PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING: IS IT “CREDITED” OR “STIGMATIZED” BY COLLEAGUES?

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As research begins to accumulate on employee volunteering, it appears that this behavior is largely beneficial to employee performance and commitment. It is less clear, however, how employee volunteering is perceived by others in the workplace. Do colleagues award volunteering “credit” (e.g., associating it with being concerned about others) or do they “stigmatize” it (e.g., associating it with being distracted from work)? Moreover, do those evaluations predict how colleagues actually treat employees who volunteer more often? Adopting a reputation perspective, we draw from theories of person perception and attribution to explore these research questions. The results of a field study reveal that colleagues gave credit to employee volunteering when they attributed it to intrinsic reasons and stigmatized employee volunteering when they attributed it to impression management reasons. Ultimately, through the awarded credits, volunteering was rewarded by supervisors (with the allocation of more resources) and coworkers (with the provision of more helping behavior) when it was attributed to intrinsic motives—a relationship that was amplified when stigmas were low and mitigated when stigmas were high. The results of a laboratory experiment further confirmed that volunteering was both credited and stigmatized, distinguishing it from citizenship behavior, which was credited but not stigmatized.

“They are more organized in order to fit those extra activities in their lives.”

“They are looking for activities that allow them to get out of work time…”

—Colleagues when asked what they think of employees who engage in volunteering

Volunteering—giving time during a planned activity for a volunteer group or organization (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Rodell, 2013; Wilson, 2000)—is becoming an increasingly popular activity, particularly among employed adults (Brudney & Gazley, 2006; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Thus far, there has been every indication that employee volunteering is beneficial for companies, in terms of harder-working employees (Rodell, 2013), positive employee attitudes (Bartel, 2001), and retention of employees (Jones, 2010). What remains less clear, however, is how other people at work—supervisors and coworkers—evaluate and react to employee volunteering.

At first glance, there are reasons to expect that colleagues would simply ignore an employee’s volunteering completely. After all, employee volunteering represents effort that is directed toward some charitable organization, and not one’s employer or colleagues. Thus, it may be easy for scholars and practitioners alike to overlook the relevance and importance of volunteering in regard to how an employee is viewed and treated at work. However, a more in-depth look at the current corporate environment may suggest otherwise. In today’s business world, employees’ personal lives are becoming increasingly intertwined with their work (Umphress, Tihanyi, Bierman, & Gogus, 2013). In part, this trend may be due to the growing visibility of people’s personal lives—for example, through social media (Conner, 2012). It may also be the result of changing perspectives and habits of employees, who blur the lines between work and home with the help of electronic devices (Golden & Geisler, 2007). Regardless of the exact method, details of employees’ personal lives are becoming more transparent and readily accessible, opening the door for behaviors such as

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volunteering to be noticed and evaluated by others at work.

A pertinent question is, then: What is the nature of these evaluations? Recently, Umphress and colleagues (2013) argued that behaviors in employees’ personal lives might run the gamut from being respected to viewed as destructive. Moreover, as evidenced by the quotes opening this paper, it is possible that volunteering may convey both positive and negative information. On the one hand, colleagues may give “credit” to volunteering because they associate it with being concerned about others or think it relates to effective time management. On the other hand, colleagues may “stigmatize” volunteering because they associate it with being distracted from work or connect it to people acting morally superior. The existence and nature of these evaluations is important because they may ultimately influence how colleagues treat employees who volunteer, such as providing those individuals with more or less assistance, guidance, and resources.

The purpose of this study is to explore how colleagues (a term used throughout this manuscript to refer to supervisors and coworkers in aggregate) interpret employee volunteering, and to examine the impact of such evaluations on the treatment that individuals who volunteer more frequently receive in the workplace. In order to understand and categorize colleague evaluations of employee volunteering, we use a reputation perspective and tailor it specifically to the reputation that employees garner from their volunteering. Recently, reputation scholars have advocated for reputation to be examined at a more specific level—a reputation for something as rated by someone based on some behavior (Anderson & Shirako, 2008; Fombrun, 1996; Jensen, Kim, & Kim 2012; Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011). Adopting this approach, volunteering reputation can be summarized as the beliefs, perceptions, and evaluations that colleagues form about an employee based on his or her volunteering (Anderson & Shirako, 2008; Ferris, Blass, Douglas, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2003).

Under this umbrella, credits can be thought of as the positive reputational components garnered from volunteering, and stigmas as the negative reputational components garnered from volunteering.

Continuing to draw from the reputation literature, we integrate theories of person perception and attribution to explore our research questions (Heider, 1958a, 1958b; Jones & Davis, 1965; Wong & Weiner, 1981). As shown in Figure 1, we expect that colleagues evaluate employees based on their volunteering behavior (forming both credits and stigmas), and that those evaluations influence their subsequent supportive reactions (supervisor resource allocation and coworker helping). Theorizing on attributions provides a foundation for examining when colleagues evaluate volunteering positively (and thus credit it) and when they evaluate volunteering negatively (and thus stigmatize it). More specifically, we propose that volunteering will be credited when attributed to intrinsic motives and stigmatized when attributed to impression management motives.

This study offers important insights for the nascent but growing literature on employee volunteering. In particular, by adopting the colleague perspective, we are able to examine how people interpret and react to others’ volunteering behavior. Moreover, by integrating theory about perceptions and attributions (Heider, 1958a, 1958b; Jones & Davis, 1965; Wong & Weiner, 1981), we are able to explore the potential for volunteering to be both credited and stigmatized, shedding light on some of the reputational implications this behavior for employees. In addition, by focusing on the reputational implications of employee behavior in the community sphere of their lives, we expand the work—non-work literature beyond the traditional focus on the role of one’s family (e.g., Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012; Westring & Ryan, 2010). As a result, our research enriches current understanding of the work—non-work interface, as well as the broader person—perception interface.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

As noted above, employee volunteering is when employees give their time to a volunteer group in the course of some planned activity (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Rodell, 2013; Wilson, 2000). Examples include an employee who spends time at a local soup kitchen, or an employee who participates in an initiative such as Habitat for Humanity during a corporate volunteer day. As illustrated by these examples, employee volunteering can occur on one’s personal time or as part of larger company initiative for community involvement. In addition, this conceptualization of volunteering is behavioral in nature (Musick & Wilson, 2008) and could encompass either an initial decision to volunteer or the extent of volunteering behavior—a distinction that can be thought of as the direction or intensity of volunteering effort (see Rodell, 2013). Consistent with the majority of existing employee volunteering research, our focus is on volunteering intensity—particularly, whether increases in one’s volunteering frequency is credited or
stigmatized by colleagues. In pursuit of brevity and clarity, when we use the term “employee volunteering” in this manuscript, we are referring to the frequency or intensity of the behavior.

Volunteering Reputation: Credits and Stigmas

Our first goal in this study is to determine the type of reputation that employees develop based on their level of volunteering. By adopting a person perception perspective, an area of research that examines how people interpret information about others and draw conclusions about them (e.g., Heider, 1958a, 1958b; Jones & Davis, 1965; Leising, Gallrein, & Dufner, 2013), we can provide insight into how one’s behavior—such as volunteering—is perceived. The tenets of the person perception perspective are consistent with those of similar theories, such as signaling and social information processing, which propose that people’s behaviors send signals that others use to evaluate and categorize them (Hochwarter, Ferris, Zinko, Arnell, & James, 2007; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Spence, 1973). Indeed, a handful of studies have demonstrated that individuals’ past behaviors form the basis of their reputation in the workplace (e.g., Anderson & Shirako, 2008; Raub & Weesie, 1990). Thus, we expect that volunteering carries information that forms the basis of employees’ volunteering reputations among their colleagues.

