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Social Responsibility Climate as a Double-Edged Sword: How Employee-Perceived Social Responsibility Climate Shapes the Meaning of Their Voluntary Work?

Frederick Yim · Henry Fock

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Abstract Given the preponderance of corporate social responsibility initiatives across the corporate landscape and the correspondingly escalating demand for volunteers who participate in these initiatives, a need exists to better understand how to effectively motivate their voluntary engagement with tasks. Against this backdrop, this study argues the need to enhance their volunteer work meanings. We hypothesize that pride in volunteer work and volunteering as a calling are determinants of perceptions of the meaningfulness of volunteer work. In addition, we reveal that an organization's social responsibility climate (SRC) is a key moderator in these relationships. Interestingly, an SRC is a double-edged sword such that it strengthens the relationship between meaning and pride, yet weakens the relationship between meaning and calling. Findings are discussed, along with managerial implications and future research directions.

Keywords Corporate social responsibility · Employee volunteerism · Volunteer work meaning · Climate · Calling · Pride

Introduction

Employee volunteerism has been an important topic for firms because it can benefit the charities, employees, and the employing firms (Peloza and Hassay 2006). In fact, the

number of volunteers has been on the rise. For example, in the United States, the estimated rate of volunteering increased from 45.3 to 55.5 % between 1987 and 1998 (Brudney and Gazley 2006). This upward trend—concomitant with the fact that today's firms are increasingly held responsible for their corporate actions, which underscores the escalating demand for corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Basil et al. 2009)—is quite encouraging for charities and non-profit organizations that are seeking to improve their endeavors to make good impacts on society. Employee volunteerism is regarded as an increasingly salient feature embedded within any CSR project (Muthuri et al. 2009).

Understandably, volunteers are at the core of many charitable programs or CSR efforts. As volunteer work is unpaid labor without any obligations (Pearce 1993), it is sometimes very challenging to recruit volunteers and/or motivate them to stay with the tasks or jobs to which they have voluntarily devoted themselves (Hall et al. 2005). Problems such as nonperformance and nonattendance of volunteers, referred to as the reliability problem (Pearce 1993), are not uncommon due to the lack of obligation regarding the volunteer work. An important driver that helps alleviate the reliability problem and possibly energizes volunteers to become more motivated in their volunteer efforts is their belief in the meaning of their work (Wrzensniewski and Dutton 2001).

A growing body of the theoretical and empirical literature has unveiled the crucial roles of work meanings to employees and their employers. For instance, Roberson (1990) maintains that work meanings shape work motivation and performance; thus, increasing volunteers' work meanings may enhance their retention and even performance in completing the voluntary work. A lack of work meaningfulness has been touted as resulting in apathy and feelings of detachment (Thomas and Velthouse 1990)

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that are detrimental to job motivation and quality of job performance (Hackman and Oldman 1976). In the current study, we posit that meaningfulness of volunteer work is a key construct that merits further research to understand volunteers' behaviors.

In an attempt to better understand how voluntary work meaning can be enhanced, we seek to connect the CSR literature with the volunteer literature (e.g., Basil et al. 2009; Peloza et al. 2009) to propose that social responsibility climate (SRC) is an important construct in nurturing or depressing work meaning perceptions in the volunteer work context. As such, we develop the SRC construct, which refers to the shared perceptions of employees concerning organizational stakeholders' values, expectations, and practices that emphasize the responsibility of individuals as a member of society. In fact, we believe that SRC bears great managerial relevance; consequently, we explicate that—although SRC can favorably impact volunteer work's meaningfulness—in certain contexts SRC may have undesirable effects on volunteers' meaning perceptions. We believe that the divergent effects of SRC on promoting or attenuating work meaningfulness are a very intriguing phenomenon that merits investigation in the CSR and volunteer literature.

