



(Mis)Using employee volunteering for public relations: Implications for corporate volunteers' organizational commitment



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the conditions under which corporate volunteering initiatives can result in work outcomes. We posit that employees participating in company-supported volunteering activities (corporate volunteers) respond attitudinally to company support for employee volunteering (CSEV) based on the attributions they make about the company's purpose in implementing the volunteering program. Specifically, we examine the moderating role of corporate volunteers' attributions concerning the public relations motives underlying companies' employee volunteering programs. A sequential mixed methodology design is used for this study, consisting of two distinct phases: qualitative followed by quantitative. Results show that attributions of public relations motives undermine the positive effects of CSEV on corporate volunteers' perceptions of company prosocial identity, and subsequently, on corporate volunteers' affective company commitment. We discuss implications for theory and practice.

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1. Introduction

Company support for employee volunteering (CSEV) – i.e. companies' encouragement or accommodation of employee's volunteer activities during working hours and/or own time – has grown fast in the last decade, especially in Europe and North America (Allen, Galiano, & Hayes, 2011; Basil, Runte, Basil, & Usher, 2011; Boccalandro, 2009; Herzig, 2006). The reasons behind this phenomenon are multiple. CSEV is a corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity that offers great potential for strategic and human resource management, such as enhancement of employee motivation and commitment, cohesion and teamwork, professional development, as well as reputational gains with regard to investors, clients and future employees (Booth, Park, & Glomb, 2009; Deloitte, 2011; Muthuri, Matten, & Moon, 2009; Peterson, 2004). Yet, as Grant *et al.* (2012, p. 610), “corporate volunteering has taken organizations by storm, but organizational scholars have only begun to take notice”. While there are indeed several practitioner-oriented publications and company reports suggesting a number of human resource benefits associated with corporate volunteering initiatives, sound empirical evaluations are scarce. Furthermore, the lack of theoretical foundations for these alleged beneficial outcomes is repeatedly quoted as a major flaw of the corporate volunteering literature (Benjamin, 2001; Jones, 2010).

Recent progress has been made in the field to address these shortcomings. Social exchange and social identity perspectives have been identified as two key theoretical lenses to examine how employees respond to CSEV, and hypotheses derived from these theories have received empirical support (Bartel, 2001; Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Jones, 2010; Pajo & Lee, 2011). Specifically, CSEV can provide the stimulus for positive employee reciprocation (e.g., increased affective commitment to the company, organizational citizenship behavior) when employees interpret this support as a signal that the company values them and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Jones, 2010). In addition, CSEV can trigger a “prosocial sensemaking process” (Grant *et al.*, 2008; Pajo & Lee, 2011) enabling employees to see themselves and their company in more prosocial-altruistic terms, and resulting in a stronger emotional bond with the company.

However, while the literature provides valuable insights into why CSEV relates to employee outcomes, there is a need for a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions under which those outcomes occur (Grant, 2012). In particular, while scholars and practitioners usually frame employee volunteering as an opportunity for both public good and strategic business objectives (Boccalandro, 2009; Grant, 2012), very little is known about whether employees perceive it as one or the other, or whether they consider these objectives as mutually compatible. Recent studies suggest that strategizing corporate social activities can have double-edged effects (Van der Voort, Glac, & Meijs, 2009), but how employees respond to the motives they attribute to the company's involvement in employee volunteering largely remains an unanswered question. This paper aims to address this gap.

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Prior research suggests that human resource (HR) practices, such as employee volunteering programs, do not automatically result in the expected outcomes, and the meanings that employees attach to those practices should be examined to understand their effect (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008). Drawing on the attribution literature (Kelley & Michela, 1980; Martinko, Douglas, & Harvey, 2006), we make the general assumption that employee perceptions of what the volunteering program means to the company can affect how employees themselves respond attitudinally to company support for employee volunteering. Specifically, we posit that employees' attributions of public relations motives underlying a company's volunteering program influence the relationship between CSEV and employees' affective commitment to their company.

The attribution literature provides a theoretical basis for the argument that employees attempt to understand companies' motives for their volunteering support. CSEV can be primarily motivated by business return expectations (e.g. adding value to the company by building employee skills, strengthening brand and enhancing reputation) or by social and human development concerns (e.g., helping those in need for charitable reasons, empowering people by increasing their awareness and knowledge of social realities; Allen et al., 2011). Thus when offered CSEV, employees are likely to search for what meaning should be given to the company's action (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009; Nishii et al., 2008; Roeck & Delobbe, 2012) and assign one of the two primary types of motives to the company: self-serving (e.g., gaining marketing and reputational benefits with stakeholders) or public-serving (e.g., helping those in need). In this research we focus on employees' attributions of public relations motives (i.e. the self-serving type of motives) as many companies envisage employee volunteering as a powerful tool to strengthen the brand and relationships with external stakeholders (Allen et al., 2011). We argue that these attributions can undermine the positive effects of CSEV when employees perceive the volunteering program as being motivated by companies' self-serving intentions of communication. More precisely, we posit that attributions of public relations motives can damage the positive effects of CSEV on employees' perceptions of their company as caring and generous (further referred to as "company prosocial identity") and subsequently, on employee's emotional attachment to the company. Fig. 1 illustrates the proposed relationships.

A sequential mixed methodology design was used for this research, consisting of two distinct phases: qualitative followed by quantitative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the first, qualitative phase, we relied on 49 interviews from employees participating in company-supported volunteering activities (further referred to as "corporate volunteers") to inform and enrich the development of our hypotheses, and to help develop our scale items (Bryman, 2006; Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002). In the second, quantitative phase, we tested the hypotheses using

survey data from four different samples of corporate volunteers. In the next section, we present the underlying theory and concepts, and develop our hypotheses. This is followed by a description of the methodology and the results of the quantitative study. We conclude with the theoretical and practical implications of our findings, together with the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Theory and development of hypotheses

In developing our hypotheses, we adopted an a priori theoretical perspective but we also made use of qualitative data obtained from 49 semi-structured interviews. This complementary qualitative approach served two main goals (Bryman, 2006). First, we used the qualitative study to complement our theoretical development and help generate hypotheses. Second, we employed our qualitative data to help develop the survey questionnaire that was used in the quantitative phase of the research (see Measures section). Additionally, we referred to the interviews we conducted to enrich the discussion of our findings (see Discussion section). It should be noted that participants in the qualitative study were not included in the samples of the quantitative study.