The relevant question is, then: What type of information does volunteering carry—is it positive (and thus credited) or negative (and thus stigmatized)? On the one hand, colleagues may associate positive information with volunteering, and thus credit it. Research has demonstrated that an individual’s behavioral tendencies are relatively consistent across time and situation (Diener & Larsen, 1984; Leikas, Lonnqvist, & Verkasalo, 2012). By definition, volunteering is a proactive and helpful behavior (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Wilson, 2000). Colleagues may make the inference that a person would act similarly at work—for example, displaying concern for other employees and investing themselves in their work community—and thus assign more credit the more a person volunteers. Although there is no direct evidence that volunteering is perceived positively because no studies to date have examined colleague reactions to volunteering, there is support for this relationship at a more general level. For example, reputation scholars have suggested that the more that employees exhibit “good” behaviors—such as behaving in a cooperative or trustworthy manner—the more positively they are perceived (e.g., Anderson & Shirako, 2008).
On the other hand, colleagues may associate negative information with volunteering and stigmatize it. Stigmatization represents the “dark side” of social evaluations (Devers, Dewett, Mishina, & Belsito, 2009), as stigmas are affiliated with characteristics and behaviors that are devalued in a particular social context (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Given that volunteering is not directly and obviously beneficial for the company, it is possible that others could devalue it. Colleagues may make the inference, for example, that volunteering distracts people from their work or that volunteers pressure others to get involved. In a handful of cases, scholars have found evidence that “good” behaviors—such as moral and unselfish acts—have been interpreted negatively by others (Giacalone & Promislo, 2013; Parks & Stone, 2010). Monin, Sawyer, and Marquez (2008) suggested that such negative reactions emerge because the individual may be seen as a threat—that their “good” behavior implicitly condemns colleagues who do not engage in that behavior (Monin et al., 2008). Regarding volunteering in particular, Snyder, Omoto, and Crain (1999) demonstrated that people can indeed stigmatize certain types of volunteering, though the volunteers in that study were stigmatized for the volunteer group itself (i.e., AIDS patients) rather than for the volunteering behavior.

A key component of interpreting the behaviors of others lies in the attribution of motives (Allen & Rush, 1998; Feldman, 1981; Heider, 1958a, 1958b; Zalensy & Ford, 1990). According to theory on attributions, people construct causal explanations for others’ behaviors in an effort to predict and understand their environment (Heider, 1958a). That is, people seek to understand the motivation for others’ behaviors—why they behave the way they do. These explanations attributed to a behavior thus factor in to how people interpret and evaluate that action.

A long tradition of research on motivation has pointed to a pivotal distinction between behaving in a more authentic manner—because someone genuinely enjoys what they are doing—and behaving in an instrumental manner—in order to get ahead or gain something from others (Deci, 1971; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This distinction carries over into the attributions that people make about another person’s motives. Specifically, “good” behaviors may be viewed positively when attributed to authentic and internal motives, but viewed negatively when attributed to more instrumental and external motives (see Eastman, 1994; Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Hui, 1993). Applying this theory to employee volunteering should shed light on the valence of colleague evaluations of the behavior, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of when volunteering is likely to be credited or stigmatized.

Adopting an authentic view of volunteering behaviors, colleagues may attribute employee volunteering to a genuine interest and enjoyment in the activity—in other words, make an intrinsic attribution (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When colleagues make intrinsic attributions about an employee’s volunteering, they see that individual as being compelled or pulled toward the volunteer work for the sake of the activity itself. When seen as intrinsically motivated, volunteering is perceived as a volitional activity that brings personal enjoyment and satisfaction to the employee. In this situation, an employee who volunteers is likely to be seen as someone who inherently enjoys other-focused and helpful actions. Given the general consistency in behavioral tendencies across situations, volunteering may then serve as a signal that such actions are likely in the workplace (Diener & Larsen, 1984; Leikas et al., 2012). This evaluation is in line with the general finding that doing “good” with good intentions is viewed positively (Allen & Rush, 1998; Grant et al., 2009). Following the attribution process in this scenario suggests that the more that colleagues attribute volunteering to intrinsic motives, the more they should credit the behavior.

Research on perceptions and evaluations of others has demonstrated that a person’s immediate behavior—in this case, volunteering—is not the only factor to consider; rather, colleagues may also be “biased” by preexisting views or general opinions of those individuals (e.g., Anderson & Shirako, 2008; Leising et al., 2013). Given that one’s job performance could cast a “halo” that affects the reputational consequences of volunteering, our hypotheses control for job performance (Hochwarter et al., 2007). They also control for prosocial identity to account for preexisting opinions that the employee is generally a good person (Grant & Mayer, 2009).

Hypothesis 1. The relationship between volunteering and credits is moderated by intrinsic attributions, such that the relationship is more positive when intrinsic attributions are high than when they are low.

On the other end of the spectrum, research on attributions for prosocial behavior has also pointed to the unique and detrimental role of engaging in such
behavior in order to impress others or obtain recognition (Allen & Rush, 1998; Eastman, 1994; Johnson, Erez, Kiker, & Motowidlo, 2002). This type of evaluation of a volunteer’s motives may be considered an impression management attribution—that the behavior was driven by a desire to create or maintain a particular image in the eyes of others (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). When colleagues make impression management attributions about volunteering, they are implying that they think the person is doing it strategically to influence the way that others view them. Impression management attributions may be harmful to interpretations of volunteering as colleagues may think the behavior is disingenuous and being used as a political tactic (Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor, & Judge, 1995). In this way, volunteering may be equated to job-focused impression management tactics—where individuals attempt to impress others through self-promotion—that tend to be viewed negatively by others (Bolino, Varela, Bande, & Turnley, 2006; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Following the attribution process, then, suggests that the more that colleagues attribute volunteering to impression management motives, the more they should stigmatize the behavior.

Hypothesis 2. The relationship between volunteering and stigmas is moderated by impression management attributions, such that the relationship is more positive when impression management attributions are high than they are low.

Supportive Reactions from Colleagues

The second goal in this study is to examine colleague reactions to the credits and stigmas assigned to volunteering. Returning to theories of person perception and attribution, once people interpret behavior—for example, categorizing volunteering with stigmas or credits—they rely on these interpretations in order to decide how to behave or react in that particular scenario (Feldman, 1981; Heider, 1958a). Indeed, research on reputation has demonstrated that the information conveyed by an individual’s reputation drives others’ reactions to them (e.g., Johnson et al., 2002; Tsui, 1984). The question is, then: If employee volunteering can convey both positive (credits) and negative (stigmas) information, what are the implications for colleague reactions?

More specifically, we are asking whether colleagues respond supportively. The form of supportive reaction could vary depending on the types of colleagues—either coworkers or supervisors. Coworkers may react supportively by going out of their way to be helpful to a particular employee. Although research has historically focused on why employees engage in helping behaviors, scholars are beginning to examine the conditions associated with receiving help (Bowler & Brass, 2006; Scott & Judge, 2009). In the current context, we are exploring the possibility that the fewer stigmas and more credits that an employee accrues, the more likely they are to receive such help from coworkers. Helping is an important and relevant response to examine because it can be a powerful action (and reaction) that could create a cycle or norm of helping behavior at work (Grant & Patil, 2012).

Although supervisors may also direct helping behavior toward employees, we propose that such helping might not be the ideal behavior to represent supervisor reactions. In part, this is because many helping behaviors (e.g., “I help this individual learn about their work”) may be considered part of a supervisor’s job tasks and, in part, because supervisors have discretion over other, more important, resources (e.g., work assignments and raises). As such, we focus on the extent to which supervisors prioritize employees during resource allocation decisions (Johnson et al., 2002; Kiker & Motowidlo, 1991). We consider the possibility that the more credits and fewer stigmas that an employee accrues, the more likely they are to be prioritized in their supervisor’s decisions about how to allocate resources among employees.

Assigning credits to an employee—for example, believing that they have more effective time management skills or more proclivity for ethical behavior—represents more favorable colleague evaluations, which should have positive implications for their supportive reactions (Feldman, 1981; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). As discussed above, such behavioral tendencies are thought to be consistent across situations (Leikas et al., 2012). Given the benefits of a helping orientation in the workplace (Grant & Patil, 2012; Rioux & Penner, 2001), colleagues are likely to want to encourage the behavior (Luthans & Kreitner, 1985; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997). More specifically, coworkers may be increasingly likely to go out of their way to help employees with more accrued credits, and supervisors may increasingly prioritize these employees.

