Gains and Motivations Employees derive from Corporate Social Responsibility Volunteering

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Contents

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Title

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Abstract

Employee volunteering and Corporate Social Responsibility have become part of companies'
business practice over the last 10 years. Corporate Social Responsibility is regarded as a
means of improving a companies' community and employee relations. The research
investigates the gains and motivations employees derive from corporate social responsibility
volunteering.   A qualitative thematic analysis was used. The participants were from one of
the Big 4 Accountancy Firms in Dublin. Eight employees were interviewed, face-to-face in
their company premises. Participants ranged in age 24-50 years.   The research found that the
gains and motivations employee volunteers derive from the programme are altruistic in
nature. In conclusion, a new wave of volunteerism is occurring across the business
community, a doing with their local communities and a giving of social capital that is of no
cost to the community.

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility ("CSR") and employee volunteering are relatively new concepts within 'Corporate Ireland'. In the past 4 – 5 years, the majority of large corporate companies have employed this philosophy. Corporations are increasingly being held responsible for the impact they have on their communities and the globalising world in general. They employ a code of ethics, which follows along the remit of community work, education, local charities, environmental/sustainable work, and the developing world. The literature reviewed here will look at employee volunteering within the context of CSR. Research on the employee volunteers themselves is quite 'sparse' because it is relatively new in Western Europe.   The research, which has been undertaken, focuses on countries such as the UK, The Netherlands, and Canada, with quite extensive work undertaken on CSR in the USA under the umbrella of globalisation.

Volunteering means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organisation. Volunteering is part of a cluster of helping behaviours, entailing more commitment than spontaneous assistance but narrower in scope than the care provided to family and friends. Motives play an important role in public thinking about volunteerism: activities that seem to be truly selfless are the most esteemed. Level of education is the most consistent predictor of volunteering. Education boosts volunteering because it heightens awareness of problems, increases empathy, and builds self-confidence. It is also probably that educated people get more intrinsic rewards from their work, building up an attachment to work and work-like activities that easily translate into volunteerism. Social resources play a crucial role when volunteering means activism to bring about social change, or when collective goods, such as safer streets, are the goal. Social resources help explain why people of higher socio-economic status volunteer more: They join more organizations and are more

likely to be active in them. Nearly a quarter of the volunteers in the 1995 *Independent Sector Survey of Giving and Volunteering* mentioned they were volunteering to "make new contacts that might help my business or career" Wilson, J. (2000).

Volunteering in Ireland

Donoghue, F. (2001) at a conference on 'Tipping the Balance' gives an outline of the history of volunteerism in Ireland. In her address at the conference, she states that voluntary activity has played a large part in the development of the Ireland that we know today. The concept of 'charity' was a strong theme, which was prevalent for many decades. This 'doing good' aspect coloured both secular and religious involvement particularly in the social welfare field. There was also a strong tradition of community volunteering in rural Ireland. A system of mutual aid necessary to the maintenance of the self-sufficiency of the family farm and rural communities existed which only began to disappear in the second half of the last century. The self-sufficiency aspect of community involvement had a strong sustaining function for Irish society. For example, the Gaelic Athletic Association ("GAA") have their roots in promoting what are perceived as 'Irish activities', involving significant voluntary input, while at the same time contribution to a sense of community and belonging. Not only, therefore, was volunteering about 'helping' but it was and is about a sense of identity, both individual and communal. The religious in Ireland i.e. priests and nuns played a vital role in communities through the church, schools and health sector. The Catholic organisations were pivotal in the running of these institutions with the added help of the community and its people. From the 1970s, state funding of other social welfares services increased not only through direct state provision but also through state support of voluntary provision most notably in housing, services for older people, childcare and the more recent Community Development Programme. The gradual formalisation of voluntary activity, which has

occurred over time, has not led to a phasing out of volunteering and volunteering continues in both formal and informal capacities. Pressures on volunteering, however, can be seen throughout the 1990s, which have led to a decline in numbers participating in volunteering.

Employee Volunteering

Firstly, what is CSR? CSR is defined by the Irish Chartered Accountants Institute as "the integration of business operations and values whereby the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors and the environment are reflected in the organisations policies and actions" (*http://*www.accountancyireland.ie). Volunteering is an activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. Volunteering is part of a cluster of helping behaviours, entailing more commitment that spontaneous assistant but narrower in scope than the care provided by family and friends (Wilson, J. 2000). Employee volunteering within the remit of CSR is a relatively under researched topic with the majority of research based on practitioner orientation linked with human resource development strategy. CSR has come into vision in Ireland in the last 10 years.

Business in the Community Ireland ("BICTI"), (*http://*www.bict.ie) a non-profit organization specializing in advice and guidance to leading companies on corporate responsibility and corporate community involvement, BITCI is also the national partner in Ireland for CSR Europe, the co-ordinating body on corporate responsibility at a European level. When contacted BITCI said that they do not have any research/views on employee volunteer, attitudes towards the various CSR programmes being run by their employer but directed me to their internet brochure on 'Community Involvement in which is described below:

"A primary service of BITCI is to guide top Irish companies through a process of implementing strategic community involvement programmes. The community

programme is aligned with the business goals so the partnership is mutually beneficial and sustainable. Community involvement programmes typically include Employer supported volunteering. Employer supported volunteering can take many forms - whether it's a national programme or a one-off local community event that harnesses the skills of employees, the common element is the channelling of much needed skills, time and resources from a business to a community group or groups for positive social benefit".

