

Corporate Volunteerism, the Experience of Self-Integrity, and Organizational Commitment: Evidence from the Field

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Published online: 23 February 2014
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Abstract We examined the relationship between the motives underlying employees' participation in corporate-sponsored volunteerism and their organizational commitment. In both a pilot study and in the main study, employees' motivation to volunteer based on the desire to express personally meaningful values (also known as the values function of volunteerism) was positively related to their organizational commitment. Additional findings from the main study helped to explain why this was so: being motivated by the values function of volunteerism was positively related to how much participants experienced self-integrity in the workplace, which in turn was positively related to their organizational commitment. That is, experiencing self-integrity in the workplace mediated the relationship between how much employees were motivated by the values function and their organizational commitment. The results of subsidiary analyses provided further evidence that corporate volunteerism was positively related to organizational commitment, and that the experience of self-integrity mediated this relationship. Implications for both the corporate volunteerism and functions of volunteerism literatures are discussed, as are practical implications and suggestions for future research.

Keywords Functions of volunteerism · Self-integrity · Organizational commitment

Corporations and their employees have long acknowledged their responsibility for the welfare of the communities in which they operate (e.g., Tichy, McGill, & St. Clair,

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1997). One of the most common ways in which companies and employees try to “give back” is through corporate volunteerism, which refers to employees’ participation in corporate-sponsored activities, often on company time, that benefit some entity typically located in the community or broader society in which the organization does business. Corporate volunteer activities are very much on the rise over the past two decades (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007). For example, in a study sponsored by the Financial Services Roundtable, employees reported 4.46 million volunteer hours in 1997, whereas that figure grew by more than 200 % a mere 4 years later (Brudney & Gazley, 2006). More recently, then Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the U. K. expressed hope that every company in his country would sponsor an employee volunteering program (Bussell & Forbes, 2008). The intended goals of corporate volunteer programs are to improve the physical and/or psychological well-being of the targeted beneficiaries. However, it also is possible that taking part in corporate volunteer activities may influence the *volunteers’* work attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Bartel, 2001), such as their organizational commitment.

If corporate volunteerism is on the rise, and if it has the potential to influence volunteers’ work attitudes and behaviors, then it is important to understand how taking part in corporate volunteer activities may influence employees’ work attitudes and behaviors. One possibility is that participating in corporate volunteer activity may detract from employees’ morale and productivity. After all, it could be argued that every hour spent on company time that is not devoted to organizationally relevant activities may do little to further employees’ engagement with their employers. However, the results of several recent studies paint a more optimistic picture. Such findings suggest that partaking in corporate volunteerism is positively related to a host of work attitudes reflective of employees’ desire to serve the organization’s interests, such as their organizational identification (Bartel, 2001) and their organizational commitment (Frank-Alston, 2000; Peterson, 2004).

Whereas there is some evidence that employees’ corporate volunteerism is positively related to constructs such as organizational commitment, relatively few studies (e.g., Bartel, 2001) have examined the theoretically and practically important questions of *why* this is so. The present research is designed to redress this deficiency. To cite several examples of the theoretical value in delineating why volunteerism is positively related to organizational commitment, doing so may shed light on: (1) other consequences of engaging in volunteerism (besides heightened organizational commitment), and (2) other factors (besides engaging in volunteerism) that may affect commitment. At a practical level, knowing why corporate volunteerism leads to organizational commitment may lead to the design of corporate volunteer programs that not only helps the intended beneficiaries but also elicits higher organizational commitment in the volunteers.

Conceptual Foundation of the Present Studies

We hypothesize that engaging in corporate volunteerism creates the potential for employees to experience self-integrity in the workplace, which in turn may lead to higher levels of organizational commitment. Theory and research on self-processes

have suggested that the experience of self-integrity consists of a number of elements. In particular, Steele (1988) suggested that self-integrity subsumes self-esteem (i.e., people's needs to see themselves as competent and good), a sense of identity (i.e., people's desires to maintain self-conceptions of being coherent, unitary, and stable), and a sense of control (i.e., people wanting to see themselves as capable of free choice, and as capable of influencing important outcomes).

How might taking part in corporate-sponsored volunteer activities lead employees to experience self-integrity in the workplace? For one thing, people may feel high self-esteem, that is, they may see themselves as good, to the extent that they believe that their volunteer activity shines favorably upon them (Grant, 2007). Moreover, their identity self-conceptions (e.g., the desire to see themselves as coherent or unitary) may be validated by taking part in a volunteer activity that reflects how they define themselves. Furthermore, they may experience control to the extent that they believe their volunteer activity is making a positive difference in the world (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). The experience of esteem, identity, and control elicited by volunteerism, in turn, may positively affect employees' organizational commitment. For example, employees are likely to appreciate the organization for providing them with the psychologically rewarding experience of self-integrity, and may reciprocate the favor by becoming more committed to the organization (e.g., Emerson, 1976; Jones, 2010).

The dependent variable in the present research, organizational commitment, has itself been the subject of considerable theory and research. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) were among the first to show that organizational commitment influences a number of important work attitudes and behaviors, including job satisfaction, work motivation, and job performance. Moreover, researchers have distinguished between different forms of commitment, such as affective, continuance, and normative (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Affective commitment refers to people being committed because they *want* to be. With continuance commitment, people are committed because they *have* to be. And, in the case of normative commitment, people are committed because they believe that they *ought* to be. Our focus is on affective commitment, for several reasons. First, because of its centrality to the commitment literature, we draw on Mowday et al.'s (1982) conception and measurement of organizational commitment, which is most closely related to affective commitment in the Allen and Meyer (1996) framework. Second, the factor posited to account for the hypothesized positive relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment (i.e., the experience of self-integrity) is closely related to the elicitors of affective commitment in particular. Organizational commitment scholars (e.g., Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004) have posited that the primary bases of affective organizational commitment include personal involvement and identification with the organization, which overlap considerably with the notions of identity and control, for instance.

