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Decision-making in corporate volunteering

Motives for the application of corporate volunteering programs

Master's thesis within Business Administration

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to elaborate decision-making in corporate volunteering by investigating the motives for implementing corporate volunteering programs (CVPs), the design and scope of the initiatives and the processes companies use to conduct corporate volunteering. Additionally, we would like to find out if the motives for implementing CVPs differ from the ones of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in general as reasons must exist why companies rely on this often costly tool.

Research design: In our qualitative study we deploy semi-structured interviews to collect data from nine different medium- and large-sized international companies. We prepared a list of themes used to conduct and guide the interviews. The content analysis is utilized to interpret and categorize the data obtained.

Findings: Firms introduce CVP for translating their CSR vision into action and for creating a win-win situation. They aim at improving the sustainability performance and the staff's performance e.g. their skills, motivation and commitment to advance the retention of employees. Furthermore, personal reasons of decision-makers to conduct corporate volunteering initiatives exist. By investigating the motives of applying CVPs, we found out that they can differ from the ones of introducing CSR activity in general as they are more of a proactive nature and more related to employees and the society in general than to all stakeholders.

Originality: We contribute to the existing literature about CSR and corporate volunteering by investigating decision-making in CVPs and by the development of a process model. Furthermore, we examine the reasons of applying CVPs to detect the value companies attribute to it. Lastly, we come up with a classification of CVPs which has not been done by other researchers yet.

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I Introduction

In this chapter we describe the background of corporate volunteering as a tool for engaging in CSR, the problem discussion, the purpose of research and the outline of each chapter.

I.1 Background

Climatic change, the depletability of resources and many other incidents worldwide (such as the collapse of a textile factory in Savar, Bangladesh in 2013) force companies to think about acting in accordance with society and environment. A recurring argument for corporate responsibility is that companies make use of natural resources belonging to all mankind and should therefore deal with them as efficiently and responsibly as possible (do Paço & Nave, 2013). Because of this use of resources it is appreciated to give something back to society and environment.

One possible way to do this is through corporate volunteering. The aim is to encourage employees to participate in initiatives that benefit the public. These activities can take place during their working time while the company can support the initiatives both financially and non-financially (De Gilder, Schuyt & Breedijk, 2005). Corporate volunteering can be seen as a tool of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and is used e.g. to increase employee relations, to positively affect job satisfaction and even organizational commitment (Muthuri, Matten & Moon, 2009; Peterson, 2004). Many companies encourage their staff to attend corporate volunteering programs (CVPs) in order to gain more of these benefits (Nave & do Paço, 2013).

A 2011 conducted Gallup survey in America showed that 90% of Human Resources professionals say that volunteering initiatives can be very helpful for the development of leadership skills and soft skills such as the capability of problem solving (Scott, 2012).

CVPs can offer advantages for the employee, the employer and the organization which gets support and therefore can lead to a win-win-win situation for everyone (Caligiuri, Mencin & Jiang, 2013; De Gilder et al., 2005).

CVPs reached popularity in the last years as evermore companies have implemented them in order to take proactively part in the society's development and so demonstrating social responsibility (Nave & do Paço, 2013; Pajo & Lee, 2011). "The Giving in Numbers Survey"¹ shows that in 2013, 204 out of 261 world's leading companies already implemented a formal domestic CVP. Thus, we can find that many companies show a willingness to support society and environment through CVPs.

To reveal how costly CVPs can be we will briefly present an example of the company Procter & Gamble (P&G) which introduced corporate volunteering in the mid 1990's. The multinational consumer goods company has been cooperating with the China Youth Development Foundation since 1996 to support the Project Hope². By 2011, the company built 300 Hope Schools in 28 Chinese provinces. 16 of the schools were built with the help of P&G employees. More than 1,500 employees participated in the voluntary initiatives supporting these Hope Schools. Additionally, P&G donated 61 million RMB (approximately 9 million Euros) to build these schools by March 2011 (Procter & Gamble China Ltd., 2011).

For getting the most out of it, decisions concerning the implementation and management of the particular program as well as its content and scope must be made.

¹ Developed by CECP, a coalition of CEOs, in association with The Conference Board, *Giving in Numbers: 2014 Edition* is based on data from 261 companies, including 62 of the largest 100 companies in the Fortune 500. The report not only presents a profile of corporate philanthropy and employee engagement in 2013, but also pinpoints how corporate community engagement is evolving and becoming more focused following the end of the Great Recession. This is the tenth annual report on trends in corporate giving (CECP, 2015).

² Project Hope is a public benefit activity which focuses on building Hope Schools to help needy children in poverty-stricken rural areas to have better access to education (Procter & Gamble China Ltd., 2011).

1.2 Problem

CSR initiatives can have many positive impacts on society, environment and companies for instance increased social welfare through supporting homeless people, less air and water pollution by applying energy efficient plants, and increased company reputation through public awareness of the CSR activities (Cannon, 2012; Crifo & Forget, 2015). Therefore, companies have certain motives to apply social responsibility activities. These can depend on preferences of different roles of stakeholders such as investors, customers and owners (Schmitz & Schrader, 2015). Motives for engaging in CSR activities can also arise from public pressure through the media (Schmitz & Schrader, 2015). As one can see, reasons for the application of CSR are extensively investigated.

There is ample research on decision-making related to CSR, covering aspects such as the influence of stakeholders (Park, Choi & Chidlow, 2014), the impact of social networks and interpersonal relations of owner-managers and CEOs (Blombäck & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2014), their attitude towards trying, self-efficacy, subjective norms and past behavior (Sandve & Øgaard, 2013), the impact of the CEO's values, personalities and experiences (Chin, Hambrick & Treviño, 2013). Aguinis and Glavas (2012) state in their literature review about CSR that knowledge gaps about processes and underlying mechanisms of CSR exist. Therefore, we especially investigate the process of decision-making in CVP.

Additionally, little is known about the reasons for applying CVPs in particular. The use of CVPs can be very costly for the company as people oftentimes conduct volunteering activities during their working time while receiving regular payment. Sometimes companies also donate money and other resources like products, food or disaster relief materials to charitable organizations. Some companies provide free food and beverages for volunteers. Organizations also need to manage the activity. Therefore, additional

personnel are needed. As one can see, the resources spent in volunteering activities must be justified by the outcomes.

In view of the rising trend to rely on CVPs as one component of CSR, further knowledge about what motivates the decisions to introduce CVPs and how these are made is of interest. This is important to know because it can mirror the status CVPs have in the company as it shows company's commitment towards CVPs. Furthermore, we aim at gaining insight on how the program is designed and how the employer's support is framed because that can reflect the firm's attitude towards CVPs, too. These research objectives are crucial because sparse studies investigated this topic yet, contrary to CSR decision-making and motives for its utilization in general. We believe that it is important to enhance the number of companies engaging in corporate volunteering as it allows to perfectly combine supporting the society and improving the company's performance. Large companies can set great examples on how to conduct corporate volunteering. However, small companies do not yet engage in corporate volunteering as much. By showing them the motives and benefits larger companies obtain using CVPs they might become convinced and feel encouraged to use corporate volunteering as well. We believe that smaller companies do not yet apply CVPs because they are either not aware of this tool or think it might be too resource-consuming.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to elaborate decision-making in corporate volunteering by investigating the motives for implementing CVPs, the design and scope of the initiatives (as it can significantly vary from company to company) and the processes companies use to conduct corporate volunteering. Through our investigation, we will receive different considerations of decision-makers representing their companies such as the value they attribute to corporate volunteering. We would like to find out if the motives for

implementing CVPs differ from the ones of CSR in general as reasons must exist why companies rely on this often costly tool.

I.4 Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter we provide the background of CVPs as well as the research problem and purpose defined. The outline of every chapter is also included.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

We illustrate the definition and key concepts of CSR, its motives of application and influences on decision-making referring to it. Afterwards we define corporate volunteering as one possible strategy to implement CSR in a company and we present its purpose, benefits and positive examples of CVPs.

Chapter 3: Methodology and method

In this chapter we describe the research process through representing the research philosophy, approach, data collection and analysis. Question areas asked in the conducted interviews are provided and the course of action is outlined. The credibility of findings is presented as well.

Chapter 4: Empirical findings

The data obtained from the conducted interviews is summarized contributing to the analysis following in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Analysis

In this chapter the findings are analyzed according to the aggregated results from chapter 4. A model about the process of decision-making in corporate volunteering is built up. We also compare our findings of the motives for the application of CVPs with existing theories about motives for using CSR in general.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this chapter the thesis will be concluded and the contribution will be highlighted.

Chapter 7: Discussion

As our research revealed a possible categorization of CVPs, we will introduce it in this chapter. Additionally, limitations, further research opportunities and managerial implications are illustrated.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter is divided into two subchapters. First, we start with a general discussion of CSR by defining it and illustrating key concepts, and by demonstrating motives of its application and decision-making theories. Afterwards, we present corporate volunteering as a subcategory of CSR initiatives by pointing out its definition, purpose and benefits as well as positive examples of companies using CVPs.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

2.1.1 Definition and concepts

Nowadays, corporations not only face economic challenges but also social and environmental pressure. It means firms have to take into account a wider context to protect the company's reputation and therefore approach sustainable development (De Witte & Jonker, 2006). CSR as an emerging agenda has become a global trend because society has changed from locally oriented to globally oriented and from closed to open, so that organizations undertake more responsibilities in their businesses (De Witte & Jonker, 2006; Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). For business leaders all over the world, CSR has become inevitable priority (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

It can be seen as a tool to improve a company's performance in both financial and non-financial perspectives. Financially, the company can attract more and/or different customers leading to increased profits as e.g. some customer groups pay closer attention on buying products which are responsibly manufactured or environmentally friendly (Crifo & Forget, 2015). Non-financially, stakeholder orientation can cause bigger commitment to the company e.g. employees make great efforts and are therefore more likely to remain in the firm. Not only can the retention of employees be a result of acting responsibly but also a better reputation of the organization (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

Because of the development of society and its evolving view on acting responsibly, the definition of CSR constantly changes and varies even from person to person, also due to different cultural or economic backgrounds.