Gilder et al. (2005) undertook a quantitative analysis of employee volunteering on the workforce of ABN-AMRO in the Netherlands. Their population was quite large (23,000 - employees). Their study showed that (a) socio-demographic characteristics from employee volunteers markedly differ from those of non-volunteers and community volunteers and (b) employee volunteering seems to have positive effects on attitudes and behaviour towards the organisation. Muthuri et al, (2009), investigated their actors' relations in their social structure and social resources of capital, which reside there, specifically 'opportunity', 'motivation', and 'ability'. They argue that actors' social interactions create opportunities to act together and for social capital transaction. Their case study was research strategy adopted in which they aimed for analytical rather than statistical generalisation. They interviewed employee volunteers from three different companies within the UK. Peloza et al. (2009) specifically examine employee volunteerism in the context of a co-ordinated, employer sanction corporate philanthropy program[1] a form of volunteerism that offers firms the maximum benefit. Their study extends previous research that has found equivocal support for both egoistic and altruistic motives for volunteerism and other forms of charity support.

The bulk of employee volunteering research so far has been practitioner orientated and linked to human resource development strategy and to community involvement and building

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[1] The spelling of the work 'program' is the American version as was used in the journals reviewed. The spelling in the main research text is 'programme'. The researcher has highlighted this fact for consistency purposes.

strategies (Muthuri et al. 2009). For companies, employee volunteering is a relatively new phenomenon and research into employee volunteering is sparse. Simple questions as who participates and what makes employees participate remain unanswered (Gilder et al. 2005). Corporations are increasingly being held responsible for the social impact of their organisational priorities. Corporate social responsibility ("CSR") has emerged as an inescapable priority for business leaders in every country. Companies while simultaneously responding to the expectation for CSR, may offer a means of addressing non-profits' needs for volunteers through the company supported employee volunteer program. (Basil et al. 2009).

Gilder et al. (2005) looked at three groups within ABN AMRO, employee volunteers, non-volunteers, and community volunteers who engaged in volunteer work in their free time. They looked at differences in ages, duration of employment, sex, and marital status, age of youngest child, religion, education, and working hours. As in previous studies community volunteers as compared to non-volunteers were relatively older, more often married with children and more often religious. Participants in the programme, however, the employee volunteers, showed fewer heterogeneous background characteristic than both the other groups. This indicates that age, marital status, and religion do play an important role in the cases of the community and the non-volunteers, but not amongst the participants in the program. The results suggest that the program has been able to tap a new source of volunteer. People with higher education, most notably those with a university degree, were overrepresented in the employee-volunteering programme. 30.7% of the employee volunteers agreed that their participation was because of 'being asked' to do so whereas 60% said this was not a consideration. There were no differences found amongst the groups concerning the importance of one's personal career, their commitment to the organisation or their intention to leave the organisation. There was, however, a difference found in their

attitudes towards their own work. Participants in the programme reported a relatively strong level of performance and attendance at work. Gilder et al. (2005) note that starting a volunteer programme could have potential risks. The programme might attract people who do not have career opportunities anymore and people who are not very motivated. Employees who do not participate in the programme would have a negative attitude towards the programme. Despite the risks, the results support their hypothesis that the programme has a positive effect for the organisation. Although it is not more, attractive for people who do not value their careers, and there is a slight tendency that participants are more committed to the organisation but the long-term effects cannot be established yet.

Employee volunteer contributions to CSR

Muthuri et al. (2009) investigated the contribution of employee volunteer to corporate social responsibility specifically whether and how it contributes to social capital, defined as "the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and contact of the actors' relations. It affects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor" (Muthuri et al. (2009) P.76). Their research followed Adler and Kwon (2002) by investigating the actors' relations in their social structure and the sources of social capital, which reside there, specifically 'opportunity', 'motivation', and 'ability'. Alder and Kwon argue that actors' social interactions create *opportunities* to act together and for social capital transaction. Muthuri et al. (2009) argue that *motivation* had to do with why 'donors' help 'recipients' in the absence of immediate or certain returns. *Ability* refers to the competencies and resources at the nodes of the social structure. They examined the specific dimensions of social capital, networks, trusts, and norms generated in the different types of employee volunteerism schemes. Their approach is different to Gilder et al. (2005) in that they gain an insight into the maintenance of social capital through employee volunteerism.

Their participants were broad and there was diversity in choosing three companies to research. Their research findings were presented in three parts (i) the actors' social relations and opportunities, motivation and abilities which lead to the creation of capital; (ii) how different employee volunteer schemes generate specific combinations of the social capital dimensions; and (iii) employee volunteer claimed benefits and perceived risks.

