Online mentorship matters on employee engagement within companies
The case of the NN Future Matters Scholarship

Student Name: Maria Florou
Student Number: 540329

Supervisor: Dr Niels Vink

Master Media Studies - Media & Business
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master's Thesis
October 2021

ONLINE MENTORSHIP MATTERS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITHIN COMPANIES
THE CASE OF THE NN FUTURE MATTERS SCHOLARSHIP

ABSTRACT

In today's working environment, companies demand engaged employees. According to recent research, employee engagement is vital to corporate performance, with various advantages (Jiang & Men, 2017; Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Therefore, it is not surprising that businesses aspire for high levels of engagement. Organizations are progressively adopting socially conscious corporate practices in response to increased competitiveness (Chaudhary, 2017). These CSR activities are driven not just by the ideological idea that companies can be a strong force for social change, but also by the benefits that firms may get from their CSR efforts (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010), one of which is employee engagement. Thus, companies link CSR strategy with employee volunteering activities (Chaudhary, 2017) for their advantage, as the interest in corporate volunteering is increasing (Rodell et al., 2017; Rodell & Lynch, 2016). Employee volunteering comes in a variety of forms, one of which is mentorship (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Engagement appears to be among the organizational advantages of CSR, along with employee volunteering and mentorship. Traditionally mentoring required physical contact but contemporary technological developments have allowed mentoring to be done virtually.

The current research examines how does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of CSR enhance employee engagement through the eyes of employees who serve as mentors inside a Dutch firm, NN Group. Qualitative in-depth interviews have been conducted to answer the research question. During the research, 15 employees as mentors were interviewed within the NN Group. The participants have all served as mentors in the scholarship program NN Future Matters 2020-2021 offered by NN Group as part of the company's CSR efforts. The interviewees were asked questions about their experience as mentors in an online setting as volunteers, how they view employee volunteering activities and what is their opinion of corporate social responsibility initiatives within the company. Thematic analysis was done to analyse the transcripts of the 15 interviewees, following the steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis resulted in three main themes being apparent: engagement as employee wellness, engagement as employee dedication towards the company, and engagement as learning and development at a personal and a corporate level. From the conclusion, it is apparent that future research should address these various components and hybrid contexts in which employee volunteering and mentoring might occur.

Keywords: *Corporate social responsibility, employee volunteering, online mentorship, employee engagement*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

Abstract and keywords

[Preface]

1. Introduction

Historically, the idea of mentorship first appears in Greek mythology in Homer's Odyssey. When Odysseus was about to embark on his journey to fight in the Trojan War, he appointed a mentor who was tasked to care for his son, Telemachus (Russel & Adams, 1997). The mentor was viewed as providing the son intelligence and advice to train him into becoming king (Bell, 1996; Clawson, 1980 as cited in Russel & Adams, 1997). Although the mentoring idea may be established back in ancient times, research on the topic proliferates after the publication of Kram's (1985) seminal work on mentoring relationships at work.

According to Noe (1988), "the mentor is usually a senior, experienced employee who serves as a role model, provides support, direction and feedback to the younger employee regarding career plans and interpersonal development and increases the visibility of the protégé to decision-makers in the organization who may influence career opportunities" (p.458). Mentors serve both career and psychosocial roles. Accordingly, not only do they provide support in terms of career development but also psychological support to assist in improving characteristics as competence, identity, and work-role effectiveness (Kram,1983).

Generally, from the very beginning of literature mentoring has been characterized as a two-way relationship between an older experienced individual and a younger less experienced person with the goal of the experienced supporting the inexperienced in developing themselves (Noe, 1988; Kram, 1985). However, it appears that, aside from the benefits that the inexperienced acquires, the intensive interpersonal interaction that distinguishes mentorships is likely to bring in benefits for both the mentee, mentor, and organization (Russell & Adams, 1997). Thereby, many businesses have acknowledged the importance of mentorships and attempted to codify these relations (Russell & Adams, 1997) for their advantage.

In the meantime, the rapid evolution of the digital world and technological advancements transform mentoring as well as other relationships. As a result, in the early 1990s, an increasing number of academics from diverse traditions studied the notion of online mentoring, often known as telementoring or e-mentoring (Ensher, Heun, & Blanchard, 2003; Bierema & Merriam, 2002). E-mentoring is defined as a "computer-mediated" mutually advantageous interaction between a mentor and a mentee that offers learning, counselling, motivation, promotion and teaching in a way that is fundamentally different from face-to-face mentoring (Bierema & Merriam, 2002, p.214).

Nonetheless, as digital media has grown in popularity, not only mentorship but also other aspects of the workforce have shifted drastically. Technical developments, particularly the pervasiveness of the Internet, have spawned a wide range of innovative work practices (Ensher, Heun & Blanchard, 2003), while several organizations have tried to codify mentoring relationships to capitalize on the potential advantages of such relations (Noe, 1988).

Similarly, not only the workplace is changing but also today's society is rapidly evolving. As the world is changing rapidly, businesses must be able to quickly respond to these changes to stay relevant. From a global pandemic to social-economic inequalities, society has forced companies to listen better and take steps to make a positive contribution to society. Hence, organizations and brands as responsible corporate citizens are increasingly turning to corporate social responsibility initiatives (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009). In academia, according to Dahlsrud (2008) review, the Commission of the European Communities defines corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a concept by which companies incorporate social and environmental issues in their business practices and their voluntary relationship with their interested parties. Thus, when corporate leaders plan to invest company capital in CSR operations, they expect to maximize the benefits to multiple stakeholders. This notion that giving and getting back has its origins in stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and in the theory of shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), which suggest that organizational leadership is essential to take strategic decisions to please a huge spectrum of stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, and society.

Therefore, employees have a significant role to play as they have been recognized as primary stakeholders in terms of CSR within companies with the potential to become actively committed ambassadors for a responsible company (Gill, 2015 as cited in Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018; Dhanesh, 2014). Thereby, it is not surprising that more and more companies are motivating their employees to be socially conscious by establishing employee volunteering programs in which employees devote their time to benefit an individual or group (Rodell, Booth, Lynch, & Zipay, 2017; Grant, 2012).