Studies conducted on reputation, and related topics such as popularity, have provided evidence of such supportive reactions. For example, Tsui (1984)
demonstrated that managers who had a positive reputation received merit increases and promotions from their supervisors. In a study on popularity—a label that could be considered a form of positive reputation—Scott and Judge (2009) showed that coworkers responded to popular employees by directing more citizenship behavior toward them. As demonstrated by Eastman (1994) and Allen and Rush (1998), colleague reactions such as these were even more likely when employee behavior was attributed to intrinsic motives. Therefore, we expect that credits should be positively related to colleagues’ supportive reactions. By extension, volunteering should be positively related to supportive reactions through credit when intrinsic attributions are high.

**Hypothesis 3. The positive indirect relationship between volunteering and supportive reactions through credits will be moderated by intrinsic attributions, such that the relationship is more positive when intrinsic attributions are high than when they are low.**

Conversely, assigning stigmas to an employee—for example viewing them as distracted from their work or acting morally superior—represents an unfavorable colleague evaluation, which should have negative implications for colleagues’ supportive reactions (Feldman, 1981; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). That is, the more colleagues stigmatize a person, the less likely they should be to respond in ways that could be perceived as encouraging the person’s behavior (Luthans & Kreitner, 1985; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997). Although few studies have explicitly studied unfavorable individual reputations, a series of laboratory studies conducted by Johnson et al. (2002) provided evidence of these negative consequences. Based on manipulations of favorable versus unfavorable reputations among undergraduates, Johnson et al. (2002) demonstrated that individuals with bad reputations received fewer rewards, in terms of pay and promotion decisions, than did individuals with good reputations. Eastman’s (1994) lab study further indicated that employees received fewer rewards when an otherwise “good” behavior was attributed to impression management motives. Therefore, we expect that stigmas are negatively related to supportive reactions. By extension, volunteering should be negatively related to supportive reactions through stigmas when impression management attributions are high.

**Hypothesis 4. The negative indirect relationship between volunteering and supportive reactions through stigmas will be moderated by impression management attributions, such that the relationship is more negative when impression management attributions are high than when they are low.**

In addition, it is possible that colleagues can simultaneously evaluate volunteering both positively and negatively—associating the behavior with both credits and stigmas (Kando & Summers, 1971). For example, a colleague may believe that the more a person volunteers, the better they are at juggling their time and activities (a credit), but also infer that they are more likely to have a “holier-than-thou” attitude (a stigma). Likewise, the more an employee volunteers, the more they may be viewed as both an ethical individual (a credit) and as distracted from their work tasks (a stigma). This possibility—that volunteering could be simultaneously credited and stigmatized—is consistent with evaluations of other non-work activities, which are conceptualized as both enhancing and conflicting with work (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

As part of the attribution process, people consider the intended outcomes or effects of a behavior in order to determine the reasons why another person engages in it (Heider, 1958a, 1958b; Jones & Davis, 1965). Because any given act can have multiple effects, it can also be attributed to multiple reasons (Jones & Davis, 1965). One can think about these situations in which volunteering is both credited and stigmatized as mixed circumstances. In these mixed circumstances, the reputational implications of volunteering are likely to be tempered. Although we expect colleagues to react more favorably the more credits they assign an employee, the simultaneous presence of stigmas may reduce the positive tenor of those reactions. Likewise, although we expect colleagues to react unfavorably when they stigmatize an employee, the existence of credits may combat such negative reactions. In other words, we expect that credits will mitigate the detriments of stigmas and that stigmas will mitigate the benefits of credits.

**Hypothesis 5a. The conditional positive indirect relationship between volunteering and supportive reactions (through credits, when intrinsic attributions are high) will be moderated by stigmas, such that the relationship is weaker when stigmas are high and stronger when stigmas are low.**

**Hypothesis 5b. The conditional negative indirect relationship between volunteering and**
supportive reactions (through stigmas, when impression management attributions are high) will be moderated by credits, such that the relationship is weaker when credits are high and stronger when credits are low.

We conducted a series of two studies in order to examine these reputational implications of employee volunteering. In Study 1, we tested our hypotheses in a field setting with pairs of employees and colleagues (either a coworker or supervisor). In Study 2, we conducted an experiment that examined the credits and stigmas assigned to others based on manipulations of volunteering behavior.

STUDY 1: METHOD

Participants and Procedures

Participants were recruited through classified advertisements posted on the Internet. In order to participate, individuals had to work full-time (at least 35 hours per week), have volunteered at least once within the past 12 months, and provide the name of a colleague (either a supervisor or a coworker) who would be willing to complete a survey on their behalf. Interested participants were directed to a website with these details and an online survey where they supplied information about their volunteering and the contact information for their colleagues. We contacted colleagues via email four weeks later and asked them to complete a survey about their perceptions of the employee. Specifically, this survey inquired about the reputation (credits and stigmas) of the employee, the resources or help they may have provided the employee, and the motives they attributed to their volunteering. Questions about volunteering motives were positioned last on this survey so that the topic would not influence responses about reputation. Both employees and colleagues received $10 compensation for their time.

A total of 451 individuals initially signed up for the study. Of this initial sample, participants were excluded from the final analyses if they did not complete their survey, if their colleague did not complete a survey on their behalf, or if they indicated that they had not volunteered within the last year. As a result, the final sample consisted of 260 employee volunteers (a 57.6% final response rate). In total, 67% of the employee volunteers were female, and their average age was 33.92 years ($SD = 10.50$). Their average tenure was 4.62 years ($SD = 4.51$), they volunteered an average of 6.22 hours per week ($SD = 6.03$), and 86.2% of their volunteering was conducted on their own time (vs. 13.8% through corporate initiatives). Of the colleagues, 60% were female, the average age was 37.28 years ($SD = 12.43$), and the average tenure was 5.94 years ($SD = 5.47$). A total of 120 colleague surveys were completed by supervisors and the remaining 140 were completed by coworkers.

Measures

Volunteering. Employees completed a five-item volunteering measure developed by Rodell (2013). The instructions read, “The following items ask about the time or skills that you give to volunteer groups (e.g., charitable groups, nonprofit groups, etc.). How frequently do you engage in the following behaviors?” The items included, “I give my time to help a volunteer group,” “I apply my skills in ways that benefit a volunteer group,” “I devote my energy toward a volunteer group,” “I engage in activities to support a volunteer group,” and “I employ my talent to aid a volunteer group.” Participants used a response scale ranging from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Very Often. The coefficient $\alpha$ was .93.

Volunteering credits and stigmas. Given that the reputation literature has focused on global and positive evaluations of others (Hochwarter et al., 2007; Jensen et al., 2012), we set out to create a tool that could capture a more specific reputation—garnered from volunteering as rated by colleagues—as well as the positive (credits) and negative (stigmas) components of such a reputation. First, adopting an inductive approach, we relied on an open-ended questionnaire to identify the nature of both positive and negative evaluations of volunteering. This process resulted in four positive themes (i.e., credits)—Time Management, Other Focus, Sense of Community, and Ethical Values—and four negative themes (i.e., stigmas)—Distraction, Evangelism, Void Filling, and Self-Righteousness. Second, we created measures of volunteering credits and stigmas following the procedures outlined by Hinkin and Tracey (1999; see also Hinkin, 1998). Table 1 provides a summary of these eight themes, including their definitions, example quotes from the open-ended questionnaire, and survey items (also see Appendix A for a more detailed description of the scale development process). Volunteering credits and stigmas were assessed using a response scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The coefficient $\alpha$ values were .84 for credits and .83 for stigmas.
Impression management attributions. Colleagues of the employee volunteer assessed impression management motives attributed to employee volunteering with four items adapted from Wayne and Ferris (1990) and Rioux and Penner (2001). An example item included, “This colleague volunteers because it will look good to their supervisor.” The response scale ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The coefficient α was .95.

Intrinsic attributions. Colleagues assessed the intrinsic motives attributed to employee volunteering with four items adapted from Grant (2008). An example item included, “This colleague volunteers because they enjoy the activity itself.” The response scale ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The coefficient α was .93.

