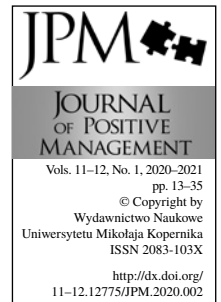


# CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT, AND WORK ENGAGEMENT: A MEDIATED MODERATOR MODEL

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of this study is to test for moderating role of corporate volunteering in relationships between perceived supervisor support, positive relationships at work, work meaningfulness, and work engagement.

**Methodology/approach:** The study is based on a survey conducted on a sample of 724 Polish employees, both involved and non-involved in corporate volunteering.

**Findings:** Results of the study suggest that employee participation in corporate volunteering moderates the link between positive relationships at work and work engagement, and the link between perceived supervisor support and work engagement mediated by positive relationships at work.

**Implications:** Results of the study are consistent with previous studies, which have been proved theoretically by the conservation of resources theory (COR) and self-determination theory (SDT). Besides, the findings deliver practical implications. Companies are recommended to design employee-friendly volunteering activities to meet employee needs, and attract those employees who have never participated in volunteering.

**Originality/value:** The study explains the effects of corporate volunteering. It also contributes to the field of organizational behaviors by arguing for the direct and indirect positive relationships between perceived supervisor support and work engagement.

**Keywords:** corporate volunteering, affective commitment, work engagement, positive relationships at work

**Paper type:** Research paper

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## 1. Introduction

Volunteering is a way to spend time and use skills for a specific beneficiary (Rodell, 2013). One form of volunteering that has recently experienced a growing trend is corporate volunteering (Wilson, 2012), which is a channel

through which organizations show their care and compassion for beneficiaries (Glavas and Kelly, 2014). More specifically, employees in the organization are encouraged and supported by employers to do volunteer activities via corporate volunteering programs (Kotler and Lee, 2005) that allow them to show their knowledge and/or relevant skills to the community during office hours, as a part of organizational community service, outreach, or corporate social responsibility activities (de Gilder et al., 2005). In addition to the positive influence that corporate volunteering has on the organization, employees can also benefit from volunteering activities (e.g., improving their morale and skills) (Basil et al., 2009). Accordingly, the advantages of corporate volunteering can be gained by both employers (organizational level) and employees (individual level), which has attracted the growing interest of researchers (Boštjančič et al., 2018).

As corporate volunteering is an activity between leisure and work, some papers (e.g., Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019) propose that the theory of organizational psychology might be helpful in understanding such issues. For example, some papers advance the idea that the participation of corporate volunteering is positively associated with employee satisfaction (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000), work meaningfulness (Rodell, 2013), work engagement (Glavas and Piderit, 2009), and working relationships (Boštjančič et al., 2018; Glińska-Neweś et al., 2019). Additionally, as a positive work-related psychological “state of fulfillment”, work engagement differentiates, but incorporates, various facets of organizational commitment, job involvement, and psychological empowerment (Swanberg et al., 2011). It is meaningful to focus on such concept, as the engaged employees are highly motivated and energized by their work, that could positively influence the profitability and productivity of the organization (Harter et al., 2002), as well as the customer satisfaction and loyalty (Salanova et al., 2005).

While there is a growing body of literature researching the relationship between corporate volunteering and relevant workplace variables (e.g., de Gilder et al., 2005; Glińska-Neweś et al., 2019), we still lack knowledge on the psychological mechanisms behind the process and its outcomes (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). Grant (2012) also mentioned that “Despite the importance of the sustained participation of employees in corporate volunteering programs, surprisingly little research has examined the factors that affect it.” To the best of my knowledge, no such study explores the effects that corporate volunteering has on these variables (i.e., perceived supervisor support, work meaningfulness, positive relationships at work, and work engagement) in Poland.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to test whether corporate volunteering moderates the links between perceived supervisor support, positive relationships at work, work meaningfulness and work engagement. We expect that the study may contribute empirical evidence to explain the effects of corporate volunteering. It also contributes to the field of organizational behaviors by arguing for a direct

and indirect positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and work engagement. The structure of this paper is as follows: the theoretical background of these relations is examined first, as well as the related hypotheses of the model. The methodology and empirical results are then shown, followed by a discussion and the implications of the study.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Work engagement