For some it means that companies' actions should obey the law, others see the value of social responsibility in a self-fulfilling point of view and act therefore voluntarily beyond the requirements (Cannon, 2012).

Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

One definition of CSR is linked to sustainable development which focuses on further economic improvement as well as people development (Blowfield & Murray, 2008). Sustainable development bases on a reasonable utilization of natural resources and a respectful treatment of the environment. In this concept, companies should consider financial, environmental and social performance equally in order to achieve sustainable progression. The combination of the three performances can be defined as “Triple Bottom Line” (TBL) creating a balance in contributing to the “3 Ps”: People, Profit and Planet (Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). “People” refers to the company’s stakeholders; “Profit” relates to business results, and “Planet” points to sustainable treatment of the environment (De Witte & Jonker, 2006). More specifically, firms have to consider their stakeholders for instance through maximizing shareholders’ value, satisfying customers’ demands and obtaining competitive advantage by simultaneously behaving responsibly. Aguinis (2011, p. 855) defines CSR as “*context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance.*” Within the process of earning profits, sustainable development also should be considered such as environmental protection, cultural advancement, business innovation and reputation improvement. Therefore, CSR has become an important challenge for organizations (De Witte & Jonker, 2006).

Carroll's pyramid

Carroll (1991) generalized that “CSR encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time”, expectations that can be classified as four corporate responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical and discretionary/philanthropic (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003). In order to recognize different organizational responsibilities, Carroll (1991) developed the model following in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1 Carroll's pyramid of CSR (Carroll, 1991).

The so-called “Carroll’s pyramid” includes previously introduced four responsibilities. Economic responsibility is the base of the pyramid and refers to the fact that business generally aims at maximizing profits (Carroll, 1991). On top of the economic dimension one can find legal responsibility. It relates to the assumption that companies are expected to obey the law. Ethical responsibility is the second top dimension and concerns moral obligations, norms and practices in the organizational level (Carroll, 1991). The philanthropic dimension forms the top of the pyramid as it is considered as voluntary, not required action. The core is to be a good corporate citizen which means organizational actions should respond to societal expectations (Carroll, 1991). These four

responsibilities should not only be embodied in the top-level management but also in the middle-level and even in the frontline to maximize the success of CSR. The responsibilities represent a company's culture and values. The model of Carroll will be applied in the subchapter "Motives" because we categorize the drivers of implementing CSR initiatives according to it.

In this thesis motives and drivers are used interchangeably and illustrate the reasons for companies to act responsibly.

Three-Domain Model by Schwartz and Carroll

CSR research is constantly expanding and different views evolve and change. To show this development of theory we point out the advancement of Carroll's pyramid. Schwartz and Carroll modified this model in 2003 to a three-domain approach consisting of the three core domains economic, legal and ethical responsibility by subordinating the philanthropic responsibility under the ethical and/or economic domain which better reflects possible diverging motivations. The following figure illustrates their new model.

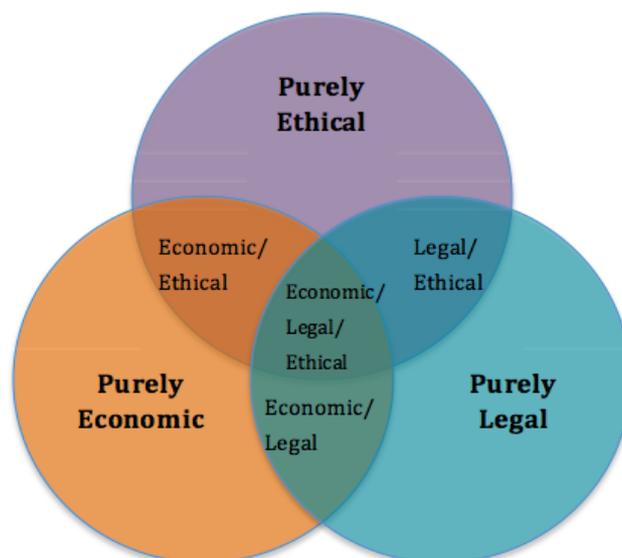


Figure 2.2 The Three-Domain Model of Corporate Social Responsibility (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003).

Other reasons for developing a new model framework were e.g.:

- The possible but fallacious suggestion of a hierarchy of domains illustrated in the pyramid.
- The impossibility of capturing the overlapping nature of the domains.
- The confusion of researchers about the philanthropic category.

As one can see, the new model stresses the overlapping of domains very much by making it possible to differentiate between seven possible subcategories of acting. The ideal combination lies at the center of the model, meaning that a CSR activity fulfills all three domains at once (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003). The authors present examples for all categories e.g. under the economic/ethical domain come “social marketing” activities such as the policy of Ben & Jerry’s when giving out free ice cream. As all models, this one is not free of limitations. Schwartz and Carroll (2003) identify some of them e.g. that some categories seldom occur such as the combination of economic and legal but not ethical activities. Moreover, the question arises whether actions can be purely ethical, economic or legal. International companies can also have problems applying the ethical or legal standards as they must decide to comply with standards of either the home or the host country (Schwartz & Carroll, 2003).

CSR perspectives and strategies

CSR combines internal and external perspectives of corporations. The internal perspective involves the individual level (e.g. entrepreneur, employee, manager) and the organizational level (e.g. culture, management, finance). The external perspective concerns the societal level (e.g. environment, community, government). CSR reflects a growing awareness of the impact of companies’ behaviors on these levels and connects stakeholders’ value to companies’ tasks (Cannon, 2012; Sahlin-Andersson, 2006).

Companies take responsibilities through designing CSR strategies which can aim at protecting the environment, enhancing organizational commitment, enlarging the competitive advantage, improving the reputation or even attracting and retaining employees (Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2008; Cannon, 2012; Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi, & Saeidi, 2015). Corporate social initiatives among CSR strategies refer to “*major activities undertaken by a corporation to support social causes and to fulfill commitments to corporate social responsibility*” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 3). They can occur in six different types: socially responsible business practices, corporate social marketing, cause-related marketing, cause promotions, corporate philanthropy and corporate volunteering (Kotler & Lee, 2005). The latter is of interest for us and will be explained in the second part of this chapter.

In our thesis we apply the stance of Valackienė and Micevičienė (2013) and define CSR as acting voluntarily beyond the laws and regulations in force by simultaneously balancing out People, Profit and Planet.

2.1.2 Motives

Decision-making about engaging in CSR can be influenced by many factors. As mentioned above, CSR initiatives are not only conducted for aiding reasons but also for profit-driven causes. Williamson, Lynch-Wood and Ramsay (2006) examined the drivers of environmental behavior in manufacturing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) discovering that business performance and regulation promote CSR activities which are considered as optional and costly. Environmental action arises from gaining business benefits by doing so e.g. the reduction of energy consumption leads to cost savings (business performance argument) or from complying with existing regulations which produces greater levels of CSR action. Regulations can therefore assist in combining the company’s profit-oriented self-interest with fulfilling the interest of the society (Williamson et al., 2006). In contrast to these profit-driven causes, socially responsible

SMEs implement CSR strategies because of moral and ethical beliefs (internal drive instead of external pressure), even though the firms identified business benefits as well (Jenkins, 2006).

According to Carroll's pyramid of CSR, the company's behavior and pursuit can be based on different responsibilities so that many motives of applying CSR initiatives arise (Agudo, Gargallo & Salvador, 2015). The motives can strongly influence the decisions for CSR activities. Due to legal and ethical responsibilities, duty, obligation, moral principles and ethical standards can promote the firms' engagement in CSR activities (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). Because of a perception of economic responsibility, a large number of investigations show that profit is a driver for companies to implement CSR strategies (Schmitz & Schrader, 2015; Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). Not only the shareholders but also the investors can gain profit from CSR activities (e.g. saving energy leads to cost reduction and thus to increased profit) so that they have higher expectations on the outcome of activities. Other studies point out that welfare-oriented companies are willing to balance economic, social and ecological concerns on the account of the awareness of corporate citizenship and philanthropic responsibility (Dhanesh, 2014; Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). Therefore, three main motives can be derived through combining the pyramid with other CSR theory: compliance drivers, profit drivers and sustainability drivers.

In addition, existing research on CSR clarifies that internal and external dimensions are important to understand the motives underlying CSR action (Crifo & Forget, 2015). The following table categorizes the three main drivers identified and combines them with internal and external perspectives, resulting in a framework which entails six groups of drivers of CSR action.

Table 2.1 Perspectives and drivers of Corporate Social Responsibility

Perspectives → ↓ Drivers	Internal	External
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moral and ethical standards, rules and norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governmental policies ● Law
Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Profit-oriented objectives ● Individual preferences e.g. of shareholders, employees and directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public pressure e.g. from competitors, customers, investors
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People's commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environmental and social issues ● Corporate citizenship

Compliance drivers

Compliance as a motive of CSR indicates that decisions to engage in CSR activities are made in a reactive manner, meaning to comply with existing and oftentimes outspoken demands from different stakeholders – internal or external ones. Companies may feel the obligation to repay the society as well as acting consistently with the government and law (Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). Every company has legal obligations to provide goods or services that at least obey the law (Carroll, 1991). In view of that, compliance as a main motive for CSR implies a way for society to direct business behavior so that it influences welfare for society and positive manner. Additionally, internal moral principles and ethical standards can pressure companies to engage in CSR activities (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). The moral atmosphere or ethical climate exists in companies and includes both the individual and organizational level such as friendship, private morality, organizational rules and codes of conduct (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Employees can

consciously comply with the rules and norms and companies are willing to pursue CSR under the promotion of a moral and ethical atmosphere.