Supportive reactions. Coworkers indicated the degree to which they helped the focal employee using six items from Van Dyne and LePine (1998). Example items included, “I offer to do things for this individual” and “I help this individual with their work responsibilities.” One of the original items in Van Dyne and LePine (1998), which referenced orienting new employees to the job, was not included because it was not relevant to the current scenario. Supervisors indicated the degree to which they prioritized the employee volunteer when making resource allocation decisions using four items drawn from Kiker and Motowidlo (1991). Example items included, “I prioritize this employee when allocating resources” and “I prioritize this employee when making salary and bonus decisions.” The response scale for both measures ranged from 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Very Often. Once collected, responses were standardized and combined to create the supportive reactions variable. The coefficient α was .92. A dummy-coded variable representing the source of these reactions (1 for coworkers and 0 for supervisors) was included in the analyses in order to ensure that the results were representative of both sources.

Job performance. We included employee job performance, as rated by colleagues, as a control variable. As noted in our theorizing, evaluations are not limited to relevant behaviors, but are also influenced by other actions and general opinions (Leising et al., 2013). In addition, previous research has shown that employee performance is related to variables at multiple steps in our model, including volunteering (Rodell, 2013), reputation (Hochwarter et al., 2007), and resource allocation (Kiker & Motowidlo, 1991). Thus, including it in our model creates a more robust test and helps avoid problems associated with unmeasured variables (James, 1980).

Job performance was rated with a five-item measure from MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Fetter (1991), using a response scale that ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Example items included, “All things considered, this individual is outstanding at their job” and “In general, this individual is a good performer.” Although this assessment was originally intended for supervisors (MacKenzie et al., 1991), research has also shown this scale to be valid when completed by coworkers (Rodell, 2013). In the current study, both types of colleagues—supervisors and coworkers—assessed job performance with this scale. The coefficient α was .93.

Prosocial identity. Another control variable included in the model was prosocial identity. Similar to job performance, the prosocial attitudes of employees who volunteer may have an important influence on how others perceive and treat them (Grant & Mayer, 2009). Employees completed a three-item prosocial identity measure developed by Grant, Dutton, and Rosso (2008), using a response scale that ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. An example item included, “I see myself as caring.” The coefficient α was .80.

STUDY 1: RESULTS

The descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations are listed in Table 2. We tested the hypotheses with structural equation modeling in MPlus 6.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). To begin, a measurement model was tested for adequacy. Following recommendations to create latent product terms in structural equation modeling, the components of the product terms (volunteering, intrinsic motives, and impression management motives) were modeled as single indicators (Cortina, Chen, & Dunlap, 2001; Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992). Stigmas and credits were treated as higher-order latent variables, each with four indicators that were created from scale scores for the components uncovered during the pilot studies. The average standardized factor loading was .73 for stigmas and .77 for credits. The measurement model demonstrated adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 (df = 194) = 377.76$, $CFI = .94$, $SRMR = .046$, $RMSEA = .060$). Paths were then added to create the structural model in Figure 2, which similarly fit the data ($\chi^2 (df = 213) = 420.56$, $CFI = .93$, $SRMR = .054$, $RMSEA = .061$).

We followed Mathieu et al.’s (1992) recommendations for modeling moderators in structural equation modeling. Specifically, we calculated the product terms from the mean-centered scale scores for the independent and moderating variables (Cortina et al.,
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| Time Management  | Organizing their schedule in an efficient manner.                          | "[They] have good allocation of [their] time." | 1. He/she effectively manages his/her time. 6.50  
2. He/she organizes his/her schedule in an efficient manner.  
3. He/she allocates his/her time well.  
4. He/she is good at budgeting his/her time in order to get things done. |                  |
| Other Focus      | Displaying concern for other people.                                       | "Generally [they] care about other people." | 1. He/she displays concern for others. 5.88  
2. He/she genuinely cares about others.  
3. He/she is generous to others.  
4. He/she is kind to others. |                  |
| Sense of Community | Feeling a sense of responsibility toward the community.                   | "They take an interest in our community." | 1. He/she feels a sense of responsibility toward the community. 6.12  
2. He/she is committed to the community.  
3. He/she is an active part of the community.  
4. He/she feels a sense of duty to the community. |                  |
| Ethical Values   | Conducting their life in an ethical manner.                               | "[They have a] high moral compass." | 1. He/she has a strong moral compass. 6.39  
2. He/she has good ethical values.  
3. He/she conducts his/her life in an ethical manner.  
4. He/she always tries to do the right thing. |                  |
| **STIGMAS**      |                                                                             |                                   |                                                                                |                  |
| Distraction      | Attention is diverted from other activities.                              | "[They] tend to focus less on their work and sometimes seem distracted." | 1. He/she is often distracted from other things he/she should focus on. 5.73  
2. He/she doesn't keep his/her "eye on the prize."  
3. His/her attention is diverted from other activities.  
4. He/she seems to focus on the wrong things. |                  |
| Evangelism       | Pressuring others to get involved in the community.                       | "They push their volunteer activities on others in the office." | 1. He/she pressures others to get involved in the community. 5.43  
2. He/she pushes others to take part in community events.  
3. He/she petitions people to be active in community efforts.  
4. He/she solicits others' involvement in the community. |                  |
| Void Filling     | Trying to fill a void in their life.                                      | "[He/she] does not have anything else to do." | 1. He/she is trying to fill a void in his/her life. 6.09  
2. He/she is looking for something that is currently missing in his/her life.  
3. He/she is compensating for a sense of emptiness in his/her life.  
4. He/she is seeking to make up for a gap in his/her life. |                  |
| Self-Righteousness | Believing they are better than others.                                   | "[They have a] 'holier than thou' attitude." | 1. He/she believes that he/she is better than others. 6.10  
2. He/she views himself/herself as superior to others.  
3. He/she thinks he/she is more important than other people.  
4. He/she presumes that others are not as good as he/she is. |                  |

<sup>a</sup> Example quotes are from the inductive study participant responses.  
<sup>b</sup> Mean rating of definitional correspondence is based on seven-point scale from the content validity study (n = 492).
Hypotheses 1 and 2 proposed that one’s volunteering reputation—credits and stigmas—would depend on the attributions that colleagues made about the behavior. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the relationship between volunteering and credits would be moderated by intrinsic attributions, such that the relationship would be more positive when intrinsic attributions were high than when they were low. The product term between volunteering and intrinsic attributions was positive and significant ($b = .12$). As shown in Figure 3, the volunteering–credits relationship was positive and significant when intrinsic motives were high ($b = .13, p < .05$) but not when intrinsic motives were low ($b = -0.09, n.s.$), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the relationship between volunteering and stigmas would be moderated by impression management attributions, such that the relationship would be more positive when impression management attributions were high than when they were low. The product term between volunteering and impression management attributions was positive and significant ($b = .15$). As shown in Figure 3, the volunteering–stigma relationship was positive and significant when impression management motives were high ($b = .18, p < .05$) but not when impression management motives were low ($b = -0.07, n.s.$), supporting Hypothesis 2.

Given the novelty of finding negative reactions to positive behaviors, we were interested in understanding which specific forms of stigmas were most responsible for this finding. Thus, we conducted a series of post hoc analyses examining each of the stigma facets individually. These tests revealed a significant interaction effect of volunteering and impression management attribution regarding two facets—filling a void ($b = .14$) and self-righteousness ($b = .11$). The interaction term was not significant for distraction ($b = .06$) or evangelism ($b = .08$).