The definition of work engagement can be traced back to the paper of Kahn (1990) that described it as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” Then, there are two definitions of work engagement that are common for most scholars, and that are conceptualized based on two different but related schools of thought (Suan and Nasurdin, 2016). The first describes work engagement as a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind, that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior, and that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Specifically, according to their explanations, vigor means always keeping high levels of energy and mental resilience during work, dedication is “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge”, and absorption could be explained as being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in work. The second similar definition of work engagement is from Leiter and Bakker (2010), is that it is “a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being” and should include three points: (a) feeling compelled to strive toward achieving challenging goals, (b) enthusiastically applying personal energy to work, and (c) being intensely involved in work to the point of experiencing flow (Csikszent-Mihalyi, 1990).

### 2.2 Antecedents of work engagement

**Perceived supervisor support.** Some papers (Kottke and Sharafinski, 1988; Eisenberger et al., 2002) have indicated that the employee would develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which their supervisors care about their contribution and well-being, which is known as “perceived supervisor support.” Burke et al. (1992) proposed that supervisor support is the degree to which employees perceive that the supervisor offers employees support, encouragement and concern. As a kind of job resource, perceived supervisor support could be explained by the job demands–resources model (JD-R), which suggests that work engagement could be seen as the result or consequence of job resources and job demand (Demerouti et al., 2007). Job resources are the organizational, physical

or social aspects of a job that could be helpful in achieving work goals (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; De Beer et al., 2012), and job demand means those aspects of a job that require sustained efforts and are related to physiological and/or psychological costs (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; van Woerkom et al., 2016). We hypothesize:

***H1:** There is a positive relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and work engagement (WE).*

**Positive relationships at work.** A connection is a dynamic and living tissue that exists in our daily life and working environment, when two people have communication that involves mutual awareness and social interaction (Berscheid and Lopes, 1997; Dutton and Heaphy, 2003). In other words, a connection results from an encounter between dyadic parties, which could be brief, short-term, or enduring (Ferris et al., 2009). Understanding the power of connection, it is necessarily critical to understand the power of high-quality and low-quality connections (Dutton and Heaphy, 2003). According to previous research (Hallowell, 1999; Gersick et al., 2000), high-quality connection at work significantly influences the achievements of both individual and organizational outcomes, regardless of whether the connection is only five minutes long or long-lasting, and could to some degree make people thrive at work. However, a low-quality, toxic connection would have a damaging emotional and psychological toll on individuals in work organizations (Williams and Dutton, 1999; Frost, 2003); as Dutton (2003) explained in the paper: “Corrosive connections are like black holes: they absorb all of the light in the system and give back nothing in return.” Looking at high-quality connection in more detail, it has three features between two people (Dutton and Heaphy, 2003): high emotional carrying capacity (i.e., a connection can bear the expression of more positive or negative emotions thanks to the sense of safety it engenders); tensility (i.e., better resilience to respond to conflicts and accommodate changes in distinct conditions); and degree of connectivity (i.e., open possibilities for action and creativity via building expansive emotional spaces). Empirically, Dutton and Heaphy (2003) also indicated that high-quality connection could help people judge whether they are in a healthy relationship. Spreitzer et al. (2005) suggested a model of thriving at work that includes interactions between related resources (i.e., high-quality interpersonal relationships) and thriving (i.e., experienced vitality and learning at work). Furthermore, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) also advanced the idea that highly engaged workers have been suggested to be more active in seeking out support from supervisors and coworkers thanks to the maintenance of reciprocal relationships. We hypothesize:

*H2: There is a positive relationship between positive relationships at work (PRW) and work engagement (WE).*

*H3: Positive relationships at work (PRW) mediate the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and work engagement (WE).*

**Work meaningfulness.** Spreitzer (1995) proposed that work meaningfulness is the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards, and involves a fit between the requirements of a work role and beliefs, values, and behaviors. Furthermore, some papers (Aryee et al., 2012; Scroggins, 2008) would try to explain the relationship between work meaningfulness and work engagement in the self-concept theory. In detail, experienced work meaningfulness is usually associated with increased levels of work motivation and, therefore, leads to increased levels of work engagement (Mostafa and Abed El-Motalib, 2020). Furthermore, based on Hackman and Oldham's (1975) work on employee psychological states, and findings from Kahn (1990) and May et al. (2004), they also argue that work meaningfulness is the psychological condition with the strongest effect on employee work engagement. In line with these papers, Macey et al. (2009) argue that "People come to work for pay but get engaged at work because the work they do is meaningful." Wang and Xu (2017) also propose that meaningfulness also helps satisfy some basic psychological needs (e.g., the need for belongingness and purposefulness), which could further promote work engagement.