Employee volunteering is frequently observed as part of a wider agenda to enable corporations to operate as responsible corporate citizens (Pajo & Lee, 2011). In literature, employee volunteering (EV) is also discussed as corporate volunteering (CV), and employee supported volunteering (Pajo & Lee, 2011). According to Cycyota, Ferrante & Schroeder (2016), companies link their CSR activity with corporate volunteering, particularly because it encourages employees to come together around meaningful initiatives for either an environmental or a societal impact. Specifically, some companies

have concentrated on CSR projects in which employees may volunteer and therefore employees contribute to the communities with the active support and encouragement of businesses (Sheel & Vohra, 2016). Companies consider volunteering programs as a method to demonstrate corporate social responsibility, while they regard themselves as "citizens giving back to their communities" (Muthuri, Matten & Moon, 2009, p. 1).

Historically, just as mentoring required physical contact between mentor and mentee, likewise corporate volunteering required physical contact between volunteers and stakeholders, but current technological advancements have enabled volunteering to be performed virtually through digital and online technologies (Loosemore & Bridgeman, 2017) as was the case with mentorship.

Employee volunteering encompasses a wide range of types and aspects in terms of scope, with education being one of the most common focused fields of concern amongst several corporate volunteering programs in the areas of "education, health and welfare, environmental concerns, and services for youth groups and senior citizens" (Solomon et al., 1991 as cited in Peterson, 2004, p.615). Hence, mentorship can be seen as one form of employee volunteering within companies that are related to education since as indicated in the definition the senior individual acts as a mentor, educating the younger counterpart in a variety of areas (Russell & Adams, 1997), which may be viewed as a type of employee volunteering activity within companies.

Additionally, according to Lukka's (2000) literature review of employee volunteering, there are two models of employee volunteering: employee involvement and employee-initiated programs, one of which includes mentoring, which according to the author is also a great learning opportunity for the mentor and is likely to contribute to long-term involvement (Lukka, 2000). Generally, mentoring has a long history and may take many forms (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). According to researchers, mentoring has been characterized for a range of purposes, encompassing psychological and professional development, the mentoring of school-age children by adults and junior staff guidance when they start their journey in academic institutions (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). In addition, some mentoring relationships emerge naturally between two people, whilst others emerge through official mentoring programs in community settings, at colleges and universities, or within companies (Eby & Allen, 2008).

However, the present study focuses on mentoring within businesses, and more precisely on mentoring in the context of employee volunteering within firms, which means it investigates mentorship via employee volunteering as two interconnected notions.

Over the years, academics and practitioners have seen a plethora of benefits of highly engaged employees within companies. In particular, as Sange and Srivasatava (2012) support when businesses have higher levels of employee engagement at work, it is linked to fewer employees' turnover rates, higher productivity, higher overall shareholder returns and superior financial success. To be more specific, employee engagement is a business management concept in which an "engaged employee" is completely immersed in and passionate about their work and will thus act in a way that benefits their firm (Sange & Srivasatava, 2012). For instance, according to a study conducted in 2003 performed by the Institute of Employment Studies (IES) including 46 businesses, engaged employees were defined as those who believed in the organization, have a willingness to work to improve things and an understanding of the business environment, respect and support for their colleagues and a willingness to go the additional mile and keep up with field improvements (Sange and Srivasatava, 2012).

Accordingly, the current study selects one of the several corporate volunteering initiatives to investigate which is mentorship within companies and more specifically online mentorship and sees mentorship as a type of employee volunteering initiative within companies outside of numerous types of mentorships within or without organizations focusing on the scope of corporate social responsibility strategy within companies. To be more detailed, the study focuses on seeing mentoring as one kind of employee volunteering with firms, but it studies mentorship via employee volunteering as two interrelated concepts because investigating mentoring outside of the framework of employee volunteering inside firms might provide different outcomes than analyzing mentoring within the context of employee volunteering within enterprises. Furthermore, this research focuses on employee volunteering inside organizations under the wider context of CSR.

Thereby, corporate social responsibility is associated with employee volunteering. Furthermore, employee volunteering as a practice of CSR can result in numerous benefits in organizations internally. Employee volunteering is considered to combine numerous benefits not only externally, but also internally for companies (Cycyota et al., 2016). Hence, it is not surprising that companies aim to achieve the maximum level of employee engagement as an internal benefit through employee volunteering. According to Lukka (2020), employee volunteering encompasses a wide range of types and aspects, with mentoring being one of them. The author defines mentoring as an employee-initiated volunteering initiative that is also a learning moment for the mentor and can result in long-term engagement (Lukka, 2000). Employee engagement appears to be one of the organizational benefits of CSR (Chaudhary, 2017), employee volunteering (Plewa, Conduit, Quester, & Johnson, 2015) and mentoring (Sange and

9

Srivasatava, 2012). Therefore, this research aims to investigate and fill the gap of the possible benefits of online mentorship as one aspect of employee volunteering which is one aspect of CSR within companies on employee engagement by investigating mentorship via employee volunteering as two connected concepts, and more accurately mentorship in the context of employee volunteering within companies under the scope of CSR.

Therefore, in order to investigate the possible positive consequences of online mentorship through employee volunteering as a practice of corporate social responsibility initiatives has on employee engagement within companies, the proposed research question of the current research can be formulated as follows:

RQ: How does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of corporate social responsibility enhance employee engagement within companies?

In particular, this research study aims to explore how employees experience online mentorship through employee volunteering as a practice of CSR and how this might influence in a positive way employee engagement within companies. Specifically, the present research tries to gain more insight into how employees describe their experiences of online mentorship through an employee volunteering initiative as a practice of CSR, while they are acting as mentors within a volunteering activity in an online setting. Thus, the study searches for new insights and thoughts from the answers of the respondents that reflect profound notions of an individual's experiences.

The current paper is more about finding patterns and underlining meanings derived from the mentor's experiences. To be more explicit, this study explores if participation in the mentorship program might enhance levels of employee engagement within companies. Therefore, this research aims to investigate and fill the gap of the possible benefits of online mentorship as one aspect of employee volunteering which is one aspect of corporate social responsibility within companies on employee engagement level by exploring a specific business case of a Dutch company through the eyes of employees.