The Functions Served by Volunteering

We hypothesize that one reason that partaking in corporate volunteerism may heighten employees' organizational commitment is that the volunteerism enables

them to experience self-integrity in the workplace. One important implication of this reasoning is that the extent to which corporate volunteerism induces employees to experience self-integrity in the workplace and thereby heighten their organizational commitment depends on their *reasons or underlying motivations* for volunteering. If corporate volunteerism can lead to organizational commitment by enabling people to experience self-integrity, then it stands to reason that the more that they volunteer for reasons related to experiencing self-integrity, the higher their organizational commitment is likely to be.¹

Functionalist theory generally posits that people may perform the same behaviors (or maintain the same attitudes) for different underlying reasons (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956). Clary et al. (1998) and others (e.g., Snyder & Omoto, 1992) proposed that functionalist theory may be applied to the study of the motivational foundations of volunteer activity. Thus, when people volunteer for reasons that are conceptually linked to experiencing self-integrity, the more likely is volunteering for these particular reasons to be positively related to their organizational commitment. For example, Bartel (2001) found that volunteers may experience an increase in self-esteem from seeing themselves as better off than the parties towards whom their volunteer activities are directed. However, the functionalist view implies that favorable social comparisons alluded to by Bartel are not the only route through which engaging in volunteerism may give rise to the experience of self-integrity.

Clary et al. (1998) identified six functions of volunteerism: values, understanding, social, enhancement, career, and protective. We suggest that some of the functions, such as values are conceptually related to experiencing self-integrity, whereas others such as career seem less related to experiencing self-integrity. According to Clary et al., the values function (short for “prosocial values”) allows people to express personally significant values such as helping others who are less fortunate. This function is based on the notion that people exhibit certain attitudes or behaviors as a way to express values that are important to their sense of identity. The understanding function aims to provide people with new learning experiences or to exercise skills that often go unused. The social function refers to people’s tendencies to volunteer in order to strengthen their relationships with others. The enhancement function posits that people volunteer in order to grow and develop psychologically. The career function reflects people’s tendencies to engage in volunteer activity for instrumental reasons related to their own career advancement. For example, people may volunteer to make connections or to build a network that may facilitate their career growth. Such volunteerism is motivated more by a desire to help the self rather than others. The protective function posits that people may engage in volunteerism as a way to distract themselves from their troubles, such as

¹ Whereas corporate volunteerism is more likely to be positively related to organizational commitment when volunteerism enables people to experience self-integrity, we are not suggesting that the experience of self-integrity is the *only* reason why corporate volunteerism may be positively related to organizational commitment. In other words, the experience of volunteerism-induced self-integrity is sufficient to heighten organizational commitment but is not necessary; other factors may do so as well. We shall return to this matter in the “Discussion” section.

feelings of guilt about being more fortunate than others, or to address other personal problems.

Pilot Study

We conducted an initial pilot study to evaluate the relative importance of the various functions of volunteerism in accounting for employees' organizational commitment. More specifically, the pilot study examined the relationships between employees' endorsement of the various functions of volunteerism and their organizational commitment. We studied employees who had engaged in at least some volunteer activity during the past year that was sponsored by their employer, a large global pharmaceutical company headquartered in New York City; the respondents themselves came from a branch located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The design of the study was cross-sectional. A total of 512 employees took part in the study, a response rate of nearly 52 %. Of those employees that completed demographic information, 63 % were female. Most employees reported that they were between the ages of 31–40 (28 %) or 41–50 (35 %). The majority identified themselves as White/Caucasian (81 %). Most of the participants were well-educated; nearly 85 % had graduated from college. Participants received a web-based survey link via e-mail, which enabled them to complete the survey online. All responses were anonymous.

The survey included a list of many of the volunteer activities sponsored by their organization (e.g., the United Way Campaign, and the American Heart Association Heart Walk). After reading the list, participants were asked, "In the past year, how much have you volunteered for activities sponsored by your employer?" Responses were made on a five-point scale, in which the endpoints were "not at all" (1) and "very much" (5). Given that we wished to study the relationship between people's motivations for volunteering and their organizational commitment, we only examined those individuals who had done at least some volunteering. Thus, if participants responded to the frequency of volunteering question with a "1" (i.e., "not at all"), they did not complete the functions of volunteerism measure. In subsidiary analyses, however, (to be presented in the Results section of the main study), we included the participants who responded to the frequency of volunteerism question with a "1." Most participants in the pilot study (77 %) reported taking part in at least some volunteer activity. How often they engaged in corporate volunteer activity (i.e., anywhere from "2" to "5") was treated as a control variable. The survey also included the measure of organizational commitment as well as how much engaging in corporate volunteerism was motivated by the various functions.

Participants' motivations for volunteering were measured with items from the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) developed by Clary et al. (1998). Two to four questions from each of the six functions of volunteerism were selected for inclusion in the present study. The instructions for this measure were as follows: "The following statements pertain to reasons why people volunteer in general. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement, reflecting upon your reasons, in particular, for doing volunteering work sponsored by your employer over

the past year.” Sample questions include, “I feel that it is important to help others in need” (values function), “I thought that volunteering would allow me to gain a new perspective on things” (understanding function), “Others with whom I am close place a high value on volunteering” (social function), “Volunteering makes me feel more important” (enhancement function), “I thought that volunteering would be a good distraction from my own problems” (protective function), and “Volunteering can help me advance in the workplace” (career function). The scale endpoints were “strongly disagree (1) and “strongly agree” (5).

The original version of the VFI measure consisted of five items per function (Clary et al., 1998). We used a shortened version (an average of three items) primarily because of a practical consideration: the sponsoring organizations in both the pilot study and in the main study wanted to keep the surveys as brief as possible. Of course, the use of a shortened version of the VFI raises potential concerns about the reliability and validity of the measure. Several empirical findings are at least somewhat reassuring, however. First, the present results were highly consistent across two rather different samples, providing evidence of the reliability of our VFI measure. Second, a recent study by Konrath et al. (2012) also used a similarly shortened version of the VFI measure and found that how much people volunteered for other-oriented reasons (rather than self-oriented reasons) was inversely related to their mortality risk. Apart from being quite provocative in their own right, the Konrath et al. findings suggest that the shortened version of the VFI measure used in the present studies has construct validity.