Empirical evidence could prove the relationship between work meaningfulness and certain variables, such as positive relationships at work, organizational context, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, affective commitment and job performance (Wrzesniewski, 2003; Peng et al., 2016; Frieder, Wang and Oh, 2018; Allan et al., 2018; Tummers and Knies, 2003; Allan et al., 2018). Although papers only rarely focus on the direct relationship between perceived supervisor support and work meaningfulness, some papers (e.g., Aquino et al., 1999; Baker and Dutton, 2007) propose that perceived supervisor support would influence work relationships among employees and managers, which could indirectly influence work meaningfulness. Furthermore, according to the job characteristics theory advanced by Hackman and Oldham (1975), job dimensions create and foster psychological states and lead to work outcomes, which implies a possible connection between perceived supervisor support and work meaningfulness. In addition, Rosso et al. (2010) suggest that the meaningfulness of work is also socially constructed, although it is ultimately determined by the individual. For example, supervisors and organizations could influence how their employees experience their work (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). Lee and Lee (2019) proposed the

empirical evidence of Korean industries to make explicit the positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and work meaningfulness. We hypothesize:

**H4:** *Work meaningfulness (WM) mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and work engagement (WE).*

**H5:** *Work meaningfulness (WM) mediates the relationship between positive relationships at work (PRW) and work engagement (WE).*

### **2.3. The moderating role of corporate volunteering**

Previous research (e.g., Rodell et al., 2016; Boštjančič et al., 2018) has shown that employee participation in their volunteering activities has positive outcomes at both individual (e.g., personal outcomes) and organizational levels (e.g., job performance, external recognition of the organization, etc.). For this study, it is argued that corporate volunteering would influence perceived supervisor support (Boštjančič et al., 2018), positive relationships at work (Benevene et al., 2018; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019), and work engagement (Glavas and Piderit, 2009).

More specifically, previous studies (e.g., Grant, 2012; Rodell, 2013) researching what job characteristics are associated with employee volunteering, and/or what effects they have, have suggested that individuals are more likely to participate in corporate volunteering activities when they perceive their work to be meaningful and important. Do Paço et al. (2013) also propose that corporate volunteering could enhance employees' competence through providing opportunities for them to learn and practice more skills, such as teamwork, leadership and interpersonal communication. In response, Allen (2013) explains that employees who have personal needs could be more satisfied and more engaged in their work if they participated in corporate volunteering programs. Furthermore, Boštjančič et al. (2018) empirically propose a positive relationship between corporate volunteering and job resources (e.g., perceived supervisor support), which implies that employees who participate more in volunteering programs would receive more job resources (autonomy and support) from other employees or supervisors in the organization.

Considering this, we hypothesize that:

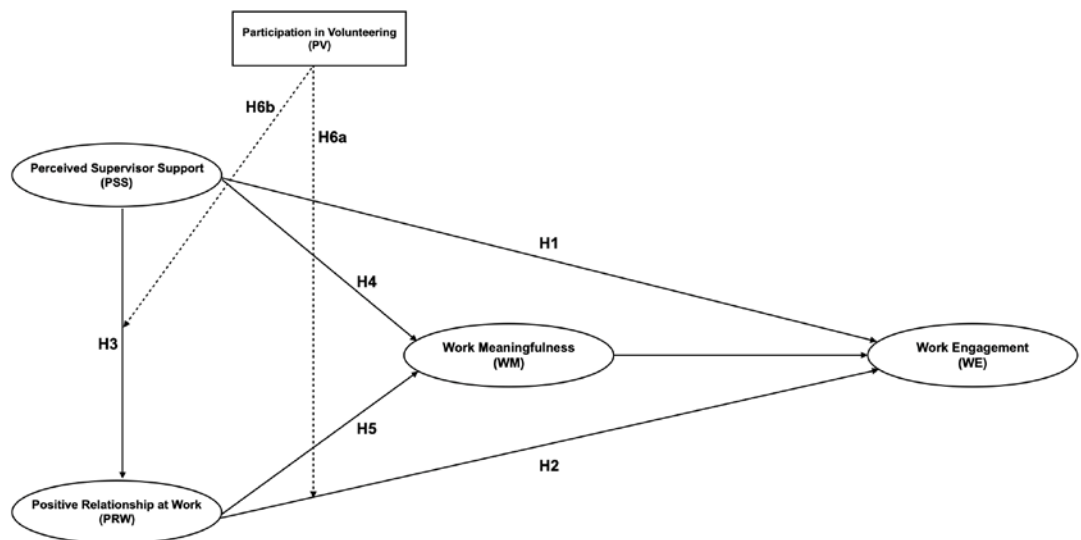
**H6:** *Participation in volunteering moderates the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS), positive relationships at work (PRW), and work engagement (WE):*