1.1. Societal relevance

In today's society, the need for social change is of prime importance. The scholars' interest in generating knowledge about social concerns is growing. Volunteers are recognized as one of society's

most significant actors because they actively contribute to addressing societal issues (Rodell, Booth, Lynch, & Zipay, 2017). For instance, even on a small scale, volunteers carry a heavy load within one community by serving as firefighters, delivering food to the homeless, providing health care services, keeping neighbourhoods and parks clean, caring for animals, and building schools, to name a few (Rodell, et al., 2017). Nonetheless, on the one hand, the percentage of contribution to voluntary work is declining (Rodell et al., 2017), while on the other hand, in terms of organizational volunteering, a positive trend is developing with corporate volunteering programs be on the upswing (Rodell et al., 2017; Rodell & Lynch, 2016; Grant, 2012). Therefore, there is still room for research studies on employee volunteerism because this transition is taking place in society. In fact, the decline in individual volunteering activity may not be unexpected. According to Overgaard (2019), it should be recognized that voluntary work is unpaid work performed by those who do not expect anything in return. Individuals' willingness to dedicate their spare time to volunteer work is driven not just by internal motivations, but also by time restrictions imposed by their day-to-day responsibilities (Rodell et al., 2017). Volunteering, on the other hand, is an essential aspect for young people when selecting employment since according to estimates, the youngest generation of workers places a high emphasis on volunteer opportunities when assessing employers (Rodell et al., 2017).

In addition, the outbreak of covid19 transforms our lives in every aspect. Thus, in the present study, the concept of online mentorship is relevant not only due to the increasing use of new media (Illia et al. 2017) and the developments that allow volunteering to be done digitally (Loosemore & Bridgeman, 2017) but also because of the pandemic restrictions. Traditionally, not only mentoring but also volunteering was physical with face-to-face meetings. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic from February to May 2020, more than one-third of the workers moved to remote employment (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). The need for virtual meetings is more intense than in the past because of the pandemic around the world. Correspondingly, this research aims to provide a significant contribution to the online settings and online experience with the focus being given on internal benefits within companies.

1.2. Scientific relevance

Aside from the societal value of this research, there is also an academic significance in terms of the need for further studies on organizational volunteering. Yet, there is still opportunity for improvement in study on corporate volunteering.

In academia, scholars' emphasis has switched from evaluating the organizational advantages of volunteering to explore how employees personally perceive volunteering. According to Van Schie, Guentert and Wehner (2011) studies should focus on evaluating individual volunteering from the viewpoint of the employee rather than the standpoint of the corporation since employee volunteering is advocated by the company but carried out by the workers. Moreover, scholars argue for studying employee volunteering as a particular process rather than a broad idea (Overgaard 2019), in which researchers investigate the many contexts in which volunteering happens (Gatignon-Turnau & Mignonac, 2015). The current study attempts to narrow down the circumstances in which volunteering can occur by investigating a specific case. Moreover, according to the suggestion of recent research by Overgaard (2019), this study attempts to restrict the attention to one type of employee volunteering, which is online mentoring, which is considered one part of employee volunteering activity in the context of CSR within companies. Thus, the current research study is focused on one form of employee volunteering activity within companies, which is online mentorship.

Furthermore, there is also an academic relevance in regards of a need for more research on organizational volunteering in the scope of CSR. It is apparent that while reviewing the existing literature it is evident that research papers address the topic of employee engagement with either CSR or employee volunteering or mentorship. To be more explicit, according to previous research, employee engagement is linked to CSR in a study by Chaudhary (2017), employee volunteering is related to employee engagement in a study by Plewa et al. (2015), and employee engagement is associated with mentorship in a study by Sange and Srivasatava (2012). However, research has not been conducted combining these topics. As a result, there is more scope for investigating more particular kinds of corporate volunteering in order to find possible new values, patterns, behaviors, and advantages that may play a role in these corporate volunteerism contexts (Rodell & Lynch, 2016; Van Schie et al., 2019).

In addition to this, this study follows the recommendation of Sange and Srivasatava (2012) for future research on the issue to focus on determining if the relationship between mentorship and

employee engagement stands true, but it incorporates online mentoring in volunteering and corporate social responsibility.

Consequently, this provides sufficient reasons to investigate and answer the research question: *How does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of corporate social responsibility enable employee engagement within companies?*

1.3. Structure of the study

In this section, the structure of this research is described. The present research study tries to answer the research question mentioned above using a qualitative methods approach. Hence, the remainder of this paper is divided into five sections that all contribute to answering the research question mentioned above while addressing relevant topics and aspects that contribute to the study's credibility.

To begin with the first chapter, following the introduction of the topic, research question, societal and scientific relevance throughout this chapter, the research question is answered in the four following chapters. Subsequently, the second chapter titled 'Theoretical Framework', which is divided into subsections defines the main concepts and discuss earlier academic research. These theories are relevant to the topic and illustrate the connections between the concepts, while the concepts establish the starting point to define the concepts, which is the operationalization and where the interview guide is based on.

Following that, the "Methodology" chapter introduces which research method is appropriate for answering the research question stated above. Subsequently, a description of the qualitative methodological approach is provided, and all the steps taken for the implementation of the current research. Then the selection of qualitative in-depth interviews is outlined, as well as the research design of the study and how the interviews are planned, conducted, and transcribed. Moreover, a detailed explanation of the sampling process is presented in the chapter. Furthermore, an explanation of how the data is collected and which analysis is performed to get the findings is provided. Following that, in the last chapter, "Results," the research findings are presented. Following next, in the final chapter of the paper, "Conclusion and Discussion" is presented. In this chapter, a conclusion drawn of the research question and the main findings of the research are discussed in depth. Moreover, besides the

understanding of the results, the main research question is answered. Finally, the implications of the current research, as well as limitations and suggestions for future research are presented in the paper finalizing the structure of the current study.

