

Corporate Volunteering: definition and relationship with Corporate Social Responsibility

Voluntariado corporativo: definición y relación con la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial

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Received on: 20/06/2022 **Revised on:** 21/10/2022 **Approved on:** 22/02/2023 **Published on:** 01/04/2023

Abstract: the aim of this paper is to build a definition of corporate volunteering, which is useful to analyze how this concept can be linked to that of Corporate Social Responsibility. Bibliographical research was done by consulting various databases. A broad spectrum of theoretical interpretations and empirical research was analyzed, which served to identify each of the components of the proposed definition and to support that this definition is functional to define Corporate Social Responsibility. The definition combines specific characteristics of corporate volunteering, elements related to its management and a summary of the benefits that this activity generates for the stakeholders involved. This article contributes to the theoretical development of corporate volunteering, to the construction of useful tools for conducting empirical research, and to the development of management strategies and methodologies for implementing corporate volunteering programs that operate effectively as tools of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Keywords: corporate Volunteering, Corporate Social Responsibility, employees, volunteers, definition, terms, forms, activities.

Resumen: el objetivo de este trabajo es la construcción de una definición de voluntariado corporativo útil para analizar cómo este concepto puede vincularse con el de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial. Se recurrió a la investigación bibliográfica mediante la consulta de diversas bases de datos. Se analizó un amplio espectro de interpretaciones teóricas e investigaciones empíricas, lo que sirvió para identificar cada uno de los componentes de la definición propuesta y para fundamentar que esa definición es funcional a las principales formas de definir la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial. La definición combina características específicas del voluntariado corporativo, elementos relacionados a su gestión y una síntesis de los beneficios que esta actividad genera para los actores involucrados. Este trabajo contribuye al desarrollo teórico del voluntariado corporativo, a la construcción de herramientas útiles para realizar investigaciones empíricas y a la elaboración de estrategias y metodologías de gestión para la implementación de programas de voluntariado corporativo que funcionen efectivamente como herramientas de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial.

Palabras clave: Voluntariado corporativo, Responsabilidad Social Empresarial, empleados, voluntarios, definición, términos, formatos, actividades

Suggested citation: Licandro, O. (2023). Corporate Volunteering: definition and relationship with Corporate Social Responsibility. *Retos Revista de Ciencias de la Administración y Economía*, 13(25), 97-110. <https://doi.org/10.17163/ret.n25.2023.07>

Introduction

Corporate Volunteering (CV) has become a tool on which many social organizations depend to carry out their mission, as it is currently used by companies of all types and sizes to implement their collaboration with these organizations. The CV is a tool that companies can use to generate a social impact and co-create value with civil society organizations. The academic production on this topic attests to its growing importance, and covers a wide range of topics, as: descriptive studies on the application of CV in different countries and contexts; research demonstrating the benefits that companies obtain from its application; studies on the needs that motivate volunteers to participate and work, considering the various positive impacts of its application for employees who practice it and for the communities where it is implemented. In much of this literature, the CV is proposed as an activity of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

A close look at this literature allows observing that it has several theoretical limitations, among which are 1) different interpretations of the concepts of CV and CSR, sometimes these terms are used without making explicit the meaning provided by the authors, 2) much of the literature considers the CV as a tool to service CSR activities directed to communities, sometimes as support to actions of social marketing or corporate philanthropy, omitting a broader approach to the CV that also understands it as practice of Internal Social Responsibility (ISR) directed to employees (volunteers), 3) in general, it is not explained how they are connected from the theoretical point of view and both concepts; 4) some studies analyze CV exclusively from the perspective of Human Resources management or corporate philanthropy management, without connecting them with Social Responsibility. In sum, the academic production on CV assumes that there is a relationship between CSR and CV, but hardly ever goes deeper to interpret how this relationship works.

The aim of this paper is to propose a definition

of CV that allows linking this activity with CSR. Since there are different ways of interpreting and applying CSR, a good definition of CV should be based on concepts that can manifest differently, depending on the conceptual framework of CSR applied. That definition should combine a set of variables, capable of assuming different values depending on the CSR definition adopted. This is relevant for empirical research, but it is even more relevant for the application of CV, since its design must be aligned with CSR objectives that are sought to be achieved through this type of volunteering. The definition proposed in this document fulfills this requirement.