They found that employees are motivated by a sense of reciprocity. Like Gilder et al. (2005) they found that employees who constantly volunteer are defined as reliable, committed and enthusiastic and are often instrumental in mobilizing other employees. In terms of how the employee volunteer schemes generate specific combinations of the social capital dimension, they look at team building exercises. Team assignments may consist of long-term forms of involvement for the employee volunteers or one-off team building exercises i.e. painting an old folks home, shelter, beach clean-up. One-off team challenges usually make for weak ties with a community actor, the rate of occurrence is low with volunteers often 'stepping in and out' of a volunteering challenge. Repeated team volunteering is associated with strong ties that create thick trust within the employee volunteer group. Benefits claimed by the employee volunteers included sharing knowledge, acquiring new skills, insights into community issues, new perspectives on their own business and inner satisfaction.

Their research contributes to a better understanding of why firms should engage in employee volunteering in the first place and provides a basis for a more realistic expectation of the outcomes of the employee volunteer for their overall corporate goals. Employee volunteerism can clearly bring benefits to companies. This kind of social capital may help individuals along their career path; bring a newfound enthusiasm to their work and their work environment, because they may know that some gains can be obtained from participation.

Peloza et al. (2009) looks at employee volunteering from a marketing perspective within the organisation. They argue that the marketing of employee volunteerism should be directed by the firm to ensure a strategic fit and focus on the core competencies of the firm. Marketing strategies are required to ensure managers receive employee support. They examine an aspect of employee volunteerism called intra-organisational volunteerism ("IOV"). IOV offers the firms the maximum benefit, since managers can guide where employee expertise is directed. Their quantitative research extends previous research by Peloza and Hassay (2006) that has found equivocal support for both egoistic and altruistic motives for volunteerism and other forms of charity support. Peloza et al. (2009) examine this through social exchange theory, where volunteers help their employers or other employees. As has already been stated there are a number of potential motivators for the employee volunteers and there is the ability to meet new people. In the study they introduce the idea of organisational citizenship behaviour ("OCB") where the employee volunteer is acting on behalf of the employer, the employee volunteer may view the activity as a form of OCB, and therefore be motivated to help his or her employer. They use the meaning of cost in exchange theory, which refers to the values or resources one gives up in order to participate in the exchange. When an employee is able to perform volunteer duties on "company time" their costs are expected to lower both directly and indirectly. Their sample included employees working in a range of firms in a large Midwestern city. Their sample was skewed toward larger firms; they justified this, as larger firms are more likely to have professional management designated to the CSR rollout and larger firms under-indexed on donations of volunteer time when compared to smaller firms, making the potential for employee volunteering more prominent for larger organisations. Depending on where the employee volunteer is employed, employers either bank their time undertaken on CSR projects or allocate specific hours i.e. can spend 36 hours annually allotted to CSR work.

The altruistic motive was found to be less prevalent in workplace volunteer programmes despite being widely reported to being a critical motivator. Egoistic motives represent important opportunities for the internal marketing of workplace volunteer programs. Like in the previous study the egoistic motives of the employee volunteer relates to career prospects and enhancement within the organisation, the social interaction and networking. Employee volunteers desire to act, as "good soldiers" are indeed indicative of their support for workplace volunteerism programmes. Their research suggests that not all forms of volunteerism are equal. The potential for egoistic rewards in exchange for volunteerism are heightened in the firm, given the opportunity for both tangible and non-tangible rewards available to managers.

Conclusion of literature reviewed

Muthiri et al. (2009) investigated the contribution of employee volunteering to CSR and how it contributes to social capital. Social capital being defined as : "those intangible assets [that] count most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit… and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community". Their sample was selected from three companies, where they focussed on people's descriptions of their employee volunteer interactions with others. They interviewed 48 actors in employee volunteering programmes within the selected companies (employees, community relations staff) and outside the companies (community organisations and employee volunteer brokers – usually charities).

They conclude that their research makes a contribution to a better understanding of why firms should engaged in employee volunteering in the first place and provides a basis for a more realistic expectation of the outcomes of employee volunteering for their overall

corporate goals. They state that employee volunteering can clearly bring benefits to companies. It encourages social cooperation with community actors, bringing opportunities for building business-community partnerships and mobilizing resources whilst also benefiting employees, community organisations and the public at large.

In short, it defines exactly what BITCI states that CSR aids community organisations and the public at large.

For research purposes Judy Muthuri was contacted by e-mail about eliciting further research and information, she stated that research was sparse and relatively new within Western Europe. That further research was required to gain an understanding of the effects of CSR on the employee volunteer and the majority of research undertaken was quantitative and researched in the USA and Canada. The qualitative study undertaken in this research will fill the gap, as it will allow for a better understanding of the dimension of motivations and gains of employee volunteers.

It has been outlined that employee volunteerism brings gains and benefits to the employer. An in-depth look at what gains it brings to the employee volunteer has not been equated. What is evident is that the employee volunteer partakes in CSR to enrich their social and business network. The aim of this study is to gain more insights into the innate gains and motivations of the company volunteers, which may be partially linked to the individual's socioeconomic background.

Method

The study was conducted within KPMG accountancy firm Dublin, Ireland. KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. KPMG employs 138,000 professionals in 150 countries worldwide.

The diversity which the CSR project offers employee volunteers is alluring and entices the volunteer to look further at what it has to offer and if they find any of the programmes appealing. A brief summation of the programmes that the employees volunteered in is as follows:

- Mentoring programme – volunteers are matched with a student and mentor them for two years up to and including their Leaving Certificate year.