2. Theoretical framework

In the following section, the four main concepts that are related to the research question of this research study are further presented. The current research study aims to contribute to the existing theories about corporate social responsibility, employee volunteering, online mentorship and employee engagement. Furthermore, the paper seeks to fill the gap between online mentorship as one aspect of employee volunteering which is one aspect of corporate social responsibility. Thus, the following literature review from prior research attempts to develop a conceptual framework that articulates its contingent relationship between these concepts mentioned above.

2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

2.1.1. The relevance of corporate social responsibility

During the last few decades, CSR has emerged as a rising organizational phenomenon with consequences for researchers, professionals, and society at large. Despite the existence of many overlapping definitions, such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management, and sustainability, the concept of corporate social responsibility remains the most commonly accepted usage definition in both academia and business (Carroll 2016; Carroll, 2015; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). In fact, all these notions are connected in the sense that they relate to underlying principles. However, in academic research and corporate practice, CSR remains a prominent, even if not exclusive term (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

To begin with, in order to gain a better understanding of what the term CSR entails, it is imperative to uncover the various interpretations and terminology by the time the term develops into a predominantly discussed concept amongst academics and practitioners. As McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006) state, theories around CSR raise controversy from the beginning of academic research since the term is differentiated from numerous conceptual meanings and terminology in other studies. Thus, it is evident that corporate social responsibility has seen a marked increase in evolution as a concept in academic literature (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Carroll, 1999). For instance, at the very beginning of research on CSR in the late 1940s, the concept appears more often as social responsibility (SR) than CSR since the period of the contemporary corporation's popularity and

domination in the commercial sector had not happened or been recognized yet (Carroll, 1999). However, the term CSR emerged in the 1950s and over the decades has seen tremendous attempts in development to a more valid definition (Ghobadian, Money, & Hillenbrand, 2015).

Even though the notion of CSR existed earlier, the first approach to the concept was presented in the work of Howard R. Bowen, named as the "Father of Corporate Social Responsibility" by the author, in the book Social Responsibilities of the Businessman, where CSR enters the modern age (Carroll, 1999). Initially, the concept's approach emphasizes the necessity of business being socially concerned, that is, contributing to the solutions of social matters rather than just seeking financial returns, which is connected to solely financial benefits for the companies (Carroll, 2015). Additionally, in the 1960s the evolution of the concept expands as a more solid definition to explain efficiently the corporate's responsibilities towards society. In fact, scholars portray the importance of the combination of both financial and societal contribution to society through the voluntary job (Ghobadian et al., 2015; Carroll, 1999). Likewise, during the 1970s, there has been much emphasis on CSR as an initiative that takes into account business ethics, community engagement and disclosure practices (Carroll, 1999). Although CSR has been widely viewed as a crucial asset for companies' growth to maximize revenues, the need to shift the focus on societal issues as Bani-Khalid and Ahmed (2017, p.208) claim derive from the "expectation gap between firms and their stakeholders regarding social responsibilities". Correspondingly, the notion of CSR has established the connection between business and society (Bani-Khalid & Ahmed, 2017).

In today's literature, a single definition of the concept of CSR is yet to be distinguished in both scholarly and business worlds. Hence, this has resulted in extensive research for even more terminology in an attempt to narrow down the broad scope of the concept and its philosophical context in academia. Consequently, in order to define the concept of corporate social responsibility for this research study, according to Dahlsrud (2008) one of the most frequently used definitions of CSR which has been proposed by the Commission of the European Communities is presented and states that CSR is "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (p.7). In other words, when businesses develop strategies for their long-term goals, they ensure that social and environmental issues are incorporated into these strategies, while they ensure that these concerns are shared with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis, which the current study defines as the company's employees.

2.1.2. Corporate social responsibility returns within companies

In response to increased competition and commercial demand from a variety of stakeholder groups, organizations are gradually embracing socially conscious corporate practices (Chaudhary, 2017). However, these unparalleled CSR initiatives are motivated not only by the ideological belief that corporations can be a constructive and robust force for social change, but also by the multifaceted business returns that corporations can theoretically derive from their CSR efforts (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010).

Corporate social responsibility has been identified as an actual performance driver on the global corporate agenda, including a plethora of internal and external returns of CSR investment within companies. Interestingly, years of academic research suggest that the majority of studies focus on the financial outcomes that derive from CSR (Cho, Chung & Young, 2019; Wang & Sarkis, 2017; Margolis, Elfenbein & Walsh, 2009; Peloza, 2009) rather than organizational benefits that come from CSR strategy such the employee commitment and organizational performance within companies (Ali, Rehman, Ali, Yousaf & Zia, 2010).

With regard the external benefits, for instance, there are various CSR's external advantages which are mostly linked to its effect on corporate image. To be more explicit, the release of information about a company's social responsibility behaviours and results can assist in the development of a positive image among stakeholder's groups (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006) and this can be very beneficial to the organization's reputation. Corporate entities utilize CSR to enhance their relations with multiple stakeholders such as customers, investors, the government, suppliers, and employees. These strengthened relations guarantee that businesses have fewer confrontations with stakeholders and that all stakeholders are committed to them (Ali, et al., 2010). Studies have revealed a variety of advantages in terms of favourable stakeholder attitudes, behavioural intentions, stronger organization and stakeholder relationships (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007). For example, previous research found that a corporation's CSR record had a positive impact on a consumer's opinions of the firm and willingness to purchase the company's products. Similarly, CSR activity has been found to have a beneficial influence on job seeking intent as well as work-related behaviours such as interpersonal cooperation (Bhattacharya et al., 2009).

Over the years, scholars have become more and more interested in the internal benefits within companies of CSR. Thus, it is apparent that researchers are increasingly attempting to use empirical

studies to explore the positive correlation of CSR and organizational commitment (Turker, 2009; Brammer et al., 2007; Peterson, 2004), intentions to seek jobs (Gully et al., 2013), job satisfaction (Glavas & Kelly, 2014; Roeck et al., 2014; Valentine & Fleischman, 2008), employee performance and lastly, retention (Jones, 2010). Nonetheless, even though the numerous returns of CSR investment as an organizational strategy within companies, organizations struggle to establish effective CSR policies (Galbreath, 2009).