This document is conducted as follows. First, an analysis of the terminology used to refer to this type of volunteering is made. Then, the components of a set of definitions from the literature were identified and systematized. Later, the definition was formulated by discussing each of those components. Finally, it is argued about how this definition allows connecting the CV with CSR.

Corpus selection criteria

A literature review was used as methodology. Articles on these topics were searched in different catalogs (Ebsco, JStor, SAGE, Science Direct, Springer and Redalyc), without establishing a time, since much of the theoretical development on volunteering takes more than two decades. The following Spanish terms were used for the search: volunteering, volunteers, corporate volunteering and employee volunteering. The terms used were *volunteering*, *volunteers*, *corporate volunteering*, *employee volunteering*, *business support for employee volunteering*, *employee supported volunteering*, and *employee supported volunteerism*. For analyzing the relationship between CV and CSR, the search combined these terms with those of *Responsabilidad Social Empresarial* (Spanish) and Corporate Social Responsibility (English). Among the articles found, those considered relevant to the research were selected.

State of the art

The variety of names and definitions for corporate volunteering

Although there are publications related to the CV, the construction of theory and the accumulation of scientific knowledge on this topic are limited by two problems. The first one refers to the variety of terms used to designate it. For Tschirhart (2015, p.17), “the variety of terms used to discuss employee volunteering programs makes it difficult to compare the results of a research study.” Three expressions are used in the Anglo-Saxon literature: 1) Corporate Volunteering (Lee and Higgins, 2001; Peterson 2004, Herzig, 2006; Runté and Basil, 2011); 2) Employee Volunteering (Magalhães and Ferreira, 2014; Rodell *et al.*, 2016; Cycyota *et al.*, 2016); and 3) Business Support for Employee Volunteering (or similar expressions: Employer Supported Volunteering and Employer Supported Volunteerism) (Booth *et al.*, 2009; Basil *et al.*, 2011; Pajo and Lee, 2011; Hetesi and Csovcics, 2015). Gallardo Vázquez *et al.* (2010) argue that corporate volunteering is the most popular term, being also the most used in Spanish-speaking countries.

The second problem is even more important: the diversity of definitions of the concept. While volunteering is often interpreted as “activities that are freely undertaken, usually without payment, to benefit another individual, group or cause” (Chow *et al.*, 2021, p. 2), it is not enough to say that corporate volunteering is a form of volunteering that takes place within the company. It has been pointed out that research on this topic “is currently based on a variety of definitions and different operationalizations” (Rodell *et al.*, 2016, p. 55). Booth *et al.* (2009, p. 25) argue that CV “is a research area in desperate need of a theory,” as “a deeper and theoretical understanding of employee volunteering can help guide policies and practices.” Tschirhart (2005, p. 28) states that “rigorous scholarship is needed to improve the growing, but now largely theoretical, literature on employee volunteering.” This situation has been represented as a metaphor: “Corporate volun-

teering is a ‘big tent’, not so different to a circus, which presents a variety of acts simultaneously” (Allen *et al.*, 2011, p. 36).

Component identification of the definition

Table 1 presents several definitions of CV, observing that their differences, however, most of these definitions share similar ideas on certain topics. First, they make explicit that it is a voluntary and non-mandatory activity (to refer to it, expressions such as: volunteering, social work undertaken voluntarily, and actively beyond the specific description of their work, is performed voluntarily, voluntary efforts are used). Under no circumstances are there any references to any kind of compulsory nature. Second, they share references to the type of employee contribution (for example, donating time, effort, or skills, providing assistance). Third, the majority of definitions share a reference to the goals and /or targets of the CV (e.g. contributing to society, serving the community, contributing to social development, charitable organizations, local community, non-profit organizations, etc.). Fourth, what characterizes the group of volunteers is the fact that they are part of the same company. Fifth, companies play some kind of role, such as supporting, encouraging, incentivizing, inviting, promoting, implementing, providing opportunity, training, etc.