Two companies operating in France were chosen as settings for our qualitative investigation: a multinational automobile company which we shall call Company X (N = 24), and a French health insurance company which we shall call Company Y (N = 25). We chose companies engaged in a form of corporate volunteering that requires a high amount of involvement both on the part of the company and from the volunteer employees (Pelozo and Hassay, 2006); this makes it likely to offer meaningful insights to our research question. When this qualitative data was collected, only ten companies in France had put into practice this form of company volunteerism. We contacted all of these companies and selected the first two who agreed to participate in our research. Both organizations offered employees several volunteer opportunities (e.g., tutoring disadvantaged students, simulating job interviews, collecting old clothes, cleaning up natural sites) and proposed either one-off or repeated activities which could be undertaken individually or in groups.

In-depth interviews were conducted with volunteering program managers and corporate volunteers from both companies. Interviews varied in duration, but all fell within a 45–90 minute range (with most lasting at least 1 h), and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview protocol included questions about employees' motivations for joining the program, the meanings associated with being a volunteer, employees' experience as volunteers within the program and what they thought of the fact that their company had set up the program. These transcripts were supplemented with archival data (including progress reports from the internal associations which set up the volunteering program, their newsletters, the minutes of their

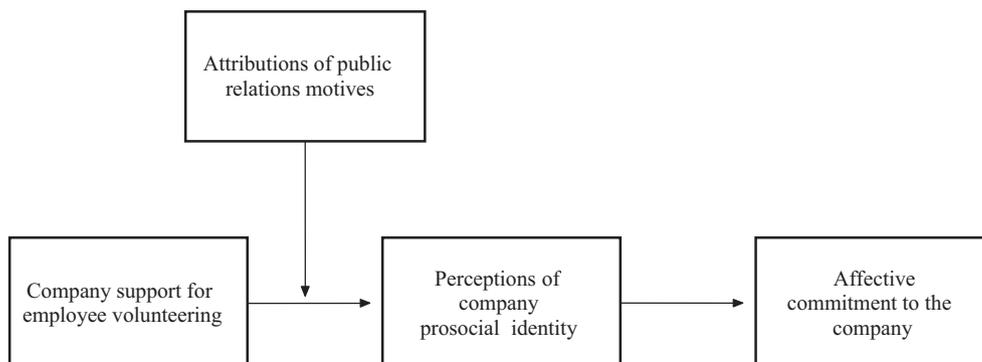


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

meetings and the volunteering program pamphlets). In addition, participant and unobtrusive observations by one of the authors supplemented the data to provide a richer context for interpreting employee responses. To facilitate qualitative data analysis, we used a computer-based analysis program (NVivo). In the following sections, selected quotes are presented to illustrate and contextualize our arguments.

2.1. The theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between CSEV and affective company commitment

Our general purpose is to understand the conditions under which company support for employee volunteering influences employee's affective company commitment, that is, the emotional attachment to a company based on a sense of identification to its goals and values (Meyer & Allen, 2007). This implies first identifying the social-psychological processes that link CSEV to affective commitment. Two complementary theoretical perspectives have been invoked to explain this relationship: the social exchange perspective and the social identity perspective.

Central to the social exchange perspective of affective commitment is the assumption that employees who perceive high levels of company support are more likely to reciprocate the company with higher levels of emotional attachment (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Accordingly, corporate volunteers are likely to reciprocate with affective commitment in response to a variety of social and psychological benefits derived from CSEV, such as perceptions of skill acquisitions (e.g., project management and leadership skills), expression and fulfillment of prosocial motives, well-being at work and satisfaction with life in general (Booth et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2008; Pajo & Lee, 2011; Peterson, 2004). The following quotes, taken from our interview data, illustrate some of these benefits.

“You can't deny it; there is a part which is pleasure-pleasure or personal development. I like doing it. I wouldn't say that getting someone back on the road to employment is my true job. My job is to get in as much profit as possible and sell the most cars. The pleasure of giving is not the same thing at all. It's a question of personal enrichment... In what I feel about [Company Y], yes it has changed things, because I'm grateful to my company.”

“I told myself that at company level, I could do much more than if I were doing it just by myself. I saw a way of having resources and working together with others as a group...The company gets involved by providing equipment and sometimes a bit of time. Equipment and financing, an office, and logistics so that people can find self expression in doing good for others is really great. For me [company Y] really deserves praise.”

“It makes me feel good because it is coherent with my beliefs and my upbringing, so I'm happy to do it without thinking twice. If I didn't do it, I sometimes think that I would find it hard to look at myself in the mirror because I would tell myself that I wasn't as available for others as I should be.”

While the social exchange interpretation of corporate volunteers' affective commitment relies on the principles of gratitude and reciprocity, the social identity perspective suggests an additional mechanism based on the feeling of pride (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Fuller, Barnett, Hester, & Relyea, 2003). Specifically, CSEV can lead to greater affective commitment by enabling employees to view their company as more prosocial, respected by external stakeholders, and thus deserving of their emotional attachment. Empirical support for this argument has been provided by a number of studies. For example, Bartel (2001) found that, over time, employee volunteers changed their perceptions of the organization's defining attributes such that social responsiveness – an attribute consistent with the notion of being prosocial – became

more central to employees' perceived organizational identity. Relatedly, Grant et al. (2008) found that “repeated exposure to the company's caring actions [enabled] employees to generalize these actions to the company's identity as a caring, humane organization” (p. 905). Pajo and Lee (2011) reported similar findings noting that the opportunity to volunteer had an important role in cultivating employees' perceptions of company prosocial identity. Thus, by fostering company prosocial identity, CSEV engenders pride in organizational membership and provides employees with a rationale for making sense of their commitment to their company (Klein, Molloy, & Cooper, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 2007).

To summarize, the social exchange and social identity theories provide complementary and empirically supported explanations about why CSEV is related to affective company commitment. CSEV can both affirm beliefs about what defines the self (i.e. perceptions of *personal* prosocial identity), as well as shape beliefs about what defines one's work organization (i.e. perceptions of *company* prosocial identity); these in turn affect organizational commitment. As we make the general assumption that employee perceptions of what the volunteering program means to the company affect how employees themselves respond attitudinally to CSEV, the company (rather than personal) prosocial identity explanation appears central to our theoretical development.

2.2. The moderating role of employee attributions of public relations motives

Drawing on attribution theory and Gilbert and Malone's assertion (1995, p. 21) that “people care less about what others do than about why they do it”, we propose that corporate volunteers' response to CSEV with affective company commitment is contingent on certain attributions that they make about the company's purpose in implementing the volunteering program.