- Junior Achievement – tailored programmes for young people aged 5 – 18 years of age; the employee volunteer teaches the students the risk and rewards of entrepreneurship through a unique business and education partnership.

- Get Cents – volunteers teach early school leavers aged 16-21 in a classroom environment and deliver a fun, interactive and education course on money, savings, budgeting, getting loans etc.

- Time to read – volunteers spend time reading with young people aged 5 – 12 years of age, the employee volunteer will sit and read with two children (half hour per child) to get them interested in reading.

- Make a Difference Day – one of days where groups of volunteers take part in community initiatives, whether it is painting a rehabilitation centre, cleaning up beaches etc.

- Old Folks Christmas Party – elderly neighbours around the office locality are invited for Christmas dinner annually; they receive a hamper on departure and are driven home by bus from the office. (http:// www.kpmg.com)

The company does not over market the CSR programme. Advertising and CSR information is placed on the internal office website and one can click and view whatever aspect of the programme they desire to gain further information on what is involved. The company have a dedicated CSR office representative and ensures that the information is freely available and that the representative is contactable by e-mail or phone for further information and discussion. The employee volunteers who participated in this study either received a mail shot, which they automatically viewed or heard about the programme through performance meetings with their directors/managers.

The research project will look at employee volunteer gains and motivations in partaking in corporate social responsibility ("CSR") programmes run by their employers.
The researcher has decided to carry out the study using qualitative method. In doing so it is the aim of this research project to explore more in-depth views of the employee volunteer an aspect which is under researched and their own insights into what they are doing for the company and if their motivations and gains are purely egoistic.   As the aforementioned studies have been undertaken in large corporations using a quantitative study in larger countries i.e. UK, The Netherlands, USA and Canada, no such study has been undertaken in Ireland. CSR programmes have become an intrinsic factor in corporate Ireland. The corporate sector in Ireland view CSR as creating innovation and proactive solutions to societal and environmental challenges, as well as collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders to improve CSR performance.   In undertaking the qualitative approach, it will give an insight into the volunteer himself or herself.

Subjects

The research will be conducted using thematic analysis, with eight participants (four male and four female). The age range of the participants is 24 years old – 50 years old.   Ethical

considerations will be outlined prior to interview, considerations such as participant protection, consent and confidentiality. Participants names will not appear in the context of the research but will be abbreviated to Participant A, B, C, etc.

In-depth interviews will be held with each participant, which will take 30 minutes maximum. The feature of an in-depth interview is intended to combine structure with flexibility. The researcher will have some sense of the themes to for exploration; the interviews will be based on an interview schedule or guide setting out the key topics and issues to be covered during the interview. However, the structure will be sufficiently flexible to permit topics to be covered in the order most suitable to the interviewee, to allow responses to be fully probed and explored and to allow the researcher to be responsive to relevant issues raised spontaneously by the interviewee.   The interactive nature of the interview will allow the researcher to ask an initial question in such a way as to encourage the interviewee to talk freely when answering the question.   The researcher will use a range of probes and other techniques to achieve depth of answer in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation. It should be noted an initial response is often at a surface level. The researcher therefore will use follow-up questions to obtain a deeper and fuller understanding of the participant's meaning. The in-depth format also permits the researcher to explore fully all the factors that underpin participants' answers, reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs; this furnishes the explanatory evidence that is an important element of qualitative research. The interview should be generative in the sense that new knowledge or thoughts are likely, at some stage, to be created. The extent to which this is so may vary depending on the questions, but it is likely that the participants will at some point direct themselves, or be directed by the researcher, down avenues of thought they have not explored before. Participants may also be invited to put forward ideas and suggestions on a particular topic and to propose solutions for problems raised during the interview.

Design

The interview will take place at the most convenient and appropriate setting for the participant, which in this research will take place in meeting rooms, which are made available to the researcher by the company. All interviews will be tape recorded and conducted face-to-face. A dictaphone will be used as a recording device. The researcher will set appropriate questions prior to each interview and will probe and develop each of the participant's answers to each of the questions.

The data sample will be diverse in their socio-demographic backgrounds, as the sample will be taken from a group of 150 employee volunteers. It will enhance previous studies, as it will look directly at the individual and develop a greater insight into what understanding the gains and motivations of individuals who volunteer on company time.

It is hoped that the use of a thematic approach will provide a rich thematic description for the entire data set. The themes identified and analysed will be an accurate account of the entire data set. This method will be particularly useful as the area under investigation is an under-researched area and the participants views on the topic are not known.

The opportunity for the employee volunteers appears to be substantial as they volunteer on company time and have that time banked. If they are representing the company by displaying the company logo on T-shirts for example how does that make them as actors feel? Would they have volunteered if it was not offered to them so openly? Will the current global economic crisis affect the employee volunteer and their participation in CSR?

Results

Eight participants were interviewed in this research project to obtain an insight into the gains and motivations of employee volunteers under the CSR programme.