Hypotheses 3 and 4 predicted conditional indirect relationships between volunteering and supportive reactions. These first-stage moderated mediation hypotheses were tested using the Edwards and Lambert (2007) approach of bootstrapping the coefficients obtained in the structural model to determine the indirect and direct effects from volunteering on supportive reactions. By multiplying the relevant path coefficients, this procedure determines the difference in indirect effects when the moderator is high versus low. Table 3 provides a decomposition of the effects from volunteering on supportive reactions.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the positive indirect relationship between volunteering and supportive reactions through credits would be more positive when intrinsic attributions were high than when they were low. Supporting Hypothesis 3, the indirect relationship between volunteering and supportive reactions was positive and significant when intrinsic motives were high (.06), but not significant when intrinsic motive were low (−.04). Hypothesis 4 predicted that the negative indirect relationship between volunteering and supportive reactions through stigmas would be more negative when impression management motives was high than when they were low. However, because the relationship between stigmas and supportive reactions was not significant, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 proposed a credit-by-stigma interaction, such that stigmas should mitigate the beneficial effects of credits (Hypothesis 5a) and that credits should mitigate the detrimental effects of stigmas (Hypothesis 5b). As shown in the tested model (Figure 2), this interaction term was significant ($b = -.18$). Moreover, as shown in Figure 4, the relationship between credits and supportive reactions was mitigated when stigmas were high ($b = .24, n.s.$) and amplified when stigmas were low ($b = 1.00, p < .05$). This interaction has implications for the indirect effects predicted in Hypothesis 5.

In particular, it was expected that when intrinsic attributions were high, employee volunteering would improve colleague reactions through credits. Incorporating the credit-by-stigma interaction term revealed that this indirect effect was mitigated when stigmas were high (.03) and amplified when stigmas were low (.09), supporting Hypothesis 5a (see Table 3).
TABLE 2
Study 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2a</th>
<th>2b</th>
<th>2c</th>
<th>2d</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>3a</th>
<th>3b</th>
<th>3c</th>
<th>3d</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Volunteering</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Credits</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.29*</td>
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<td>a. Time management</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.74</td>
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<td>0.83*</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Other focus</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.86*</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Sense of community</td>
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<td>0.78*</td>
<td>0.48*</td>
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<td>d. Ethical values</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Stigmas</td>
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<td>−0.19*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Distraction</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>−0.13*</td>
<td>−0.42*</td>
<td>−0.40*</td>
<td>−0.35*</td>
<td>−0.28*</td>
<td>−0.35*</td>
<td>0.83*</td>
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<td>b. Evangelism</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
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<td>c. Void filling</td>
<td>2.26</td>
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<td>0.67*</td>
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<td>d. Self-righteousness</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>−0.11</td>
<td>−0.40*</td>
<td>−0.36*</td>
<td>−0.39*</td>
<td>−0.20*</td>
<td>−0.37*</td>
<td>0.84*</td>
<td>0.65*</td>
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<td>0.62*</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Intrinsic attributions</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
<td>0.50*</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>−0.20*</td>
<td>−0.29*</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>−0.20*</td>
<td>−0.16*</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Impression management motives</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>−0.17*</td>
<td>−0.14*</td>
<td>−0.19*</td>
<td>−0.11</td>
<td>−0.13*</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>0.30*</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
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<td>6. Supportive reactions</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>−0.18*</td>
<td>−0.23*</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td>−0.17*</td>
<td>−0.17*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Job performance</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.62*</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>−0.51*</td>
<td>−0.58*</td>
<td>−0.21*</td>
<td>−0.45*</td>
<td>−0.41*</td>
<td>0.44*</td>
<td>−0.24*</td>
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<td>8. Prosocial identity</td>
<td>4.36</td>
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<td>0.30*</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
<td>−0.23*</td>
<td>−0.25*</td>
<td>−0.05</td>
<td>−0.21*</td>
<td>−0.25*</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>−0.07</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=260.
* p < .05
A series of post hoc analyses revealed that this effect was consistent across the four stigma facets. For each stigma facet × credit interaction, the interaction terms were: distraction ($b = -0.11, p < .05$), evangelism ($b = -0.13, p < .05$), filling a void ($b = -0.16, p < .05$), and self-righteousness ($b = -0.11, p < .05$). Moreover, in all four cases, this interaction influenced the positive conditional indirect effect of volunteering on supportive reactions through credits (when intrinsic attributions were high). In particular, high levels of stigmas mitigated the positive indirect effect of volunteering on supportive reactions (through credits, when intrinsic attributions were high), while low levels of these stigmas amplified this positive indirect effect (.08 vs. .04, for each stigma facet).

We also expected that credits would similarly mitigate the otherwise detrimental effects of stigmas on colleagues’ supportive reactions. Given that this indirect effect of volunteering on supportive reactions through stigmas was not significant, the moderating role of credits was also not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 5b was not supported.

Taken as a whole, the results from this study support the negative and positive reputational implications of employee volunteering. Colleagues assigned both stigmas and credits to volunteering, depending on their attributions for the behavior, and these evaluations ultimately impacted the supportive reactions of helping and resource allocation.

**STUDY 2: METHOD**

**Participants and Procedures**

We conducted this study using students that served as a subject pool as part of their introductory business management class. In return for their participation, students received course credit. Once registered, participants completed an online survey that asked about their volunteering, citizenship behavior, motives for volunteering and citizenship behavior, and personality. Two weeks later, they were sent the second survey, which asked them to evaluate student profiles that were allegedly created...
based on information from the initial surveys from other classmates. A total of 366 students completed a Time 1 survey and 305 completed a Time 2 survey (83.3% final completion rate). Of the participants, 54% were male, and their average age was 20.63 (SD = 2.38). We employed two 2 × 2 designs, fully crossed, where participants were randomly assigned to evaluate one of 16 profiles. These profiles manipulated volunteering (high and low), citizenship behavior (high and low), as well as attributions for both volunteering (intrinsic and impression management) and citizenship behavior (intrinsic and impression management).

We advertised this study as an investigation of how individuals perceive each other and how that evaluation impacts the degree to which they wish to work together. We took several steps to create realism for the participants. First, participants were told that their initial surveys would be used to create anonymous profiles so that students could evaluate

![Figure 3](image-url)

**FIGURE 3**  
Study 1: Moderating Effects of Intrinsic and Impression Management Motives

![Table 3](image-url)

**TABLE 3**  
Study 1: Indirect Effects of Volunteering on Supportive Reactions from Colleagues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>First Stage Moderator</th>
<th>Second Stage Moderator</th>
<th>Indirect Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>High intrinsic attribution</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low intrinsic attribution</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stigmas</td>
<td>High impression management attribution</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low impression management attribution</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>High intrinsic attribution</td>
<td>High stigmas</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High intrinsic attribution</td>
<td>Low stigmas</td>
<td>0.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Stigmas</td>
<td>High impression management attribution</td>
<td>High credits</td>
<td>–0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High impression management attribution</td>
<td>Low credits</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: n = 260.

* p < .05
each other. They were further told that they were evaluating randomly selected actual classmates in the second survey and that other classmates may receive their profile to evaluate (when, in truth, the profiles were fictitious). Second, students were told that their evaluations of these profiles could influence group assignments for the second class in the series they were taking. Finally, the profiles also included other non-relevant information: a blurred picture of a student next to the profile description (gender was randomly rotated), a randomly generated student identification number, and profile information about an unrelated personality trait (moderation). We employed this design to try to keep students from focusing exclusively on volunteering and citizenship information and from engaging in hypothesis guessing. We also wanted them to believe that their evaluations had the potential for real outcomes (who they were assigned to work with the next semester) in order to encourage them to make realistic evaluations. After all data were collected, participants were debriefed about the need for deception and the true purpose of the study.

In addition to the traditional benefits of employing an experimental design—such as addressing concerns about causality (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991)—this study allowed us to consider the role of citizenship behavior. Citizenship behavior and volunteering are similar in a few obvious ways; for example, they are both volitional and positive in nature (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Organ, 1988). These behaviors also vary, however, as they occur in different domains with different referents: citizenship behavior is effort directed toward the workplace (e.g., helping co-workers or voicing concerns about work) while volunteering is directed outside the workplace (e.g., dedicating time to a nonprofit). Manipulating the levels of both of these behaviors allowed us to compare and contrast the behaviors more specifically.

**Manipulations and Measures**

We created profiles with information about fictitious students regarding volunteering and citizenship behavior, and either intrinsic or impression motives for volunteering. The information within these profiles is described below. Based on the study design, there were 16 versions of these profiles. Participants were told that the profiles were based on the initial survey that all students filled out, lending credence to the realism of the manipulations.