**H6a:** *Participation in volunteering moderates the positive relationship between positive relationships at work (PRW) and work engagement (WE) in*

a way that for volunteering employees the effect is stronger than for non-volunteering employees.

**H6b:** Participation in volunteering moderates the positive relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and work engagement (WE) via positive relationships at work (PRW) in a way that for volunteering employees the effect is stronger than for non-volunteering employees.

Figure 1 presents our overall conceptual model.



**Figure 1.**  
Conceptual model

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sample data and collection

The research data was collected from April to June of 2020 via online self-completion questionnaire. The subject of this study is to research employees from organizations located in Poland that offer corporate volunteer programs. To meet this research objective, we selected companies from the ranking list on the Responsible Business Forum (Responsible Business Forum, 2019). Among these companies, four selected companies agreed to accept our academic invitation to provide us data by sending questionnaires to their employees. We then randomly selected about 900 samples for empirical analysis. Finally, approximately 750

respondents across the four companies completed the questionnaire, 724 of which were from the same company in the banking sector. Thus, we choose this company for analysis, as that company collected the most questionnaires of the four companies, about 73.7% of total questionnaires. As to the features of collected data, we could find females (78.5%) had a higher response rate than males (21.5%), and ages ranged mostly between 31 and 45, and especially between 36 and 40 years (22.4%). Over half of employees had no experience in corporate volunteering (58.8%). For more details of demographic characteristics, see Table 1.

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage (Valid sample = 724)</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Female	78.5%
	Male	21.5%
<b>Age</b>	Less than 26	5.4%
	26–30	12.1%
	31–35	14.5%
	36–40	22.4%
	41–45	16.9%
	46–50	10.7%
	More than 50	17.9%
<b>Tenure</b>	Less than 11 years	51.2%
	11–20 years	29.7%
	21–30 years	13.5%
	31–40 years	4.6%
	More than 40 years	1.0%
<b>Position</b>	Manager	25.1%
	Non-manager	74.9%
<b>Household</b>	Single	14.5%
	Household without children	24.5%
	Household with children	61.0%
<b>Participation in Volunteering</b>	Do Volunteering	41.2%
	No Volunteering	58.8%

**Table 1.**  
Demographics of the  
respondents



### 3.2. Measures

Measurements of all variables in the proposed model were adopted and developed on the basis of existing variables established in previous studies. Perceived supervisor support and work engagement were measured with a 7-point Likert-type scale. Positive relationships at work and work meaningfulness were measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale.

**Perceived supervisor support** was measured by the 8-item scale of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). Sample items include “The supervisor values my contribution to organizational well-being” and “The supervisor really cares about my well-being.”

**Positive relationships at work** were measured by the 7-item scale of Carmeli (2009), with sample items “I feel that my co-workers like me” and “We are committed to one another at work.”

**Work meaningfulness** was measured with the 10-item scale of Steger, Dirk and Duffy (2012), namely the “Work as meaning inventory” (WAMI) scale. Sample items include “I have a good sense of what makes my job meaningful” and “I have discovered work that has a satisfying purpose.”

**Work engagement** was measured by the 9-item scale of Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) that classifies scales in three categories: the vigor scale, the dedication scale and the absorption scale, with sample items: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” and “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.”