Profit drivers

When profit is the motive of CSR it displays that decisions to engage in CSR activity are made proactively, i.e. to obtain financial benefits. The profit motives play an important role for the implementation of CSR activities. According to Aguinis and Glavas (2012) the outcome of CSR initiatives can be tangible (financial results) and intangible (non-financial results e.g. improved management practices or attractiveness to investors). Plenty of investigations illustrate that profit motives are often associated with stakeholders' influence (Schmitz & Schrader, 2015; Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013; Crifo & Forget, 2015).

Pursuing profit-maximization, CSR activity can arise internally as well as externally. Firms face external pressure from e.g. competitors, customers and investors. Product differentiation, information asymmetries and market contestability can lead to imperfect competition, meaning companies have to gain competitive advantage in order to survive (Crifo & Forget, 2015). However, opportunities of obtaining competitive advantage can lie in social or environmental resources, so that it can encourage firms to engage in CSR initiatives. In a study, 68% of the interviewed customers claimed buying a product or service because of a firm's CSR reputation (Crifo & Forget, 2015). In order to satisfy and attract more customers, companies are willing to engage in CSR activities (Crifo & Forget, 2015). Simultaneously, customer loyalty as well as evaluations and product purchasing can be improved (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; cited in Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Schmitz & Schrader, 2015). Building a strong relationship with customers is a useful way to enhance and protect reputation which is the main outcome of CSR activity (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). Reputation as a strategic intangible asset can positively influence the company's success (Crifo & Forget, 2015). Investors exercise

also external pressure because they generally prefer low-cost CSR initiatives and pay greater attention to a high profitability after spending money on CSR activities (Schmitz & Schrader, 2015).

In addition to the external pressure, internal pressure can come from shareholders, employees and directors. Some shareholders, managers or employees want to achieve their personal goals or gain private benefits from CSR initiatives (Crifo & Forget, 2015; Pelozo, Hudson & Hassay, 2008). For example, employees can view CSR activities as an effective means to enhance job-related skills and obtain more social-related experience (Pelozo et al., 2008). One cannot say that internal motives are negative because they can positively drive the application of CSR initiatives. In general, stakeholders play an important role in CSR decisions due to the willingness of companies to satisfy their various demands and align with them.

Sustainability drivers

Companies take philanthropic responsibility in order to be a good corporate citizen (Cannon, 2012). Good corporate citizenship is not only about the individual (“People dimension”) and organizational level (“Profit dimension”), but also about the “Planet dimension” which means the involvement of social and environmental responsibilities. Companies are motivated by the “3 Ps” and follow the TBL through placing social and environmental objectives on an equal footing with economic objectives (Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). They consider balancing their financial, environmental and social performance to approach sustainable development. Conducting charity events are an example of philanthropic CSR action (Payton, 1988). Through CSR activities, employees obtain more opportunities to get in touch with the environment and society by participating in activities benefiting the public, so in the “People” perspective the improvement of employee commitment can be a reason for conducting CSR activities. Especially in welfare-oriented companies the provision of goods with better quality, the

environmental awareness and better working conditions are more likely to occur (Schmitz & Schrader, 2015). Kotchen and Moon (2008; cited in Schmitz & Schrader, 2015) investigated that higher environmental pollution will lead to higher CSR activities. Therefore, environmental issues such as global warming, shortage of resources and water pollution can strongly incent the companies to implement CSR strategies relieving these issues. However, not only environmental issues can facilitate the application of CSR activities, but also commitment to social problems such as human rights, racial discrimination and unequal treatment of men and women.

2.1.3 Decision-making

Decision-making in CSR can be affected by the CEO's and manager's experiences, personalities and values (e.g. Hay & Gray, 1974; Swanson, 1999). Chin et al. (2013) examined the impact of CEO's political ideologies, namely their orientation towards political conservatism or liberalism as expression of underlying values influencing CSR action. In general, liberal CEOs stress CSR more than conservative ones and specifically even when financial performance is low while conservative CEOs emphasize CSR only when financial performance allows for it (Chin et al., 2013). Therefore, company-owners influence directly the firm's CSR direction by hiring CEOs. Not only the political orientation has an influence on CSR, but even the manager's values expressed by the possibility to exercise discretion, i.e. the permission to use their own judgement (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004). The authors argue that the allowance of exercising influence can lead to the initiation or change of certain projects addressing personal moral concerns. This championing of CSR can inspire employees to be willing to make a difference. CSR cannot merely be explained by strategic commercial interest of the firm resulting from a CSR policy, but rather by individual values and action (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004). SMEs practicing CSR can be most successful when the managing director or owner-manager shows a strong effective leadership when championing CSR as these people often drive and implement company values (Jenkins, 2006).

The attitudes towards trying, self-efficacy, subjective norms and past behavior count for predictors of decision-making as these are positively related to the intention to try (Sandve & Øgaard, 2013). In this study “attitudes towards trying” has the biggest influence on decision-makers. As we conclude, the managers’ characters play an important role when deciding about and implementing CSR strategies.

The CEO’s investments in CSR also rest upon motivations such as enhancing shareholder value, altruism and personal interests (meaning the increase of professional or personal reputation) according to Borghesi, Houston and Naranjo (2014). Younger CEOs, female CEOs and CEOs being often in the media invest tendentially more in CSR. Borghesi et al. (2014) assume that these groups of people obtain either more private benefits from investing in CSR activities or they see investments as being more compliant with shareholder value. One recognizes here again that CSR activity is strongly influenced by leaders’ interests.

The CEO or owner-manager is not only influenced by values and attitudes but also by social networks and interpersonal relations (i.e. embeddedness). Especially in SMEs, leaders engage in the local community expressing their embedded role in society (Spence, Schmidpeter & Habisch, 2003). Embeddedness in the local culture affects decision-makers significantly by taking action of CSR (Blombäck & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2014). Therefore the closeness to stakeholders plays a vital role: If the owner-manager is simultaneously inhabitant of the local community, he/she identifies himself/herself with the community, its values and norms more than an employed CEO living somewhere else who is more embedded in values and norms of the parent company. Reasons for acting responsibly vary and can range from fulfilling the expectations of others to be willing to give something back to society (Blombäck & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2014). We argue that engaging in the local community by conducting corporate volunteering and other CSR activities can be a reason of the firm’s embeddedness in its surroundings.

Even the society, namely a company's primary and secondary stakeholders, impinges socially responsible behavior. Freeman (1984) describes stakeholders as *“any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives”* and categorizes them into primary (having a direct impact) and secondary (being affected by the firm and can indirectly influence it) stakeholders (cited in Álvarez, Moreno & Mataix, 2013). Primary stakeholders such as employees and consumers function as catalysts for the promotion of CSR in the host markets while business collaborators like local firms being part of the company’s supply chain negatively influence CSR activities (Park et al., 2014). Secondary stakeholders e.g. non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the local community, media and the government in turn positively sway the company’s decision-making (Park et al., 2014). To conclude, different kinds of stakeholders can have diverse influence on companies. Grunig (1979) states that they also have distinct expectations concerning a firm’s CSR. Stakeholders can therefore be predictors which affect whether companies engage in CSR activities and in which types specifically (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). They exercise pressure through affecting future revenues and resources and the company’s reputation (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

As one can see, the impacts on decision-making in CSR are widely explored in contrast to the ones in corporate volunteering. In the following part we illustrate corporate volunteering, its purpose and benefits and provide positive examples.

2.2 Corporate volunteering

2.2.1 Definition

Corporate volunteering is also known as employee volunteering, employer-supported volunteering, corporate-sponsored volunteering (Pajo & Lee, 2011) or community volunteering and differs from the other areas mentioned in subchapter 2.1.1 because of its characteristic of involving volunteering employees (Kotler & Lee, 2005). It describes company-internal programs of promoting voluntary activities in which volunteers

provide physical labor, ideas, talents and expertise supporting the local community and causes (Kotler & Lee, 2005). These programs include the mobilization and organization of the employees', managers' and sometimes former employees' and other stakeholder's willingness to work voluntarily (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Volunteering activities can range from *“giving specialized technical support, lectures and workshops, supporting an organization, promoting fund-raising events, giving emotional support to hospitalized people, providing entertainment for old people, and organizing campaigns, among others”* (Nave & do Paço, 2013, p. 33).

Corporate volunteering can take place in cooperation with a non-profit organization or can be an autonomous effort of a company (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Likewise, it can be organized by the company in form of CVPs or the employee itself (Lukka, 2000; cited in Pajo & Lee, 2011) who gets support through paid time-offs, the provision of a matching program, recognition for service and/or organizing volunteering teams (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Company support differs according to company size (Basil, Runte, Basil & Usher, 2011). Basil et al. (2011) investigated that small companies (with less than 100 employees) compared to large ones (with 500 or more employees) are more flexible as they show less formalization and codification of support, meaning that they have less formal policies and programs for corporate volunteering. Large firms use corporate volunteering efforts more strategically (Basil et al., 2011). The support of companies for acting voluntarily differs also among genders (MacPhail & Bowles, 2009). The authors found out that women who usually have more time constraints receive less support in general and especially in forms of time-offs and flexible work hours than men.

Burnes and Gonyea (2005) and also Kotler and Lee (2005) argue that volunteering initiatives are not a new phenomenon but novel is its rising integration into the existing corporate social initiatives and its linkage to core business values and goals (cited in Basil et al., 2011; Kotler & Lee, 2005).

2.2.2 Purpose and benefits

By educating people in corporate citizenship, the aim of CVPs is to utter the best in everybody (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Given that corporate volunteering is properly implemented in the company, it can bring positive outcomes for the employees as their job satisfaction can be enhanced, their learning can be positively affected and their motivation can be increased (do Paço & Nave, 2013). Additionally, their morale, productivity and skills can be extended (Basil, Runte, Easwaramoorthy & Barr, 2009). Such skills are according to Nave and do Paço (2013) communication, negotiation, problem solving and team working skills. Furthermore, Peterson (2004) indicates that employees who take part in CVPs perceive an enhancement of leadership and project management skills. Nave and do Paço (2013) argue that employees can also increase their creativity and confidence. Not only the employees can benefit from these initiatives but also the company itself by a heightened reputation and image, a positive internal culture (Peterson, 2004) as well as by using corporate volunteering as means for employee recruitment and retention (Basil et al, 2009; do Paço & Nave, 2013). Reason for the latter two is the employees' claim to work for companies which behave as good corporate citizens (Pajo & Lee, 2011). Allen (2003) sees the company's benefits of corporate volunteering in the possibility of meeting strategic goals and in the reinforcement of relationships (cited in do Paço & Nave, 2013). Most important, society can profit from an advance of quality of life and a solution of its problems (do Paço & Nave, 2013).