The data was led by deciphering each participant's socio-demographic background, the level of education they attained etc. Self-confidence was a major theme arising out of this question. The participants were quite proud of their educational status and the experience gained from attending prestigious institutions such as DCU and UCD. Some of the participants suggested that they fell into the path of finance/commerce/law which in turn led them to the graduate programme which KPMG run. Two of the participants have been with the company for 25 plus years and whilst they never attended 3rd level education they were involved in many other aspects of company life and training programmes which took place internally in the company and externally. Participant A (male) emulated self-confidence not in an arrogant manner but a surety of who he was as a person. When asked about his views on volunteering he replied by stating that "My opinion is that if you put something in front of someone they will happily do it but someone might not actually seek it out. I found that putting it in front of people everyone was willing to partake". Participant D stated that volunteering was "doing something else than what you actually do". Participant H mentioned the fact that it was the 'Legion of Mary' in her local community 30 years ago that "you went out and did good deed and went out and helped people". Of the other five volunteers two of them have volunteered consistently with their local GAA clubs, running mini leagues and managing the local kid's football team one night per week. The remaining volunteers worked with Vincent De Paul, did various company charity work with ex employers who had a chosen charity such as UNICEF where events were held and money raised for UNICEF.

The recurring theme from the initial questioning was that each participant came from a strong community base. Social capital on the private face of it has gains for individuals in that it forms connections that benefit an individual's own interests, within a community setting they get to know other members in their community and new members whom may have joined their community. In doing so, they sometimes may be unaware of the connections they are forming and their motivations are mainly altruistic.

Gilder et al. (2005) found that most notably people with a university degree were overrepresented in the employee-volunteering program. This is also true in this case; of the eight participants, two of them had not obtained a university degree. It nonetheless, makes them less or more of a volunteer because of this, as these participants were between the ages of 45 – 50 years old they mentioned further education at that time was not what their objectives were and that their priorities lay with finding a job. They were keen to emphasise social capital gained from volunteering within their communities helped them secure a 'good job'.

CSR programme – responses

When each participant was asked about the CSR programme, there was an unequivocal enthusiastic response to the programme and the various schemes, which the company partake in under the CSR umbrella. Participant B enthused "I love doing CSR and am a big believer in it". While other participant responses were "It makes you feel good that you are doing something for somebody else", "Yes, I have loved it and one of the highlights of my time here in KPMG", "It makes me feel proud of where I work". The participants worked in different branches of the various programmes run by KPMG. These are as mentioned previously, the Get Cents programme, Mentoring, Time to read and Junior Achievement.

The participants believed in each of the programmes they were involved in. The theme of self-interest was evident especially in the area of the programmes outlined above. They were realising through their work their initial career choice would probably have been teaching but they put it to the back of their minds. As the programmes, they were partaking in involved working with children varying in ages (5 year olds – 17 year olds) and from different socio economic environments than the volunteers themselves. They realised that teaching is a career that they regretted not trying, they did not rule out the prospect of further education, but it stirred the belief in them that they could do it from having experienced the classroom environment. They found and continue to find their experiences humbling and felt that it was the children's outlook on life that made them more appreciative of the opportunity they were receiving. They also illustrated feelings of gratitude because in some of the programmes they have used their skill set. In working on the Get Cents programme, they give budgeting advice to 15-17 year olds who were early school leavers. The Get Cents programme was altered for Depaul Ireland, a homeless hostel where advice was given on budgeting, cost savings, opening bank accounts. The participants felt that when you are working in an accountancy environment that it is an extreme positive to give back to the community in that area using one's own skill set. In programmes like the Get Cents programme, initially they felt intimidated by the setting and environment and how the different communities and the different environments they were entering would perceive them. They did state that with the 15-17 year olds it was difficult to keep them stimulated and that their attention span was minimal. They felt once they gave advice in a simplistic manner with varying examples that more questions would be offered and once they were comfortable with you, they were extremely grateful of your time.

Other participants felt that the mentoring programme was quite a good support system for 5th and 6th year students. They meet once a month for lunch and offer any advice, career

direction or a listening ear to the youths involved. They found also that the students were quite willing to participate in the mentoring programme as one of their brothers, sisters or friends were mentored previously. One participant stated, "I would have loved something like that when I was in school myself".

Some but not all of the participants participated in one of day programmes such as: Make a Difference Day, which encourages employees (in a team setting) to give their time to make a positive difference in their communities. Each employee team undertakes a day challenge in local community projects that demonstrate a positive social impact and provide team-building opportunities. These projects are focussed on education, employability or on the environment.   The participants said they partake in these activities on the odd occasion preferring to work under one of the programmes as opposed to the day programme.

A theme that emerged with the older participants was one of self-righteousness that they felt they were "older and wiser", had more life experiences and a near expertise on the volunteering issue, in that they do it in their free time also. They are supportive of the corporate social responsibility programme they were quick to point out that there has always been an Old Folks Christmas party, where neighbours of the office are invited into the office for a meal at Christmas. They were also quick to judge young people in society in that there form of social capital is quite 'technical' minded in that they do not have time to do anything apart from talk on their IPhones and log on to Facebook.   Although they did maintain that, their fellow employee volunteers were exceptional young people.