Organizational commitment was measured with three items based on questions from the scale developed by Mowday et al. (1982). This three-item measure, which has been used in previous research (e.g., Brockner et al., 2004) has been found to be highly related ($r = .93$) to the short form of the widely used Mowday et al. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). Sample items included, “I am willing to put in effort beyond what is expected to keep this organization successful,” and “I am likely to talk up this organization as a great organization to work for.” Responses on the five-point scale ranged from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlations for all measures are reported in Table 1. Four of the functions were positively related to organizational commitment (values, understanding, social, and enhancement) whereas two were not (career and protective). We then regressed organizational commitment on all six functions simultaneously, along with frequency of volunteerism as a control variable, which yielded a significant overall effect, $F(7, 352) = 3.70, p < .001$, total $R^2 = .069$. As can be seen in Table 2 (Model 2), the only function which was significant in the regression analysis was values, $t = 2.65, p < .01$. The more participants were motivated to volunteer for value-expressive reasons, the higher was their organizational commitment. The p value for the function with the second biggest F (the social function) was .16. As can be seen in Table 2, Model 1, virtually identical results emerged when the control variable of frequency of volunteerism was deleted as a predictor.

Table 2 also includes the results of the test for diagnosing multi-collinearity, in which it can be seen that the highest variance inflation factor (VIF) was 2.23 (for the

Table 1 Summary statistics, pilot study

| | N | Overall M | SD | Items | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|--|-----|-----------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Organizational commitment | 371 | 3.28 | .91 | 3 | (.87) | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Frequency of corporate volunteerism | 385 | 2.97 | .93 | 1 | .08 | – | | | | | | | |
| 3. Frequency of non-corporate volunteerism | 381 | 2.88 | 1.26 | 1 | –.09 | .14** | – | | | | | | |
| 4. Values function | 384 | 4.39 | .76 | 2 | .19** | .16** | .15** | (.90) | | | | | |
| 5. Social function | 381 | 2.97 | .75 | 4 | .18** | .07 | .03 | .15** | (.69) | | | | |
| 6. Enhancement function | 384 | 2.59 | .87 | 3 | .14** | –.04 | –.02 | .00 | .59** | (.74) | | | |
| 7. Protective function | 385 | 2.23 | .94 | 3 | .05 | –.06 | –.05 | –.13* | .39** | .63** | (.82) | | |
| 8. Career function | 384 | 2.15 | .86 | 3 | .05 | –.02 | –.00 | –.21** | .45** | .57** | .65** | (.84) | |
| 9. Understanding function | 381 | 3.49 | .85 | 3 | .17** | .16** | .13* | .38** | .49** | .49** | .37** | .29** | (.74) |

Coefficient alphas are displayed on the diagonal. Ns vary slightly due to missing values. Scale ranges are from 1 to 5

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 2 Multiple regression of organizational commitment (pilot study)

| Variables | <i>B</i> | Std. error | β | <i>t</i> | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|------|-----------|------|
| Model 1 | | | | | | | |
| (Constant) | 1.72 | 0.35 | – | 4.97 | 0.00 | – | – |
| Values function | 0.20 | 0.07 | 0.16 | 2.71 | 0.01 | 0.74 | 1.35 |
| Social function | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.10 | 1.44 | 0.15 | 0.60 | 1.68 |
| Enhancement function | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.10 | 1.29 | 0.20 | 0.45 | 2.20 |
| Protection function | –0.04 | 0.08 | –0.04 | –0.52 | 0.61 | 0.46 | 2.20 |
| Career function | 0.01 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 0.10 | 0.92 | 0.49 | 2.03 |
| Understanding function | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 0.54 | 0.59 | 0.59 | 1.69 |
| Model 2 | | | | | | | |
| (Constant) | 1.64 | 0.36 | – | 4.53 | 0.00 | – | – |
| Frequency of volunteerism | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.70 | 0.49 | 0.95 | 1.06 |
| Values function | 0.19 | 0.07 | 0.16 | 2.65 | 0.01 | 0.74 | 1.36 |
| Social function | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.09 | 1.41 | 0.16 | 0.59 | 1.68 |
| Enhancement function | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.10 | 1.35 | 0.18 | 0.45 | 2.23 |
| Protection function | –0.04 | 0.08 | –0.04 | –0.49 | 0.62 | 0.45 | 2.20 |
| Career function | 0.01 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.94 | 0.49 | 2.03 |
| Understanding function | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.43 | 0.66 | 0.58 | 1.73 |

Model 1; total $R^2 = .067$, $p < .001$

Model 2; total $R^2 = .069$, $p < .01$

enhancement function). This value is well below 10, the point at which multi-collinearity begins to be a concern (Hair et al., 1995). For example, as Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner (1989) put it, “a maximum VIF value in excess of 10 is often taken as an indication that multi-collinearity may be unduly influencing the least square estimates” (p. 409).

Main Study

A central thesis of the present research is that certain functions of volunteerism, by promoting the experience of self-integrity, are likely to be positively related to organizational commitment. The results of the regression analysis in the pilot study showed that it was participants’ endorsement of the values function *in particular* that was positively related to their organizational commitment. One interpretation of the latter finding is that the extent to which participants’ corporate volunteerism was motivated by the values function is especially likely to be positively related to their experience of self-integrity in the workplace.

We evaluated this possibility in the main study. Participants came from a different organization that sponsored volunteer activity. They completed all of the same measures used in the pilot study. In addition, participants in the main study completed a measure of how much they experienced self-integrity in the workplace.

As in the pilot study, we expected to find that participants' endorsement of the values function *in particular* would be positively related to their organizational commitment. Furthermore:

Hypothesis 1 Participants' endorsement of the values function is more likely than their endorsement of all other functions to be positively related to their experience of self-integrity in the workplace.