2.2.3 Positive examples

Many companies already implemented corporate volunteering in their CSR agenda. In the following, outstanding examples are illustrated to present the possible scope CVPs can have and the decisions the firms made e.g. about the support they offer or the collaboration with others.

The manufacturer and retailer of outdoors wear Timberland engages more than 1,500 employees and guests in a community service event called “Serv-a-palooza” taking place annually for the 17th time this year (Timberland, 2015). The senior manager of community engagement speaks on it as follows:

“Serv-a-palooza represents an opportunity for us to reconnect with our neighbors and provide them with much needed resources that will support their community growth for years to come.”

Projects come off in more than 50 locations across Europe, Asia and North America, resulting in some 12,000 hours of volunteering. Examples of projects include building a school library in Malaysia, beach cleaning in Taiwan, planting trees in Italy and reconstructing of homeless’ shelters. Another event organized by Timberland is the “Earth Day” aiming at protecting the environment. One of the other countless projects is organizing job readiness fairs supporting job seekers. Every full-time employee receives 40 hours per year paid for engaging voluntarily (Timberland, 2015). From the example stated, one can derive that Timberland started engaging in corporate volunteering a long time ago. The CVP is designed internationally and covers different areas such as education, environment and societal challenges. The company aims to support its neighbors with physical labor of the employees and other company resources. Timberland also provides a fixed amount of working hours paid for engaging in the initiatives. This is an example for what we call company support in the following.

Microsoft is also a glowing example for having a successful CVP. It started a volunteer match program already in 2005 and supports their employees by finding organizations which suit their volunteering interests and skills best by having an in-house volunteering tool called “Microsoft Volunteer Manager” (Microsoft, 2015). In 2013, 8,620 employees were matched to 2,025 nonprofit organizations (Microsoft, 2014a). Since the implementation of the program in 2005, U.S. employees have been volunteering more than two million hours (Microsoft, 2015). In 2014, 7,144 U.S. employees registered for

the program (11.7% of the workforce) by volunteering 456,356 hours in total (Microsoft, 2014b). Employees outside the U.S. gain up to three paid days offs (Microsoft, 2014b). Microsoft engages in many different initiatives. One of them is the Microsoft “Tech Talent for Good” program bringing IT expertise to nonprofit organizations (Hogen & Smith, 2015). Laudable is in addition, that the company not only provides paid time-offs but also a donation for the organization volunteered in, namely a “Company Volunteer Match” of \$25 per hour, meaning four hours of volunteering eventuate in a \$100-donation to the nonprofit organization (Hogen & Smith, 2015). As one can see, Microsoft implemented corporate volunteering long ago, too. The company applies a matching program for allocating employees to nonprofit organizations. Microsoft introduced certain rules for supporting the initiative, meaning a fixed amount of paid days off and of donating money for the project.

Another outstanding example of implementing corporate volunteering in the company strategy shows the cooperation of the German firms Citigroup Global Markets Deutschland AG, Deutsche Börse Group, Fidelity International – FIL Investment Services GmbH, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP and Linklaters LLP for the mutual “ENGAGE” job application training they offer. All companies together won the "Generali European Employee Volunteering Award" in 2011 as the best companies in Germany in the category “big firms”. The project’s aim is to support adolescents who despite having a Certificate of Secondary Education do not find a job. Among others, employees impart security in the application process and help to enhance the youths’ self-esteem. The involved companies pool their strengths in the initiative by providing resources, time, experience and expertise in solving two of the region’s biggest problems: youth unemployment and integration (UPJ e.V., 2015). From this example one can learn that CVPs can also be conducted together with other companies. This regional initiative aims at a recent social issue, namely supporting young people to enter the workforce.

The firms provide resources such as time, employee's experience and their skills collectively.

According to the examples mentioned above, one can say that every company executes and decides about corporate volunteering differently. Decisions that need to be made can concern the collaboration with other organizations (nonprofit organizations and profit organizations), the support they offer for the CVP or the location where the initiatives take place. Every decision depends on the company itself and the decision-maker(s) in charge.

2.3 Summary

CSR as a company strategy is a well-researched area as many different definitions and concepts exist (e.g. Carroll's pyramid, TBL or the Three-Domain Model). We know that CSR strategies can aim at different objectives and that companies can have different perspectives on CSR. The motives why companies engage in CSR activities are also established and can be according to the internal and external dimensions divided into compliance, profit and sustainability drivers. Decision-making in CSR is well-known, too. It can be based on e.g. the leader's experiences, personality, values, political ideologies, social networks and interpersonal relations. But also stakeholders exercise a great influence on the firm's CSR activities and therefore influence decision-making.

Although the phenomenon of corporate volunteering is clearer defined than CSR is, every company decides about it and executes it differently. This can be derived from the positive examples we presented. We already know the outcomes of engaging in corporate volunteering (such as advantages for the society, the employee and the firm), but we do not know about the specific motives and decisions in detail. Investigating the motives can help us to examine the value they attribute to corporate volunteering and to design a universal decision-making process for CVPs.

3 Methodology and method

In this chapter we explain the research choices we made. Research philosophy and approach are introduced under the subchapter methodology. Choices for the type of interviews, sample selection, course of action and analyzing data are presented as well as the credibility of findings.

3.1 Methodology

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) the term “methodology” describes how research should be conducted. We commence with our explanation of choosing interpretivism as research philosophy and discuss later on the approach of research.

3.1.1 Research philosophy

“Research philosophy” depicts the nature of knowledge and its development (Saunders et al., 2009). In this thesis we apply the stance of interpretivism, meaning that we think that there are distinctions between humans as social actors. Williamson, Burstein and McKemmish (2002) argue that there are differences in the social world and in the world of nature as humans creating the social world interpret actions and words differently and derive perceptions which in turn lead to choices. We stress research among people (Saunders et al., 2009) – in our case decision-makers (i.e. CEOs, managers and employees) responsible for corporate volunteering in a company. Their interpretation of social roles is for us of importance as this leads to decision-making which is investigated.

3.1.2 Research approach

As a limited amount of literature investigated corporate volunteering and the foundations of decision-making within it, our approach is of abductive nature. Firstly, we observed the phenomenon of corporate volunteering, later we developed a framework about

decision-making in corporate volunteering and we illustrated different aspects that need to be considered when deciding about CVPs. Hence, the classification of the research purpose is exploratory as it helps to investigate “*what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light*” (Robson, 2002, p. 59). Because the phenomenon of corporate volunteering is not much researched yet, our results clarify the understanding about corporate volunteering. Additionally, we investigated the motives of using CVPs; therefore we argue an exploratory study is appropriate.

Our aim is to discover how decision-making in corporate volunteering takes place and what differentiates the motives of applying CVPs compared to CSR in general. Additionally, we are interested in how the programs are designed. Therefore, we conducted a qualitative study which is according to Saunders et al. (2009) characterized by the generation or utilization of non-numerical data (meaning expressed through words – in our case mostly collected by semi-structured interviews). Thus, the research questions predetermined our approach. Additionally, Aguinis and Glavas (2012) state that more qualitative studies are needed to enhance the comprehension of underlying mechanisms of CSR action.

3.2 Method, data collection and analysis

The used techniques and procedures to gain and analyze data are called “methods” and comprise in our thesis semi-structured interviews and qualitative analysis techniques (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Our research technique in order to collect qualitative data is characterized by one-to-one semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and appropriate for qualitative research (King, 2004). We decided for semi-structured interviews as we did not want to explore a general area in depth but we were interested in

specific issues about CVPs e.g. decision-making, company support and motives for the application. To guide our respondents we prepared a list of topics we were interested in asking instead of a detailed interview guideline. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to freely communicate which is important when conducting an exploratory study (Saunders et al., 2009). Using semi-structured interviews allowed us to ask additional questions in order to explain and clarify the responses but also to direct the interview (Saunders et al., 2009).

Before accomplishing the interviews, we made a list of main areas to be asked to the respondents. To establish a better connection to the interviewee we started asking about the company's application of CSR in general. Afterwards we narrowed down the topic by investigating the details of the utilized CVPs, for instance about the scope of the program, when the company started to use the CVP, why the company chose CVPs instead of or additional to other CSR activities, why it chose this specific CVP and the value attached to it. From these questions we could derive the reasons and motives of applying CVPs. Then, we inquired the company's management of the CVP e.g. who decides what, whether the company provides support or offers a certain budget for it. Another question which we were interested in was if the company monitors the initiative and if the company recognized any changes after implementing the CVP e.g. increased reputation. Through these questions, we wanted to investigate decision making and the motives of introducing corporate volunteering.

3.2.2 Sample selection

For our sample we chose international companies from different countries (Sweden, Germany and China) and industries: technology and consulting, chemistry, banking and financial services, retail, transportation and logistics, consulting for professional services, IT consulting as well as manufacturing industry. We decided for this sample as decision-making and motives can be very different because of the company's culture,

values, history and background. These factors can influence the decisions about the design and execution of corporate volunteering. As our aim was to derive deeper knowledge about the decision-making process in general across industries and countries, we did not focus on one certain company, industry or country in detail but we interviewed one CEO, seven managers and one employee as company representatives from nine different industries located in three distinct countries. We also did not focus on one specific industry as we want to develop a process of decision-making which can be applied to almost every company regardless of its size, industry or location. We conclude that this approach is more suitable for developing an understanding of CVPs and therefore answering our research questions. The interviewees are all responsible for the CVP and are employed as e.g. “Manager Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs”, “Senior Expert Corporate Volunteering” or “Sustainability Developer”. We interviewed them because they are more familiar with the decision-making process, the motives of the company to implement CVPs, the staff’s involvement and ways of communication than other employees as they are the experts in this field.