On the other hand, the content of these definitions, as well as other statements by the authors, allow to conclude that there are important differences in the various topics used to define the concept or to explain aspects related to its scope and application. These topics relate to 1) who takes the initiative, decides and manages; 2) the degree of formality of CV’s activities (how they are organized and planned); 3) whether the activities are in group or individual; 4) whether the activities take place during or outside working hours; and 5) whether, in addition to employees, other actors can participate as volunteers, (retirees, family members, etc.). Then, different proposals on these issues were identified and analyzed in the literature.

Initiative, decision-making and management. In

this topic, some authors argue that the company is the actor that exclusively has these powers, whether it is taking the initiative (Cook and Geldenhuys, 2018), choosing the causes and institutions where voluntary activities are channeled (Tschirhart, 2005; Peloza and Hassay, 2006) or managing these activities (Tschirhart, 2005; Peloza and Hassay, 2006; Nave and Paço, 2013). Other authors propose that these actions can be performed interchangeably by both actors, whether it is the initiative (Santos and Bittencourt, 2008; Pajo and Lee, 2011) or the choice of the institutions where the activities will be performed (Tschirhart, 2005; Pajo and Lee, 2011).

Degree of formality. Several authors state explicitly that the CV is a formal activity (organized, planned, etc.) (Zappalá and McLaren, 2004; Peterson, 2004; Krasnopolskaya *et al.*, 2015). Other authors propose that corporate volunteering can

have both formal and informal characteristics (Tschirhart, 2005; Nave and Paço, 2013).

Group or individual activities. Although some authors emphasize that VC is a group activity (Rodell *et al.*, 2016), others propose that VC programs can combine individual activities with group activities (Peterson, 2004).

Out of or within working hours. Several authors propose that CV companies allocate to volunteers a certain amount of hours of work for them to dedicate to volunteering. Some of them explicitly state that the CV combines the use of free time of volunteers with time set aside by companies (Tschirhart, 2005; Lorenz and Gentile, 2011; Gatignon-Turnau and Mignonac, 2015). Few authors propose that voluntary activities should be carried out only during working hours (Herzig, 2006; Magalhães and Ferreira, 2014).

Table 1
Terminology and definitions

Term used	Author	Definition
Corporate Volunteering (Voluntariado Corporativo in Spanish and Voluntariado Empresarial in Portuguese)	(Herzig, 2006, p. 53).	"Company grant employees permission during their normal work to enable them to participate in social work and similar tasks."
	Peterson (2004, p. 371)	"Any formal organized business support to employees and retirees who wish to volunteer their time and skills to serve the community."
	Krasnopolskaya <i>et al.</i> (2015, p. 643)	"Any formally organized support or encouragement that a company provides to employees wishing to volunteer their time and skills to serve the local, national or international community without any further compensation or remuneration."
	Nave and Paço (2013, p. 33)	"Practices and activities that a company may adopt to encourage and support voluntary activities, and subsequently apply them to social work undertaken voluntarily by its employees."
	Lorenz and Gentile (2011, p. 184)	"As an employer, a company invites its employees to engage voluntarily and actively beyond the specific description of their work in charitable endeavors, often in cooperation with non-profit organizations (NPOs), while possibly investing additional resources."
	Sekar and Dyaram (2017, p. 662)	"Encourage employees to engage in various social/community-related activities with active employer support, both for business- and employee-led programs."
	Sajardo and Serra (2008, p. 213)	"The set of actions implemented at the initiative of the company and its human capital designed to contribute to social, welfare, environmental, educational and cultural development involving people directly linked to the company (employees and retirees) or indirectly (family members and friends)".
	Santos and Bittencourt (2008, p. 4)	"The term corporate volunteering refers to the practices and actions of a company to encourage, support and apply social work that is performed voluntarily by its employees."