Hypothesis 2 The experience of self-integrity in the workplace will mediate the positive relationship between participants' endorsement of the values function and their organizational commitment.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Participants consisted of 414 employees (representing a response rate of approximately 59 %) from a global medical technology company headquartered in New Jersey, in which participants also worked. Working with the head of the company's social investing department, we distributed a survey to employees in sixteen sites across the country. As in the pilot study, web-based questionnaires were used to solicit participant responses. Participants were given 3 weeks to complete the survey.

Measures

The survey was generally similar to the one used in the pilot study with several differences to be described next. First, the nature of the corporate volunteer activities sponsored by the organization in the main study was different from those in the pilot study; accordingly, the survey was changed to reflect this fact. As in the pilot study, participants read the list of corporate-sponsored activities and were then asked to rate (on the same five-point scale) how often they had taken part in the various corporate-sponsored volunteer activities during the past year. Frequency of participation (ranging anywhere from "2" to "5") was once again treated as a control variable. The proportion of participants who took part in at least some corporate-sponsored volunteer activity was considerably lower in the main study (45 %) than in the pilot study (77 %). Second, to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which they experienced self-integrity in the workplace. In constructing this six-item instrument, we chose two items for each of the self-esteem, identity, and control dimensions, as set forth by Steele (1988). Sample items included, "I feel like I am a competent person at work" (self-esteem), "I feel that I have a clear sense of who I am at work" (identity), and "I feel that I have the opportunity to make a difference at work" (control). Responses to the five-point scales ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Coefficient alpha for the measure of self-integrity was .89.

Results

Summary statistics, reliability estimates, and intercorrelations between variables are presented in Table 3. As in the pilot study, zero-order correlations showed that each of the values, understanding, social, and enhancement functions was positively related to organizational commitment. In fact, the zero-order correlation for the values function ($r = .55$) was considerably larger than that found in the pilot study. Also, as found in the pilot study, the career function was unrelated to organizational commitment. Unlike in the pilot study, however, the protective function was positively related to organizational commitment as a zero-order correlation.²

As in the pilot study, we then conducted a multiple regression analysis on organizational commitment, in which all of the functions were entered simultaneously along with frequency of volunteerism as a control variable; see Table 4, Model 2. Similar to the results of the pilot study, (1) the overall term was significant, $F(7, 181) = 13.92, p < .001$, total $R^2 = .35$, (2) only the values function attained significance, $t = 5.65, p < .001$, and (3) the test of multi-collinearity diagnostics showed that the highest VIF (3.19, for the enhancement function) was considerably lower than 10. Also as found in the pilot study, virtually identical results emerged when the control variable of frequency of volunteerism was deleted as a predictor (see Table 4, Model 1).

Hypothesis 1

The regression results in both the pilot study and in the main study showed that participants' endorsement of the values function in particular was positively related to their organizational commitment. We speculated that this was because endorsement of the values function may have been more related to the experience of self-integrity in the workplace than was endorsement of the other functions, as set forth in Hypothesis 1. In fact, from Table 3 it can be seen that the correlation between the values function and the experience of self-integrity was a sizable .57,

² We examined the fit of our nine-factor measurement model in the main study via a confirmatory factor analysis that included the single-item measure of frequency of corporate volunteerism and the following latent factors: organizational commitment (three items), self-integrity (six items), the values function (two items), the social function (four items), the enhancement function (three items), the understanding function (three items), the protective function (three items), and the career function (three items). This analysis confirmed that the proposed nine-factor measurement model fit the data reasonably well, $\chi^2(323, N = 209) = 683.78, p < .001$, SRMR = .07, IFI = .90, RMSEA = .07.

Moreover, the nine-factor model fit better than a number of alternative models. Chi-square difference tests were conducted to compare the measurement model to an eight-factor model (which was similar to the nine-factor solution, the one difference being that self-integrity and organizational commitment were loaded onto a single-factor, given the sizable correlation between the two; $\Delta\chi^2(7) = 80.96, p < .001$), a five-factor model which consisted of frequency of volunteerism, organizational commitment, self-integrity, the four functions which were shown to be related to the experience of self-integrity (i.e., values, understanding, social, and enhancement) loaded onto a single factor, and the two functions shown to not be related to the experience of self-integrity (i.e., career and protective) loaded onto a single factor; $\Delta\chi^2(22) = 483.52, p < .001$), a four-factor model (consisting of frequency of volunteerism, organizational commitment, self-integrity, and all six functions loaded onto a single factor; $\Delta\chi^2(25) = 545.85, p < .001$), and a one-factor model (in which all of the items were loaded onto a single factor), $\Delta\chi^2(28) = 1175.51, p < .001$.

Table 3 Summary statistics, main study

| | <i>N</i> | Overall <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Items | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|----------|------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Organizational commitment | 201 | 3.86 | .86 | 3 | (.85) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Frequency of corporate volunteerism | 210 | 2.46 | .92 | 1 | .32** | – | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Frequency of non-corporate volunteerism | 210 | 2.73 | 1.22 | 1 | .22** | .31** | – | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Employer support for volunteerism (ESVP) | 210 | 3.93 | .98 | 3 | .60** | .29** | .08 | (.84) | | | | | | | |
| 5. Self-integrity | 202 | 3.71 | .84 | 6 | .73** | .37** | .18* | .56** | (.89) | | | | | | |
| 6. Values function | 210 | 4.23 | .91 | 2 | .55** | .29** | .27** | .43** | .57** | (.94) | | | | | |
| 7. Social function | 208 | 2.73 | .82 | 4 | .25** | .06 | .05 | .22** | .32** | .28** | (.77) | | | | |
| 8. Enhancement function | 210 | 2.42 | .91 | 3 | .16* | .02 | –.00 | .09 | .16* | .17* | .61** | (.78) | | | |
| 9. Protective function | 210 | 2.22 | .88 | 3 | .18* | .01 | .03 | .07 | .13 | .18* | .58** | .75** | (.75) | | |
| 10. Career function | 210 | 2.02 | .90 | 3 | .11 | .06 | –.01 | .16* | .13 | .03 | .54** | .67** | .65** | (.87) | |
| 11. Understanding function | 208 | 3.28 | .93 | 3 | .33** | .10 | .09 | .22** | .33** | .44** | .55** | .61** | .56** | .45** | (.83) |