Table 3.1 Sample

Interview	Company’s industry	Company’s location	Number of employees	Position of interviewee	Date	Interview language	Length of interview	Type of interview
Company 1	Technology and consulting	Germany	21,100	Manager	03-13-15	English	48:32 mins	Telephone
Company 2	Chemistry	Germany	113,292	Manager	03-17-15	English	32:33 mins	Telephone
Company 3	Retail	Sweden	700	Employee	03-20-15	English	25:00 mins	Face-to-face
Company 4	Banking and financial services	Germany	45,392	Manager	03-26-15	German	28:55 mins	Telephone
Company 5	Consulting for professional services	Germany	9,600	Manager	03-31-15	German	25:06 mins	Telephone
Company 6	Transportation and logistics	Germany	94,951	Manager	04-07-15	English	-	E-mail
Company 7	IT	China	1,750	CEO	04-09-15	Chinese	25:35 mins	Face-to-face via Skype
Company 8	Manufacturing industry	China	1,200	Manager	04-09-15	Chinese	41:50 mins	Face-to-face via Skype
Company 9	IT consulting	Sweden	1,200	Manager	04-16-15	English	10:11 mins	Telephone

3.2.3 Course of action

We started our empirical work by exploring websites offering company examples with best practices about CVPs. To figure out which companies were of interest for conducting interviews we analyzed particular websites of large organizations to gather information whether they offer corporate volunteering programs. Assessing the fit to our research we proceeded by sending emails to relevant companies directly and by completing online forms on the companies' websites. As the response was lower than expected we contacted people directly. After establishing a personal contact through e-mail correspondence, we made appointments for interviews. In one case it was possible to arrange a company visit and conduct the interview face-to-face. All the other interviews were accomplished by telephone, Skype or e-mail. As one interview was conducted via e-mail, we sent the participant the questions by e-mail. These questions are attached in Appendix 1. Before conducting the interviews, we asked the interviewees for allowance to record and for the permission to state position, company name and/or industry in the thesis. As some interviewees did not want that we state their company's names we decided to not mention them in the thesis to ensure consistency. We were allowed to record all interviews. We also asked for conducting the interviews in English but in four cases the participants preferred to conduct the interview in their mother tongue (two interviews in Chinese, two in German). The interviewees were of course allowed to refuse answers. Overall, we talked to people from China, Germany and Sweden. The length of the interviews took on average 29:43 mins.

3.2.4 Analyzing data

When conducting a qualitative data analysis one interprets and classifies linguistic data to reveal statements about dimensions as well as structures of meaning making (Flick, 2014). According to Saunders et al. (2009) there is no standard process for analyzing qualitative data, but three types to approach it are generally used: summarizing (condensation) of

meanings, categorization (grouping) of meanings and structuring (ordering) of meanings using narrative. We decided for categorizing data because it allowed us to match the answers to different topics of categories and to recognize similarities, differences and relationships between answers leading to the derivation of theory.

We used a qualitative content analysis inspired approach to analyze and categorize our data obtained. A qualitative content analysis can be applied for describing the meaning of data systematically (Mayring, 2000; Schreier, 2012; cited in Schreier 2014). It comprises technical procedures which require the researcher to make decisions (Content Analysis, 2005). An assignment of successive parts of the data to categories is conducted by applying a coding frame (Schreier, 2014). Usually, the frame constitutes of at least one main category and two subcategories (Schreier, 2014). Steps need to be undertaken in a qualitative content analysis are: the creation of a coding frame/conceptual framework by generating category definitions and the segmentation of the data into the coding units/categories (Schreier, 2014). In our research we created six main categories, namely “Corporate Social Responsibility activities”, “Range of Corporate Volunteering programs” (including the three subcategories “Starting point”, “Program” and “Exclusion criteria”), “Decision-making”, “Ways for employees to engage”, “Company support” and “Motives and benefits”. For the segmentation of the data we used a cross table in which the material from the transcriptions produced was grouped according to the six categories. To evaluate and modify the developed frame the analysis of data should be separated into a pilot and main phase (Schreier, 2014). As time constrained our research we did not conduct a pilot analysis and modified the developed frame. To reduce the observer bias, we created the categories and segmented as well as analyzed the interviews collectively.

3.3 Credibility of findings

Dependability

To ensure stability over time (Ericson, 2014), we reported the research process in detail. It includes our research about existing theories supporting our thesis topic (chapter 2), the approaching of target companies and their decision-makers, the creation of a list of predetermined question areas and the design of our research (chapter 3), the categorization of findings from the interviews (chapter 4) and its analysis (chapter 5).

Credibility

In order to assure the credibility of the research, we started our research with scanning the companies' webpages to find out if they offer corporate volunteering activities, and then we contacted people who were informed about the decision-making process in CSR activities in those companies by e-mail and asked for interviews. We conducted interviews with decision-makers from different countries, industries and company sizes (medium- and large-sized). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. As we interviewed the participants about the real processes taking place in the companies we argue that the findings are congruent with the reality (Ericson, 2014) and contribute to the purpose of the study.

Transferability

We investigated nine companies from different industries and countries in order to receive a variety of possible practices and opinions. We think that the findings can be applied to other contexts (Ericson, 2014) e.g. in companies which would like to implement CVPs as one can derive possible approaches (e.g. content of programs) and apply the process we developed. As our process is of a universal nature and not company, industry or country specific one can transfer our results to other countries and firms with

different company sizes, too. The application of the general process of decision-making in other contexts such as in other CSR initiatives is also conceivable.

4 Empirical findings

In this chapter we outline the results from the conducted interviews. We categorize our findings according to the coding frame in six parts: CSR activities, range of CVPs, ways for employees to engage, company support, decision-making as well as motives and benefits. Quotes are used to illustrate the findings.

4.1 Corporate Social Responsibility activities

Before communicating about the company's corporate volunteering activities in detail, we asked what CSR means in general to the companies. To save time for the more important questions, some respondents told us to visit their company's webpage for detailed information about the sustainability strategy, vision and CSR practices. The CSR strategy of three of the interviewed companies is based on the combination of economic, social and environmental pillars. Their aim is to build a strong relationship with the society and environment. Several companies have corporate citizenship engagements which focus generally on supporting the community but also the environment. Companies are willing to produce green products to deal with environmental issues such as reducing CO₂.

In addition, companies also pay attention to develop CSR internally. One company stated to create values for their shareholders and employees through its economic success and competitive international presence as well as provides open dialogue for the public. This company also claims to have a high standard of ethics and integrity. Employees' improvement is another point firms generally concern. They offer internal career opportunities and job-related training for every employee in order to development their skills and gain more experience.

Supplementary to the traditional pillars of CSR, one company e.g. engages in upholding relations to universities and the government. Most companies also donate money (e.g.

for disaster relief) or material assets (mostly own products). One interviewee said *“So most of the time we donate the furniture to different organizations and our goal is to help children nearby in Jönköping, so it could be a local soccer team that wants to have a better club house....”*

4.2 Range of corporate volunteering programs

Starting point

The time when companies started with their implementation of CVPs varies heavily, in our sample from one year ago to more than ten years ago. One interviewee said *“I started with my team regarding corporate volunteering one and a half years before. It is the first global idea for a strategic corporate volunteering program.”* Some interviewees also told us it varies from region to region or country to country and that branches e.g. in the US had a forerunner role because the need to give something back to society is longer anchored there. One interviewee said that the company started with small activities such as blood drive or clothing collection and developed the program later on.

Program

Some companies grouped spheres of activities in which they want to engage generally. The volunteering projects the companies then provide belong to certain categories such as educational, environmental or humanitarian aid engagement.

Most companies offer different types of programs such as Social days (which are normally conducted once a year), mentoring programs for people in need or to support NGOs, blood drives or aiding disabled people.

Social team events are in one company executed for reasons of team building. Reasoning behind this is not only to go together in a hotel and talk about team building but to help other people by doing so. Social days represent the activity of corporate volunteering which most people take part in. Professional skills are not necessarily applied in Social

days. Examples of those one-off activities are the renovation of kindergartens and playgrounds, tree plantings and disaster relief.

Mentoring projects can encompass helping immigrant adolescents to find an apprenticeship or supporting students growing up in not affluent households. These programs are long-term-oriented and can last up to two or three years. The support of NGOs or other organizations like education institutes is based on the employees' professional skills and is also designed for a longer period of time. An example one respondent gave us is that the company consults organizations regarding financial topics, sponsoring topics, communication topics, marketing topics, project management topics or topics of organizational development. These activities are called pro bono services and can content e.g. that the employee working in the marketing department helps the NGO with marketing planning. As one firm stated, these services can happen in emerging or developing countries and in collaboration with partners on site who know the chosen country and its challenges.

One company also reported about a global contest it initiated because of its anniversary giving the best 150 volunteering projects grants and one day off for the realization of the project. Another firm encourages not only its employees to engage in CVPs but also its retirees. Programs only accessible for managers exist as well in which they e.g. exchange views with headmasters as both groups face similar challenges such as the recruitment of employees, conflict management and motivation of employees. A different person talked about a volunteering project concerning city problems which is only accessible for executives in the firm. The challenge they face is finding a solution for problems that concern whole cities. As an example, in a German city one group looked for opportunities to develop talent in the city as it has problems in attracting skilled personnel. The group came up with very helpful recommendations for the municipality.

Other companies (maybe because of their smaller size) keep it simpler and do not categorize their projects. Instead of focusing on offering different types of CVPs they only engage in projects to support the local community for instance through homework aid for children of the city or visiting disabled and elderly people in the neighborhood.