Although examining work meaning and SRC is a topic of high relevance and importance to understand and promote volunteer behaviors and motivation, the extant literature does not provide much insight into this issue. No frameworks exist for revealing the possible antecedents to the meaningfulness of voluntary work, with no guidance as to how managers can induce subordinates' work meaningfulness perceptions. Furthermore, the SRC construct has not been investigated in the literature. In response to this research gap, we undertake the current study to first propose a model hypothesizing that pride and calling are two powerhouses boosting the meaningfulness of volunteer work. Our model also delineates the moderating role of SRC in affecting employees' meaningfulness feelings (see Fig. 1).

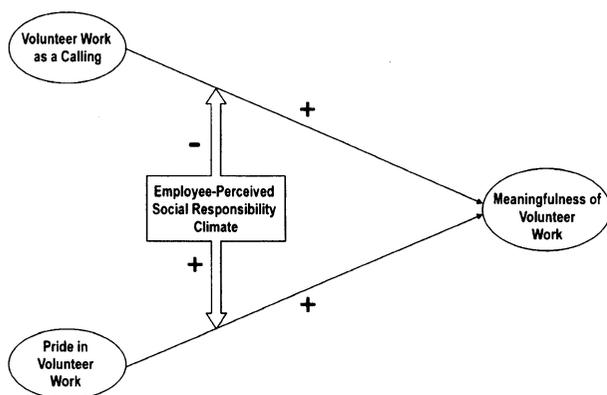


Fig. 1 Theoretical model

By proposing and testing our model, we strive to contribute to the literature in two significant ways. First, we supplement the early helping behavior theories by proposing probably the first theoretical model integrating a number of theoretically relevant and intriguing constructs as applied to a volunteering context. Specifically, we undertake a pioneering effort to examine the construct of meaningfulness of volunteer work in the volunteering context, theoretically proposing that pride and calling—two under-explored constructs in the business ethics literature—are positively related to feelings of meaning related to volunteer work. This substantiates the role of egoistic motivation as specified in helping behavior theories (e.g., Bendapudi et al. 1996) while adding new light to these theories by accentuating an equally important role of calling in helping behavior. Moreover, we develop a new construct—SRC—and explicate its moderating role in influencing the meaningfulness of volunteer work, thereby delineating the boundary conditions for the early helping behavior theories. Second, we reveal the interesting role of SRC as a double-edged sword in influencing volunteers' work meaning. Although much CSR research has purported that CSR should be propagated and exercised in organizations, in the current paper, we raise the caveat that CSR might pose unexpectedly negative effects on employees' crafting of work meaning.

Conceptual Background

Meaningfulness of Volunteer Work

Volunteer work is “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization” (Wilson 2000, p. 215). Although it seems intuitive to assume that some meanings should be associated with any type of volunteer work, the meaningfulness of volunteer work indeed varies depending on individual idiosyncratic interpretation and evaluation of the purpose of the task as well as its relevance to self and important others, such as co-workers, customers, supervisors, or organizations (Wrzesniewski et al. 2003). In this study, meaningfulness of volunteer work is conceptualized as the employee's understanding of the purpose and significance of his/her volunteer work (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001). In the proposed model, we hypothesize that meaningfulness of volunteer work is enhanced by pride in such work and in this work as a calling.

Pride in Volunteer Work

Pride in volunteer work is conceptualized as the evaluation that an individual participates in volunteer work with

favorable status (Boezeman and Ellemers 2007; Tyler and Blader 2002), often related to the individual's view about the favorable status of his/her volunteer work group (Tyler and Blader 2003). In other words, people feel proud of the volunteer work to which they have devoted themselves due to their association with such work that offers favorable status as well as the resultant recognition and respect from others. Pride is identity-relevant information linked with employees' senses of self (Tyler et al. 1996); therefore, employees who are identified with the volunteer work that is assigned a high status are delighted and motivated to enhance their social selves via maintaining these positive social identities according to the social identity theoretical perspective (Tajfel 1978).