Coefficient alphas are displayed on the diagonal. *N*s vary slightly due to missing values

* *p* < .05

** *p* < .01

Table 4 Multiple regression of organizational commitment (main study)

| Variables | <i>B</i> | Std. error | β | <i>t</i> | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|------|-----------|------|
| Model 1 | | | | | | | |
| (Constant) | 1.38 | 0.28 | – | 4.89 | 0.00 | – | – |
| Values function | 0.46 | 0.07 | 0.48 | 6.83 | 0.00 | 0.76 | 1.32 |
| Social function | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.84 | 0.40 | 0.52 | 1.91 |
| Enhancement function | –0.13 | 0.10 | –0.14 | –1.25 | 0.21 | 0.31 | 3.19 |
| Protection function | 0.06 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.58 | 0.56 | 0.36 | 2.76 |
| Career function | 0.06 | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.69 | 0.49 | 0.45 | 2.21 |
| Understanding function | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 1.42 | 0.16 | 0.49 | 2.04 |
| Model 2 | | | | | | | |
| (Constant) | 1.22 | 0.28 | – | 4.33 | 0.00 | – | – |
| Frequency of volunteerism | 0.17 | 0.06 | 0.18 | 2.84 | 0.01 | 0.87 | 1.15 |
| Values function | 0.40 | 0.07 | 0.41 | 5.65 | 0.00 | 0.68 | 1.48 |
| Social function | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.84 | 0.40 | 0.52 | 1.91 |
| Enhancement function | –0.13 | 0.10 | –0.13 | –1.25 | 0.21 | 0.31 | 3.19 |
| Protection function | 0.09 | 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.92 | 0.36 | 0.36 | 2.80 |
| Career function | 0.03 | 0.09 | 0.03 | 0.29 | 0.77 | 0.44 | 2.26 |
| Understanding function | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.13 | 1.49 | 0.14 | 0.49 | 2.05 |

Model 1 total $R^2 = .321$, $p < .001$ Model 2 total $R^2 = .350$, $p < .001$

$p < .001$. The second highest correlation between the other functions and the experience of self-integrity was .33 (for the understanding function). The difference between these two correlations was significant at the .01 level, $z = 3.10$. Of course, the difference in the relationship between the values function and the experience of self-integrity yielded a z -score greater than 3.10 for each of the other functions. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 posited that the experience of self-integrity would mediate the positive relationship between endorsement of the values function and organizational commitment. As can be seen in Table 3, the independent variable (endorsement of the values function) was positively related to both the dependent variable (organizational commitment) and the hypothesized mediator (the experience of self-integrity); also, the hypothesized mediator was related to the dependent variable. As recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986), we then regressed organizational commitment on the values function and the experience of self-integrity simultaneously. The hypothesized mediator, self-integrity, was highly significant ($\beta = .605$; $t = 10.42$, $p < .001$, and the independent variable (the values function) was significant as well; $\beta = .206$; $t = 3.55$, $p < .01$).

We tested for mediation using the bootstrapping method developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008), in which we generated 95 % bias-corrected confidence intervals

using 1,000 bootstrap samples. Mediation is present if the derived confidence interval does not contain zero. Results of the bootstrap analysis indicated that with a probability of .95, an interval between .216 and .435 contains the indirect effect of endorsement of the values function on commitment via the experience of self-integrity ($B = .321$, $SE = 0.057$). These results support Hypothesis 2: the experience of self-integrity mediated the relationship between participants' endorsement of the values function and their organizational commitment. Given that the direct effect of the values function on commitment continued to be significant even when we controlled for self-integrity, the mediating effect of self-integrity was partial rather than complete.

Subsidiary Analyses

Whereas the results of the pilot study and the main study show that the values function in particular leads to organizational commitment (and the results of the main study suggest that the experience of self-integrity mediates this relationship), the findings are limited in that they are based only on participants who had taken part in at least some corporate volunteer activity. Accordingly, we conducted additional analyses in the pilot study and the main study which included the participants who had not engaged in any corporate volunteer activity. These analyses enabled us to evaluate further: (1) whether corporate volunteerism was positively related to employees' organizational commitment, and (2) whether the relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment may be accounted for by self-integrity.

First, in both the pilot study and in the main study we examined the relationship between how often participants reported taking part in corporate volunteer activity in the past year and their organizational commitment. Unlike in the previous analyses associated with the functions of volunteerism, these analyses included those who had not taken part in any corporate volunteerism; these were the participants who responded with a "1" (meaning "not at all") on the measure of frequency of corporate volunteerism. Both studies yielded significant positive relationships between frequency of volunteerism and organizational commitment, $r(510) = .11$, $p < .05$, and $r(412) = .13$, $p < .01$, in the pilot study and main studies, respectively. The more participants engaged in corporate volunteerism, the higher their organizational commitment.

Second, we also evaluated whether it was participants' corporate volunteerism *in particular* that was positively related to their organizational commitment. An alternative explanation of the positive relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment is that both measures reflect individuals' tendencies to be upbeat or engaged. That is, people who are upbeat or engaged are likely to take part in corporate volunteerism, and people who are upbeat or engaged also are likely to be committed to their organizations. Therefore, it could be argued that the positive relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment is spurious, with both reflective of participants' tendencies to be upbeat or engaged.

To further evaluate this alternative interpretation, we included a measure of frequency of non-corporate volunteerism in both the pilot study and the main study. Presumably, people who are upbeat or engaged also are likely to participate in non-corporate volunteerism. Hence, if the relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment is spurious (with both constructs reflecting people's tendencies to be upbeat or engaged), then we should also find a positive relationship between non-corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment. The measure of non-corporate volunteerism was very similar to the measure of frequency of corporate volunteerism: participants indicated on a five-point scale how often they had engaged in volunteerism in the past year, with endpoints of "not at all" (1) and "very much" (5). The only difference was the referent: in the measure of corporate volunteerism, the referent was corporate-sponsored volunteerism. In the measure of non-corporate volunteerism, the referent was volunteerism done on their own that was not related to their corporate affiliation.