For the measurements of **employee participation in volunteering**, this paper would also categorize employee participation in volunteering into only two groups by combining the measurements mentioned above in order to find the potential correlations when we compare whether employees engage in corporate volunteering activities or not. More specifically, the first group, called “Do PV”, includes all volunteering activities participated in by employees, whether inside the company or outside. The second group, called “No PV”, represents those employees who do not participate in any volunteering activities.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

This study mainly uses structural equation modeling (SEM) in Mplus 8.3 to test the hypotheses. There are three main steps. The first step is to do confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the convergent and discriminant validity and reliability of sample data. Then, the second step is to analyze the multiple mediation effects in a bootstrapping approach (5,000 bootstrapping samples) (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Finally, the third step is to test the conditional indirect effects (moderated mediation) in a bootstrapping approach (5,000 bootstrapping samples). In addition, considering the potential bias caused by the cross-sectional study, we also test the common method variance (CMV) in Harmon’s single factor analysis (Kushwaha and Agrawal, 2015), in order to prove that the result will not

be affected by CMV. The test results of each stage are presented in the next part, as well as model fit indices, such as The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the RMSEA measure (Byrne, 2010).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 *Confirmatory factor analysis*

We test the reliability and validity of our model by conducting confirmatory factor analysis (Anderson and Garbing, 1988). Our model fit indicates that our model fits the data well. More specifically, the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) are above 0.90 (0.978 and 0.973, respectively), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) are both significantly below 0.08 (0.051 and 0.032, respectively) (Iacobucci, 2010).

Table 2 shows the results of the convergent validity test and the reliability test. Our result of all items is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), and all standardized factor loadings are above 0.6. The purpose of convergent validity is to test whether the measurement's factor loadings are all significant (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), and what the level of items' intercorrelatedness is (Cunningham et al., 2001). Furthermore, in our model the results of average variance extracted (AVE), which represents the average interpretability of latent variables to their items, are all satisfactory (0.703, 0.703, 0.670, and 0.646), all being larger than 0.50 (Hair et al., 1998). The results of Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) (0.876, 0.902, 0.888, and 0.878) and composite reliability (CR) (0.876, 0.904, 0.890, and 0.879), which test internal consistency and construct reliability, are also satisfactory; according to previous studies (Nunnally, 1978; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), they are all above recommended values (Cronbach's alpha: 0.7; CR: 0.6).

Table 3 shows the result of discriminant validity test to prove that the correlations between latent variables are less than the internal correlations of these variables. Fornell and Larcker (1981) advanced that each correlation between any two latent variables should be less than its square root of AVE. Thus, our model passed the test.

The potential threat of common method variance is tested by Harmon's single factor test in SPSS, which is commonly used in many papers (e.g., Kushwaha and Agrawal, 2015; Singh and Verma, 2019). Based on the assumption mentioned in the paper of Podsakoff and colleagues (2003), common method variance is a serious problem when a single latent factor will account for more than 50% of the total variance of the measures. In this result, there is only one individual factor (42.003%) in our data, which means this factor could only explain 54.560% total variance. Thus, we concluded that the Common Method Bias will not influence our findings. Additionally, the inner VIF values has been checked by SPSS in

this study, in order to examine the existence of multicollinearity (Kock and Lynn, 2012). After test, VIF values are all less than 3.3, that means multicollinearity is not a concern of our study.

Dimension	Item	Unstd.	S.E.	Z	P-value	Std	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
PSS	PSS1	1.000				0.828	0.876	0.876	0.703
	PSS6	0.995	0.042	23.848	0.000	0.814			
	PSS8	1.057	0.042	24.890	0.000	0.872			
PRW	PRW1	1.000				0.773	0.902	0.904	0.703
	PRW2	1.269	0.053	23.967	0.000	0.836			
	PRW3	1.359	0.051	26.428	0.000	0.912			
	PRW4	1.247	0.053	23.437	0.000	0.825			
WM	WM1	1.000				0.798	0.888	0.890	0.670
	WM4	1.059	0.045	23.494	0.000	0.803			
	WM5	1.328	0.052	25.593	0.000	0.887			
	WM6	1.164	0.052	22.383	0.000	0.782			
WE	WE4	1.000				0.784	0.878	0.879	0.646
	WE6	0.907	0.044	20.710	0.000	0.746			
	WE7	1.138	0.047	24.381	0.000	0.877			
	WE8	0.970	0.043	22.345	0.000	0.802			

**Table 2.** CFA analysis (Convergent Validity & Reliability test)

Note: See text for abbreviations.