Social attributions refer to the processes by which people explain the behavior of others (Kelley & Michela, 1980; Martinko et al., 2006). Based on their perceptions of others' motives, people can assign different meanings to the same behavior they observe, and their attitudinal responses may vary depending on their interpretation. This logic is often used to explain consumer responses to CSR activities (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011) but can also be applied to employee responses to CSEV. This reasoning implies that the relationship between HR practices, such as CSEV, and employee attitudes depends on the attributions that employees make about the motives underlying the HR practices they experience (Nishii et al., 2008, p. 505). In support of this argument, Nishii et al. (2008) found that HR practices that are perceived as reflecting a commitment to quality and employee well-being are associated with positive outcomes, such as affective organizational commitment, whereas HR practices that are perceived as reflecting the company's view that employees are a cost to be contained are associated with negative outcomes. There is also additional evidence that the attitudinal effects of HR practices depend on employees' perceptions and subjective interpretations of those practices (Koys, 1988, 1991; Mignonac & Richebé, 2013).

Within the specific context of CSEV, Allen et al. (2011) identified several motivations for corporate volunteering efforts, which can be labeled as company self-serving motives (e.g. adding value to the company by building employee skills, strengthening brand and enhancing reputation) or public serving motives (e.g., helping those in need for charitable reasons, changing systems by building capacity and self-sufficiency). Following attribution theory, corporate volunteers are likely to make differential attributions about company's motives for supporting their volunteering activities, and assign one of these two primary types of motives to the company (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Ellen et al., 2006). The following quote from our interview data illustrates the search for meaning that corporate volunteers may engage in.

“What I find hard to understand is what the company itself actually gets out of it. I think it is really a basic question which no one has really answered yet at [Company X]. What interest does the company

have in giving its employees time to do that? What is common knowledge is that the company has to do that because it has a responsibility towards the outside world. OK, but you can argue about that for hours and hours quite simply because the company already pays a lot of taxes for the environment and also, it creates jobs. Does it really also need to give more time to the outside? What is the logic behind that?"

Corporate volunteers' interpretations of the company's action could partly be based on the extent of CSEV, that is, the degree of investment the company makes in the volunteering program (e.g., support in the form of material, logistic and financial help, managers facilitating and participating in the volunteering activities). Thus, the higher the level of CSEV, the higher the perceptions company prosocial identity should be (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007; Ellen et al., 2006; Hoeffler, Bloom, & Keller, 2010). However, in line with attribution theory, we propose that corporate volunteers' attitudinal responses to CSEV depend not only on *how much* CSEV but also on their perceptions of *why* the company decided to set up a volunteer program. The meaning corporate volunteers attribute to their company's volunteering initiatives can indeed be based on their observation of how this is used by the company. Given the significant resources required for effective volunteering programs, companies are often tempted to meet business goals through employee volunteerism (Boccalandro, 2009; City of London Corporation, 2010). In particular, as many companies envisage employee volunteering as a tool to strengthen their public image (Allen et al., 2011), corporate volunteers are likely to be sensitive as to whether or not their engagement is used for public relations purposes. The following quotes from our interview data illustrate this argument.

"These are the doubts that were expressed at the beginning: will the company use my involvement to improve its image and to make a good impression?"

"There shouldn't be communication just for good publicity. They could easily say "X has got you further, and X has been involved in sponsoring competences for the last five years" But in that case, it would be a total exploitation by the company of a number of private personal initiatives."

Research on impression management and reactions to CSR policies indicate that people tend to have negative opinions of those who are seen as having an ulterior or instrumental motive for citizenship activities (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008). Because taking advantage of a volunteering program to influence what people think about the company has such self-centered/egoistic connotations (Ellen et al., 2006; Whetten & Mackey, 2002), attributions of public relations motives should undermine the positive effects of CSEV on corporate volunteers' attitudes towards the company. Our qualitative data support this proposition. While the corporate volunteers we interviewed admitted that the company may benefit indirectly from the consequences of their volunteering, they considered that positive spillover in terms of company image should be incidental; it should never be the reason behind the program's existence nor even one of its objectives. If this were the case, they would feel deceived and the image of generosity they confer on their company (i.e. their perceptions of company prosocial identity) would be considerably altered, as the following quotes from our interview data illustrate.

"If tomorrow the company put forward its role in the volunteering program just to improve its image on the economic market, or just to get better known in the world in general, it would be a great pity. There are agencies that rank citizenship initiatives, and our company would like to get into the ranking. OK as far as it goes, but we have to make sure that we don't set up citizenship actions just to get a ranking."

"I think it's good that this type of initiative doesn't have the sole objective of making the company look good and get good publicity saying 'look, see what a humanist company we are'. As long as that isn't the company's prime objective, it is highly honorable that it invests time or money in this type of activity. I think that [Company Y] is one of those companies that don't try to take advantage of this. For me this seems clear, with two years' experience, even if indirectly there may be an occasional newspaper article on our association. Our company's name is mentioned indirectly, but that is not at all [Company Y]'s goal, and I think that is all to the honor of the top management."

Our arguments can be summarized in the first-stage moderated mediation model (Edwards & Lambert, 2007) depicted in Fig. 1. We predict that corporate volunteers' attributions of public relations motives weaken the positive effect of CSEV on employees' perceptions of company prosocial identity; these in turn contribute directly and positively to affective company commitment. These predictions yield the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. *Employee attributions of public relations motives moderate the relationship between company support for employee volunteering and affective commitment to the company, such that this relationship is weaker when attributions of public relations are high than when attributions of public relations are low.*

Hypothesis 2. *Company prosocial identity mediates the moderating effect of employee attributions of public relations motives on the relationship between company support for employee volunteering and affective commitment to the company.*

3. Method

To provide an initial test of the above hypotheses, we conducted a survey among corporate volunteers in two companies that had developed their own volunteering programs and deployed employee volunteers to *domestic* locations (Sample 1 and Sample 2). To examine the robustness of our hypotheses, we followed this up with a second survey of corporate volunteers from various companies who were deployed to international locations (Sample 3 and Sample 4). As international employee volunteering has as yet received very limited attention from scholars, we wanted to make sure that its specific nature (e.g., geographical and cultural distance, large investment required by these programs) would not change the pattern of the hypothesized relationships.

3.1. Research settings and data collection

3.1.1. Sample 1 and Sample 2

We collected data from two large companies headquartered in France, which we shall call the Insurance Company (Sample 1) and the Airline Company (Sample 2), respectively. We chose these organizations for three reasons. First, both companies were well known in France for their involvement in corporate volunteering activities. Second, we focused on large companies in order to secure a sufficient number of respondents for data analysis. Third, the choice of the two organizations was also determined by the pragmatic question of access to corporate volunteers, this was granted to us in exchange for a free report of the study's results, and the guarantee of respondent anonymity. Through an internal association, employees of both companies had the opportunity to volunteer, on a regular or occasional basis, for selected (employer- or employee-initiated) philanthropic projects and charitable organizations dealing with, for the Insurance Company, social exclusion, handicap and health and for the Airline Company, with education and training for children and young people suffering from illness, disability or living in conditions of hardship.