2.1.3. CSR as a strategy to engage employees

Traditionally, one of the most common ways organizations demonstrate their corporate social responsibility is by encouraging their employees to engage in community programs (Pajo & Lee, 2011) that they establish. Companies actively incorporate employees, as prime stakeholders within organizations but also valuable ambassadors for what a business stands for and represents. To be more specific, the firm with a long-term vision incorporates employees into the company's CSR strategy plans in order to reap the long-term advantages that their involvement in these types of initiatives will bring to the organization in the long run. As a consequence, employees might be defined as an important stakeholder group from companies in terms of CSR initiatives, with the potential to become highly engaged advocates and ambassadors for a responsible organization (Gill, 2015; Dhanesh, 2014).

Given the employee's value as a stakeholder group, it is worth noting that they have received relatively little attention in terms of their engagement with CSR (Aguilera et al., 2007). Thereby, an increasing amount number of studies have begun to examine the literature on corporate social responsibility and employee engagement within companies. According to resent findings, it is critical to transition from simply notifying employees to involving them in terms of sustainable development and ethical business practices (Lim & Greenwood, 2017). Numerous recent studies have been conducted to determine the best ways to convey CSR policies internal to the organization (Lim & Greenwood, 2017; Seele & Lock, 2015; Baumgartner, 2014; Graafland, Ven & Stoffele, 2013; Du, et al., 2010), and it has frequently been discovered that personnel ought to be engaged, by being active in the process and policy execution,in order to more easily absorb the core values within companies (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

In academia, CSR and employee engagement are frequently investigated simultaneously since employee engagement appears to be a recurring theme and there is a growing amount of literature on

how CSR practices may efficiently improve engagement within companies. As Mirvis (2012) states organizations engage their workforce in a variety of ways through CSR activities. Specifically, according to the author, companies associate CSR and employee engagement in three ways: first, being as a responsible employer, secondly, developing programs to illustrate their CSR dedication, and third, by actively involving their employees in volunteering and CSR initiatives (Mirvis, 2012). In other words, companies create CSR programs to show their contribution to society and these programs are being utilized as a strategy to engage employees.

Employee engagement in CSR has been shown to benefit both the employee and the organization (Bhattacharya et al., 2011), which explains the rising importance of employee involvement within businesses. In addition to this, it appears that CSR has been proven to be closely related to employee efficiency, employee devotion to an organization, and general employee involvement in a corporation (Bhattacharya et al., 2011), while simultaneously employee engagement in a corporation's CSR programs is claimed to be one of the major indicators in its success (Koch et al., 2019). Moreover, previous research states that CSR is incredibly effective when employees are the ones who carry out the CSR plan, with the firm acting as a facilitator (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). Thus, as a growing number of firms incorporate CSR initiatives into their core business strategy, employees are increasingly being compelled to participate in CSR initiatives on the workplace (Du et al., 2015).

In the following section, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the connection between employee volunteering and corporate social responsibility, a review of prior literature describes the connection of CSR with employee volunteering within companies.

2.2. Bringing together corporate social responsibility and employee volunteering

Corporate volunteering considered one of the fastest-growing aspects of corporate social responsibility (Rodell et al., 2015; Pajo & Lee, 2010). Corporate social responsibility covers society's economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations on businesses, while this collection of duties creates a framework that aids in delineating, framing, or characterizing the nature of a company's obligations to the society of which it is a part (Caroll, 2016). Companies are constantly seeking to be identified as responsible corporate citizens, with several organizations embracing CSR as a central principle and strategic catalyst of their activities.

Correspondingly, corporate volunteering (CV) initiatives are the most commonly used form of CSR activity across industries, while the number of companies implementing CV into their company operations is continually rising over the long run (Sekar & Dyaram, 2017). Hence, companies increasingly comply with the needs of society and appear to have warmly embraced employee volunteering initiatives with several studies concluding that such corporate programs have proven very beneficial for companies (Sekar & Dyaram, 2017).

Interestingly, in recent literature by Cycyota et al. (2016) it is apparent that prestigious corporations relate their corporate social responsibility strategies with employee volunteering. Interestingly, these companies seem to use similar activities to promote and sustain employee volunteerism (Cycyota et al., 2016). Specifically, approximately 97% of the best companies promote and respect employee volunteerism as an important corporate objective and part of their CSR (Cycyota et al., 2016). To be more specific, the research study discovered six major themes and areas where organizations addressed and motivated employee volunteerism as part of their corporate social responsibility. Specifically, the focus is on "time allowances, community involvement, day of service events, skills-based volunteering or pro bono service provisions, nonprofit board services, and focused philanthropic areas" (Cycyota et al.,

2016, p. 324). This means that successful organizations try to combine these two conceptions for their advantage, but that their success may also result from this relationship, making this topic very intriguing.

Hence, due to the obvious internal benefits for companies, employees as primary stakeholders are continually encouraged by companies to come together around meaningful initiatives for either an environmental or a societal impact. Consequently, integrating them successfully into the CSR programs is crucial for success (Edinger-Schons, Lengler-Graiff, Scheidler & Wieseke, 2019). Not only studies of corporate volunteering show that companies all over the world encourage employee participation in voluntary efforts as part of their corporate social responsibility policy (Basil, Runte, Easwaramoorthy & Barr, 2009), but also employees are continually expressing their willingness to work for corporations that practice good corporate citizenship (Peterson, 2004).

Correspondingly, employee volunteering has been considered a dimension of CSR and thus from the very beginning of research on corporate volunteering, corporate social responsibility has been linked to employee volunteering within companies. As a result, there is a lot of significance in researching the link between these two fundamental concepts further.

2.3. Employee Volunteering

The following section outlines the relevance of employee volunteering, presents the definition and the importance of the concept. Moreover, the section presents previous academic insights relevant to answer the research question for the current research study.

2.3.1. The relevance of employee volunteering

In contemporary times, employee volunteering has seen tremendous growth as a concept in both workplaces and organizational literature, especially in the fields of leading management and psychology (Rodell, et al., 2016; Rodell, 2013; Grant, 2012). In academia, employee volunteering is also

known as corporate volunteering (Pajo & Lee, 2011). Moreover, recent literature by Overgaard (2019) states that volunteering has come to be considered as somewhat of a panacea for society's problems. Nonetheless, the percentage of contribution to voluntary labour is decreasing (Rodell et al., 2017), whereas corporate volunteering work is increasing (Rodell et al., 2017; Rodell & Lynch, 2016; Grant, 2012).