We expect employees with pride in their volunteer work to be more likely to perceive meanings from such work. Consistent with the model of interpersonal sense-making, which focuses on the role of cues conveyed by others in shaping the meaning employees make of their work (Wrzesniewski et al. 2003), individuals exhibiting pride in their volunteer work can derive meanings from their full-time work through the recognition from others, who acknowledge and even enhance their self-esteem in light of their favorable association with the volunteer work. The external recognition provided by others affirms the self-esteem of volunteers, who display pride in their work, conducive to their construction of meanings from the volunteer work. As such, we hypothesize:

H1 Pride in volunteer work is positively correlated with meaningfulness of such work.

Volunteer Work as a Calling

Conceptually, a calling is a rather elusive construct (Bunderson and Thompson 2009). Although the early notion of a calling was referred to as a divine inspiration for doing morally responsible work (Weber 1963), the more secularized connotation of a calling is "a transcendent summons" to a particular line of work (Duffy and Sedlacek 2007, p. 591). In this study, we adopt the neoclassical notion of calling (Bunderson and Thompson 2009) and define volunteer work as a calling as volunteer work that a person perceives as his/her purpose in life (cf. Hall and Chandler 2005).

When employees embrace volunteer work as a calling, they aspire to complete tasks on a voluntary basis to benefit society in accord with their calling orientation, which can be understood as a global and generalized perception that their work is their purpose in life (Hall and Chandler 2005). When these individuals are offered the opportunities to work voluntarily, a congruence emerges between their calling orientation and the tasks they are completing, thereby energizing their enjoyment and fulfillment of the

work. Feeling that the volunteer work is inseparable from their life (Wrzesniewski et al. 1997) with respect to the congruence, volunteers more at ease to assign both personal meaning and social significance to their voluntary work (Bunderson and Thompson 2009) and feel that their work is rewarding (Wrzesniewski et al. 1997) and meaningful (Bunderson and Thompson 2009). As such, we hypothesize:

H2 Volunteer work as a calling is positively correlated with meaningfulness of voluntary work.

Employee-Perceived SRC

Climate—the "feeling in the air" one gets from walking around an organization or "the atmosphere that employees perceive is created in their organizations" (Schneider et al. 1994, p. 18)—can be understood as shared perceptions regarding policies, procedures, and behaviors that are rewarded, supported, and expected by an organization (Schneider 1975; Schneider et al. 1992). Schneider (1975) argued that many types of work climates exist. In the current study, we develop the construct of SRC and focus on its moderating role in our proposed model.

We conceptualize SRC as employees' shared perceptions concerning organizational stakeholders' values, expectations, and practices that emphasize the responsibility of individuals as a member in society. Organizational stakeholders are individuals and groups who have vast interests in organizational activities (Maignan and Ferrell 2004). They include, but are not limited to, the company, management, work peers, and customers (Clarkson 1995).

Social responsibility climate is employees' perception of stakeholders' expected behaviors that are discretionary, are not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and promote the effective functioning of society as well as the social and psychological environment (Organ 1988). Specifically, SRC perceptions originate from cues regarding the expectations of various stakeholders (i.e., management, customers, and co-workers) related to employees' behavior. The perceived SRC helps the organization member answer such questions as "What are the appropriate decision criteria?", "Which alternative is suitable to the organization from the stakeholders' view?", and "What should I do?"

Although SRC is, by definition, a macro-level construct, the perception of SRC bears relevance to individual responses at the micro-level, such as meaning construction at work (Barnett and Vaicys 2000; Wyld and Jones 1997). In particular, we seek to investigate the contrasting effects of SRC on moderating the relationships between meaningfulness of volunteer work and its antecedents—namely, pride in such work and such work as a calling. We first

propose that SRC moderates the relationship between meaningfulness of volunteer work and pride in this work, such that the relationship is more positive with respect to a stronger SRC. As previously discussed, individuals who are proud of their volunteer work are more at ease in deriving meanings from their full-time work with respect to recognition from others who affirm and even enhance their self-esteem in light of their favorable association with the volunteer work. Since stakeholders in a high SRC favor and support socially responsible activities, SRC—by its nature—recognizes and supports employees in voluntarily contributing to the well-being of society. Therefore, SRC magnifies and even enriches the recognition that volunteering employees can experience, enhancing the process of meaning construction. As such, we hypothesize:

H3 Pride in volunteer work is positively correlated with meaningfulness of such work, such that the relationship is more positive when SRC is stronger.