We used a web-based survey tool to collect the data. Using contact information obtained from the internal associations, we sent an email, along with a URL survey link, to 245 corporate volunteers from the Insurance Company, and 264 corporate volunteers from the Airline Company. We received 107 usable employee survey responses for the Insurance Company (representing a 43.7% response rate) and 102 for the Airline Company (representing a 38.6% response rate). The main socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

3.1.2. Sample 3 and Sample 4

Cross-border volunteering is a significant new trend in corporate volunteering initiatives (Allen et al., 2011). However, at the time of data collection, we were aware of only few companies that had employee volunteer programs that include opportunities to go abroad. Moreover, these programs had too few participants to secure a sufficient number of respondents for data analysis. As international volunteering often requires companies to create alliances with volunteer organizations, we chose to collect data in collaboration with two Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) which accepted to send our questionnaire to the corporate volunteers registered in their database: *Planète Urgence* (Planet Emergency; Sample 3) and *Electriciens sans Frontières*, (Electricians without Borders; Sample 4).

Planète Urgence is an NGO that proposes voluntary work abroad (mainly in Africa) in fields such as adult training, education and environment protection. Examples of activities include educational support and socio-educational activities, computer skills' training for local associations and support for the reforestation of natural reserves. *Électriciens sans Frontières* is an NGO whose aim is to facilitate access to energy and water for the populations of the poorest countries and to encourage local initiatives that contribute to improving living conditions. The NGO essentially uses the technical and organizational skills of professionals in the sectors of energy and water. Examples of activities include the electrification of dispensaries and schools and the installation of photovoltaic water pumps and lighting for refugee camps in the wake of natural disasters. The conditions under which Volunteers with *Planète Urgence* or *Électriciens sans Frontières* help abroad may vary. Most go in the context of a partnership between their company and the NGO, taking time from their personal paid holiday or training leave. They may be financed partly, totally or not at all by the company, and may be using their professional skills or not.

As for Sample 1 and Sample 2 data collection, we used a web-based survey tool to collect the responses. We sent an email from the two NGOs' databases, along with a URL survey link, to 278 corporate volunteers from *Planète Urgence*, and 272 corporate volunteers from *Électriciens sans Frontières*. We excluded responses from individuals who had retired or changed companies since their mission. Because our study focused on employees' reaction to their company volunteering initiatives, we also excluded responses from the few individuals working in companies that had no partnership with the studied NGOs. A partnership implies a certain level of involvement from the employer (usually, a monetary donation to support the NGO and encouragement of employee's volunteer activities) but companies can go far beyond this minimum (i.e. by fully funding the international volunteering experience or donating new materials or equipment needed to carry out projects). These differences in situations generate sufficient variance in the variables of interest to allow for hypothesis testing.

We received 95 usable employee survey responses for *Planète Urgence* (representing a 34.1% response rate) and 97 for *Électriciens sans Frontières* (representing a 35.6% response rate). The main socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 2.

3.2. Measures

Because we used both previously validated scales and scales developed specifically for this study, we first conducted a pilot study to pre-test and validate our questionnaire. We collected survey data from 82 corporate volunteers (representing a 44.4% response rate) from various companies which partnered with three charitable organizations to collect and distribute goods to the needy, or to mentor children in difficulty. We used data from this sample solely to pre-test and refine our measures, not to test our hypotheses. The pilot study participants compared with the participants of the main study, with the exception that the former only volunteered domestically. Participants in the pilot study were not included in the sample of the main study. Further details on this pilot study are available from the corresponding author.

The final items used to assess the constructs of interest in the four samples are presented in Appendix A. Unless otherwise indicated, response options for all scales ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Sample 1 (N = 107)</i>											
1. Age	47.19	8.89	–								
2. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.33	0.47	–0.03	–							
3. Company tenure	21.98	11.33	0.79**	–0.16	–						
4. Years in corporate volunteering	6.29	2.52	0.41**	–0.12	0.48**	–					
5. Job satisfaction	3.96	0.83	0.08	–0.07	0.11	–0.11	(0.81)				
6. CSEV	3.49	0.65	0.16	0.13	0.16	0.10	0.31**	(0.84)			
7. Attribution of PR motives	3.46	0.76	–0.13	–0.13	–0.10	0.07	–0.12	–0.31**	(0.71)		
8. Company prosocial identity	3.22	0.77	–0.05	0.03	–0.08	–0.07	0.39**	0.39**	–0.35**	(0.81)	
9. Affective company commitment	3.53	0.67	0.01	0.09	–0.15	–0.01	0.31**	0.14	–0.18	0.50**	(0.84)
<i>Sample 2 (N = 102)</i>											
1. Age	47.71	8.84	–								
2. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.38	0.49	0.07	–							
3. Company tenure	22.22	10.33	0.86**	0.09	–						
4. Years in corporate volunteering	5.96	2.19	0.08	0.21	0.19	–					
5. Job satisfaction	3.83	0.94	–0.19	–0.05	–0.15	0.03	(0.80)				
6. CSEV	2.92	0.75	0.14	–0.24*	0.15	0.00	0.20	(0.86)			
7. Attribution of PR motives	3.06	0.81	0.06	0.20	0.14	0.08	–0.20	–0.28**	(0.69)		
8. Company prosocial identity	3.12	0.82	–0.09	–0.09	–0.11	0.04	0.39**	0.42**	–0.23*	(0.82)	
9. Affective company commitment	4.03	0.56	0.18	–0.05	0.21	0.06	0.36**	0.26*	0.09	0.39**	(0.80)

Note: CSEV = company support for employee volunteering; PR = public relations.

* p < 0.05.

** p < 0.01.

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Sample 3 (N = 95)</i>												
1. Age	40.84	10.34	–									
2. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.32	0.47	–0.06	–								
3. Company tenure	12.84	10.24	0.77**	0.10	–							
4. Years in corporate volunteering	3.57	1.43	0.05	–0.06	–0.04	–						
5. Job satisfaction	3.61	0.99	–0.03	0.02	–0.15	0.12	(0.94)					
6. Company size	5.24	1.41	0.09	0.12	0.12	–0.07	0.00	–				
7. CSEV	3.02	0.84	–0.18	0.01	–0.23*	0.16	0.25*	–0.20	(0.83)			
8. Attribution of PR motives	3.04	0.82	–0.10	0.15	0.05	–0.20	–0.18	0.20	–0.06	(0.70)		
9. Company prosocial identity	2.99	0.84	–0.17	0.23*	–0.17	0.22	0.54**	–0.17	0.42**	–0.16	(0.81)	
10. Affective company commitment	2.93	0.80	0.00	0.14	0.07	0.22	0.59**	0.00	0.31**	–0.10	0.64**	(0.88)
<i>Sample 4 (N = 97)</i>												
1. Age	48.65	10.25	–									
2. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.82	0.38	0.19	–								
3. Company tenure	23.46	11.74	0.76**	0.21*	–							
4. Years in corporate volunteering	5.71	2.38	0.30**	0.25*	0.23*	–						
5. Job satisfaction	4.00	0.77	–0.03	0.15	0.01	–0.05	(0.81)					
6. Company size	5.62	1.12	–0.09	0.05	0.06	0.02	–0.09	–				
7. CSEV	3.13	0.79	–0.16	0.06	–0.13	0.01	0.23*	–0.13	(0.84)			
8. Attribution of PR motives	3.43	0.72	0.27**	–0.06	0.27*	0.05	–0.18	0.08	–0.14	(0.71)		
9. Company prosocial identity	3.05	0.71	–0.10	0.11	–0.10	–0.10	0.48**	–0.21*	0.30**	–0.17	(0.74)	
10. Affective company commitment	3.61	0.80	0.27**	0.39**	0.25*	0.19	0.39**	–0.08	0.18	–0.07	0.51**	(0.91)