Director/Manager – encouraging/limiting

Participation in the programme warrants permission from their director/manager both of whom have a positivist approach to the programme.   The theme running throughout this part of the interview was one of pride and self-confidence in their own abilities. Pride in that their

director/manager encourage their participation and self-confidence on the participants behalf as if the director/manager was reflecting to them that they were competent individuals and to share their skills set with others who were disadvantaged was a selfless and humbling opportunity. At no stage did any of the participants feel they were limited in what they could volunteer for or the time required undertaking it. All participants said that each of their directors/managers were "extremely supportive" of their volunteering.

When probed further about there being advantages of volunteering on "work time", blank expressions were drawn as in "are you joking", and "it's not about free time off work". They went on to say that at times they think, "I have to do a programme today and I don't have the time", in that when they are busy in work, which is constant, they feel "guilty" running off to attend their programme. They also emphasised that they do not "have to make up hours at work" in busier times and that, they themselves undertake to work longer hours if they are busy. They make up time for missing two hours on the morning of the programme, or an hour each side of your lunch break, this time includes travel time to and from the programme, as they are located throughout the city. Time is a rare commodity in society today. Each participant outlined it as a reason for not volunteering more. Citing the fact that if they did volunteer on their own time they would have no time for other pursuits and activities with friends and family. Work monopolises their current time. Participants felt that due to the economic crisis and redundancies at work that whilst they are kept busy throughout the working week there are not enough employees to assist with the workload, they also felt an inability to shout too loudly about the lack of resources. Time as one volunteer described "is diarised, and accounted for on a daily basis… which leaves little time for self".

Some of the participants believed that CSR reflects well on the company. Whilst others did not even think about the company within the context of it benefiting either way. It was a win, win situation for them that they were giving back to their community and using their

skills in whatever way they could to do so. One of the participants stated "Going forward it would be important for me that a company would have it or at least have some support system set up towards allowing you to do it"… the awards you get are huge both personally and from a company perspective in the people that you can meet and the people you are helping".

Career and personal development, were themes running through some of the participant's answers. They see it as a positive to have on your curriculum vitae and that subconsciously more than consciously they would elicit some career development from it. Through links which they have made under the various programmes, leaders of the programmes and the feedback the company received from those leaders, participants felt that " It is one factor that will make up the big picture, it is definitely a positive", whilst another stated "A lot of the companies especially among consultancy have very strong CSR departments. I think it is becoming more prevalent".

The main theme running through the data that the gains and motivations the employee volunteers receive are altruistic in nature. As individuals, the participants believed that giving back to the community was a good thing. They were un-phased by the roles that they had to perform even though they had never done them before. The fulfilment and the fact that they felt they have 'gained' more from it than what the organisations have, is definitely a positive for the company.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the gains and motivations employees derive from corporate social responsibility. The results show that gains and motivations derived are altruistic in nature. The most pronounced effect of the employee volunteering programme is that a group of employees responded to the opportunities offered by the company and has started doing work they were not doing before the programme started. The volunteer groups mainly consist of younger members of the employee population but are open to all kinds of groups of employees not just the professionals. For the society as a whole, this is a positive outcome as the total number of people and the total number of hours spent on volunteer work is likely to increase because of the introduction of the programme. However, this may entail the company engaging with more community organisations, which can bring issues of health and safety to the forefront and issues regarding demands on time within the workforce.

The data has illustrated that the employee volunteers have been socialised in this way. From their community origins, they have undertaken various volunteering roles in their teenage years, which have instilled them with a sense of civic duty to society in general. As social actors in their socialised mind, the volunteering aspect of their lives has been instilled so they would keep an eye out for it, when the opportunities presented itself. In saying, this I do not believe that all of the participants would have actively sought out the employee volunteering programme, without it being placed in front of them or through their performance review with their directors/managers. The participants who actively did seek it out wanted to do so to enhance their day-to- day routine. To bring more to their lives other than the daily grind of work.

The employees work environment and work output is constant, on a daily basis they are under time pressure and deadlines regarding their work. Their work environment and the

processes it involves require concentration, customer/client contact where the customer/client is seeking advice, knowledge and expertise from them on a daily basis. Participants believe that for them the programme and being involved in it has been a great 'leveller' in terms of the way they look at work and where they see themselves within a constantly busy corporate environment. Their introduction to working in a corporate environment brings with it the added stress of exams and the pressure they find themselves under to succeed especially since the global downturn in late 2008. They find that whilst participation in the programme is not an escapist mechanism from work but that they feel they become better employees and look favourably on the company as the company in turn seeks to look after its employees.

The employee volunteers do not believe that they have a distinct advantage over their colleagues at work who do not participate in the programme believing that it is a choice and an individual choice whether one partakes in the programme or not. Although, they do believe it will reflect positively on their future career aspirations and progression.

Evaluation in cohesion with the literature reviewed

Gilder et al. (2005) found that there are characteristics of new volunteers to be found in their study. Research shown here also concludes that employee volunteering under the remit of CSR could indeed be the future of volunteering. When one looks at it in the context of the global economic crisis, people will be working for longer and well into old age due to financial constraints. There is an opportunity for a new source of volunteering to be tapped into by the corporate sector and companies in general. This volunteering could result in a new social capital where people see their community as a vital source of that social capital. As people will no longer be able to move as freely as they have in the last decade, they may look to the external factors of their community and find a base in which they can assist each other as part of their civic duty.