Corporate Volunteering (Voluntariado Corporativo in Spanish and Voluntariado Empresarial in Portuguese)	Goldberg (2001, p. (24)	"A set of actions taken by companies to encourage and support the involvement of their officials in community activities."
	(Voluntariado Corporativo in Spanish and Voluntariado Empresarial in Portuguese)	"A set of organized actions that the company develops to involve its employees in voluntary activities, motivating them to participate in them".
Employee Volunteering	Cyclota <i>et al.</i> (2016, p. 322)	"Active support, through a variety of means, for employees volunteering with charitable organizations."
	Pelozza and Hassay. (2006, p. 360)	"Voluntary efforts made by employees within company-authorized programs on behalf of the causes/ organizations selected by their employer."
	Sheell and Vohra (2016, p.1376)	"Many organizations give employees the opportunity to volunteer in their CSR activities. This type of employee participation in CSR is known as corporate volunteering ... or employee volunteering."
	Tschirhart (2005, p. (16)	"It consists of formal and informal policies and practices that employer uses to encourage and help employees volunteer in community service activities."
	Rodell <i>et al.</i> (2016, p. 58)	'Employed people who donate time during a planned activity to an external non-profit organization or to a charity group or organization'.
	Zappalá and McLaren (2004, p. (41)	"A commitment by a business organization to encourage its staff to volunteer in the nonprofit sector."
Business Support for Employee Volunteering or Employer-Supported Volunteering/	Cook and Geldenhuys (2018, p. 3)	"Planned and managed efforts that seek to motivate and train employees to be effective volunteers under employer sponsorship and leadership, and are specifically designed to promote behaviors that seek to improve the social conditions of the communities in which a company operates."
	Gatignon-Turnau and Mignonac (2015, p.7)	"Encouragement of businesses or accommodation of employee volunteering activities during working hours and /or own time"
	Pajo and Lee (2011, p. 467)	"It allows employees to volunteer in the local community with the active support and encouragement of employers through formal and informal policies."

Audiences that can volunteer. Some authors point out that, in addition to employees, some CV programs include other actors: 1) former employees who are retired (Peterson, 2004; Sajardo and Serra, 2008); 2) family members or friends of employees (Sajardo and Serra, 2008); and 3) customers of the company (Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014).

The differences in the first topic are the most relevant for managing CV. Pelozza and Hassay (2006) identified that there are three forms of CV, determined according to the main actor in terms of initiative, decisions and management. The extra-organizational volunteering is the one where the participation of the company is reduced to supporting the volunteer initiatives of its employees (financing activities, freeing time, etc.), without getting involved at all in the decisions or management. Conversely, in the intra-organizational volunteering the company participates actively in the initiative, the decisions and the

management of the CV, even reaching the monopoly of all this. Inter-organizational volunteering refers to CV activities carried out within the framework of the company and with some involvement of the company, but where leadership is exercised by the volunteers. In general, the term corporate volunteering is associated with intra-organizational volunteering and the term Business Support for Employee Volunteering is used by authors whose definition of CV matches the approach of inter-organizational volunteering. In addition, there is a broad consensus that extra-organizational volunteering is not a form of corporate volunteering.

Formats of corporate volunteering

Regarding activities of CV, the literature covers a wide spectrum, being classified in different ways and called in different forms: modalities

(Sajardo and Serra, 2008), domains (Santos and Bittencourt, 2008), types (Guardia Massó *et al.*, 2016), primary areas (Cycyota *et al.*, 2016), categories (Hetesi and Csovcics, 2015) or forms (Moreno, 2013; The Global Compact, 2016). Since none of these names was satisfactory, the use of

the term *CV formats* was chosen in this document. This term refers to the combination of the types of tasks volunteers do, when they do them, how and who organizes them, and how the company is involved. Table 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of formats identified in the literature.

Table 2
Formats of corporate volunteering activities

Format	Format Description
Matching giving	Money donation campaigns implemented by volunteers in which the company donates in return an amount similar or proportional to the amount raised.
Individual Matching	Volunteers propose specific activities to be undertaken by them at the individual level and the company supports them with some type of counterpart (money, resources, etc.).
Virtual Micro-Volunteering	A wide range of small tasks volunteers perform for social organizations during their working hours, using electronic media.
Campaigns	One-off activities organized by the company or volunteers, with a specific purpose and limited duration (collecting donations, arrangements in a school or a place, etc.).
Time Banks	Volunteers have a monthly number of working hours to volunteering activities they choose to do, inside or outside the company .
Solidarity <i>Out-door</i>	Group activities, usually carried out as a team, are organized and led by a social organization.
Volunteering	Activities where the main contribution of volunteers is based on the use of their professional knowledge and skills (counseling, training, tutoring, membership of the directory of social organizations, etc.).
Pro-Bond Services	Activities based on providing services at no cost to social organizations, in which the company's professionals act as volunteers.
Assignment of human capital	Activities in social organizations carried out by qualified volunteers (e.g. managers), for long periods of time (weeks or months), who are released from their responsibilities in the company. For example: advising an NGO in another country.
Managers or managers volunteering	Specific volunteering of directors and/or managers who in an honorary way form the boards of social organizations or spend time to advise them.