Furthermore, we propose that SRC moderates the relationship between meaningfulness of volunteer work and volunteer work as a calling, such that the relationship is less positive with respect to a stronger SRC. As previously explained, volunteering employees who view volunteer work as a calling are more at ease in assigning both personal meaning and social significance to their volunteer work (Bunderson and Thompson 2009) due to the enjoyment and fulfillment of personal aspiration they acquire when they volunteer for work that benefits others. Given a strong SRC, calling—something performed for its own sake (Bellah et al. 1985) or intrinsic motivation not driven by instrumental goal-seeking (Hall and Chandler 2005)—may be thwarted according to cognitive evaluation theory (CET) (Deci and Ryan 1985). Specifically, calling as an intrinsic motivation may be undermined due to the controlling aspect of organizational stakeholders' expectations, who emphasize the responsibility of individuals as a member in society as characterized in a strong SRC. In other words, these expectations may exert undue pressures on the behaviors of the volunteering employees, causing stress and reducing their intention to stay with the job (Bolino et al. 2010), ultimately dampening the positive relationship between volunteer work as a calling and the meaningfulness of such work:

H4 Volunteer work as a calling is positively correlated with meaningfulness of such work, such that the relationship is less positive when SRC is stronger.

Method

This study is part of a larger online survey. The respondents for the survey were recruited from a national panel

organized by a commercial research agent (Zoomerang). The panel comprises salespeople involved in business-to-business selling from across the United States. We selected industrial salespeople for our sample because they are often given a high level of flexibility in managing their work schedule. Hence, compared with employees in back office positions, salespeople have more autonomy in allocating their time for work and non-work matters, including volunteer work. Panel members were e-mailed an invitation to participate in the study. The invitation letter included a hyperlink to the survey web site. Each respondent could take the survey only one time. The commercial agent hosted and managed the online survey.

Sample

A total of 304 respondents completed our questionnaire online. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents came from large firms with over 250 employees. Thirty-five percent worked in the wholesale and retailing sector while 10 % were in the manufacturing sector; the remaining respondents were engaged in the service industry (e.g., banks and financial institutions). Our respondents in general possessed an average of 9.13 years of work experience with their current employers. The long working experience with existing employers had enabled them to develop adequate observations and in-depth understandings of the attitude of various stakeholders of their companies toward social responsibility. Twenty-four percent of respondents were between 25 and 35 years old, while 44 % were over 45 years old. Seventy-three percent had completed their tertiary education. More females (58 %) than males comprised the sample. To control for any possible confounding influence, these demographic factors were included in the subsequent analysis as control variables. All these control variables were found to be non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Measurements

All measurement items were adapted from the existing literature. Participants indicated their responses on Likert-type scales (1-strongly disagree; 7-strongly agree). Measures of meaningfulness of volunteer work (5 items; composite reliability = 0.97) and volunteer work as a calling (6 items; composite reliability = 0.95) developed by Bunderson and Thompson (2009) were adopted in the survey questionnaire. Pride in volunteer work was measured by three items (composite reliability = 0.88) adapted from Boezeman and Ellemers (2008). Employee-perceived SRC was assessed using a 12-item scale adapted from Wagner et al. (2009); items in this scale captured respondents' perceptions of the attitude of their various stakeholders (company, management,