Exclusion criteria

Some firms determined exclusion criteria for projects such as politics, religion (when aiming at the dissemination and manifestation of the religion), sports and engagements which are chased by the constitution protection. Others did not define any exclusion criteria but specified that the projects need to fit the predetermined spheres of activities.

4.3 Ways for employees to engage

In order to understand the decision-making process of corporate volunteering, we investigated the steps employees undertake before engaging in CVPs and what happens if employees come up with new ideas of initiatives. Most companies inform employees via the intranet, online platforms or canteen meetings when they offer projects so employees can apply in and decide in which initiative they would like to engage. On the companies' webpages, they show detailed information about CVPs such as offered program types, particular projects, requirements for participation and steps for applying. Two firms provide both individual and teamwork and local and international activities and therefore the employees can select according to their preferences. Employees can apply and register for the CVP online, via e-mail or personally. One of the Chinese firms has another way to conduct it. This company divided its production according to the assembly line in different workshops and one person from every workshop can represent its unit in a volunteering activity every month. After this month another employee gets the possibility to work voluntarily. For some CVPs employees need a special training so the companies provide a coach education before entering a program. Another company

requires its employees to take a one-week pre-job training before starting to work in the company and one of these training classes is about CSR activities of the company in general and the offered corporate volunteering activities.

Regarding the employee's possibility to come up with project ideas, all decision-makers stated that they are open for it and some even feel proud of their employees' engagement. Two decision-makers said that they couldn't implement new ideas directly because they have to be proved according to the companies' capabilities, general orientation concerning CSR, or exclusion criteria the companies set.

4.4 Company support

We define company support as the aid of the employer to facilitate volunteering projects in form of paid leaves, donating money to the project or the possibility to use company equipment for the CVP. Some companies offer a fixed amount of time in which their employees can engage and receive their regular payment for it. This time support can range from one hour per employee per year up to four hours per month and can depend on the fact that the project is one-off or ongoing. Some companies also do not have a fixed amount or do not support with paid time. One interviewee stated *"It is their own time they engage but they have this freedom to engage anytime. So if they want to support school which they can only do during working hours in a business as well, they are allowed to do so."* Another respondent said that the employees are allowed to take a leave of absence for supporting a program in South Africa.

Not only paid time and the free design of working hours are offered but also the opportunity to use company equipment for the project such as office supplies and equipment. Other interviewees talked about the defrayment of transportation costs or the provision of food and beverages during the project.

One interviewee also mentioned that the company rewards their volunteers by a global volunteering award in which the best three projects per region receive a fixed amount of money. Other respondents talked about rewarding employee engagement, too. Another participant said when conducting 40 hours of volunteering in five months the employee can apply for a company grant for the project. Donations of money and products for the projects are usual.

4.5 Decision-making

Most of the interviewees answered that the specific region or branch can work independently with the execution of the CVP as they can best evaluate the local situation in terms of what is needed in the specific region and society. The companies' headquarters usually design a global framework or guidelines to present the strategic direction e.g. including the definition, areas and exclusion criteria for CVPs. One participant whose company recently finished the development of a framework said *"We will implement the corporate volunteering framework in the different regions but then the regions have to decide how they want to make corporate volunteering. We only give the strategic way with two or three guidelines."*

To which organizational unit corporate volunteering belongs differs. In one company it is included in "Human Resources" in the headquarters, but CSR units exist in the different regions of the firm additionally. Another respondent said that central units in the so-called "hubs" are responsible for corporate citizenship and corporate volunteering. In these centralized units the monitoring and reporting of the CVP is conducted. In another firm, an integrated approach of CSR is pursued, meaning that no particular CSR department exists e.g. "Supply chain management" belongs to "Purchasing" and "Wellbeing" is with "Human Resources". Only "Citizenship" to which the CVP comes under is separately acting. These departments meet in a working council quarterly to discuss topics of CSR. In another company the sustainability officer who is in charge of

corporate volunteering reports to the chairman directly. In this case the company belongs to an international group in which every company is legally independent and acts self-reliantly. One interviewee also said that he and the site manager together are in charge of the placing of donations. In both Chinese companies the CEO decides in consultation with the department managers in conferences about corporate volunteering actions. In the European companies most often a certain budget for CSR or corporate volunteering initiatives is provided. The idea for implementing a volunteering program and the design of it came in our sample from the headquarters, the CEO, the CSR manager or any other person dealing with sustainability issues.

Regarding the reporting and measurement of the CVPs, most companies conduct surveys. Questions about the quality of the CVP (e.g. about recommendations for future projects) are either part of a (global) employee survey or a specific CVP survey. One interviewee said that the tracking, monitoring and reporting of the corporate volunteering activities takes place centralized. It contains quantitative records (e.g. number of employees participating, time amount spent) as well as qualitative questions about the program itself. In one Chinese company the employees write summaries (work diaries) at the end of every working day and post them in an online discussion group. This is done because the managers want to receive reflections about the work and the participation in the CVP. Another interviewee talked about the “bureaucracy” belonging to the management of CVPs and that employees oftentimes complain about it. They get a questionnaire which needs to be signed by the charity organization. *“Then we have governance and business conduct guidelines not only with suppliers and business partners beyond, so have it of course with every donation you know, so we require the charity to sign a piece of paper.”* Additionally for the transfer of the grant the account number of the charity needs to be checked (for validation reasons) which annoys employees sometimes.

4.6 Motives and benefits

In order to learn about what influences decision-making in CVPs we investigated the motives of implementing CVPs instead of CSR activities or additionally to those and the reasons of engaging in corporate volunteering in general.

The most common reason for implementing CVPs is to translate the CSR vision in action e.g. if the company focuses on supporting people and is willing to be a good neighbor the CVP can comprise taking care of children, teenagers, elderly people without families or disable people.

All of our interviewees presented that employees were positively influenced by participating in CVPs and that this is a main motive for applying CVPs. More specifically, employees' engagement and commitment to the company can be improved so that the company has a higher possibility to retain productive employees. One interviewee said *"10% you learn in a seminar, 20% you can learn from others, but 70% you can learn by doing"*. Therefore individual development takes place e.g. employees can increase their experience, skills and self-esteem as well as get to know real societal challenges. Furthermore, they can receive energy and feel happier at work. Another respondent pointed out that they do not have to provide any rules or norms to control employees' work results anymore as employees participating in CVPs are intrinsically motivated to do their job more consciously and self-reliantly. One interviewee told us that conducting CVPs can support recruitment as a lot of young people care about this possibility to engage.

Not only employees but also managers and CEOs can obtain benefits from participating in CVPs. They can transfer knowledge and experiences during the activity (e.g. in the mentoring program). Besides, they also have the possibility to become more innovative and creative as the volunteering experience can provide new insights from outside the

company. One interviewee said he improved personally a lot after participating in a CVP. Before, he used to blame others but after attending the initiative he became more aware of forgiveness and tries not to blame others anymore.

Furthermore, companies implement CVPs also for getting a “win-win” situation which means not only benefits for the society and environment but also the company’s performance, especially regarding reputation. It is also one reason for implementing CVP instead of other CSR activities. The firms’ goals are to be more visible and well-deemed in the location. Moreover, as one respondent stated CVP as a proactive CSR tool can help to exploit future markets and to preserve the company’s sustainable development. *“So that it’s a strategic imperative to me, you know to get engaged, to do a proactive corporate responsibility strategy. That is what keeps your company another hundred years alive.”*

Additional reasons for conducting specific CVPs can be very personal. For instance, one interviewee said that the reason for implementing volunteering activities is the fact that the founder of the company also founded the social program/NGO. One decision-maker said he prefers CVPs to donations because in his point of view donation lost the meaning of social responsibility as he does not know where the money will go and cannot ensure that people receive the whole amount donated. Another interviewee said that if one can align the CVP with the company’s main business then one can better position the company in future markets e.g. in developing countries in which the firms does not act yet. One respondent also stated that the employees prefer emotional activities (concerning the support of people) to actions which affect the environment such as tree plantings.

5 Analysis

In this chapter we analyze the empirical findings. First, we illustrate the motives for implementing CVPs. Then, the CVP motives we received from our empirical research are compared with CSR motives based on previous research. Finally, we elaborate considerations for designing a CVP and build up a model to describe its decision-making process.

5.1 Motives for applying corporate volunteering

Firms engage in corporate volunteering initiatives as they want to translate their CSR strategy into concrete actions. For instance, when the company states that it focuses on supporting people and being a responsible corporate citizen, then it will most often engage in helping children, teenagers and disabled or elderly people. Companies are also willing to create a win-win situation for the society, environment and themselves. Firms implement CVPs in order to improve their sustainable performance, reputation and recruitment of skilled people (as also mentioned by Basil et al, 2009; do Paço & Nave, 2013; Peterson, 2004). CVPs can be a useful tool to engage in regions or countries in which the company is not represented yet. Supporting people in foreign countries can lead to prominence and creation of a corporate image in this country. When later starting business there, most people already know the firm and its engagement and can therefore be seen as potential customers and multipliers. This can lead to a competitive advantage over other firms as the market entry can be easier and therefore the company may better survive in competitive markets (Crifo & Forget, 2015).

In accordance with do Paço and Nave (2013) we found that corporations are also willing to conduct CVPs in order to encourage and motivate employees. Motives comprise the enhancement of the staff's engagement and commitment aiming at their retention. By participating in CVPs employees shall increase their skills (Basil et al., 2009), experiences

and self-esteem and become intrinsically motivated, happier and more energized when experiencing social challenges other people face. Not only employees but also managers and CEOs who partake in corporate volunteering initiatives can benefit. By sharing their own experiences and utilizing their skills they can improve themselves further, obtain new insights and increase their creativity which was also found by Nave and do Paço (2013).

Personal motives as the refusal of donations as tool of CSR or the personal engagement in a NGO can play an important role for the application of CVPs as well. Additionally, the feedback a manager or CEO receives from employees can lead to an adjustment of an existing CVP (i.e. the staff's preference of supporting people instead of the environment).