Contributions to the state of the art

Proposed definition

Based on the above, a definition of CV is proposed below, which can be considered as a flexible version of the extra-organizational volunteering concept (Peloza and Hassay, 2006). The definition interprets CV as an activity aligned with the strategy of the company. This requirement allows it to be managed as a CSR practice directed simultaneously towards the community and employees, as required by the application of the CV in the framework of some approaches to

CSR. Therefore, it is necessary that the company has a leading role (but not exclusive) in the initiative, decisions and management. Corporate volunteering was also chosen because it is the most used expression in Spanish language literature (Gallardo Vázquez *et al.*, 2010) and because it emphasizes the centrality granted to the company. CV is defined as:

Activities through which employees donate their time, knowledge and/or skills with various purposes: 1) contribute to a social cause or meet the needs of a sector of the community, 2) meet the needs of employees themselves, promote their personal development, promote skills development in them and 3) generate benefits for the company. They are activities that

have some degree of formality (organization, planning, etc.), which can support different formats, be timely or organized in programs, be held outside or within working hours, practiced individually or in groups and allow the participation of other actors in the role of volunteers (family members, retirees, clients, etc.). These activities arise at the initiative of companies or volunteers, but are chosen by companies based on predetermined objectives, and can give employees participation in their choice. It is managed by the company but can be shared with volunteers and targeted social organizations. The company always provides some kind of support (money, equipment, logistics, etc.). Employees' participation is neither paid (directly or indirectly) nor conditioned by any form of coercion.

Figure 1 illustrates this definition by showing the relationship between its components.

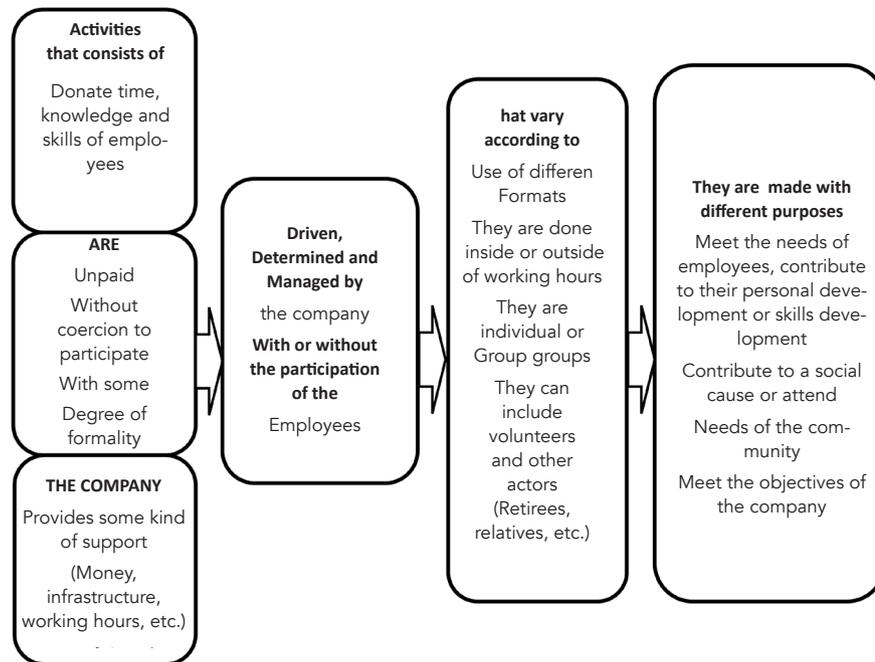
The aims of the CV regarding employees and the company

The *purpose* component of the definition proposes that the CV serves to generate benefits or positive impacts for the company and volunteers, in addition to those received by the community. In the case of volunteers, there is abundant research demonstrating that participation in CV activities: 1) satisfies a broad set of needs or motivations (Frisch and Gerrard, 1981; Clary *et al.*, 1998; Pajo and Lee, 2010; Chow *et al.*, 2021); 2) contributes to their personal development (Chow *et al.*, 2021) and solidarity (Cook and Geldenhuys, 2018) and 3) facilitates the development of various competences (Benjamin, 2001, Lee and Higgins, 2001, Cavalaro, 2006, Herzig, 2006, Booth *et al.*, 2009, Van Schie *et al.*, 2011, Chow *et al.*, 2021), particularly soft skills (Palacios *et al.*, 2021).