We then regressed organizational commitment on the two measures of frequency of volunteerism (corporate and non-corporate) simultaneously. In both the pilot study and in the main study, the results showed that corporate volunteerism continued to be positively related to organizational commitment ($t = 2.48, p < .02$; $B = .092, SE = .037$ for the pilot study, and $t = 2.11, p < .05$; $B = .088, SE = .042$ for the main study). Importantly, both studies showed that non-corporate volunteerism was unrelated to organizational commitment. In fact, the regression analysis in the pilot study showed that the relationship between non-corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment was *negative* and nearly significant, $t = -1.93, p < .054, B = -.064, SE = .033$, while in the main study it was positive but not significant, $t = 1.70, p > .05, B = .056, SE = .033$. In summary, it was participants' corporate volunteerism in particular that was positively related to their organizational commitment, and not just their tendency to volunteer in general.

Third, in the main study we evaluated whether the experience of self-integrity in the workplace accounted for the relationship between frequency of corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment. As reported previously: (1) frequency of corporate volunteerism was positively related to organizational commitment, and (2) the experience of self-integrity (the hypothesized mediator) was positively related to organizational commitment. Moreover, the latter relationship also emerged when participants who had not engaged in corporate volunteerism were included, $r(412) = .71, p < .001$. Frequency of volunteerism also was positively related to the hypothesized mediator, the experience of self-integrity, $r(412) = .19, p < .01$.

We then regressed organizational commitment on frequency of volunteerism and the experience of self-integrity simultaneously. The effect of the hypothesized mediator, self-integrity, was highly significant, $\beta = .714; t = 20.26, p < .001$, whereas the effect of the independent variable, frequency of volunteerism, became trivial, $\beta = -.004; t = 0.11$. Once again, we used the bootstrapping method of Preacher and Hayes (2008) to test for mediation, which generated 95 % bias-corrected confidence intervals using 1,000 bootstrap samples. Results of the bootstrap analysis indicated that with a probability of .95, an interval between .061 and .165 contains the indirect effect of endorsement of the values function on

commitment via the experience of self-integrity ($B = .113, SE = 0.027$). Given that the direct effect of frequency of volunteerism was not significant, it can be said that the experience of self-integrity fully mediated the relationship between participants' frequency of volunteerism and their organizational commitment.

Fourth, we tested the possibility that it may not even be necessary for employees to *take part* in a corporate volunteer program for them to experience self-integrity and, as a result, show greater organizational commitment. Perhaps believing that their employer is supportive of its volunteerism programs (hereafter referred to as ESVP) also may cause people to experience self-integrity in the workplace, which in turn will positively affect their organizational commitment. Organizations that are perceived to be supportive of corporate volunteerism are likely to be perceived as having good values. As suggested by social identity theory, employees may experience a positive sense of esteem or identity by being members of an organization whose “heart is in the right place” (Bartel, 2001; Grant et al., 2008). The experience of self-integrity, in turn, may have a positive influence on organizational commitment, for at least two reasons. First, reciprocity may be the underlying mechanism; participants may express their appreciation to the organization for enabling them to experience self-integrity and thereby display organizational commitment in return (Jones, 2010). Second, if the presumably positive experience of self-integrity emanates from people's sense of connection with the organization, then they may be able to intensify that positive experience by strengthening their sense of connection with (i.e., commitment to) the organization.

Thus, in the main study we examined the relationship between employees' perceptions of ESVP and their own organizational commitment, and also whether employees' experience of self-integrity accounted for this relationship. Participants completed a three-item measure of ESVP, e.g., “How much do you believe your company is committed to its Corporate Volunteer Program?” Responses on a five-point scale could range from “not at all” (1) to “very much” (5); coefficient alpha = .81. There was a strong positive relationship between ESVP and employees' level of organizational commitment, $r(412) = .60, p < .001$. There also was a strong positive relationship between ESVP and the hypothesized mediator, namely, employees' experience of self-integrity in the workplace, $r(412) = .60, p < .001$.

We then regressed organizational commitment on ESVP and self-integrity simultaneously. The hypothesized mediator, self-integrity, was highly significant ($\beta = .588; t = 15.44, p < .001$, and the independent variable (ESVP) was significant as well; $\beta = .247; t = 6.49, p < .001$). Once again, the bootstrapping method of Preacher and Hayes (2008) was used to test for mediation, in which we generated 95 % bias-corrected confidence intervals using 1,000 bootstrap samples. Results of the bootstrap analysis indicated that with a probability of .95, an interval between .187 and .338 contains the indirect effect of endorsement of the values function on commitment via the experience of self-integrity ($B = .261, SE = 0.039$). Given that the direct effect of ESVP on organizational commitment continued to be significant even when we controlled for self-integrity, the mediating effect of self-integrity was partial rather than complete.

In summary, the results of a variety of subsidiary analyses provided converging evidence that corporate volunteerism is positively related to employees' organizational commitment, and that the experience of self-integrity in the workplace may account for this relationship.

Discussion

A central hypothesis of the present research is that the more that engaging in corporate volunteerism induces employees to experience self-integrity in the workplace, the more likely they are to be organizationally committed. We hypothesized that one predictor of how much engaging in corporate volunteerism leads employees to experience self-integrity in the workplace consists of their motivations for (or the functions of) volunteering. The results of both the pilot and the main study showed that participants' organizational commitment was differentially related to the reasons why participants engaged in corporate volunteerism. Whereas zero-order correlations showed that the values, understanding, social and enhancement functions were positively related to organizational commitment, the results of regression analyses in both studies showed that it was only the values function that attained significance.