5.2 Comparison of CSR and CVP motives

From the empirical findings we can derive that the motives of implementing CVPs are of a proactive nature (meaning that it is not about complying with the law or government policies as there are no regulations for it) and therefore belong more to the sustainability driver of CSR. In order to correspond to Table 2.1, the motives also can be divided into external and internal.

In the external perspective, companies are willing to show their corporate citizenship engagement and to meet societal expectations (Carroll, 1991; Dhanesh, 2014; Pajo & Lee, 2011; Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013). In addition, corporate volunteering is a good way to improve a company's reputation and to become more visible in its location. As we concluded from the existing theory explained in chapter 2.1.2, reputation is a strategic intangible asset and companies are willing to protect it (Crifo & Forget, 2015). From these two motives above we can derive that companies regard corporate volunteering as a tool to get in touch with society and environment as well as to spread their CSR concept to public. The third external motive is the willingness to relieve social issues

which can refer to supporting socially disadvantaged children and elderly as well as disable people. As one interviewee said he encourages his employees to start with helping people around them, to pay more attention to social issues and to take care of marginalized groups, thereby trying to change the employee's mindset and company's values and culture.

Compared to the CSR motives concentrating on (all) stakeholders (e.g. Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Grunig, 1979), the internal motives for implementing CVPs focus especially on employees and managers. Based on the definition of corporate volunteering, employees receive opportunities to interact with people from other departments and organizations which can lead to an exchange of views so that engagement and commitment can be improved, consistent with the sustainability driver of CSR action (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Through applying CVPs companies also try to motivate employees intrinsically in order to encourage them to create more contribution to their work. This improvement of commitment usually leads to the retention of staff. On the other hand, companies want to improve their employees' job-related and personal skills and support them gaining more experience from social activities which we also discussed in chapter 2.1.2 (Peloza et al., 2008). Not only improving skills but also knowing and experiencing more about real societal challenges e.g. through Social days can make employees understand the severity of specific social and environment issues. This awareness-raising and desire to educate employees can be a motive of responsible decision-makers as they want to show them the reality beyond what one sees in the media. Furthermore, improving the company's performance is also a driver for CVP implementation which is congruent with the sustainability driver in CSR, too. More specifically, according to one interviewee's statement, companies implement CVPs instead of other CSR activities in order to develop the social and environmental performance. Compared to other CSR initiatives such as saving costs by reducing energy consumption, the aim to increase the financial performance is not predominating.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the drivers for engaging in CSR activities can be of proactive and reactive nature and can be divided into compliance, profit and sustainability drivers. However, the drivers for implementing CVPs are more of a proactive nature and only concern the sustainability aspect. We distinguish the specific motives mentioned by the interviewees in internal and external ones and present them in Table 5.1. Internal motives refer to the company’s aim to enhance positive circumstances inside the organization. Examples of reasons for the implementation of CVPs are to enhance the employees’ commitment, skills, experiences, retention and awareness regarding societal challenges and their relief. But the company also engages in CVPs for external reasons in order to improve its corporate citizenship engagement, its reputation and its responsiveness to social and environmental issues. Combining the internal and external perspectives companies aim at balancing out the “3 Ps” of the TBL (Valackienė & Micevičienė, 2013).

Table 5.1 Perspectives and drivers of corporate volunteering engagement

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhancement of employees’ and manager’s engagement, commitment, skills, experiences, awareness and retention ● Creation of a win-win situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate citizenship engagement ● Improvement of company’s reputation ● Responding to social and environmental issues

5.3 Main considerations in decision-making

According to our findings and the positive examples illustrated in chapter 2.2.3 we can derive important aspects which need to be considered in the design of corporate volunteering initiatives.

One decision that needs to be made is the venue where the CVP takes place. According to our sample, some companies focus on supporting their neighborhoods (e.g.

homework aid for children from the city or supporting elderly people nearby), some send their employees to different regions or countries to realize projects in indigent locations like developing countries; some companies engage in both. Thus, the company's decision-makers have to decide where to conduct the CVP. This decision can be influenced by the feeling of embeddedness in the society (Spence et al., 2003).

The next decision concerns the time horizon for which the projects are scheduled: Social days or blood drives are examples for one-off events which usually take place once or twice a year but e.g. mentoring or coaching programs for people or NGOs are oriented on a longer time period. Therefore, decision-makers need to determine if the offered CVP shall be executed only onetime or over a longer period of time. Of course, companies can engage in different kinds of projects.

In their CSR strategy some companies defined specific areas in which the voluntary engagement should be integrated such as education, environment or humanitarian aid. Though, not every company determined areas. Some firms clarified exclusion criteria such as politics or religion. The decision about specific areas can depend on the company's CSR strategy in which main areas can be determined. Decision-makers should consider if they want to clarify areas and/or exclusion criteria for the CVP.

The following aspect which needs to be taken into account is the people who are allowed to participate in the CVP. Projects can be defined for a single employee (e.g. most mentoring or coaching relationships) or a team of people (e.g. groups of volunteers engaging in Social days). One could also think of including not only employees but also retirees or other stakeholders. Some programs can also be designed for selected employees or managers only e.g. the exchange of views and experiences with headmasters as one interviewee mentioned.

One also needs to take into consideration if the volunteer is required to use particular skills for the participation in the CVP. When for instance a coaching of a NGO in financial topics is conducted, the coach applies his/her professional skills. However, for attending a Social day no specific skills are needed or have to be acquired beforehand. Therefore, when designing CVPs the person in charge has to think of the necessity of organizing and conducting trainings for obtaining the skills required for the program.

When establishing a CVP the decision-maker needs to clarify if the company wants to collaborate with other organizations (Kotler & Lee, 2005). In our research, some interviewees stated to work together with NGOs because they know better where support is useful. On the other hand, some companies of the sample look for projects and societal challenges independently. The person responsible for the CVP should consider if collaboration with others makes sense. Cooperating with other organizations can lead to a reduction of organizational workload and to more convenience when executing CVPs as the other organization can have more experience and offer various types of CVPs.

5.4 Model about decision-making

Every decision and action is based on underlying motives mentioned above. The whole process of decision-making in CVPs is illustrated in Figure 5.1 and explained underneath.

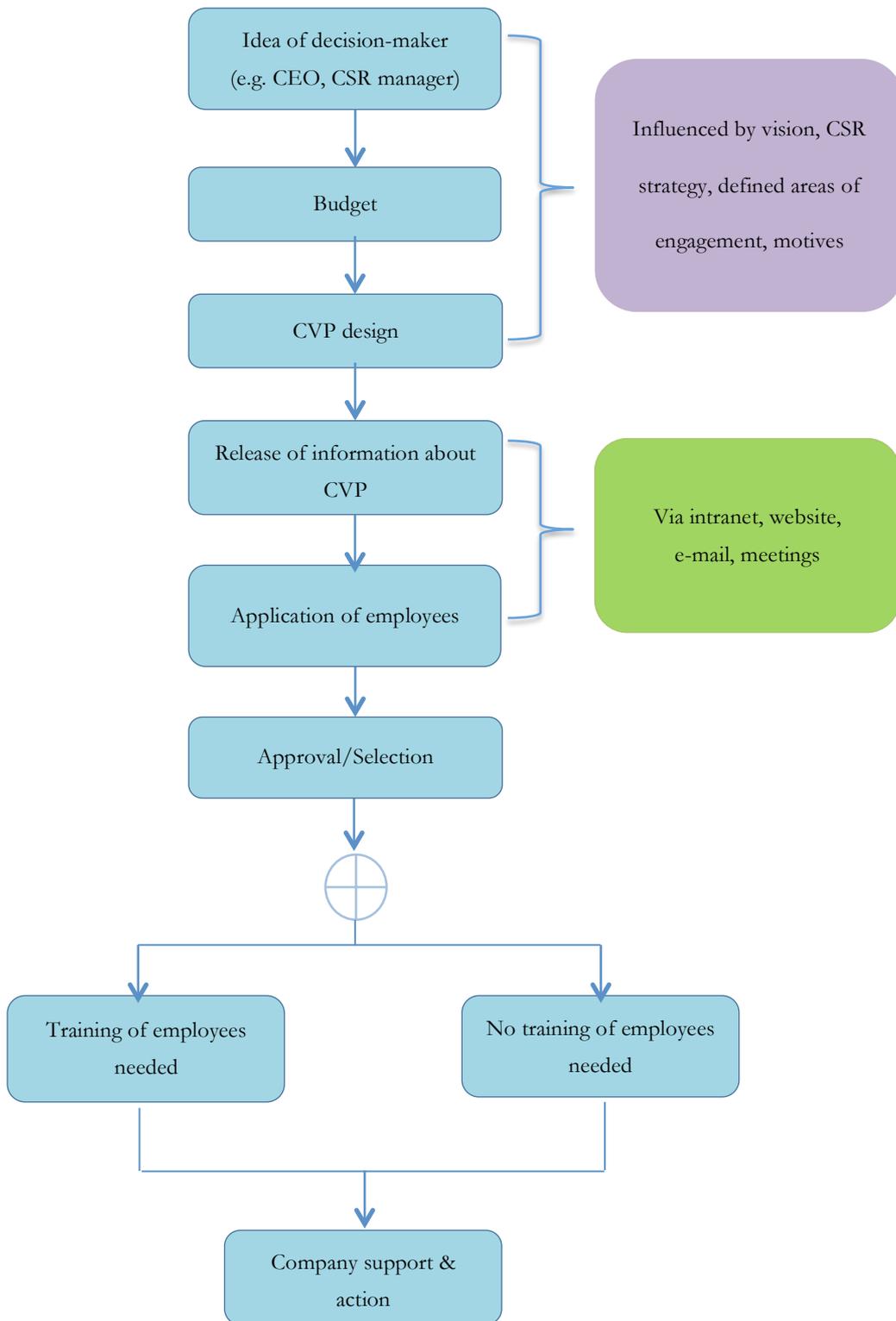


Figure 5.1 Process of decision-making.