In recent years, scholars have adopted various conceptual meanings and approaches to defining the concept in academia. For the present research, in order to comprehend the concept's features and what exactly constitutes employee volunteering, a definition by Rodell, et al. (2017) was adopted, which defines employee volunteering as the initiative in which employees of a specific organization offer both their time and effort to benefit another individual, group or organization. Employee volunteering is an act of not only giving employee's time but also offering knowledge and skills as part of community service, most of the time sponsored by companies, out of any additional benefits or direct personal return (Rodell, 2013; Bussell & Forbes, 2008), which contradicts the elements of the stated definition of Rodell et al. (2016), which defines employee volunteering as the initiative in which "employed individuals giving time during a planned activity for an external nonprofit or charitable group or organization" (p.57). The current study focuses on a certain set of people for which employees volunteer and donate not only their time but also their entire selves as persons contributing expertise and experience or anything similar to these components.

Volunteering tasks have different versions either take place during working hours or outside of working hours, for example during weekends, while some organizations simply encourage employees to volunteer for any reasonable cause such as blood donation camps, cleanliness initiatives, while others have established CSR initiatives for which employees can volunteer (Sheel & Vohra, 2016). Commonly, companies may provide their employees either with a paid day off to offer volunteer jobs or schedule days to participate in multiple voluntary work initiatives (Rodell et al., 2017).

Even though personal volunteering initiatives are typically organized and carried out by individuals, employee volunteering initiatives are usually initiated and held by the organization (Schie, Guentert, & Wehner, 2011). Employee volunteering activities are launched by the firm and often take place as one-time events rather than on a regular basis (Van Schie, Guentert, & Wehner, 2011). Companies may initiate volunteer work through volunteering programs, but it is up to their employees to decide whether to participate in an employee volunteering initiative (Rodell et al., 2017; Schie, et

al., 2011). Specifically, their motivation to devote their time to volunteering activities is affected not only by intrinsic motivations but also by time restrictions imposed by their daily activities (Rodell et al., 2017).

As Rodell et al. (2017) advocate, companies can encourage participation by creating volunteering programs. According to Mirvis (2012), there are corporate volunteering initiatives such as assisting employees who coach either school children, care for the homeless, elderly, create neighbourhood playgrounds or initiatives in which employees use their technical and commercial understanding to tackle social issues. In particular, corporate volunteer programs distinguish in terms of focus areas, for instance, "some of the most commonly targeted areas are education, health and welfare, environmental concerns, and services for youth groups and senior citizens" (Solomon et al., 1991 as cited in Peterson, 2004). That is to say that employee volunteering, for example, tends to be classified into several forms, with education being one of the most important areas within the scope of employee volunteering. In detail, according to Lukka (2000) employee volunteering initiatives can be categorized both as "employer-Initiated" and "employee-led". The author discusses some positives and negatives per each type within these categories. The first category is employee involvement, which includes financial support, local one-off events, contributions, whereas the second category includes employer-initiated programs in which one program of the list includes mentoring (Lukka, 2000). In detail according to the author mentorship as a form of employee volunteering is considered an efficient approach for improving coaching and interpersonal abilities (Lukka, 2000). In addition to this, it is considered highly motivating in the sense that it has a particularly favourable influence on an individual mentee, such as a student. Moreover, the author points out that it is also a good learning experience for the mentor, and it is likely to lead to long-term involvement (Lukka, 2000).

However, while employee volunteering has always needed physical interaction between volunteers and stakeholders, the latest technological advances have enabled volunteering to be performed remotely using online or digital technologies. (Loosemore & Bridgeman, 2017). Thus, nowadays employee volunteering can take place not only face to face but also online.

2.3.2. Outcomes of employee volunteering within companies

With the rapid increase of employee volunteering in academia as well in practice, also acknowledging the internal benefits for companies, it is not surprising that companies offer various types of employee volunteering initiatives to their stakeholders. Scholars have explored various benefits both internally and externally within the companies. From not only an academic but also a corporate point of view, it seems that employee volunteering within companies has consistently demonstrated various benefits both in employees and enterprises (Rodell et al., 2016). For instance, the literature reveals that such strategies enhance brand image and maintain a positive reputation (Loosemore and Bridgeman, 2017). According to a research study by Basil et al. (2009), companies can effectively reduce the negative impact of a reputation crisis through employee volunteering and maintain their public image, while research by Plewa et al. (2015) support that corporate volunteering affects consumer attitudes of CSR image and subsequently consumer behaviour.

However, in this research, the focus is on the internal benefits of employee volunteering. An empirical study of the Dutch ABN-AMRO bank by De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk (2005) concludes that the employee volunteering program of the company seems to have a positive effect in terms of assisting to meet CSR expectations, while volunteering appears to have a beneficial impact on attitudes and behaviour toward the company. According to Peterson (2004), corporate volunteer programs have been associated with numerous positive results relating to the company's employees. Volunteering initiatives enable employees to develop job-related skills such as teamwork, verbal and nonverbal communications, project management, and leadership (Wild, 1993 as cited in Peterson, 2004), improve job performance (Rodell, 2013; Rodell & Lynch, 2016) and boost employee attitudes (Breitsohl and Ehrig, 2016). Moreover, employee volunteering is considered a successful employee engagement initiative used by small or big sized companies in a wide variety of sectors (Plewa et al., 2015). Thus, according to Breitsohl and Ehrig (2017), the ability to increase organizational commitment make employee volunteering an appealing initiative for companies.

Over the years of employee volunteering research have provided researchers with a wealth of empirical data, from a wide variety of perspectives to help understand the outcomes of employee volunteering. As a result, there is room for a deeper understanding with qualitative research to

investigate the benefits of employee volunteering within companies specifically on employee engagement within companies since most of the academic research search through empirical studies on the benefits of CSR and employee engagement, while this study explores one of the benefits which is the employee engagement of employee volunteering as a practice of CSR.