As in previous studies community volunteers as compared to non-volunteers were relatively older, more often married with children and more often religious. Participants in this study showed few similarities to those of community volunteers, apart from the fact that the participants had a high education notably a university degree, are over-represented in the programme. This may arise within the company where more of the young professionals volunteer because they are interested whereas support and admin staff are mainly older, female, married with children, and simply ignore the mail-shots sent from the CSR administrator. As one of my participants stated in interview, "that if you put something in front of someone they will happily do it but someone might not seek it out".

Simple questions as who participates and what makes employees participate remain unanswered, which is what Gilder et al. (2005) did not find out in his study. Though the research presented here is limited to eight members of the employee volunteer programme, what can be stated is that, employees who have gained social capital through their socio-demographic areas, who participated in community activities, are employees who participate in these programmes. They are young, diligent, intelligent and confident young people. They work hard and may play hard in their social lives, but the opportunity to volunteer is accepted as the norm for them with a kind of a blasé attitude of 'why not' participate if the company are willing to offer it and encourage you then it is an ideal opportunity to bring some balance into your work day.

Alder and Kwon (2002) argue that actors' social interactions create *opportunities* to act together and for social capital transaction. The current study would support this as one participant who will be going on study leave for three months to complete her final exams stated, that she mentioned to the co-ordinator of one of the DePaul Get Cents programme, that she would be "happy to do some work with her during the summer", as she would have

more free time. In this instance, the participant's social interaction with the co-ordinator has created the social capital transaction.

The participants in this study some of which consciously or subconsciously admitted that they believed in some way participation in employee volunteering would have a partial influence on their career path. Gilder et al. (2005) maintains also that the employee volunteers may know that some gains can be obtained from participation in the programme.

Muthuri et al. (2009) concluded that their research contributes to a better understanding of why firms should engage in employee volunteering in the first place. They state that employee volunteering can clearly bring benefits to companies. It encourages social cooperation with community actors, bringing opportunities for building business-community partnerships and mobilizing resources whilst also benefiting employees, community organisations and the public at large. The current research is compatible with what Muthuri et al. (2009) states. The company and its shareholders gain benefits from sending employee volunteers into the local communities to educate and provide a free service to community members who are early school leavers, young children who may have felt that companies are just a face and not real. By providing expertise in general and free of charge can only be of benefit to the company but it has also shown here that it is of benefit to the employee volunteer also and that the sustainability of the employee volunteer is what the employer should focus on.

The research undertaken by Peloza et al. (2009) looked at the employee volunteer from a marketing perspective within the organisation. They found that the altruistic motive was found to be less prevalent in workplace volunteer programmes despite being reported to being a critical factor and that egoistic motives represent important opportunities for the internal marketing of workplace volunteer programs. The current research does not

compliment Peloza et al. (2009) findings, this in part could be because they were looking at the marketing aspect of it and the study here was focussed on the volunteer. What is clear is that whilst employee volunteers may subconsciously think involvement with the programme will benefit their future careers, it is not the dominant factor in why they partake in the programme.

Donoghue, F. (2001) gives an outline of the history of volunteerism in Ireland. One example she gave was that of the Gaelic Athletic Association ("GAA") an organisation which involves a significant voluntary input, while at the same time contributing to a sense of community and belonging. The present research has indicated how two of the participants were involved in volunteering with their local GAA clubs and how they were involved in GAA themselves. They volunteered because it is prevalent in their community they wanted to maintain their own experiences and get involved with volunteering to keep younger generations interested. The social capital gained by them from this sense of community has given them the chance to reciprocate what they themselves gained.

Donoghue, F. (2001) stated that the religious in Ireland played a vital role in communities; one of the participants in the study was introduced to volunteering through the Legion of Mary a religious prayer group run by the church and its community. An employee volunteer's previous experience of volunteering shows us precisely why they partake in the CSR programme. The altruistic motivation has previously been activated and when it is placed in front of them again, they decide to give it a shot.

The fact that the study looked at the individual as opposed to the company in the context of CSR, reviewing the literature initially gave a one sided cynical view that of the company benefiting wholly by introducing the model. It is evident from the literature that companies have been placed under pressure to install a more human face to their activities. The

literature presents you with a conundrum of who really benefits and if these benefits are marketed internally or externally by those involved. Research has proven that CSR is of benefit to the company and in looking at the employee volunteer the research derives an egoistic picture of the employee volunteer. The employee volunteer may be partaking because there is a selfish gain on their part whether it is for further career advancement or an alter ego massage. The research undertaken in previous studies was conducted in large companies with a diverse range of people from different socio-economic and socio-demographic backgrounds. Their population size was larger. A larger population can have advantages and disadvantages, if the participant's responses were not answered truthfully and honestly. They may have had alterior motives, where at the time the study was undertaken they may have been for example, disillusioned by their work environment, their own career progress or by company morale being low which happens in quite a vast number of organisations whether CSR is available or not.

The present study concurred with some of the views in previous research as seen above. They too all concluded that further research is required on the topic to elicit more of the internal and external factors involved in the programme.