Table 1 Measurement items

Item description	Standardized loading	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability
Meaningfulness of volunteer work		0.87	0.97
The voluntary work that I do is important.	0.91		
I have a meaningful job.	0.89		
The voluntary work that I do makes the world a better place.	0.95		
What I do at voluntary work makes a difference in the community/industry.	0.95		
The voluntary work that I do is meaningful.	0.96		
Employee-perceived social responsibility climate		0.69	0.96
In my opinion my organization is socially responsible	0.83		
In my opinion my organization is genuinely concerned to improve the well-being of society	0.87		
In my opinion my organization follows high ethical standards	0.86		
In my opinion the management of my organization is socially responsible	0.92		
In my opinion the management of my organization is genuinely concerned to improve the well-being of society	0.91		
In my opinion the management of my organization follows high ethical standards	0.88		
In my opinion the employees of my organization in general is socially responsible	0.82		
In my opinion the employees of my organization in general is genuinely concerned to improve the well-being of society	0.80		
In my opinion the employees of my organization in general follows high ethical standards	0.80		
In my opinion the customers of my organization is socially responsible	0.74		
In my opinion the customers of my organization is genuinely concerned to improve the well-being of society	0.77		
In my opinion the customers of my organization follows high ethical standards	0.73		
Volunteer work as a calling		0.76	0.95
The voluntary work I do feels like my calling in life.	0.91		
It sometimes feels like I was destined to do the voluntary work I do.	0.93		
The voluntary work I do feels like my niche in life.	0.95		
I am definitely the sort of person who fits in my line of voluntary work.	0.88		
My passion for the voluntary work I do goes back to my childhood.	0.64		
I was meant to do the voluntary work I do.	0.89		
Pride in volunteer work		0.72	0.88
I feel respected as a volunteer	0.85		
I am proud to be a volunteer with a charitable cause.	0.96		
I feel good when people describe me as a typical volunteer.	0.72		

customers, and work peers) toward social responsibility (composite reliability = 0.96).

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed. The results indicated an acceptable fit of the measurement model (CFI = 0.93; NNFI = 0.93; $\chi^2 = 2149.62$, $df = 293$, $p < 0.001$). All coefficient loadings (λ) were significant ($p < 0.001$) and larger than 0.64, indicating that all explained more than 64 % of the variance in their observable measures (see Table 1). Convergent validity of the constructs was demonstrated. The average variance extracted from each construct (0.69 to 0.87) was larger than the square of any inter-construct correlation (ϕ^2), thereby

demonstrating discriminant validity of the measurement model (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Common Method Variance

To verify the possibility of common method variance, a principal components analysis was performed on all 111 items in the larger questionnaire following a procedure for the one-factor test. The first component (without rotation) captured only 30.98 % of the variance. Although the first component in our one-factor analysis was not a dominant variable, suggesting that common method seemed not to be

of significance in this study, we were unable to eliminate the possibility of common method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Therefore, we followed the practice of Griffith and Lusch (2007) and used a proxy variable based on the suggestion of Lindell and Whitney (2001) to control for possible method variance in the regression analysis.

Results

To test our hypotheses of the direct influences of calling and pride on the meaningfulness of volunteer work as well as the moderating effects of the perceived SRC, a moderated hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. Measurement items were aggregated to form composite variables for inclusion in the analysis. Specifically, demographic variables were first included together with the proxy variable for common method variance as control variables, followed by the main effects, and finally the interaction terms. All independent variables were mean-centered to eliminate possible multicollinearity problems (Aiken and West 1991). Descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations are reported in Table 2.

Main Effects

Results of regression analysis showed that the main effects of employee-perceived SRC and all control variables were non-significant ($p > 0.10$). Hypothesis 1 suggested that viewing volunteer work as a calling generates personal meanings for one's voluntary work. Based on our data, a significant positive main effect of calling on meaningfulness was shown as predicted ($b = 0.41$; $t = 9.52$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, our first hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that a sense of pride will enrich the meaningfulness of the volunteer work. As expected, a significant positive main effect of pride on the meaningfulness of volunteer work was found ($b = 0.55$; $t = 10.51$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, the second hypothesis was also supported.