One interpretation of the regression results showing that the values function in particular was related to organizational commitment is that employees' endorsement of the value function was especially likely to be related to their experience of self-integrity in the workplace, as set forth in Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, our reasoning suggested that the experience of self-integrity in the workplace would mediate the positive relationship between participants' endorsement of the values function and their organizational commitment, as set forth in Hypothesis 2. The results of the main study lent support to Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Whereas the relationships between the various functions of volunteering and organizational commitment were generally consistent across studies, there were some differences in the magnitude of the relationships. In particular, the significant effects were generally stronger in the main study than in the pilot study. For example, the correlation between the values function and commitment was .19 in the pilot study and .55 in the main study. One explanation may emanate from the fact that there was a much higher level of volunteerism among the participants in the pilot study (77 % of the people we polled reported taking part in at least some corporate volunteerism activity) than in the main study (in which the comparable percentage was only 45 %). That is, participants in the pilot study may have felt more of a strong norm to volunteer than was the case for participants in the main study. Based on Mischel's (1973) conception of "strong" versus "weak" situations, individual difference variables (such as employees' motivations for volunteering, as measured by the functions of volunteerism) are likely to be less consequential in strong situations, in which perceived situational cues constrain people's beliefs and behaviors. If participants felt more situationally compelled to do at least some volunteering in the pilot study than in the main study, then individual differences in their reasons for volunteering may have become somewhat less consequential,

thereby weakening the results found in pilot study relative to those found in the main study. Of course, this possibility is merely speculative and awaits further research.

Finally, the results of the subsidiary analyses which included participants who did not take part in corporate volunteerism provided additional evidence that corporate volunteerism is positively related to employees' organizational commitment, and moreover, that the experience of self-integrity accounted for this relationship. The more participants engaged in corporate (but not non-corporate) volunteerism, the higher was their organizational commitment. Furthermore, the more participants believed that their employers were committed to their volunteer programs the higher was their organizational commitment. Moreover, both of these relationships were mediated by the experience of self-integrity.

Theoretical Implications

Corporate Volunteerism

The present studies provide several important contributions to the corporate volunteerism literature. First, with a few exceptions (e.g., Bartel, 2001; Grant et al., 2008) there has been a paucity of theoretically grounded studies examining the relationship between employees' participation in corporate volunteer activities and their work attitudes and behaviors. Drawing on the functionalist approach to volunteer behavior, the present studies provide insight into why engaging in corporate volunteerism is positively related to organizational commitment. The more people volunteer for reasons that enable them to experience self-integrity, the higher is their organizational commitment.

The findings of the earlier study by Bartel (2001) also are consistent with the notion that the experience of self-integrity accounted for the positive relationship between engaging in corporate volunteerism and employees' support for their organizations. Bartel suggested that when employees engage in corporate volunteerism their self-esteem may benefit from favorable social comparisons between themselves and the parties to whom the volunteer activities are directed. The present research suggests that corporate volunteerism may give rise to the experience of self-integrity through processes other than esteem-enhancement engendered by favorable social comparisons. As the functionalist approach and the present findings suggest, engaging in corporate volunteerism for value-expressive reasons leads to the experience of self-integrity, which, in turn is positively related to employees' organizational commitment.

The present findings also bear some similarities to the results of Grant et al. (2008), who found that the extent to which employees volunteer for programs that are aimed at helping fellow employees (rather than external beneficiaries) is positively related to their organizational commitment. Moreover, the mediating variables in the Grant et al. study (the extent to which people see themselves and their organizations as "caring") are conceptually analogous to the mediator in the present studies (e.g., the experience of self-integrity). Importantly, the present

studies extend those of Grant et al. in at least two noteworthy respects. First, we showed that it is not simply the *amount or frequency of* volunteerism that is predictive of employees' organizational commitment. It also is important to take into account people's motives for engaging in volunteerism. Controlling for frequency of volunteerism, we found in both studies that the more people engage in corporate volunteerism for value-expressive reasons, the higher was their organizational commitment. Thus, it is not only the quantity of corporate volunteerism that is significantly related to organizational commitment; the qualitative nature of the volunteerism matters as well. Second, unlike in Grant et al. we demonstrated that engaging in corporate volunteerism is associated with heightened organizational commitment when the beneficiaries of the volunteerism are external rather than internal to the organization, which is the more traditional terrain in corporate volunteer programs. Put differently, the present results also lend generalizability to the Grant et al. findings.

Functions of Volunteerism

The present findings also contribute to theory and research on the functions of volunteerism (e.g., Clary et al., 1998). In particular, we offer one meaningful way to differentiate between the various functions, namely, the extent to which the functions lead people to experience self-integrity. In support of Hypothesis 1, we found that engaging in volunteerism for value-expressive reasons is associated with the experience of self-integrity to a greater extent than is engaging in volunteerism for other reasons. The rich body of theory and research on self-affirmation processes has shown that people are able to counteract various sources of self-threat when they engage in an activity that affirms their self-integrity (e.g., Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Will engaging in volunteering buffer people against self-threat? The present findings suggest that it may depend on the motivation underlying their volunteer activity: volunteering motivated by the values function may be a more likely buffer against self-threat than is volunteering undertaken for other reasons, such as the career and protective functions which were shown to be unrelated to the experience of self-integrity; see Table 3.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In calling attention to the limitations of the present studies, we also are suggesting some avenues for further research.

Methodological Concerns

First, the internal validity of the various findings is questionable due to the cross-sectional nature of the studies. Put differently, there may be other ways to explain the relationships between participants' endorsement of the values function, their experience of self-integrity, and organizational commitment. For example, perhaps those who experience self-integrity at work volunteer for values-related reasons,

which, in turn leads to their organizational commitment. Whereas it is possible to generate alternative explanations for the main findings and the results of the subsidiary analyses, the most parsimonious explanation of the *set* of findings is the one we are advocating: greater corporate volunteerism leads employees to experience greater self-integrity in the workplace, which in turn leads to higher levels of organizational commitment. That said, further research using longitudinal or experimental designs is needed to evaluate the internal validity of the present findings.

