



Corporate volunteering climate: mobilizing employee passion for societal causes and inspiring future charitable action

Booth, J., et al, 2017, *Corporate volunteering climate: mobilizing employee passion for societal causes and inspiring future charitable action*, Academy of Management Journal 2017, Vol. 60, No. 5, Ppp. 1662–1681.

Overview

This study by Rodell, Booth, Lynch and Zipay (2017) provides a new perspective on research into corporate volunteering schemes. This paper goes beyond looking into the impact of corporate volunteering on individual employees, and instead focuses its investigation on the development of a corporate volunteering climate within a corporation, as well as wider society. The writers made a selection of hypotheses to test these areas of exploration. These included that company policy, as well as employee belief in the cause, would help to create a volunteering climate, and that employees who volunteer as well as those who don't will be positively affected by programmes because of collective pride.

Method

In order to test the hypotheses, the writers worked with United Way Worldwide to recruit potential corporations operating volunteering policies and programmes to source participants from. 58 companies took part and returned 674 surveys in total as part of the research for this study (445 employees answered the first survey, with 229 respondents agreeing to also take part in the second). In the second sample, 169 said that they had volunteered, whilst 60 had not. The surveys used a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to investigate the extent to which employees agreed with a number of statements. The subjects of the statements included *company-provided resources*, *employee belief in the cause*, *corporate volunteering climate*, *collective pride*, and *personal and corporate volunteering intentions*.

Results

The results of the surveys show that a volunteering climate is fostered both by company policy and employee motivation for the cause. These two elements are both important, and if one element is stronger than the other, it still contributes towards the creation of a climate. Furthermore, it was shown that affective commitment was improved through a volunteering scheme, both for volunteers and nonvolunteers due to the impact of the volunteering climate and the resulting collective pride. Although it was found that existing there was no significant change in likeliness to engage in corporate volunteering as a result of a volunteering climate, there was more of a change in intentions to volunteer personally, especially for nonvolunteers. Therefore, these results show that corporate schemes have wide-ranging impacts that go beyond individual employees. The effects can be seen in all members of the company, even those who do not volunteer, which means that volunteering schemes may directly and indirectly produce societal change. Finally, the creation of a climate enabling this intention to volunteer is due to both company policy and employee passion for a cause, with neither one 'cancelling out' the other so to speak.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the idea that, although it is shown the intention to volunteer can be improved by corporate volunteering, the study does not then follow up if these intentions are acted upon, which would bring about the societal change discussed throughout the paper. Furthermore, the sample size of this study is fairly small, and a greater level of participation, as well as a more equal division between participants who volunteer and those who don't, would make this study more reliable. Finally, the study only asks for one reason of employee motivation to volunteer (belief in the cause), when in fact there may be many reasons why employees choose to volunteer, including for materialistic reasons, which may challenge the findings of this study.