Interaction Effects

Testing hypotheses H3 and H4 involved the examination of the interaction effects between predictor variables and the criterion variable. The block of two-way and three-way interaction variables was entered into the regression analysis for testing the moderation effects of perceived SRC on the relationships between the meaningfulness of volunteer work and calling as well as pride. The final model explains significantly more R-square ($R^2 = 0.69$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.68$; $R^2 = 0.02$, F change (4,291) = 5.52, $p < 0.001$) in addition to the main effects in the previous model

($R^2 = 0.67$). This finding indicated that the interaction terms together significantly accounted for the variation of the outcome variable. The results of the final model are displayed in Table 3.

After the inclusion of the block of interaction terms, the main effects of calling ($b = 0.40$; $t = 8.97$; $p < 0.001$) and pride ($b = 0.55$; $t = 10.51$; $p < 0.001$) remained positive and significant. Meanwhile, the main effects of employee-perceived SRC and all control variables were non-significant ($p > 0.10$), as in previous model. The three-way interaction variable (SRC \times VWC \times PVW) and the interaction between calling and pride (VWC \times PVW) were non-significant as well ($p > 0.10$).

Hypothesis 3 suggested that employee-perceived SRC strengthened the effect of pride on the meaningfulness of volunteer work. As predicted, the analysis reported a positive and significant coefficient of the interaction variable ($b_{\text{SRC} \times \text{PVW}} = 0.08$, $t = 2.66$, $p < 0.01$). To interpret this significant interaction effect, a simple slope analysis was conducted (Aiken and West 1991). The findings revealed that, whereas the effect of pride in volunteer work was positive and significant across salespeople in both high and low SRCs, its magnitude of influence in a high SRC (at +1 SD: $sb = 0.65$; $t = 8.88$; $p < 0.001$) was much stronger than that in a low SRC (at -1 SD: $sb = 0.45$; $t = 8.26$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, hypothesis H3 was fully supported.

Hypothesis 4 posited that employee-perceived SRC attenuates the effect of calling on the meaningfulness of volunteer work. Results revealed consistent findings to support this hypothesis. The interaction term was found to be negative and significant ($b_{\text{SRC} \times \text{VWC}} = -0.11$, $t = -3.64$, $p < 0.001$). A followup simple slope analysis showed that the effect of calling on salespeople was significant in low SRCs (at -1 SD: $sb = 0.53$, $t = 9.95$, $p < 0.001$) but was weakened when the perception of climate among salespeople increased (at +1 SD: $sb = 0.26$; $t = 4.21$; $p < 0.001$). These findings demonstrated that the positive effect of personal calling was contingent upon a low SRC, thereby supporting hypothesis 4.

Discussion

Given the preponderance of urges for CSR initiatives across the corporate landscape (e.g., Bhattacharya et al. 2009), a correspondingly escalating demand has emerged for volunteers who devote themselves altruistically to these initiatives (Muthuri et al. 2009). As unpaid labor without any obligations (Pearce 1993), these volunteers are sometimes hard to recruit and may lack the motivation to stay with the volunteer tasks. Our research has sought to understand how to promote meanings of their volunteer work (Wrzenski and Dutton 2001) to enhance their