As for companies, it has been found that CV generates multiple benefits in at least three dimensions of management: the construction of organizational culture, human resources policies and the relationship with the community. In terms of contributing to the construction of organizational culture, CV serves as a tool to manage and strengthen that culture and to develop values consistent with it (Benjamin, 2001; Van Schie *et al.*, 2011; Bauman and Skitka, 2012). In terms of its contribution to improving the efficiency of HR policies, it has been shown that the CV: 1) increases employee satisfaction (Basil *et al.*, 2009; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014); 2) promotes their identification with the company (Herzig, 2006; Bauman and Skitka, 2012); 3) develops pride in belonging to it (Jones, 2010); 4) improves employee motivation (Benjamin, 2001; Lee and Higgins, 2001, Herzig, 2006, Basil *et al.*, 2009, Gallardo *et al.*, 2010), 5) increases their commitment, develops organizational citizenship behaviors and a positive attitude towards work, while reducing laziness (Van Schie *et al.*, 2011), 6) promotes employee involvement and loyalty (Lee and Higgins, 2001, Herzig, 2006, Jones, 2010, Ruizalba 7) contributes to talent development (Dempsey-Brench and Shantz, 2021), 8) improves productivity (Basil *et al.*, 2009) and performance (Hu *et al.*, 2016), 9) favors the acquisition and /or retention of valuable people for the company (Jones, 2010; Van Schie *et al.*, 2011). As for the relationship with the community, several studies indicate that the CV serves to manage and improve their relationship with the communities in which they are embedded (Easwaramoorthy *et al.*, 2006; Gallardo *et al.*, 2010) and to strengthen the link with social institutions where they perform their CSR activities (Benjamin, 2001), strengthening alliances with them.

Figure 1

Diagram illustrating the definition of CV



The relationship between corporate volunteering and social responsibility

There is a tendency to associate CV with CSR in the literature. According to Mañas-Viñegra (2018), the CV has gained space within CSR programs. It has been pointed out that in the beginning, CV was associated with a corporate philanthropy of the welfare state type, but in recent decades it has evolved towards a value-added approach for the parties involved (something that is typical of CSR) (Gallardo *et al.*, 2010). In addition, the CV has become a more qualified and structured activity, through which the workers' solidarity impulse is articulated with the CSR policies of companies (Santos and Bittencour, 2008). In this regard, Runté and Basil (2011, p.134) state that CV is a "means of enactment of CSR that explicitly involves the employee stakeholder group". According to these authors, several studies conducted in Canada "identify that Canadian companies support volunteering to meet CSR expectations imposed on them by external stakeholders" (Runté and Basil, 2011, p.134). For their

part, Dreesbach-Bundy and Scheck (2017) concluded in their review of the literature of CV in the period 1990-2015, that it is evolving to approach CV as an independent phenomenon of CSR, to another in which it is integrated.

Given the different ways of interpreting the concept of CSR (Garriga and Melé, 2004, Dahlsrud, 2008, Carroll, 2015), the relationship between CV and CSR is conditioned by the way this concept is defined. Three approaches in which CV plays some role as part of CSR are highlighted. These approaches interpret CSR as: 1) engagement with society or philanthropy (corporate citizenship); 2) addressing stakeholder interests and needs; and 3) responsible management of the company's externalities on its stakeholders, society and the environment (Licandro *et al.*, 2019).