A second potential methodological problem is common methods bias. Whereas it is impossible to discount this issue entirely, the nature of the results suggests that the present findings are not simply an artifact of common methods bias. Note that differences in relationships between constructs emerged *in spite of the fact that all of them were measured in the same way*. For example, in the omnibus regression analyses in the pilot study and the main study, only the values function was significantly related to organizational commitment even though all of the measures were assessed via self-report. Nevertheless, future research may extend the present findings by examining other measures of organizational commitment that are assessed in ways other than how its predictor variables are assessed (e.g., Bartel, 2001). In a related vein, it also would be useful to evaluate whether subjective measures of frequency of volunteerism (such as the one employed in the present studies) or objective measures of frequency of volunteerism (which may be maintained in the organization's archives) are more predictive of the experience of self-integrity and organizational commitment.

Conceptual Concerns

Future research is needed to help us better understand why the values function was highly related to the experience of self-integrity ($r = .55$), and significantly more so than were other all of the other functions. Theory and research have shown that self-affirmation processes are much more impactful when people experience them as coming from within (intrinsic) rather than as a means to an end (extrinsic). For example, Schimel et al. (2004) examined the effects of intrinsically versus extrinsically motivated self-affirmation experiences on people's defensiveness. Participants completed a sentence completion task in reference to an important self-definition, say, being a doctor. For half of the participants, the sentences were phrased such that completing them would have the effect of highlighting intrinsically self-affirming thoughts. For example, "Being a _____ reflects my true _____," could have been completed as follows: "Being a doctor reflects my true personal values." For the remaining half, the sentences were written such that completing them made salient extrinsically self-affirming thoughts. For example, the sentence "If I perform at a high level as _____ then other people will _____" could have been completed as follows: "If I perform at a high level as a doctor then other people will admire me."

After being primed with intrinsic self-affirmation or extrinsic self-affirmation, all participants performed a task in which they were likely to be worried about how well they would perform. Shortly before working on the task, they rated how much

their performance would be due to external reasons such as time pressure or the difficulty of the task. For people worried about their task performance, the defensive or self-protective thing to do is to say in advance that their performance will be due to these external reasons. The results showed that participants who did the sentence completion task that made salient intrinsically self-affirming thoughts were much less defensive: they were less likely to attribute their upcoming task performance to external factors relative to their counterparts who did the sentence completion task in a way that elicited extrinsically self-affirming thoughts.

In a related study, Sherman et al. (2009) examined people's defensiveness in the face of information that contradicted their views. Prior to reading the information participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups. One group took part in a traditional self-affirmation exercise in which they first rank ordered personal values, and then wrote about why their most highly rated value was important to them as well as a specific situation in which the value proved to be important. A second group wrote about why one of their lowest rated values may be important to someone else, along with an accompanying example. A third group did the same thing as those in the first group. However, to make salient the extrinsic (or "means to an end") nature of the self-affirmation exercise, participants were told explicitly instructed beforehand that "the writing activity is designed to make you feel better about yourself and to increase your self-esteem."

Replicating previous research, Sherman et al. (2009) found that those in the first group who did the traditional self-affirmation exercise were less defensive in response to information that contradicted their views than were those in the second group. The level of defensiveness among participants in the third group fell in between that shown by those in the first group and the second group. Of particular relevance to the present research, these findings suggest that the self-integrity of those in the third group, who did the self-affirmation exercise under more extrinsically motivated conditions ("it is designed to make you feel better about yourself") did not benefit as much from the experience.

In the present research, perhaps the values function was particularly likely to lead to the experience of self-integrity because it reflected an intrinsic motivation, namely, the expression of personally meaningful values. In contrast, perhaps some of the other functions of volunteerism reflected more extrinsically motivated activity. For example, at first blush it might seem that the enhancement function and the protective function are relevant to people's experience of self-integrity. According to Clary et al. (1998), the enhancement function reflects people's desire to volunteer in order to grow psychologically. The protective function reflects people's motivation to volunteer in order to reduce or distract themselves from bad feelings they have about themselves. If these functions reflect more extrinsic forms of motivation, however, they may be less likely to promote the experience of self-integrity. In sum, whereas the present study showed that people's endorsement of the values function was most strongly related to their experience of self-integrity further research is needed to delineate why this was the case.

Finally, it would be worth examining in future research whether other factors besides the experience of self-integrity may account for the relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment. As suggested in Footnote

#1, our conceptual rationale did not posit that the experience of self-integrity was the *only* way in which volunteerism will heighten organizational commitment. In fact, the present findings provide evidence that the experience of self-integrity is not the only factor that can account for the relationship between corporate volunteerism and organizational commitment. Whereas the experience of self-integrity significantly mediated the relationship between: (1) employees' endorsement of the values function and their organizational commitment, (2) frequency of corporate volunteerism (among all participants) and employees' organizational commitment, and (3) ESVP and employees' organizational commitment, in instances (1) and (3) the mediating effects were partial rather than complete. Hence, it is important to examine other possible processes through which corporate volunteerism leads to higher organizational commitment. Perhaps volunteering with co-workers enables employees to bond with one another, which, in turn, may lead them to feel more committed to the organization as a whole.

Practical Implications

The present findings suggest that to build organizational commitment by sponsoring corporate volunteerism, organizations may need to do more than create opportunities for their employees to take part in volunteer programs. Volunteer efforts need to be conducted in ways that promote participants' experience of self-integrity. Whereas the present findings suggest that some employees may be more dispositionally motivated than others to engage in volunteerism for reasons that enable them to experience self-integrity, situational factors also may affect how much people experience self-integrity when engaging in corporate volunteerism. Moreover, these situational factors may be influenced by the managers of the sponsoring organizations.

For example, in communicating the positive aspects of taking part in corporate volunteer activities, organizational authorities may wish to highlight certain benefits (e.g., the importance of contributing to a cause that reflects employees' values), and to give less emphasis to other benefits (e.g., to make connections that will help them to climb the corporate ladder). Furthermore, once employees have agreed to take part in a certain volunteer activity, its values-expressive purposes should be made salient on a periodic basis, perhaps through feedback reports from the beneficiaries that show volunteers the progress they have made while also reminding them of the importance of the underlying mission towards which their volunteer efforts are being directed (Grant et al., 2007).

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