Weaknesses/Limitations

The limitations experienced in this research were in the initial access to the participants. The researcher was not given permission to select the participants. Initially this was the thought process of the researcher. A list of employee volunteers would be forwarded and the researcher could decipher which employee volunteers to interview in order to have the diversity of programmes in which the participated. The reason for this was so the researcher would gain a greater insight into the various different programmes the employees were involved with. Due to exam leave, many of the participants were not available for interview

and out of the list of 10 received eight participants were interviewed. Throughout the process, the questions asked were at times difficult to probe as some of the volunteers felt uncomfortable giving away too much information. The ethical considerations were reiterated to them first during initial contact and once again before interview. The process initially was limiting but once reiterated that confidentiality was assured they relaxed more.

At stages, the interviews were weak where time was of the essence on the participant's part. The 30-minute interviews were sufficient, the participants at times were difficult to direct when they were speaking about the projects they were involved in because they spoke so positively about their experiences, it was quite easy to listen to them and give them the opportunity air their views on their experience of the programme.

Findings

The study presented here focussed on the gains and motivations employees derive from corporate social responsibility volunteering. The findings of the study lends support to the general question, employees volunteer for altruistic reasons.

The findings show positive consequences of the programme from an employee volunteer perspective. The employee volunteers spoke about the different aspects of the programmes they were involved with enthusiasm and confidence as if they have been partaking in it all their lives. Interestingly previous research led to the research of this study to be viewed cynically before soliciting participants. Altruistic reasons had not entered the research until participant interviews began to unfold. The more one reviewed the data, the more one began to understand why the employees felt the way they did about the programme.

Consideration was given to the age profile and level of education of each of the participants in the study. The majority of the employee volunteers interviewed was aged

between 24-27 years. They were articulate, intelligent, socially aware young people who came from a grounded socioeconomic and socio-demographic background. They participated in the programme not out of egoistic pursuits as found in previous research but because they wanted to do it, they wanted to give back something to communities, to help selflessly. They were ambivalent about what affect it had on the company as the programmes they were on would have no client facing value to the company. To them the company is giving a great service to the community and it instils pride to be involved in this aspect of company life. They are quite happy to boast about the CSR programme socially with their friends and find their friends quite envious that a company would allow you such time to volunteer.

The surprise finding was that the added bonus of volunteering on company time was not taken as a given positive. One assumes that if employees can get time away from a busy office environment that they would jump at the chance. However, this was not the case each participant re-iterated how at times it was difficult to leave work to attend their programmes when you already had so much of your own work to do. The fact that their directors/managers were supportive of their involvement in the programme also enabled them to leave the office partially guilt free. Some participants said they have stayed back at work an hour or two extra to catch up on what they were not done that day. This was purely the choice of the individual, as they are delegated work to do and it is expected of them to do it no matter what constraints they are under time wise.

Putnam, Robert D. (2000) states that "those of us where were involved in youth groups or did youthful volunteering are half again as likely to donate to charity as adults and twice as likely to volunteer as those of us who were not so involved as youngsters". The employee volunteer group in this study have all volunteered in their youth, whether it was through

community based endeavours or fund raising. Putnam develops this further "simple act of kindness have a ripple effect".

Suggestions for further study

Although the results support the idea that gains and motivations employees derive from participating in corporate social responsibility volunteering, the participant sample in this study was quite small, and the long-term effects have not been established. As the employee volunteers are on graduate programmes for duration of four years, after such time the may gain a permanent employment contract or may not.   Will companies be guaranteed that their successors will be as altruistic in nature as their current employee volunteers?

This research contributes to a better understanding as to why the employees engage in employee volunteering. This line of research could be pursued further and undertaken with a larger sample of participants from more than one company. A further study establishing both sides of the CSR environment company and employee volunteer. As no research on employee volunteers exist in Ireland it would be useful to develop further insights into employee volunteers gains and motivations and if at all they are in any way egoistic in nature.

Conclusion

The relevant result of the study primarily lends support to the hypothesis that gains and motivations employees derive from corporate social responsibility are altruistic in nature.

Companies in the corporate world are tapping into a new form of volunteering globally. This new form of volunteering is presenting the community, not for profit organisations, health sector, with more stability in relation to their volunteer database. It is also allowing these sections of the community to tap into the corporate world, to get a foot in the door and pave the way for a constant flow of social capital.

Research has consistently proven that it is a part of societies civic duty to volunteer, this new wave of volunteerism is present in society and it may increase social capital in order to do with communities as opposed to doing good.

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Appendix I

Qualitative interview questions:

1. Where are you from and if you attended college, what institute did you attend?

2. What are your views on volunteering in general?

3. If you had a choice of volunteer activities what would you most like choose?

4. Do you partake in volunteer work, outside of the work environment, primarily volunteering on your own time?

5. How did you hear about the CSR programme? Through mail-shots, colleagues?

6. What developed your interest further?

7. Did you feel that you were drawn to one particular programme on the CSR list, or did they all appeal to you?

8. Has the CSR programme enhanced your view of the company?

9. Do you feel on a personal level that you gain from the volunteer work in CSR?

10. Do you think the CSR programme reflects favourably on the company?

11. Have you made any new connections from a business point of view through your involvement with the CSR programme?