2.4. Online mentorship

2.4.1. The rise of online mentorship

"The reasonable thing is to learn from those who can teach''

- Sophocles

Mentoring research encompasses a wide range of fields, including psychology, organizational behaviour, education, and social work, among others (Eby, & Allen, 2008). Mentoring interactions are vital in improving learning and development in a variety of environments, including classrooms, corporations, hospitals, and other contexts (O'Neill*, Weiler & Sha, 2005). Such interactions exist between young people and adults, students and teachers, and organizational members while coming in a variety of forms. Some mentoring relationships emerge naturally between two people, while others emerge through structured mentoring programs in community settings, on college campuses, or inside companies (Bierema & Merriam, 2002).

Organizational psychologists and management academics are commonly interested in workplace mentorship (Eby, & Allen, 2008). Over the decades, the rapid evolution of the digital world and technological advancements transform mentoring as well as other relationships (Bierema & Merriam, 2002) as previously mentioned in terms of employee volunteering. Thus, early in the 1990s, a growing number of scholars from various traditions have investigated the concept of online mentoring or popular either as telementoring or e-mentoring (Ensher et al., 2003; Bierema & Merriam, 2002). For this research paper according to Bierema & Merriam (2002) conceptual definition, e-mentoring is defined as "a computer-mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a protégée which provides learning, advising, encouraging, promoting, and modelling, that is often boundaryless, egalitarian, and qualitatively different than traditional face-to-face mentoring" (p.214).

In literature, popular types of mentoring have recently been linked to career, academic, and psycho-social growth. Specifically, e-mentoring has become available in a variety of contexts, with academic institutions pioneering the use of e-mentoring programs (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Russell and Adams (1997) classified mentoring into two types: traditional mentoring and alternative mentoring. Conventional mentoring has always been characterized as formal and informal mentorships. Particularly, Informal mentorships are unplanned connections that develop without the intervention of the organization while in contrast, formal mentorships are controlled and authorized by the organization (Russell and Adams, 1997). For example, organizations establish dyads such as the mentor and the mentee in a variety of methods. Some examples include the following types such as K-12 programs, teacher support, university-initiated programs, mentoring centres, corporate-sponsored Initiatives, and online mentoring to benefit ostracized communities (Bierema & Merriam, 2002).

Furthermore, previous research points out that a mentorship relationship "cannot be forced—like a blind date, merely pairing people up only rarely leads to the kind of relationship desired in a mentoring situation" (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). To be more specific, it appears that for this connection to succeed that is to say having a positive outcome for both parts, it must be a voluntary relationship.

Although online mentoring is not a substitute for face-to-face mentoring, it does have certain distinct advantages. For instance, Hamilton & Scandura (2003) support that volunteer mentors can be recruited from all around the world, giving mentees access to a wider and more diverse pool of potential mentors. As a result, the interaction between mentors and mentees can take place more regular than physical meetings allow, while the communication can be easily controlled because of the technology (O'Neill*et al., 2005). Thereby, Web 2.0 is a tremendous breakthrough in terms of overcoming the challenges of mentoring (Stoeger, Duan, Schirner, Greindl, & Ziegler, 2013) since digital literacy allows users to interact better with each other even though online mentorship cannot compare with face-to-face mentoring.

2.4.2. Benefits of mentoring within companies – Mentoring and Employee engagement within companies

Organizations have been identified as one of the primary beneficiaries of the benefits of mentorships. Current academic literature reveals that the demonstrable benefits of mentorship have been found on the mentors, mentees and within organizations (Zhang, Qian, Wu, Wen & Zhang, 2016). For example, the advantages of mentoring for educational excellence, career goals, and personal growth are well recognized. In academia, mentoring was recognized as essential for attaining personal and professional goals while Individuals were advised to seek a mentor somehow (Bierema & Merriam, 2002) since the benefits of this association are vast and they may gain greatly from it.

In fact, previous research presents that being a mentor can establish a centre of authority and appreciation within the organization which can contribute to potential opportunities. Thus, this implies that serving as a mentor can be related to career success and development (Hunt, & Michael, 1983). Accordingly, the importance of a well-structured mentoring process is multifaceted and difficult to overestimate because it is linked to the consequences that it can bring. For example, an organization that creates a positive mentoring culture and atmosphere attracts people that like to learn on the job, innovate, share, and grow (Sange & Srivasatava, 2012).

Mentorship contributes to the development of committed members of a professional community who are self-assured and knowledgeable. Therefore, mentoring relationships can also support professions as a whole (Hunt, & Michael, 1983). According to Allen et al. (1997) as cited in Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, (2006), mentoring support the creation of a social network within the organization, benefits the mentor in terms of task assistance, learning, visibility, and other job-related skills such as maintaining administrative expertise, assisting in the development of a skilled workforce. Additionally, constructing leadership initiatives establish a support system that offers tools for learning organizational culture, transparency, team interaction, and, most critically, the unspoken rules of business engagement. Hence, from an organization or unit perspective mentoring services have been seen to increase professional engagement and loyalty (Arms, 2010 as cited in Sange & Srivasatava, 2012).

A variety of quantitative studies have discovered a positive association between mentorship and engagement. According to recent empirical research by Whitten (2016) examining mentoring and work engagement for female accounting faculty members found that the degree of involvement of individuals who were mentored was observed to be higher than that of those who were not mentored.

Furthermore, according to Sange and Srivasatava (2012) research, mentorship has a considerable positive effect on employee engagement levels amongst employees who are part of a mentorship relationship. In detail, the findings of this study show that organizations who plan to spend resources in developing a mentorship program will have a substantial impact on their workforce's employee engagement levels (Sange & Srivasatava, 2012). As a consequence, mentoring and engagement will ensure success in forcing employee's engagement levels inside an organization, making mentoring and engagement inextricably linked. This conclusion is also consistent with the findings of the Triple Creek research report (2010) as cited in Sange & Srivasatava (2012) as which found that mentoring has a favorable influence on employee engagement and can have long-term positive consequences for firms. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that having an effective mentoring relation within the organization enhances employee engagement in a variety of ways.