Note: Internal consistency values (Cronbach's alphas) appear across the diagonal in parentheses. CSEV = company support for employee volunteering; PR = public relations. Company size coded as: 1 = less than 50 employees to 6 = more than 1000 employees.

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

3.2.1. Company support for employee volunteering

We measured CSEV as agreement with seven statements reflecting the extent to which employees thought their company supported them in their volunteering activities. We developed this scale based on our qualitative data and with the assistance of volunteering program managers.

3.2.2. Attributions of public relations motives

We developed a three-item scale to measure employees' reports of their company's use of its volunteering program for public relations (PR) motives. This scale was also developed using our qualitative data and with the assistance of volunteering programs managers.

3.2.3. Company prosocial identity

We measured company prosocial identity with a three-item scale developed by Grant et al. (2008). This scale was translated from English to French by one translator and then back-translated independently by a second translator.

3.2.4. Affective commitment to the company

We measured affective commitment to the company using a slightly modified version of the Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) six-item scale that has proved reliable in French (e.g., Bentein, Vandenberg, Vandenberghe, & Stinglhamber, 2005).

3.2.5. Control variables

In order to rule out alternative explanations for the findings, we controlled for several variables. To rule-out demographic explanations of affective organizational commitment (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), we controlled for age, gender, company tenure and years in corporate volunteering. Because an employee's feelings about his or her job are likely to influence organizational commitment and perceptions of company prosocial identity (Grant et al., 2008; Meyer et al., 2002), we controlled for job satisfaction. We measured job satisfaction using a three-item scale derived from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983), and previously validated in French (e.g., Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009).

Large companies tend to support employee volunteering in a more strategic manner than small companies (Basil et al., 2011), so they may be perceived by employees as less genuinely motivated in their support. To rule-out this explanation of company prosocial identity, we controlled for company size in Sample 3 and Sample 4.

3.2.6. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA)

We used CFA to demonstrate discriminant validity among the five latent variables. We used the survey items as indicators for all constructs except CSEV and affective commitment where three parcels were formed and used as indicators. The hypothesized measurement model fit the data well; Sample 1: $\chi^2(80) = 103.60$, $p < .05$, CFI = .98, NNFI = .97, RMSEA = .053, SRMR = .075; Sample 2: $\chi^2(80) = 93.49$, $p > .10$, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, RMSEA = .041, SRMR = .082; Sample 3: $\chi^2(80) = 120.03$, $p < .01$, CFI = .96, NNFI = .95, RMSEA = .071, SRMR = .078; and Sample 4: $\chi^2(80) = 121.90$, $p < .01$, CFI = .97, NNFI = .96, RMSEA = .075, SRMR = .068. We then compared our hypothesized five-factor model to all possible nested models using the χ^2 difference test to determine the best-fitting model. In all cases, the five-factor model was significantly superior ($p < .01$). Overall, these results provide evidence that our constructs do possess adequate discriminant validity for use in hypothesis testing.

4. Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Tables 1 and 2. We tested the hypotheses using hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses, following the moderated regression procedures recommended by Aguinis and Gottfredson (2010) and the moderated mediation procedures specified by Edwards and Lambert (2007).

Table 3 presents OLS regression results for Hypothesis 1. After accounting for the effects of all control variables, we found in the four samples a statistically significant interaction between CSEV and attributions of PR motives in predicting affective commitment. To interpret the form of this interaction, we plotted the simple slopes at one standard deviation above and below the mean of attributions of PR motives (Aguinis & Gottfredson, 2010). As displayed in Fig. 2, CSEV appeared to be positively related to affective commitment when attributions of PR motives were low but not when they were high (interaction plots

Table 3
Moderated regression analyses predicting affective company commitment.

Variable/step	Sample 1		Sample 2		Sample 3		Sample 4	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Age	0.29 [†]	0.30 [†]	0.14	0.13	−0.24	−0.21	0.21	0.20
Gender	0.05	0.05	−0.07	−0.04	0.14	0.15	0.27**	0.27**
Company tenure	−0.50**	−0.52**	0.09	0.06	0.38*	0.33*	0.05	0.09
Years in corporate volunteering	0.17	0.17	0.02	0.06	0.15	0.18*	0.06	0.04
Job satisfaction	0.35**	0.32**	0.40**	0.36**	0.57**	0.54**	0.32**	0.25**
Company size					0.00	0.04	−0.03	0.05
CSEV (A)	0.00	0.03	0.19 [†]	0.14	0.18 [†]	0.09	0.12	0.06
Attribution of PR motives (B)	−0.16	−0.16	0.21*	0.21*	−0.02	0.00	−0.05	0.00
A × B		−0.19*		−0.21*		−0.22*		−0.31**
ΔR ²		0.03		0.03		0.03		0.07
ΔF		4.00*		3.86*		4.51*		9.46**
R ²	0.22	0.25	0.26	0.29	0.48	0.52	0.33	0.40
Adj. R ²	0.16	0.18	0.19	0.22	0.42	0.45	0.27	0.34
Model F	3.56**	3.71**	4.04**	4.15**	7.66**	7.67**	5.17**	6.12**

Note: CSEV = company support for employee volunteering; PR = public relations. All beta coefficients reported are standardized.

[†] p < 0.10.

* p < .05.

** p < 0.01.

for Samples 2–4 show similar patterns and are available from the corresponding author). To test this interpretation statistically, we compared each of the simple slopes to zero. Results of the simple slope analysis, displayed in Table 5, revealed that the relationship between CSEV and affective commitment was positive and statistically significant when attributions of PR motives were low. In contrast, when attributions of PR motives were high, the relationship between CSEV and affective commitment did not differ significantly from zero. These results supported Hypothesis 1.