**High volunteering condition.** “He/she scored above the 80th percentile on volunteering. This means that he/she often gives time or skills to volunteer groups (e.g., charitable groups, nonprofit groups, community groups, etc.). Specifically, he/she has frequently volunteered with Adopt-a-Highway, Green Corps, or IMPACT, among others.”

**Low volunteering condition.** “He/she scored below the 20th percentile on volunteering. This means that he/she rarely gives time or skills to volunteer groups (e.g., charitable groups, nonprofit groups, community groups, etc.). Specifically, he/she has occasionally volunteered with Adopt-a-Highway, but has not volunteered with groups that other students are involved in (e.g., Green Corps, IMPACT).”

**High citizenship condition.** “He/she scored above the 80th percentile on citizenship. This means that he/she often uses his/her discretion to improve the functioning of the group. Specifically, he/she has kept others informed about group issues, shared personal property with others in the group, and assisted group members with their duties.”

**Low citizenship condition.** “He/she scored below the 20th percentile on citizenship. This means that he/she rarely uses his/her discretion to improve the functioning of the group. Specifically, he/she has occasionally kept others informed about group issues, but has not engaged in behaviors that other students have (e.g., shared personal property with others in the group, assisted group members with their duties).”

**Intrinsic attribution condition.** When paired with a high volunteering (or citizenship) condition, intrinsic motive was manipulated with, “When asked why he/she volunteers, he/she reported that he/she finds it fun and engaging.” When paired with a low volunteering (or citizenship) condition, intrinsic motive was manipulated with, “When asked why he/she volunteers, he/she reported that, to the extent that he/she does it, he/she finds it fun and engaging.”
Impression management attribution condition. When paired with a high volunteering (or citizenship) condition, impression motive was manipulated with, “When asked why he/she volunteers, he/she reported that he/she essentially does it to impress other people and make himself/herself look good.” When paired with a low volunteering (or citizenship) condition, impression motive was manipulated with, “When asked why he/she volunteers, he/she reported that, to the extent that he/she does it, he/she does it to impress other people and make himself/herself look good.”

Measures of credits and stigmas. Participants evaluated the profiles using the stigma and credit measures developed in Study 1. The response scale ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The coefficient α was .85 for stigmas (.80 for distraction, .92 for evangelism, .94 for filling a void, and .95 for self-righteousness) and .93 for credits (.95 for time management, .91 for other focus, .93 for sense of community, and .92 for ethical values).

STUDY 2: RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

We used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine whether our manipulations were effective. For the manipulation check, we used one item from Rodell (2013): “He/she gives time to help a volunteer group.” Participants rated the profiles of the high volunteering condition as higher for volunteering (M = 4.39) than the profiles in the low volunteering condition (M = 2.61; F[1, 303] = 283.34, p < .05). Intrinsic attributions were assessed with the item “He/she volunteers because it is fun and engaging” (Grant, 2008). Participants rated the intrinsic attribution condition higher on this item (M = 4.10) than profiles of the impression management attribution condition (M = 2.38; F[1, 302] = 239.20, p < .05). Vice versa, impression management attributions were assessed with the item “He/she volunteers because it impresses other people” (Riouxf & Penner, 2001; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Participants rated the profiles of the impression management attribution condition higher on this item (M = 4.51) than profiles of the intrinsic attribution condition (M = 3.05; F[1, 302] = 161.84, p < .05). Finally, for the citizenship behavior manipulation check, we used one item from Lee and Allen (2002): “He/she assists others with their duties.” Participants rated the high citizenship condition higher on citizenship behavior (M = 3.72) than the low citizenship condition (M = 2.82; F[1, 302] = 74.12, p < .05). Taken together, these results indicated that the manipulations effectively represented our variables of interest.

Hypothesis Testing

A series of between-subjects ANOVAs were used to examine the conditional effects of volunteering on credits and stigmas, providing another test of Hypotheses 1 and 2. The means and standard deviations for each condition are presented in Table 4. The results showed that there was a main effect of volunteering on credits—participants assigned more credit to profiles indicating high volunteering than to profiles of low volunteering (F[1, 303] = 50.06, p < .05). In addition, there was a significant interaction effect of volunteering and intrinsic attributions on credits (F[1, 302] = 4.87, p < .01), such that more credits were assigned to volunteering when the behavior was attributed to intrinsic motives than when it was attributed to impression management motives (see Figure 5).

The results also indicated a main effect of volunteering on stigmas—participants assigned more stigmas to profiles indicating high volunteering than to profiles of low volunteering (F[1, 304] = 18.81, p < .05). However, there was no significant interaction effect of volunteering and impression management attributions on stigmas (F[1, 304] = 0.50, n.s.). A series of post hoc analyses on the four stigma dimensions revealed that the main effect was driven by two facets in particular—evangelism (high M = 2.78, SD = 0.89 vs. low M = 2.00, SD = 0.82; F[1, 304] = 65.75, p < .05) and filling a void (high M = 2.90, SD = 0.96 vs. low M = 2.52, SD = 0.75; F[1, 304] = 14.12,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study 2: Means and Standard Deviations by Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
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<td>DV</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Stigmas</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: n = 305; M = mean, SD = standard deviation.
Taken together, these results suggest that volunteering was both stigmatized and credited, and that credits where amplified when intrinsic attributions were made for volunteering.

The results regarding citizenship behavior revealed a different pattern of effects. As with volunteering, there was a main effect of citizenship behavior on credits—participants assigned more credit to profiles indicating high citizenship behavior (M = 3.32, SD = 0.62) than to profiles of low citizenship behavior (M = 2.88, SD = 0.66; F[1, 304] = 43.57, p < .05). In addition, there was a significant interaction effect of citizenship behavior and intrinsic attributions on credits (F[1, 304] = 6.80, p < .05), indicating that the relationship was stronger when intrinsic attributions were made.

However, unlike volunteering, citizenship behavior was not associated with higher levels of stigmatization. In contrast to the pattern with volunteering, the mean level of stigmas was lower for profiles indicating high citizenship (M = 2.71, SD = 0.56) than for low citizenship (M = 2.82, SD = 0.56). Although this mean difference in stigma levels between high and low citizenship behavior did not reach significance (F[1, 304] = 3.30, p = .08), it was significantly different from—and in the opposite direction to—the mean difference between high and low volunteering. Indeed, the 95% confidence intervals for these values—volunteering .27 (95% CI: .15, .39) and citizenship behavior -.11 (95% CI: -.23, .01)—did not overlap. The overall pattern of these results points to an important distinction between volunteering and citizenship behavior. Although the design of this experiment allowed for citizenship behavior to be stigmatized—seen as an act of self-righteousness or a distraction from work tasks—participants did not evaluate it that way. Whereas both volunteering and citizenship behavior were credited, only volunteering was stigmatized.

In addition, we examined the possibility that volunteering and citizenship behavior may interact in a way that affects credits and stigmas. Our results showed that, indeed, the interaction between volunteering and citizenship behavior was positively related to credits (F[1, 304] = 4.33, p < .05), but not significantly related to stigmas (F[1, 304] = 0.118, n.s.). This pattern of results suggests that a combination of volunteering and citizenship behavior leads to the greatest level of credits; however, engaging in citizenship behavior does not mitigate the stigmatizing associated with volunteering.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Despite the apparent positive outcomes of employee volunteering for companies (Bartel, 2001; Jones, 2010; Rodell, 2013), the reputational implications of volunteering are unclear. Is volunteering viewed positively or negatively by colleagues, and what are the behavioral repercussions of those
evaluations? Traditional research about the role of non-work activities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) has suggested that colleague evaluations of employee volunteering are negative. For example, colleagues may think that volunteering distracts employees from their job or that employees who volunteer are likely to pressure others to get involved. However, more recent views about the role of non-work activities have suggested that employee volunteering can be viewed positively (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For example, colleagues may think that volunteering promotes good time management or that employees who volunteer are more likely to care about others. The purpose of this manuscript was to examine the potential for both positive and negative evaluations—through credits and stigmas—and, ultimately, colleagues’ behavioral reactions to employee volunteering.