	Mean	SD	AVE	PSS	PRW	WM	WE
<b>PSS</b>	4.460	1.424	0.703	<b>0.838</b>			
<b>PRW</b>	3.900	0.799	0.703	0.462	<b>0.838</b>		
<b>WM</b>	3.944	0.887	0.670	0.540	0.484	<b>0.819</b>	
<b>WE</b>	4.935	1.140	0.646	0.502	0.404	0.771	<b>0.804</b>

**Table 3.** CFA analysis (Discriminant Validity)

Note: See text for abbreviations. Diagonal elements are the square root of AVE.

#### 4.2 Moderated mediation analysis (SEM model)

The moderation and mediation in this paper would be estimated via bootstrap method (5,000 times), which is a good non-parametric method to estimate indirect effects (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

Firstly, we tested the direct (H1&H2) and indirect (mediation) relationships (H3–H5) between the constructs (Table 4). Model fit indices show a good fit between the data and the proposed model ( $\chi^2=239.444$ ;  $\chi^2/df=2.85$ ; CFI=0.978; TLI=0.973; RMSEA=0.051; SRMR=0.032) (Iacobucci, 2010). Hypothesis 2 (p-value=0.836) and Hypothesis 3 (p-value=0.837) are not supported, but Hypotheses 1, 4 and 5 are supported. The R-square of work engagement (WE) is 0.604 (60.4%), which is the moderate level suggested by Chin (1998). This means that the covariance of AC could be explained approximately with 60.4% in our model. Figure 2 presents the model with path coefficients referring to H1–H5.

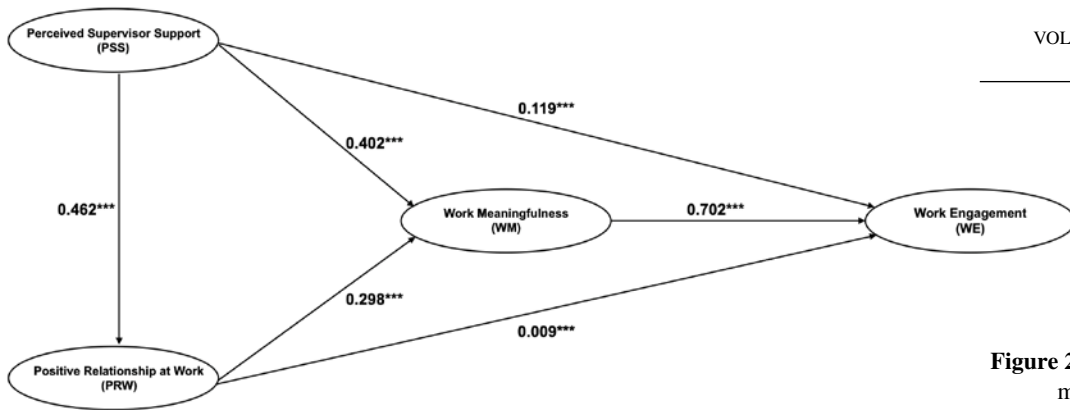
**Table 4.** Direct & indirect effect (mediation) without moderator

Note: \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001. See text for abbreviations.

Hypothesis	Indirect&Direct effect	Point Estimate (Unstd.)	Product of coefficient			Bootstrap 5000 times(95% Confidence Interval)				Result	
			SE	Z	P-value	Std.	Percentile		Bias-corrected Percentile		
							Lower	Upper	Lower		Upper
H1	PSS-WE	0,099	0,037	2,724	<b>0,006**</b>	0,119	0,030	0,172	0,032	0,173	<b>Accept</b>
H2	PRW-WE	0,016	0,075	0,207	0,836	0,009	-0,172	0,166	-0,131	0,161	Reject
H3	PSS-PRW-WE	0,003	0,016	0,205	0,837	0,004	-0,027	0,038	-0,039	0,036	Reject
H4	PSS-WM-WE	0,235	0,034	6,96	<b>0,000***</b>	0,282	0,174	0,304	0,177	0,308	<b>Accept</b>
H5	PRW-WM-WE	0,369	0,063	5,822	<b>0,000***</b>	0,209	0,249	0,500	0,227	0,508	<b>Accept</b>