To test whether company prosocial identity mediates the moderating effect of employee attributions of PR motives on the relationship between CSEV and affective commitment (i.e., H2), we applied Edwards and Lambert's (2007) procedures for examining first-stage moderation effects. We first conducted moderated regression analyses predicting perceived company prosocial identity (see Table 4). After accounting for the effects of all control variables, we found in the four samples a statistically significant interaction between CSEV and attributions of PR motives in predicting company prosocial identity. The plotting of simple slopes (see Fig. 3 for Sample 1; interaction plots for Samples 2–4 show similar patterns and are available from the corresponding author) suggests that CSEV was positively related to company prosocial identity when attributions of PR motives were low but not when they were high. Results of the simple slope analysis (Table 5) provided statistical support to this interpretation: the relationship between CSEV and company prosocial identity was positive and statistically significant when

attributions of PR motives were low, and did not differ significantly from zero when attributions of PR motives were high.

Next, we tested whether company prosocial identity significantly relates to affective commitment when CSEV, attributions of PR motives, and their interaction were controlled. The results, displayed in Table 4, show that company prosocial identity was a significant predictor even after controlling for these variables, and the coefficient on the interaction term decreased in magnitude (and below statistical significance in Samples 1, 2 and 3).

To test the significance of the indirect effect of CSEV on affective commitment via company prosocial identity (as a function of attributions of PR motives), we generated 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) on the basis of 10,000 bootstrap samples. This analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2012). Results indicated that CSEV led to affective commitment, via company prosocial identity, when attributions of PR motives were low (indirect effect = .22, .10, .11, and .13 for Samples 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively; CI = [.08, .45], [.03, .23], [.03, .25], and [.03, .25] for Samples 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively). However, CSEV did not influence affective commitment via company prosocial identity when attributions of PR motives were high (indirect effect = .02, .03, −.03, and −.02 for Samples 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively; 95% CI = [−.07, .14], [−.03, .15], [−.15, .09], and [−.16, .10] for Samples 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively). These results supported Hypothesis 2.

5. Discussion

This research examines the moderating role of attributions made by employees about the public relations motives underlying companies' employee volunteering programs. Results from four samples of corporate volunteers converged to show that attributions of public relations motives undermine the positive effects of CSEV on corporate volunteers' perceptions of company prosocial identity, and subsequently, on corporate volunteers' affective company commitment. These findings have important implications for theory and practice.

5.1. Theoretical implications

First of all, our findings have implications for the corporate volunteering literature. This study is a response to the call for greater theoretical and empirical evidence examining the conditions under which corporate volunteering initiatives can result in work outcomes (Grant, 2012). We show that corporate volunteers respond attitudinally to CSEV based on the attributions they make about company's purpose in implementing the volunteering program. Previous research suggests

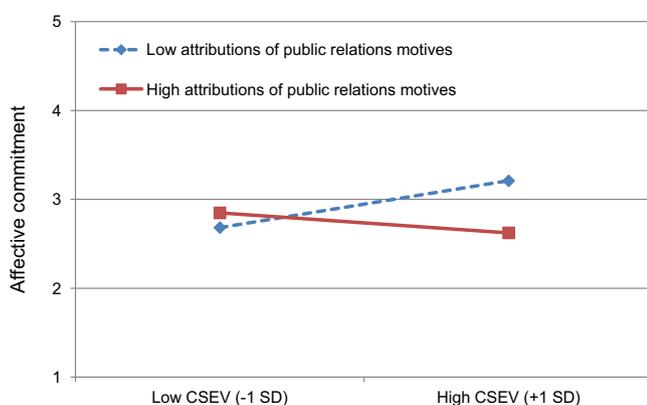


Fig. 2. Moderating effect of attributions of public relations motives on the relationship between company support for volunteering (CSEV) and affective company commitment (Sample 1).

Table 4
Moderated mediation analyses.

Variable/step	DV: Company prosocial identity								DV: Affective company commitment							
	Sample 1		Sample 2		Sample 3		Sample 4		Sample 1		Sample 2		Sample 3		Sample 4	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Age	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.08	-0.17	-0.13	-0.02	-0.02	0.30*	0.13	0.11	0.11	-0.21	-0.16	0.20	0.21
Gender	-0.04	-0.05	-0.03	0.00	0.26**	0.27**	0.08	0.08	0.05	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.15	0.05	0.27**	0.24**
Company tenure	-0.21	-0.23	-0.20	-0.22	0.10	0.04	-0.05	-0.02	-0.52**	0.06	0.13	0.33*	0.33*	0.31*	0.09	0.10
Years in corporate volunteering	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.11	0.13	0.16	-0.08	-0.10	0.17	0.06	0.03	0.18*	0.18*	0.12	0.04	0.08
Job satisfaction	0.31**	0.29**	0.28**	0.25*	0.46**	0.42**	0.41**	0.37**	0.32*	0.36**	0.29**	0.54**	0.54**	0.38**	0.25**	0.11
Company size					-0.14	-0.10	-0.15	-0.09						0.08	0.05	0.09
CSEV (A)	0.25*	0.29**	0.37**	0.32**	0.23*	0.13	0.17†	0.13	0.03	0.14	0.05	0.04	0.09	0.04	0.06	0.01
Attribution of PR motives (B)	-0.26**	-0.26**	-0.05	-0.05	-0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.00	-0.16	0.21*	0.23*	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00
A × B	-0.19*	-0.19*	-0.24*	-0.17†	-0.22*	-0.22*	-0.22*	-0.22*	-0.19*	-0.21*	-0.16	-0.22*	-0.22*	-0.13	-0.31**	-0.23*
Company prosocial identity																
ΔR ²	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.11	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.10
ΔF	5.00*	5.00*	5.60*	2.86†	2.86†	5.60*	4.07*	4.07*	14.85**	6.74*	6.74*	6.74*	6.74*	9.60**	16.91**	16.91**
R ²	0.32	0.36	0.30	0.32	0.49	0.53	0.31	0.34	0.25	0.29	.35	0.52	0.52	0.58	0.40	0.51
Adj. R ²	0.27	0.30	0.24	0.25	0.43	0.46	0.24	0.27	0.18	0.22	.27	0.45	0.45	0.51	0.34	0.45
Model F	6.13**	6.23**	4.91**	4.75**	7.86**	8.10**	4.63**	4.72**	3.71**	5.47**	4.70**	7.67**	7.67**	8.78**	6.12**	8.28**

Note: DV = dependent variable; CSEV = company support for employee volunteering; PR = public relations. All beta coefficients reported are standardized.

† p < 0.10.

* p < .005.

** p < 0.01.

that CSEV has the potential to impact important employee outcomes as a function of how volunteering affects the content of employees' personal and social identities, that is, the perceptions of what volunteering means to employees (Brockner & Welch, 2010; Caligiuri, Mencia, & Jiang, 2013). Our study extend this by suggesting that employee perceptions of what CSEV means to the company affect how employees themselves respond to these activities.