Integration of Study Results

When combined, the lab and field studies provide useful information about the reputational implications of employee volunteering. At a global level, the results suggest that volunteering can be both credited and stigmatized, and that the nature of this evaluation may be dependent upon the attributions that colleagues make about employee motives for volunteering. Moreover, the reputation that emerges from volunteering has implications for how someone is treated by their coworkers and supervisors at work.

The results regarding credits are relatively straightforward. As demonstrated in the experiment, volunteering may be credited directly, regardless of any attribution for the behavior. Colleagues may simply interpret volunteering as a positive signal about the individual and evaluate them accordingly. Moreover, as demonstrated in both the field study and the experiment, this positive evaluation is amplified when colleagues believe that the employee was volunteering for personal enjoyment and fulfillment. In particular, colleagues tend to credit employee volunteering—associating it with strong time management skills, concern for others, a sense of responsibility toward their community, and good ethical values—when they believe that it is intrinsically motivated. The results from the field study further suggest that the credits associated with volunteering ultimately pay off for employees in terms of the treatment they receive from others—in terms of both assistance and resources.

Compared to credits, the results revealed a relatively complex and nuanced story regarding the stigmatization of employee volunteering. When considering both studies in conjunction, the most straightforward take-away would be that volunteering is seen as an attempt to fill a void in one’s life—an evaluation that is amplified when the volunteering is attributed to impression management motives. There were also indications that the more an employee volunteers, the more their colleagues view them as evangelical and, if attributed to impression management motives, self-righteous.

The least consistent set of findings pertains to the stigma of distraction. Although perceptions that an employee is distracted from work tasks could certainly harm colleague treatment, there was no evidence that volunteering was associated with this evaluation. In fact, in the experiment, the relationship between volunteering and distraction was negative (and bordered on significance). Upon reflection, it is possible that this result emerged in the lab study due to the nature of the sample: college students. Perhaps students believe that volunteering is a positive signal—that volunteering students have their priorities straight and are focused on the right things. Given that the vast majority of companies encourage and reward employee volunteering (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Points of Light Foundation, 2006), students may believe that such behavior is as important as their task to find a job. Future research on distraction should carefully consider the nature of the sample and the different role that volunteering may play depending on the relevant goals and outcomes for the participants.

Although stigmas did not have a direct impact on others’ reactions across studies, it appears that stigmatizing volunteering can influence the impact of credits on others’ reactions. In particular, the credits associated with volunteering more significantly benefit the individual when there are fewer stigmas. However, when colleagues associate volunteering with both credits and stigmas, there is potential for stigmas to mitigate the otherwise positive effects of credits. This suggests that an ideal scenario emerges when an employee is perceived as volunteering for intrinsic reasons—this person is likely to be credited and not stigmatized, thus maximizing colleagues’ reactions. In a scenario where there are mixed attributions—when colleagues believe that an employee volunteers for both intrinsic and impression management reasons and both stigmatize and credit the behavior—the potential for favorable colleague reactions is tempered.

Overall, these findings are important because they show that volunteers can derive tangible benefits
from their colleagues, just by devoting time to a volunteer group. In particular, the more that an employee volunteers, the more likely they are to receive assistance from their coworkers, and to receive more resources—such as prioritization in promotion decisions and job assignment decisions—from their supervisors. The caveat, it appears, is that these rewards are more likely realized when employees are perceived to be volunteering for the “right” reasons (i.e., intrinsic) and not the “wrong” reasons (i.e., impression management). What is striking, for good or for bad, is that these benefits of volunteering occur even when accounting for the employee’s job performance and prosocial tendencies.

**Theoretical and Practical Implications**

This manuscript expands what is currently a rather limited understanding of employee volunteering (Grant, 2012; Tschirhart, 2005). Based on prior research, there is evidence of various antecedents of employee volunteering—centered on personal characteristics, the volunteer context, and workplace factors (e.g., Penner, 2002; Rodell, 2013; Wilson, 2000)—as well as a handful of consequences—such as well-being, performance, and commitment (Bartel, 2001; Harlow & Cantor, 1996; Jones, 2010; Rodell, 2013). However, understanding the consequences of volunteering in the workplace involves more that just the resulting attitudes and behaviors of the volunteer—it should also consider the opinions and reactions of others. Although the role of others has been commonly considered in studies of other workplace phenomena, it has yet to be considered regarding volunteering. With that in mind, this manuscript extends existing knowledge by considering the impact that others’ perceptions—in particular, those of coworkers and supervisors—have on employees who volunteer.

Moreover, it is unclear whether volunteering is likely to reflect positively or negatively on an employee. Indeed, extrapolating from the work–non-work literature suggests that such activity in the non-work domain can have either a positive or a negative impact on the work domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The current consensus from research on employee volunteering is that the behavior is generally positive for employees’ work attitudes and behaviors (Mojza, Sonnentag, & Bornemann, 2011; Paço & Nave, 2013; Rodell, 2013). Considering the fact that volunteering is inherently an off-task (and sometimes non-work) activity, however, there is clearly potential for downsides and a negative impact in the workplace (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). By including the potential for volunteering to be both credited and stigmatized, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the implications of employee volunteering.

At a practical level, this manuscript provides important information for managers of companies that are currently running or seeking to implement employee volunteer programs. Despite the prevalence of this practice in the corporate world (Points of Light Foundation, 2006), there is still limited data from which managers can make decisions about these efforts. Our results are the first to provide information regarding the impact of volunteering on the interpersonal relationships among colleagues. For example, our findings show that opinions about employee volunteering can vary on a wide range from positive—such as a strong sense of ethics and good time management—to negative—such as being self-righteous and distracted from work. Moreover, they point to the importance of role attributions in these opinions. Given the stigmas associated with volunteering for impression management motives, managers may seek to minimize the potential for this motive and the resulting negative perceptions to emerge.

Because the act of employee volunteering crosses the boundary between one’s work and home domains, our findings also have broader implications for the work–non-work interface. Traditionally, research in this literature stream has focused on the role of one’s family demands and behaviors (see Westring & Ryan, 2010)—and how these choices are evaluated by one’s colleagues (e.g., Leslie et al., 2012)—yet has rarely considered the role of other non-work activities in this regard. Our finding that employees are judged for their volunteering suggests that aspects of one’s non-work domain beyond family can also influence one’s workplace experiences. In a “big-picture” sense, it appears that employees’ reputations at work—and, ultimately, how they are treated—are not simply dictated by their workplace attitudes and behavior. Rather, the other individuals in that domain (supervisors and/or coworkers) are also paying attention to that person’s non-work behaviors—such as family choices and community involvement—incorporating that information into their opinions and allowing it to influence how they treat that employee.

In addition, our results speak to important trends ongoing in the reputation literature. For starters, our focus on volunteer reputation represents a pivot
away from treating reputation as a global evaluation toward a more specific evaluation—that is, an attribute-specific evaluation based on prior behaviors by a specific audience (Jensen et al., 2012; Jensen & Roy, 2008; Lange et al., 2011). Proponents of this approach have argued that evaluations of global reputation are too easily confused with other global evaluations, such as managerial effectiveness (e.g., Tsui, 1984). Our treatment of volunteer reputation as stigmas and credits (“for something”) based on one’s volunteering behavior rated by one’s colleagues (“by someone”) encapsulates this new direction, acting as an example of the potential merits of this approach.

In a related vein, our consideration of both positive and negative components of reputation, through credits and stigmas, is also consistent with the evolution from global to specific representations of reputation. Part of the argument for a transition to specific reputation is that it makes it possible to simultaneously explore positive and negative components (Jensen et al., 2012). Although many global definitions of reputation are broad enough to encompass both positive and negative aspects, prior research has largely focused on the positive side of reputation (e.g., Ferris et al., 2003; Mishina, Block, & Mannor, 2012; Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever 2005). Our findings—that volunteering may carry both positive and negative reputational implications—further support the fruitfulness of this direction for research.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations exist within our studies, which should be noted. As with many studies in the social sciences, there may be concern about common method bias. Given that several variables in our field study—credits and stigmas, attributions for motives, and supportive reactions—were reported by colleagues, there is the potential for inflated correlations and questions about causal direction (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). We introduced temporal and source separation wherever possible—two common procedural remedies that combat this threat (Doty & Glick, 1998)—collecting our data across two time periods and sources. Given that colleague evaluations and attributions are most accurately self-reported, there were some same-time, same-source relationships in the model. However, in those instances, there was theoretical reasoning to support the hypothesized causal order.