Table 2 Correlations and descriptive statistics

	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Meaningfulness of volunteer work	4.99	1.40	1.00											
2. Age	3.12	0.92	0.03	1.00										
3. Sex	1.59	0.49	-0.07	-0.10	1.00									
4. Education attainment	1.86	0.59	0.03	-0.04	-0.09	1.00								
5. Work experience with the employer	9.13	8.23	0.02	0.31	-0.11	-0.00	1.00							
6. Proxy variable	3.12	1.65	0.19	0.12	-0.04	-0.09	0.13	1.00						
7. Employee-perceived social responsibility climate (SRC) ^a	4.63	1.28	0.30	0.02	-0.03	-0.03	0.08	0.66	1.00					
8. Volunteer work as a calling (VWC) ^a	4.24	1.38	0.71	-0.08	-0.06	0.05	0.00	0.16	0.26	1.00				
9. Pride in volunteer work (PVW) ^a	5.20	1.27	0.74	0.03	-0.03	-0.03	0.02	0.29	0.36	0.60	1.00			
10. SRC × VWC	0.44	2.10	-0.16	-0.08	-0.07	0.09	-0.07	-0.00	-0.01	-0.04	-0.06	1.00		
11. SRC × PVW	0.56	2.16	-0.15	-0.04	-0.02	0.15	-0.07	-0.05	-0.02	-0.05	-0.25	0.62	1.00	
12. VWC × PVW	1.04	2.48	-0.32	0.01	-0.03	0.05	0.01	-0.00	-0.05	-0.15	-0.35	0.41	0.37	1.00
13. SRC × VWC × PVW	-0.15	5.66	0.37	0.04	-0.01	-0.15	-0.01	0.30	0.44	0.33	0.36	-0.34	-0.44	-0.44

^a These variables were mean-centered in regression analyses; correlations ≥ 0.10 are significant at $p < 0.05$; correlations ≥ 0.15 are significant at $p < 0.01$; All other correlations are non-significant; $n = 304$

motivation to improve these CSR endeavors. In this research, we empirically substantiated the relationships between meaningfulness of volunteer work and its antecedents—namely, pride in volunteer work and volunteer work as a calling. In addition, we demonstrated that a firm’s SRC is a double-edged sword with respect to its intriguing pattern of effects on the aforementioned relationships: SRC strengthens the relationship between pride and volunteer work meanings, yet weakens the relationship between calling and volunteer work meanings.

Theoretical Contributions

Although previous research has established the importance of meaning of work to employees (e.g., Wrzesniewski et al. 2003), the bulk of extant literature primarily focuses on paid employees. Little research, if any, has ever investigated the segment of volunteer workers. Virtually, no theoretical framework has been developed to explicitly unveil the enhancement factors for the meaning of volunteer work. Our poor understanding in this regard hampers the endeavor of organizations in terms of recruitment and motivation reinforcement of volunteer workers (Hall et al. 2005). Since volunteer work is not compensated by monetary or tangible rewards, psychological fulfillment with enriched work meaning is considered as the omnipotent element in rewarding and adding fuel to the volunteer workers. When an organization is incapable to create and sustain the meaning of their work mission to their volunteer workers, the organization might hardly maintain the enthusiasm of their volunteer workers and solicit their continuous support. This research fills our knowledge void and sets forth two major contributions to the literature of volunteerism and business ethics.

First, this study offers probably the first theoretical model portraying the synergetic effects of pride, calling, and employee-perceived SRC on the enhancement of meaningfulness of volunteer work. These constructs are under-explored in the business ethics domain (e.g., Dik and Duffy 2009; Fock et al. 2010; Kuchinke et al. 2009) but were theoretically and empirically demonstrated to be highly relevant to the motivation of volunteer workers in our research. Our findings supplement early helping behavior theories which concluded that volunteer behaviors are outcomes of the appeal message and the egolistic and altruistic motivations of individuals (Bendapudi et al. 1996). Findings of our study (H1) on one hand, corroborate the role of egolistic motivation in volunteer behavior; on the other hand, they (H2) reveal another under-researched motivation to volunteer behaviors, calling. Furthermore, our findings of the double-edged effect of SRC (H3 and H4) add to the extant helping behavior theories a