Additionally, our research contributes more generally to the CSR literature, as companies often engage in employee volunteering in response to expectations for them to be socially responsible (Muthuri et al., 2009). Whereas employees are a prominent stakeholder group, few studies have investigated the relationship between CSR and employee-level outcomes (Brammer et al., 2007; Ellis, 2009; Hoeffler et al., 2010; Valentine & Fleischman, 2008). As Morgeson, Aguinis, Waldman, and Siegel (2013, p. 822) assert, "We have just begun to scratch the surface in terms of answering questions about linkages between CSR and HR/OB". Our theoretical perspective and empirical results contribute to achieving a more complete perspective on CSR by examining its microfoundations (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012) and addressing important questions such as "how do CSR policies or practices relate to employee work attitudes or morale?" or "what causal attributions do organizational members make regarding their firm's CSR policies and practices, and what are the consequences of these attributions?" (Morgeson et al., 2013).

Finally, our research responds to calls in the work commitment literature to examine additional antecedents of affective organizational commitment, particularly those that are not exclusively based on the exchange based framework and reciprocation motive (Morrow, 2011). Crocker and Canevello (2008) found that individuals with compassionate goals – those who give support in response to others' needs and out of concern for others' welfare – build close relationships in which they ultimately receive support, even though obtaining support is not their goal. They also found that positive effects of compassionate goals are undermined among individuals with self-image goals, that is, individuals who support others because others can give some desired social good in return. Similarly, we found that when companies support employee volunteering for public relations purposes (giving strategically to obtain something for self-image goals), they are perceived as less prosocial (less compassionate) and eventually cultivate less affective organizational commitment (receive less in return). Thus, our results suggest that under certain conditions CSEV can be interpreted by employees through the lens of communal relationships (vs. exchange relationships), that is, relationships governed by concern for others' welfare, in which benefits are given in response to others' needs or to please others without the expectation that these benefits will be reciprocated (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986; Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). However, a strategic use of CSEV may lead employees to interpret their employment relationship in exchange rather than in communal terms, and this may influence the effectiveness of CSEV in emotionally binding employees to their company.

5.2. Practical implications

This research has meaningful implications for managers. We showed that the implementation of corporate volunteer programs does not guarantee the increase in organizational commitment that many companies hope for. Indeed, we found that corporate volunteers do not respond to CSEV with stronger affective company commitment when they perceive that their company uses the volunteer program for public relations purposes. Companies thus need to pay attention not only to the amount of volunteering support they provide to their employees, but also to the extent to which that support may be perceived as being motivated by company self-serving intentions. This may sound like a tough, even a paradoxical task for companies which may well be tempted to meet business goals through employee volunteering given the significant resources required for effective volunteering programs

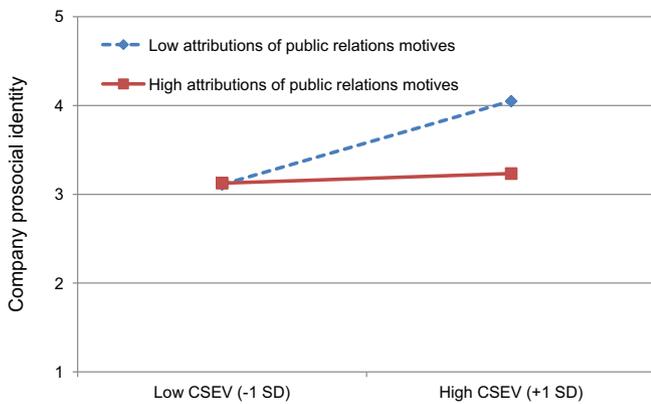


Fig. 3. Moderating effect of attributions of public relations motives on the relationship between company support for volunteering (CSEV) and company prosocial identity (Sample 1).

(Boccalandro, 2009). Our findings suggest explicitly ruling out public relations objectives, as an option that would allow employees to perceive company support for volunteering as a genuine “gift” (Balkin & Richebé, 2007; Booth et al., 2009). As Gouldner reminds us: “there is no gift that brings a higher return than the free gift, the gift given with no strings attached. For that which is truly given freely moves men deeply and makes them most indebted to their benefactors” (Gouldner 1973, p. 277). The following quote taken from our interview data illustrates this option.

“This was a deliberate choice on the part of our CEO, who did not wish to communicate outside the company, saying ‘We are not looking for any return on this investment, so there’s no point in communicating about it’. And that’s when we really felt that it was truly Company X’s own project, and not just a tool for communicating or getting publicity... You may think I’m being naïve, but I think that Company X has no particular reason for having it (i.e. the volunteering program), and only does it because the company thinks that it’s the right thing to do, to help a certain number of people. I mean it’s completely disinterested.”

Another option for companies that invest in employee volunteering and wish to improve their external image would be to acknowledge this goal openly, and inform employees of the dual motives of their volunteering program. Our qualitative data suggest indeed that corporate volunteers need clear statements about the objectives of CSEV:

“I think that the [name of CEO] actually spoke to us at a certain point to say that our volunteering actions should be good for the company image. I think it was more implied than actually stated in so many words. But I think that the company volunteers definitely felt it. Somewhere I think it upset them. But I can understand that the company directors want a bit more publicity. Only, they should say it more clearly. For now, it’s all in implications and what is not really said.”

Table 5
Results of simple slope analysis.

DV	IV	Moderator	Level	Sample 1		Sample 2		Sample 3		Sample 4	
				b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t
Affective company commitment	CSEV	Attributions of PR motives	High (+1SD)	-0.15	-1.02	-0.04	-0.35	-0.09	-0.59	-0.22	-1.51
			Low (-1SD)	0.34	1.98*	0.25	2.65**	0.26	2.65**	0.34	2.93**
Company prosocial identity	CSEV	Attributions of PR motives	High (+1SD)	0.07	0.47	0.17	0.97	-0.07	-0.49	-0.06	-0.43
			Low (-1SD)	0.61	3.35**	0.53	3.93**	0.33	3.44**	0.28	2.62**

Note: DV: dependent variable; IV = independent variable; CSEV = company support for employee volunteering; PR = public relations. All beta coefficients reported (b) are non-standardized.

* $p < .005$.

** $p < 0.01$.

There is also indeed indirect evidence suggesting that corporate volunteers would be willing to accept firm-serving motives behind companies’ volunteering initiatives provided that these motives are publicly acknowledged (Foreh & Grier, 2003) and as long as corporate volunteers also perceive the company as sincere in supporting public goods (i.e., high public-serving; Kim & Lee, 2012). Future research should examine this possibility. In all cases, companies would be well-advised not to focus only on the positive external image that they can derive from CSEV, or the social and psychological benefits that their employees can derive from such programs (i.e., skill development, having a prosocial identity). Our results suggest that image management and careful messaging towards employees may also be important.