According to our empirical findings, decision-making in corporate volunteering starts with introducing the idea of a CVP by headquarters, CEOs, CSR managers or other people in the company. These persons and their decisions about launching a CVP can be

influenced by their experiences, preferences and values when championing CSR and CVP (Hay & Gray, 1974; Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Swanson, 1999). Almost every interviewed firm provides a certain budget for corporate volunteering initiatives. After obtaining the budget, the person or team in charge can start designing the CVP. This tailoring but also the idea and budget are influenced by the company's vision, CSR strategy, defined areas of engagement and motives underlying the implementation. In this design phase the feasibility of the intended program needs to be checked by considering the resources available. Moreover, the person in charge of the CVP decides to set up a volunteer matching program or to let their employees choose where to engage by themselves (Lukka, 2000; cited in Pajo & Lee, 2011). All the aspects mentioned in subchapter 5.3 should be considered as well. After tailoring the program and if necessary getting in touch with partners of collaboration, the CVP has to be marketed internally. In most cases of our sample the information about the CVP are released on intranet pages, webpages, via e-mail or personally in meetings (if the company size allows for it). Then, the interested employees have to register and sometimes apply for the desired initiative (when the CVP is limited to a certain amount of people). This usually occurs online, via e-mail or in person. If the project is dimensioned for a restricted amount of participants, these have to be selected and have to receive an approval of participation. In some cases it can happen that the participants need a special training (e.g. coach education) before engaging in an initiative. Then, this training has to be organized and conducted. However, in some cases no special training is needed (e.g. Social days). After obtaining the training or not, the employees receive the support proposed by the company (e.g. certain paid day offs) and can engage in the project.

6 Conclusions

In this chapter we conclude our findings and highlight the contribution of the research based on the purpose.

We started our analysis with the motives for engaging in corporate volunteering activities finding out that firms utilize CVP for actively translating their CSR vision into operation and for creating a win-win situation. Other company-internal reasons are the improvement of reputation, sustainability performance and visibility in the location. Firms apply volunteering initiatives also to increase their employees' and manager's personality and skills e.g. their self-esteem, creativity and innovativeness, but as well as to enhance motivation and commitment in order to advance their retention. Using CVPs can promote the recruitment of talents, too. Furthermore, personal reasons of decision-makers to conduct corporate volunteering initiatives exist.

Afterwards, we compared the motives of introducing CVPs with CSR activities in general ascertaining that drivers for CSR action can be of proactive and reactive nature while drivers of implementing CVPs are only proactive and exclusively belong to the sustainability category. CSR motives can concern all stakeholders whereas CVP motives mainly focus on the employees and society in general. According to our theoretical framework and empirical findings we divided the motives into company-internal and company-external ones. The company-internal motives for the application of CVPs encompass e.g. the enhancement of commitment and intrinsic motivation. External drivers for the use of CVPs are for instance the expression of corporate citizenship engagement and the improvement of the corporate image. Although CVPs are a component of CSR, the reasons for implementing them compared to CSR activities in general can differ.

After that, we illustrated important considerations a decision-maker should keep in mind when designing a CVP. These are venue, time horizon, specific areas/exclusion criteria, people, skills and collaboration.

Lastly, we built up a process describing how decision-making takes places in companies introducing CVPs and thereby we contribute to the existing literature of decision-making in CSR. The process starts with having the idea to engage voluntarily, proceeds with receiving a certain budget for tailoring a program and passes by the internal marketing of the designed program. Afterwards, employees receive the possibility to register or apply for the CVP and the selection of employees is conducted by approving their participation. Sometimes a special training for employees has to happen, in other times it is not necessary. At last, the employee receives the agreed support and can participate in the initiative. It might be reasonably assumed that the process varies in companies, but it can be seen as a general indication of how decision-making can proceed.

As one can see, we fulfilled our purpose to investigate the motives of applying CVPs and the decision-making underlying their execution. Thereby we discovered which value companies attribute to CVPs. We also investigated if the motives of introducing CVPs differ from the ones of CSR activity in general. Additionally, we presented important aspects to consider in creating a CVP and designed a general process of decision-making according to our research aim.

7 Discussion

In this chapter, additional findings, limitations, further research opportunities and managerial implications are illustrated.

Additional findings

During the development of the research we realized that CVPs can be categorized according to six different groups: Time horizon, Venue, Requirements for the volunteer, Number of participants, Collaboration and Area. These categories are shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Categorization of CVPs

Category	Subcategory	
Time horizon	One-off	Long-term
Venue	Local	Global
Requirements for the volunteer	Skills-based	Non-skills-based
Number of participants	Individual	Team
Collaboration	Dependent	Independent
Area	Environmental	Social

“Time horizon” concerns the duration of the CVP which can either be conducted once (e.g. once a month, once a year) or last over a certain period of time (e.g. 2 weeks, 3 month). The “Venue” of the event refers to the location in which the CVP takes place. It can be executed locally (e.g. in the city or municipality) or globally (e.g. in a developing country or disaster area). As for some CVPs certain skills need to be possessed (e.g. when mentoring NGOs), we can distinguish CVP also according to the “Requirements for the volunteer” between skills-based and non-skills-based programs. CVPs can be designed for a certain “Number of participants”, meaning for one person (such as

mentoring programs) or a group of people (e.g. Social days). The category “Collaboration” concerns the company’s decision to conduct the CVP in cooperation with other organizations (dependent on NGOs or other firms) or independently. Lastly, CVPs can be classified referring to the “Area” of activity e.g. tree-planting campaigns belong to environmental CVPs and blood drives to social ones.

Limitations

Our research contains some limitations. The companies we chose are medium- and large-sized companies. We did not investigate the feasibility of our model in small-sized companies. Therefore, the company size can be a limitation of transferability as resources spent on the CVP can differ significantly. We tried to reduce the interviewer bias by creating topics we wanted to cover in every interview and by avoiding leading questions which could anticipate answers. The participants can be biased as well e.g. when they make points their bosses want them to say. In one case we interviewed a person who already holds the highest position possible in the firm (CEO). In other cases, we interviewed managers or employees who have bosses and can be influenced by their opinions. Here, we cannot distinguish if the interviewee stated his/her own beliefs or the ones the bosses would like to spread. The language in which the interviews were conducted can be a limitation as well. Most of the interviews were executed in English which is neither the mother tongue of the interviewers nor the interviewees. In four out of nine cases the interviews had to be translated into English which can falsify the data and results through the interviewer’s interpretation. The observer bias can occur as well as interpretation always depends on the person. To minimize this, we analyzed the data collectively. Most interviews were conducted with interviewees from German companies which can have an influence on the results obtained. Different results from companies in different countries or contexts can occur, especially with Anglo-American companies as they usually apply CVPs longer than German ones according to our interviewees. We did

not integrate companies from e.g. Africa, Australia or America in our sample which can have an influence on the model of decision-making or the motives for applying CVPs. We interviewed ambassadors from companies which implemented CVPs recently and also long time ago, so the companies are on different stages of working with CVPs. As processes are improved or changed over time, this can be a limitation in our model. Processes in companies which lately introduced CVPs can differ from the ones in companies that work with CVP for a longer period of time. We assume that our model of decision-making cannot only be used in corporate volunteering but also in other CSR engagements. This assumption is not tested yet.

Further Research

There is little research about corporate volunteering by now. Our thesis focuses on decision-making in corporate volunteering activities especially on the motives for their application. The same study can be conducted in different contexts e.g. in smaller companies, in firms from different countries or in organizations belonging to one single industry to approve or extend our results (i.e. the motives, the main considerations and the process of decision-making). Future research can also investigate not only decision-makers but also interview NGOs with which companies collaborate to validate the motives we found. Employees who want to participate in the CVP and their satisfaction with the course of the process (e.g. application for a program and selection) can be surveyed as well. Regarding the categories we developed, further research can complement our categorization by interviewing other companies with different kinds of CVPs. Our model can also be tested (approved, modified or denied) for other CSR activities.

Managerial implications

Our findings can convince decision-makers to introduce CVPs as they can see that the development of a CVP and the process of decision-making are not complicated and they can use our developed process to design a customized procedure fitting to the company's requirements. The motives we mentioned can support the introduction of a CVP because they enable decision-makers to recognize that helping others can enhance the company's performance (business case for corporate volunteering). With this study one can also convince other decision-makers (in the company) of the value of offering CVPs e.g. through the motives of other companies like increasing reputation and retention of employees. Companies which think of the introduction of CVPs can use our thesis to receive an overview of how programs can be shaped. When commencing with CVPs, one can start with small initiatives e.g. in the neighborhood and extend the program incrementally according to the resources available and its acceptance by the employees. Not only decision-makers are among the target group of our readers but also employees who can – with the acquired knowledge – persuade decision-makers to either introduce CVPs or to enhance the support the company provides for the existing CVP. The thesis can also support managers and corporate headquarters which already implemented CVPs as it can help to compare and allows an adjustment of established practices and strategies.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Interview questions for e-mail interview

1. In which fields does the company engage in regarding CSR/Corporate Citizenship (examples)?
2. What kind of volunteering program(s) does the company offer, since when?
3. Are there differences in the branches or locally/globally?
4. How is this program promoted and managed (intranet, software/matching program, (de)centralization, monitoring, surveys after participation etc.)?
5. Who is involved in decision-making about corporate volunteering (influence of headquarters, levels, autonomy of branches)?
6. Can employees come up with new ideas for projects, when yes, how does this process look like?
7. Are certain projects excluded (e.g. religious, political support)?
8. What kind of company support is offered (X days paid time-offs, donations etc.)? Do you think it is enough?
9. Why do you use corporate volunteering instead of/additional to other CSR activities?
10. Why do you use this special kind of corporate volunteering program?
11. Wherein do you see the overall value of corporate volunteering?