Table 3 Results of regression analyses

Dependent variables	Meaning of voluntary work	
	Unstandardized coefficient	t-value
Constant	5.14***	14.25
Control variables		
Age	0.07	1.26
Gender	-0.11	-1.17
Education	0.06	0.72
Experience with the employer	-0.00	-0.21
Proxy variable	-0.05	-1.11
Independent variables		
Employee-perceived social responsibility climate (SRC)	0.04	0.74
Volunteer work as a calling (VWC)	0.40***	8.97
Pride in volunteer work (PVW)	0.55***	10.51
Interaction Variables		
SRC × VWC	-0.11***	-3.64
SRC × PVW	0.08**	2.66
VWC × PVW	-0.03	-1.25
SRC × VWC × PVW	0.01	0.72
R^2	0.69	
Adjusted R^2	0.68	
Overall F	54.65***	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$;
 *** $p < 0.001$; All coefficients
 are non-standardized; No
 VIF > 2.20; $n = 304$

contingency factor in promoting the meaningfulness of volunteer work.

Second, in response to the call for more research examining the *undesirable* effects of climate perceptions (Martin and Cullen 2006), we provided an interesting anatomy of how employee-perceived SRC can be a double-edged sword in terms of affecting the volunteering employee's work meaning construction *both* positively and negatively. While most researchers will view a SRC in positive light and ennoble its supremacy in driving positive organizational outcomes, we assert that, under certain conditions, a SRC may exert an unexpectedly detrimental effect on the employee's crafting of work meanings. In empirically testing our model, we advance the CSR literature by painting a more realistic depiction of the complexities of the contrasting effects of SRC on perceptions of meanings of work in a volunteering context.

Managerial Implications

Based on the findings from the current study, we consider pride and calling to be of value in promoting volunteers' assignment of meanings to their volunteer work, thereby helping them sustain the motivation to stay with the tasks. In accordance with theoretical reasoning and empirical testing, we suggest that organizations seeking to further their CSR initiatives and effectively promote volunteer

programs should consider inducing pride and calling among their volunteer employees.

For example, organizations can induce pride in volunteer work by hosting meetings in which employees contributing to volunteer efforts are publicly recognized and rewarded. Volunteers who devote an exceptional amount of time to charity causes may be awarded badges and certificates to strengthen their associations with the volunteer work, which is conducive to feelings of pride and thus meaningfulness perceptions of their volunteer work.

Meanwhile, calling is intrinsic motivation (Hall and Chandler 2005) that hinges on how an individual interprets his/her purpose in life. Although it is challenging to inspire a sense of calling within the individual, allocating a mentor (Murray 2003) to help him/her align his/her personal values with the volunteer task (Gardner et al. 2001) might be effective in triggering or promoting the feelings that working voluntarily is a calling.

In addition, we discovered that an organization's SRC can act as a double-edged sword in terms of augmenting and attenuating volunteer work meanings. It is understandable that this interesting finding may perplex organizations that seek to nurture an SRC with respect to fostering meaningfulness perceptions among their volunteer employees. We recommend that organizations should first scrutinize the backgrounds of their employees to evaluate whether the majority of them are dominated by

pride or calling perceptions—if the former is the case, an SRC is justified; if the latter is the case, the organization is advised not to over-sell CSR to the employees. Most importantly, supervisors and managers are encouraged to maintain high quality dyadic relationships with their subordinate employees to gain a good understanding of employees' genuine aspirations for volunteer work, so that they can customize their strategies in enhancing meaning perceptions of their volunteer subordinates.

Limitations and Future Research

As with every study, it is important to recognize the limitations associated with the current investigation. First, the data were cross-sectional self-reports; thus, the findings of the study were susceptible to the threats of common method variance. Although we were not able to totally eliminate the threats of method variance (Podsakoff et al. 2003), we followed Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) suggestion to promise response anonymity, along with undertaking suggestions by Griffith and Lusch (2007) and Lindell and Whitney (2001) to control for possible method variance in the regression analysis. Second, although we endeavored to investigate a series of theoretically sound and intriguing hypotheses, we realize that other variables are worthy of investigation in the realm of volunteers' feelings of work meanings. Finally, the sample for our study limits the generalization of the findings. Future research should consider adopting a different cultural lens through which volunteers' work meanings are fostered in line with the growth of cross-cultural studies examining ethical issues (Cullen et al. 2004).

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