5.3. Limitations and directions for future research

The implications of this research should be considered in the light of its limitations, which point to directions for future research. First, the cross-sectional nature of our data makes it impossible to draw conclusions about the causal direction of the relationships observed. Therefore, while we suggest the reverse, it is also possible that when people are committed to their company, they perceive it in more prosocial terms and tend to attribute less self-serving motives to its practices. In other words, corporate volunteers’ positive or negative attitudes towards their company may provide a lens through which they perceive and attach meaning to corporate volunteering initiatives. Longitudinal research from employee entry into the volunteering program would be needed to properly address this limitation.

The second limitation of our study stems from its single source and self-report approach. Most of our key variables address internal psychological states, which can be appropriately gauged using self-report measures (Spector, 2006). Moreover, our principal hypothesis predicts an interaction effect, which cannot be produced by common method variance (Evans, 1985). Nonetheless, mono-method bias is a methodological threat for the measurement of CSEV. We cannot be sure that corporate volunteers reported accurately on the objective volunteering practices of their company, although we tried to design items in such a way that informants were asked factual rather than opinion questions (e.g. whether company allows its employees to undertake some of their volunteering activities during work hours). Future research might consider multisource assessments of CSEV implementation. However, gauging corporate volunteering practices from other sources, such as top managers, would have its own disadvantages, including impression management (e.g., top managers reporting that CSEV is substantial) and observational bias (e.g., CSEV may not be implemented in the same way across departments and units). As Rupp, Shao, Thornton, and Skarlicki (2013) note, the way in which “employees perceive the CSR of their employer may actually have more direct and stronger implications for employees’ subsequent reactions than actual firm behaviors of which employees may or may not be aware”.

Third, we limited our investigation to attributions of public relations motives. Given the diversity of motives underlying companies’ employee volunteering programs (Allen et al., 2011), it would be worthwhile to

examine the effect of other attributions, in particular attributions of motives that can less easily be categorized as company self-serving or public serving (e.g., building employee skills and leadership). Research on consumer attributions for CSR programs suggests that employees are able to distinguish between self-centered motives that are strategic or egoistic, and public serving motives that are values-driven or stakeholder-driven (Ellen et al., 2006). Considering such nuances and the possible duality of company motives would advance our understanding of the influence of attributions on employee responses to CSEV.

The fourth limitation is that we did not examine outcomes other than affective company commitment. Although affective commitment has been linked to several important work-related outcomes (Meyer et al., 2002), it would be fruitful to move beyond this towards a broader examination of the moderating role of attribution of company motives in the relationships between CSEV and outcomes such as employee's work engagement, employees' continuation of volunteer work or capability development (Caligiuri et al., 2013). Furthermore, in this investigation we directed our efforts to *affective company commitment*, whereas organizational commitment can take multiple forms and be directed towards various targets (Meyer & Allen, 2007). Therefore, future research could also consider employee *normative commitment* (i.e., the sense of obligation-based form of attachment) and *continuance commitment* (i.e. the cost-based form) to the company or to other relevant targets such as organization-sponsored causes (Bingham, Mitchell, Bishop, & Allen, 2013).

Fifth, we didn't include the corporate volunteers' own motives into our conceptualization and measurement. As there are several motivational bases for which people donate their time (Clary et al., 1998), future research should examine how corporate volunteers' motives affect their attributions, and subsequently, their attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the generalizability of our findings may be limited by the national context in which the research was conducted. Even if corporate volunteering is an international phenomenon (Allen et al., 2011), volunteerism cannot be seen in isolation from the broader political, economic and cultural context in which it takes place (Runte, Basil, & Runte, 2010). According to Anheier and Salamon (1999), volunteering in France is less pronounced than in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, where volunteering is part of the cultural repertoire and typically expected from citizens. Moreover, volunteering in France stands in an instrumental relationship with the State, contrary to countries such as Sweden and Finland in which volunteering is far more a matter of community building, life-style, and recreation (Anheier & Salamon, 1999, p. 65). Thus it is possible that socio-cultural elements influenced the way employees evaluated the legitimacy of corporate volunteering initiatives and attributed motives to their company, as the following quote taken from our interview data illustrates:

We will never really know what the true objective is of all this [i.e. the corporate volunteering efforts]. The objective is not very important. A lot of people say "it's just to make money", "they're just trying to get good publicity to show how generous they are and that it is a good company". I have the impression that Americans don't have a complex about their company benefiting from citizenship actions in terms of the company image. By comparison, I find the French a bit hypocritical: you mustn't say what you are doing; you have to prove that it's a strictly disinterested act with no ulterior motive. For me in any case, the important thing is that you're helping somebody.

Future research will then need to ascertain whether our findings can be generalized to other national contexts.

In conclusion, we believe that this research provides important insights into the conditions and the underlying processes by which company support for employee volunteering is reflected in employee attitudes. While many organizations are trying to use CSEV both to

engage the public and to foster commitment among employees, our study warns that attempts to advance these goals simultaneously could be counterproductive. CSEV appears to be a double-edged sword that companies should use with care. We hope that our theoretical perspective and findings will stimulate more research into the fast growing phenomenon of corporate volunteering and the potential dark side of such programs.

Appendix A. Survey items

A.1. Company support for employee volunteering (developed for this study)

My company allows me to undertake some of my volunteering activities during my hours of work.

My company facilitates communication and exchange of information among volunteers in the company.

My company responds favorably to my funding requests related to my volunteering activities.

My company makes it easy for me to use its premises and material for my volunteering activities.

My company encourages my supervisor to facilitate my volunteering activities.

My company really gets involved in the volunteering activities I undertake.

My company is willing to extend itself to support my volunteering activities.

A.2. Attribution of public relations motives (developed for this study)

My company uses its volunteering program to strengthen its reputation with public opinion in general.

My company expects that employees' volunteering activities will have positive spin-off in terms of its external image.

My company communicates to the outside world about its volunteering activities in order to show that it is concerned by social matters.

A.3. Company prosocial identity (from Grant et al., 2008)

I see this company as caring.

I think that this company is generous.

I see this company as being genuinely concerned about its employees.

A.4. Affective commitment to the company (adapted from Meyer et al., 1993)

This company has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

I really feel a sense of belonging to my company.

I am proud to belong to this company.

I feel emotionally attached to my company.

I really feel as if my company problems are my own.

I feel like "part of the family" at my company.

A.5. Job satisfaction (adapted from Hackman & Oldham, 1980, and Cammann et al., 1983)

Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.

I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.

In general, I don't like my job (reversed scored).

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