The first approach reduces CSR to the responsibility of the company with the community or society in which it operates, which virtually assimilates CSR to the concept of *corporate citizenship*. The idea is that, in addition to economic, moral and legal responsibilities, companies can take on a voluntary basis responsibilities called

“social” (Kok *et al.*, 2001, Kotler and Lee, 2005) or philanthropic (Carroll, 1991). Under this approach, the CV is part of the toolbox used to carry out actions of corporate citizenship, which also include social marketing, philanthropy, some forms of patronage and sponsorship (Kotler and Lee, 2005; Herzig, 2006; Nave and Paço, 2013). The CV relates the employees to support activities of the company to social causes (Vázquez-Parra *et al.*, 2020), for taking advantage of their talent and time “for social development and improvement of their environment” (Vázquez-Parra *et al.*, 2020, p. 429).

It should be noted that the community is the recipient of CV’s actions, while volunteers are considered a resource that the company uses to carry them out. Regarding the definition of CV, under this approach of CSR: 1) the initiative, the choice of causes and institutions, as well as the management of activities, are a prerogative of the company; 2) the formats of activities are determined almost exclusively in function of the service that the company intends to provide to the community and 3) the CV is used exclusively as a tool that supports the social actions of the company.

The second approach arises under the influence of the Stakeholder Theory. This theory led to a reformulation of the CSR concept, extending its scope to the relationship of the company with the whole of its *stakeholders*, in particular its shareholders, employees, customers and suppliers (Jones, 1980; Hopkins, 2003). Thus CSR “requires a simultaneous focus on the legitimate interests of all appropriate stakeholders” (Garriga and Melé, 2004, p. 62). It is even argued that the first responsibility of the company is with its employees (Ostos and Hamann, 2020), and when properly applied it increases its identification, sense of belonging and commitment to the company (Contreras-Pacheco *et al.*, 2022). Under this approach, it is proposed that the CV is a tool to meet simultaneously the needs of the community and also the employees (Zappalá and McLaren, 2004, Jones, 2010, Cook and Geldenhuys, 2018; Gatignon-Turnau and Mignonac, 2015). In other words, the CV becomes a CSR activity aimed also at employees (and not only at the community), generating multiple benefits related to the man-

agement of human resources, since CSR allows building reciprocal behaviors between the company and its employees (Licandro *et al.*, 2021).

Regarding the definition of CV, under this approach of CSR: 1) the initiative and choice of causes and institutions are shared by the company and volunteers, but management is still predominantly in the hands of the company, 2) the choice of formats is no longer exclusively determined based on the type of intervention or service that the company intends to provide to the community, since the motivations and interests of volunteers are taken into account; and 3) the CV is used with the dual purpose of providing support to the social actions of the company and meet the motivations and interests of volunteers.

The third approach to CSR has antecedents before 2000 (Fitch, 1976; Reder, 1994), but its finished formulation occurred only in the first decade of this century. The ISO 26000 Guide, published in 2010, is perhaps the greatest conceptual development of this approach. CSR is defined in this document as the “responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities (products, services and processes) on society and the environment” (ISO, 2011, p.106). It includes both unwanted negative impacts as well as positive ones that the company can intentionally generate (Carroll, 2015). In other words, acting with CSR implies considering the externalities that the company’s operation can generate on stakeholders, society, and the environment. This approach includes the two previous ones, as contributions to society (first approach) can be conceptualized as positive externalities on it, whereas the attention to stakeholders’ interests and needs (second approach) requires the voluntary and responsible management of possible negative externalities on them (eg: avoiding discrimination within the company) and generating positive impacts (eg: promoting personal and professional development of employees).

Under this CSR approach, the definition of CV implies that: 1) initiative, choice of causes and institutions and management of CV is shared by the company and volunteers (stakeholder dialog is a necessary condition of CSR in the ISO 26000 Guide); 2) choice of formats is determined taking

into account the type of intervention, needs or motivations of volunteers and company objectives; 3) CV is applied with multiple objectives, which can include 1) supporting the company's social actions, 2) generating positive impacts on employees (development of skills, satisfaction of

needs, integration, etc.) and 3) strengthening the bond of employees with the company, as well as improving their performance. Table 3 summarizes the values assumed by the components of the definition of CSR, as applied to each of the three ways of interpreting CSR.