Then, we tested moderations (conditional indirect/direct effects) via bootstrap (5,000 times), because of the categorical moderator “participation in volunteering (PV)” in our proposed model. The result of moderations (Hypothesis 6) is shown in Table 5. Participation in volunteering, as the moderator of our model, would be discussed in two categories (Do PV vs. No PV). The model fit is satisfactory ( $\chi^2=353.447$ ;  $\chi^2/df=1.86$ ; CFI=0.976; TLI=0.974; RMSEA=0.049; SRMR=0.043) (Iacobucci, 2010). Only Hypotheses 6a and 6b are partially supported, specifically:

- H6a (PRW→WE): “Do PV” and “No PV” (unstandardized coefficient is 0.324, p=0.030, lower bound is 0.036, upper bound is 0.623), i.e., the coefficient is higher when an employee participates in volunteering;



**Figure 2.** Empirical model. \*, \*\*, \*\*\* indicate that the coefficient is statistically significant, respectively, at  $p < 0.05$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

- H6b (PSS→PRW→WE): “Do PV” and “No PV” (unstandardized coefficient is 0.073,  $p=0.042$ , lower bound is 0.010, upper bound is 0.154), i.e., the coefficient is higher when an employee participates in volunteering.

Comparison	Indirect&Direct effect	Point Estimate (Unstd.)	Product of coefficient			Bootstrap 5000 times(95% Confidence Interval)			
			SE	Z	P-value	Percentile		Bias-corrected Percentile	
						Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Do PV vs. No PV	PSS-WE	0.016	0.077	0.206	0.837	-0.130	0.171	-0.130	0.170
	PRW-WE	0.324	0.150	2.165	<b>0.030*</b>	0.019	0.613	<b>0.036</b>	<b>0.623</b>
Do PV vs. No PV	PSS-PRW-WE	0.073	0.036	2.034	<b>0.042*</b>	0.005	0.146	<b>0.010</b>	<b>0.154</b>
	PSS-WM-WE	0.001	0.062	0.011	0.991	-0.117	0.126	-0.117	0.126
	PRW-WM-WE	-0.173	0.115	-1.504	0.133	-0.407	0.046	-0.400	0.055

**Table 5.** Conditional direct & indirect effect (moderation)

Note:  
Unstandardized Coefficients.  
\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ;  
\*\*\* $p < .001$ . See text for abbreviations.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Findings and implications

The main purpose of this study is to explore whether perceived supervisor support (PSS) and positive relationships at work (PRW) could directly or indirectly (i.e., with work meaningfulness as a mediator) influence work

engagement (WE), and whether corporate volunteering (PV) could significantly moderate the proposed model. After empirical analysis supported by banking sector data (N=724), we initially found that some indirect and direct relationships were supported, except the direct relationship (i.e., Hypothesis 2) between positive relationship at work (PRW) and work engagement (WE), and the mediated relationship (i.e., Hypothesis 5) between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and work engagement (WE). Additionally, corporate volunteering (PV) would partially buffer the direct and indirect relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and work engagement (WE).

In order to better explain the mediated results of our proposed model, the conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 2001, 2002) can be referred to as a theoretical framework. The basic assumption of the COR model is that individuals strive to protect, retain and accumulate valued resources (e.g., Hobfoll, 2002), which include aspects that are material (e.g., physical environment and objects), social (e.g., relationships and support) and psychological (e.g., positive self-regard and optimism) (e.g., Hobfoll and Schumm, 2009; Weigl et al., 2010). As resources are assumed to be generative, some scholars (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002; Hobfoll et al., 2003) propose the terms “positive gain spirals” (e.g., positive psychological development) and “negative gain spirals” (e.g., stress process) to describe whether the developments of resources are progressively accumulated or depleted. More specifically, the social gain spirals include the interactions between working person and social environment, which is consistent with COR in the aspect of social resources, such as the quality of interpersonal relationship at work and in life (Hobfoll, 2002; Hobfoll and Schumm, 2009). Empirically, a growing number of longitudinal studies indicate that the relationship between job resources and work engagement is not unidirectional, but reciprocal (Bakker et al., 2008), which also provides evidence for the social exchange theory. In particular, enjoying instrumental support (i.e., orientation and advice for carrying out tasks) and socio-emotional support (i.e., concern for well-being) provided by supervisors meant that employees had higher levels of energy at work (Orgambídez and Almeida, 2020); this is also more likely to foster employees’ emotional bonding and identification with the organization (Fuller et al., 2006), such that employees may feel the value and meaningfulness of the support they received and, reciprocally, want to engage more in their organizational work. These explanations are consistent with Hypotheses 1 & 3 of this study – that perceived supervisor support would directly or indirectly influence work engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also suggest that the support from colleagues, supervisor coaching and feedback would facilitate work engagement. Grant (2007) also proposed that positive social interactions at work would enhance prosocial motivation, which, in turn, positively affects employees’ interpersonal behavior. Thus, the interactions among people can generate upward spirals of social resources (Dutton and Ragins,