It should also be noted that we focused on one specific conceptualization of volunteering—frequency (Rodell, 2013). Although we found significant results, we acknowledge that this is not the only way to study employee volunteering. Drawing on the motivation literature, we can consider the direction, intensity and persistence of volunteering efforts (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). Applying this framework, the current study addressed the intensity of effort. Studies may also address the direction of effort (the initial decision to volunteer, or volunteering vs. non-volunteering), as well as the persistence of effort (volunteering commitment)—a choice that should be driven by one’s research questions.

In addition, although we accounted for two attributed motives for volunteering— intrinsic and impression management—we did not examine the potential interplay between these perceived motives. Recent research has demonstrated that impression management motives may undermine the positive role of other, more highly regarded, motives (Takeuchi, Bolino, & Lin, 2015). Accordingly, future research on volunteering motives may consider how such motives co-exist and even conflict with one another. Moreover, it is possible that colleagues may be influenced by other aspects of the employee’s volunteering behavior, beyond their motives. For example, they may have opinions—either positive or negative—about the specific type of volunteering. Indeed, Snyder et al. (1999) showed that volunteering for an AIDS organization came with a particular stigma. Likewise, colleagues may be concerned with the timing or scheduling of the volunteering endeavor. Volunteering that occurs during the day and interrupts work time may be evaluated differently than volunteering conducted on the weekend.

Our results also point to some additional directions for research. Given the increasing potential for volunteering to benefit both companies and employees (Bartel, 2001; Jones, 2010; Rodell, 2013), it is likely that companies will continue to support volunteering. Assuming that is the case, future research may be conducted to gain a better understanding of the various forms of support that companies can offer employees for volunteering, and the effectiveness of these approaches. There is a relatively wide range of the type and formality of support that companies can offer their employees for volunteering. For example, company support may range from raising awareness about local opportunities to financially supporting employees’ own initiatives to organizing company-sanctioned volunteer days, to praising employee...
volunteering through a formal rewards system (see Peterson, 2004). Although reports have suggested that over 50% of companies formalize their support for volunteering in their business plans (Points of Light Foundation & Allstate Foundation, 2000), there are few details about the specific nature or structure of that support, let alone any evidence of its effectiveness. Additionally, given the potential stigmas associated with volunteering, it is worth exploring how best to advertise these opportunities in a way that minimizes the potential stigmas.

The current findings regarding attributions also point to further questions about corporate volunteer programs. Our results indicate that employee evaluations are highly dependent on the attributions that colleagues make for volunteering. Prior research on attributions has indicated that people are more likely to seek out explanations for behavior when it deviates from expectations (Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1981; Wong & Weiner, 1981). Companies with established and publicized volunteer programs may consider volunteering the norm and an expectation of employees. If so, colleagues may be less likely to engage in the attribution process. In the absence of a volunteer program, however, colleagues may search harder for information on which to base their evaluations of the behavior. The company signal of expectations may have an impact on perceptions of volunteering in that workplace.

Conclusion

Although it already appears that employee volunteering is good for companies, it is equally important to understand whether volunteering also pays off for the employees engaging in the behavior. One important consideration is the nature of colleague evaluations of employee volunteering and the implications for how colleagues treat those employees—such as allocating resources and helping. Our results demonstrate that supervisors and coworkers associated employee volunteering with both credits (time management, other focus, sense of community, and ethical values) and stigmas (distraction, evangelism, void filling, self-righteousness), depending on the nature of the attribution. Employees were credited when the behavior was believed to be intrinsically motivated, but stigmatized when it was believed to be motivated by impression management. Ultimately, due to the credits, supervisors allocated more resources to those employees, and coworkers were also more likely to help them.

REFERENCES


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**APPENDIX A**

**SCALE DEVELOPMENT FOR VOLUNTEERING CREDITS AND STIGMAS**

We created scales to assess volunteering credits and stigmas by following prescriptions described by Hinkin (1995, 1998). The first step in this process was to generate items that assessed the underlying construct of interest. Following Hinkin’s (1998) prescriptions, we adopted an inductive approach to item generation because our construct of interest was both new and abstract. This inductive approach begins by asking a set of participants to respond to broad open-ended questions about the construct of interest. Participants’ responses are then content analyzed to determine the relevant dimensions of the construct.

We provided an open-ended questionnaire to a sample of 31 executive MBA students. Of the participants, 26% were female, their average age was 37.17 years (SD = 6.74), and they were all full-time employees. Participants were provided with our definition of volunteering and encouraged to write down at least three negative and three positive evaluations that they associated with their colleagues who volunteered (“What bad or negative things do you associate with coworkers who volunteer?” and “What good or positive things do you associate with coworkers who volunteer?”). The order of this request for negative and positive responses was counterbalanced. The responses were then transcribed into the NVivo 8.0 software system.

We followed a content analysis approach to identify themes within the data (Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007; Krippendorff, 2004). As part of that approach, we read each discrete statement provided by the participants, organized the statements by assigning them to similar themes, and created new themes when necessary in an iterative process. Themes were ultimately labeled to reflect their content. For example, one theme with statements such as “volunteers generally care about other people” was labeled “other focus.” Ultimately, we retained eight themes—four positive (i.e., “credits”) and four negative (i.e., “stigmas”)—because they met a threshold of three mentions (Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterson, 2008). Other themes were excluded because they fell outside the boundary of “volunteering reputation” (e.g., referenced motives for volunteering or behavioral treatment of volunteers).

The volunteering credits included: Time Management, Other Focus, Sense of Community, and Ethical Values. Thus, it appears that employee volunteering can be associated with managing time well, caring about others, feeling a sense of responsibility for the community, and having ethical values. The volunteering stigmas included: Distraction, Evangelism, Void Filling, and Self-Righteousness. It appears that employee volunteering can be associated with being distracted, pressuring others to get involved in the community, attempting to fill a void in life, and thinking highly of one’s self.

The next step was to create measures that assessed the content that emerged from this inductive process. Hinkin (1998) suggested that scholars create a list of potential survey items of the construct of interest and then rely on participant evaluations of these items—in reference to the construct’s definition—in order to reduce the number of items down to a final measure (Hinkin, 1998; Hinkin & Tracey, 1999). Based on our definitions of the dimensions that emerged from the content analysis (see Table 1), we generated six potential survey items for each volunteering credit and stigma (Hinkin, 1998).

A total of 492 undergraduate business students were recruited to assess the content of these items. Of these, 48% were female, and the average age was 20.68 years (SD = 1.52). Using Hinkin and Tracey’s (1999) method of content validation, participants were asked to assess the extent to which each survey item accurately reflected the volunteering stigma or credit according to the definition provided. The participants rated each item using a seven-point scale where 1 = Extremely Bad Match and 7 = Extremely Good Match. For example, in one version of the survey, the definition of “distraction” was provided in the directions,
and participants were asked to what extent the six distraction items accurately reflected the definition. Those participants were also given the survey items for the other three stigmas (evangelism, void filling, and self-righteousness) and asked to what extent these items accurately reflected the distraction definition. This process helped to ensure that participants could distinguish the correct items for the distraction definition from the incorrect ones. Similar survey versions were created for each of the other volunteering stigma and credit definitions.

ANOVA was conducted to compare the rating of each survey item in instances where participants were provided with its correct definition to instances where participants were provided with one of the other three definitions. For example, one ANOVA tested whether the mean definitional convergence for distraction items was higher for the distraction definition than for the evangelism, void filling, or self-righteousness definitions. Based on these results, survey items were deleted if they cross-loaded onto an incorrect definition or if they had a low mean rating. As a result of this process, four items for each volunteering credit and stigma were retained to create the measures (see Table 1). The average mean rating was 6.03 out of 7.00 (with a range of 5.43 to 6.50). Moreover, ratings for credits and stigmas with the correct definition were significantly higher than ratings with the incorrect definition.