Table 3

Values assumed by the components of the CV definition in each CSR approach

How to interpret CSR as:			
Definition Component	Engagement with the community	Incorporation of Stakeholders' Needs.	Responsible impact management.
Initiative/ proposal	The company	La empresa, a veces los empleados	La empresa y los empleados.
Decision	The company	The company, sometimes the employees.	The company and the employees.
Management	The company	The company, sometimes the employees.	The company and the employees.
Activities	Formatos funcionales al tipo de intervención	It combines functional formats to the type of intervention and formats consistent with the needs (motivations) of volunteers.	It combines formats: functional to the type of intervention; consistent with the needs (motivations) of volunteers and the objectives in terms of developing skills and strengthening the bond of employees with the company.
Objectives of corporate volunteering	Supporting social actions	Supporting social actions. Meet employee needs.	Supporting social actions. Generate positive impacts on employees (skills development, needs satisfaction, etc.). Strengthen the bond of employees with the company and increase their performance. Facilitate the incorporation of CSR.

Discussion and conclusions

This paper aims to fill a gap in the conceptual development of CV, derived from the scarce theoretical reflection on this topic. The literature allowed observing that the authors in general do deepen on formulating a definition of the CV. Many do not even propose a definition but they simply mention general characteristics of the CV or refer only to the definitions of other authors without specifying their own definition of the concept. Only a minority of authors propose a definition, but they often do not include all of the elements, as can be seen in the definitions included in Table 1. There is a lack of theoretical effort in the literature to construct a definition that encompasses the different elements of this concept. The definition of CV proposed in

this paper is an attempt to cover this diversity, in order to contribute to research on CV and its practical application.

The construction process of this definition allowed mapping the values (alternatives) of these elements in the different ways of interpreting volunteering: individual or group, outside or within working hours, managed by the company or by volunteers, it includes only employees or other audiences, it will generate value for the community or also for employees, etc. In this sense, this definition establishes the variables (elements) that the concept should include but leaves open that these variables adopt different values (alternatives) in each situation. Each of these possible CV configurations is covered by it.

By filling this conceptual gap, the definition helps to improve the quality of empirical research.

Since the CV is like a big tent under which different shows are performed (Allen *et al.*, 2011), this definition is useful to specify and classify that diversity, i.e., to build typologies determined by the combination of different forms of leadership (initiative, decision making and management), formats and other variable elements. These typologies will be useful in refining research on the most studied topics in this field.

One topic is the identification and weighting of the motivations of employees to participate in the CV. In general, the analysis of answers to questions about motivations (using both quantitative and qualitative techniques) does not control the type of CV applied in the companies of the volunteers studied. It is worth asking if the same results will be obtained in companies where volunteers participate in decisions compared to companies where they do not, since it has been found that the structure of motivations is different in intra-organizational and inter-organizational volunteering (Licandro *et al.*, 2022). Is this structure similar when volunteering is a group structure than when it is an individual one? Another issue is the satisfaction of volunteers. Can satisfaction be measured with the same indicators when the volunteer designs and carries out a voluntary action, as when he/she does not? Equally important is to study the benefits obtained by companies. Are all types of CVs used to generate the same benefit type? Does any type of volunteering serve to develop teamwork skills, improve identification with the company or increase commitment?

The latter suggests the practical value of the definition proposed here. If a company identifies that egocentric motivations predominate among its volunteers related to the satisfaction of socialization needs, surely the activities must have a strong group component (example: *outdoor* solidarity). But if the predominant motivations are self-esteem, the activities should have a component that facilitates personal initiative (example: *matching* individual). In the case of satisfaction, if the company identifies a certain degree of dissatisfaction because volunteers do not feel like protagonists, perhaps it should reconsider the way in which activities are defined and managed, giving them greater participation.

In relation to the intended benefits, if the objective is to enhance the technical skills required in the production processes, it is probably best to engage pro-bono services, virtual micro-volunteering or managerial volunteering in CV activities where volunteers use those skills.

Finally, it is important to highlight the contribution of this definition to the application of CV in the framework of CSR. As illustrated in Table 3, the definition helps with decision-making. If the focus of the company is CSR towards the community, there will be monopoly of the initiative and the choice of the social organization where the CV will be applied. If the focus is CSR for employees, it may be best for volunteers to decide the cause and organization. But if CVs are applied as a combination of CSR to the community and employees, it will probably be interesting for them to share the initiative and decision.

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