2007; Rousseau and Ling, 2007) – that is, positive workplace relationships are generative in that they contribute to work engagement (Weigl et al., 2010). In our study, a significant relationship between positive relationships at work and work engagement, mediated by work meaningfulness, could also empirically prove these findings.

For the moderations, our findings show that the indirect relationship between perceived supervisor support and work engagement, and the direct relationship between positive relationships at work are stronger when employees participate in more volunteering activities in and/or outside the company, as compared to employees who do not have any volunteering activities. Referring to the “self-determination theory (SDT)” (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000), employees are more likely to be motivated by meaning and enjoyment (autonomous motivation), compared to the motivation of punishments and rewards (controlled motivation), if their basic psychological needs are satisfied within a context (organized work). Some papers (e.g., Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009) try to extend SDT theory to corporate volunteering. More specifically, some scholars (Grant, 2012; van Schie et al., 2018) also understand corporate volunteering via SDT theory, as it offers a very relevant framework. Furthermore, in our proposed model, positive relationship at work (PRW) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) are also related to the workplace context, which is mentioned by SDT theory. In other words, the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness mentioned in SDT could be influenced by corporate volunteering (e.g., Bidee et al., 2013), and such psychological needs could influence workplace factors, such as leader support and leader–member exchange, which is to a certain degree consistent with our findings of positive relationship at work (PRW) and perceived supervisor support (PSS). Additionally, some papers (Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2019; Lavine, 2012; Glińska-Neweś et al., 2019) concluded that the sense of meaningful purpose is derived from individual active involvement in volunteer programs. Boštjančič et al. (2018) provides the possible theoretical support that corporate volunteering included in the “work environment”, as well as “support from supervisors”, could be classified as “job resources” in the JD-R model, which assumes that resources have motivational potential and lead to high levels of engagement and dedication to the organization. In our study, employees who participate more in volunteering programs (i.e., both in and outside the company) perhaps have more opportunities to get social resources and learn skills to enhance their work-related skills than those employees without any volunteering programs. Perhaps this is why employees who participate in volunteering would more easily find meaning in their work, leading to more work engagement.

In practice, because the effects of corporate volunteering on direct and indirect relationships between perceived supervisor support and work engagement have been empirically proved in our study, companies could employ several strategies

to deepen the influence of volunteering programs for employees. The company could design more employee-friendly volunteering activities to meet employee needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence in order to help achieve these highly desirable goals for employers and employees alike (van den Broeck et al., 2016). In addition, corporate volunteering could be designed and developed as a means for teambuilding (Grant, 2012), in order to encourage and attract those employees who have never participated in volunteering. The purpose of corporate volunteering is to improve job resources (e.g., perceived support and work environment), work engagement, and, finally, individual performance. Such behaviors could help employees build their relationship with their peers and develop their skills while benefiting the community, and can lead to the aforementioned positive results for the company, their employees and society at large (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019).

### ***5.2 Limitations and directions for future research***

Firstly, the only moderator we test is corporate volunteering, thus omitting other potential moderators of our proposed model. For example, we could combine the corporate volunteering with other demographic factors, such as a comparison of high-income and low-income employees' volunteering participation. In the future, it would be interesting to examine whether the interactions between corporate volunteering and other moderators exist. The second problem relates to our samples: the female sample (78.5%) is much larger than the male sample (21.5%). The data is only from one bank, that is more easily to be affected by the organizational culture and other related variables. Future studies could examine such organizational variables as the control variables. Furthermore, the data collection could in the future be more diverse, such as collecting data from multiple companies in the same industry and collecting data from different industries, if possible. Such data could also to a certain degree solve the problem of common method variance. Finally, a longitudinal study could be considered in the future, which would provide a more comprehensive view of the long-term influence of corporate volunteering on the model we want to target, and which would also contribute more persuasive findings to the extant literature.

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