However, there is room for research in terms of online mentorship. As a result, this research aims to understand how online mentorship enhances employee engagement as a form of employee volunteering within companies.

2.5. Employee engagement

2.5.1. Defining employee engagement

Employee engagement has been extensively researched. Employee engagement is amongst the few concepts and areas of research that have sparked the attention of both academics and practitioners in such a short period (Saks & Gruman, 2014). The lack of a widely accepted definition of employee engagement is one of the first problems posed by the literature. The first definition of the concept appeared in the academic literature by Kahn's ethnographic research study of the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement. In 1990, Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of personal engagement, stating that it is "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances", while according to the author in "disengagement" during role performances, people retreat and shield themselves "physically, cognitively or emotionally" (p. 694). To be more explicit employee engagement's cognitive element is associated with employees' views about the

company, including leadership, and workplace conditions. The emotional component is concerned with how employees feel about each of those three variables, as well as whether they have favourable or negative views about the company as well as its leadership. The physical element of employee engagement is concerned with the physical efforts expended by employees to fulfil their responsibilities (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). Thereby, engagement entails being both psychologically and physically present when holding and executing an organizational position (Kahn, 1990). Interestingly, from the time Kahn introduced the first accepted definition of engagement in 1990 until recent years, the concept has been extensively defined and investigated both within and without academia. For the current research, to define the concept an accepted definition of engagement was adopted that points out that employee engagement is "a positive work-related state of fulfilment that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris, 2008). In detail, the authors explain further that vigour is associated with "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working", while dedication is connected "to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" and lastly, absorption is linked "by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (p.702). Accordingly, engagement is negatively related to the concept of burnout as "burnout is characterized by low levels of activation and pleasure, whereas engagement is characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure" (Schaufeli, Leiter & Maslach (2009, p.417).

According to Kumar and Pansari (2015), there are five aspects of employee engagement namely: employee satisfaction, employee identification, employee commitment, employee loyalty and employee performance. In detail, employee satisfaction is considered the favourable attitude that employees have to their whole working environment, including their managers, salary, and colleagues. Identification refers to the emotional condition in which employees feel as they are a part of the company, while commitment is a substantial aspect of employee engagement because it motivates individuals to go above and beyond the scope of their job titles that is to say they offer more to the company. Last but not least, employee loyalty to a company fosters a favourable attitude toward the organization, whereas employee performance is evident in the quality of the services produced by the firm.

2.5.2. Employee engagement within companies

In the contemporary world of the working environment, companies demand engaged employees. Thereby, organizations expect their employees to be proactive, demonstrate initiative, work together, assume accountability for their career development, and commit to high-performance standards (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

At the very beginning of the research on the topic, it has been concluded that engagement is closely linked to a variety of positive results on both the individual and organizational levels (Kahn, 1990). Moreover, recent studies advocate that employee engagement is critical to organizational success, resulting in numerous benefits such as increased productivity, lower attrition, and improved internal reputation (Jiang & Men, 2017; Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Additionally, according to Mehta and Mehta (2013), high levels of employee engagement can contribute to increased employee commitment resulting in a motivating working environment that will achieve the organization's shared objectives. Thus, it becomes evident that engaged employees can be a competitive benefit for a company's growth (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Macey & Schneider, 2008). In fact, employee engagement is considered an excellent strategy for any organization seeking to achieve a strategic advantage over its competitors because people are one aspect the competitors cannot copy and also due to the fact that employees are considered one of the most significant assets within companies if they are involved adequately (Anitha, 2014).

In academia, a lot of studies have found that people prefer to work for organizations that are ethical and socially responsible (Mehta & Mehta, 2013) towards society. In the contemporary workplace, employees have high expectations for their employers, they are seeking inspiration and motivation, and they want to feel good about their employment choice (Mehta & Mehta, 2013). Therefore, such shared objectives can be volunteering initiatives or corporate social responsibility strategies within companies.

For all the aforementioned, it becomes important to explore employee engagement within companies. In recent literature has empirically been demonstrated that there is a positive relation between CSR activities with employee engagement (Chaudhary, 2017; Tsourvakas & Yfantidou, 2018). Similarly, according to research by Wollard and Shuck (2011) as cited in Duthler and Dhanesh (2018) corporate social responsibility is a major driver of employee engagement, while according to Robertson and Cooper (2010), numerous empirical data has shown the importance of low levels of employee

engagement in different countries. Thus, there is room for qualitative studies to support empirical

research on the topic. In addition, recent literature reveals that companies focus on assessing

engagement rather than optimizing it, while they often struggle to implement changes that will manage

to both engage employees and address their needs (Mann & Harter, 2016). Taking all the above into

consideration, it becomes clear that there is a need for qualitative research to support surveys with

interviews derived from employees to gain insights and a better understanding of employee

engagement.

3. Methodology

The following section would thoroughly clarify all the systematic steps taken in performing this research study and answer the research question leading this thesis.

3.1. Methodological approach – Research design

Based on the theoretical framework, corporate social responsibility is associated with employee volunteering, while employee volunteering as a practice of CSR can result in numerous benefits in organizations. Employee volunteering encompasses a wide range of types and aspects in terms of scope, with mentorship being one of them. Employee engagement appears to be one of the organizational benefits of CSR, employee volunteering and mentoring. The purpose of this study is to look at the potential advantages of online mentoring through employee volunteering, which is one part of CSR inside companies that affects employee engagement. Consequently, this provides sufficient reasons to investigate and answer the research question: *RQ: How does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of corporate social responsibility enable employee engagement within companies?*

The study tries to follow the suggestions from Overgaard (2019), therefore this research attempts to narrow the focus on one form of employee volunteering, which is online mentorship that is considered one aspect of employee volunteering in the scope of CSR. As a consequence, on the researcher's recommendations, a qualitative research method is considered as most appropriate to offer a response to the research question leading this study. In academia, it seems the vast majority of employee volunteering studies has relied on quantitative surveys to examine possible connections among employee volunteering and other parameters (Rodell et al., 2017; Rodell & Lynch, 2016). Thus, it is worthwhile to investigate possible links between employee volunteering and employee engagement as a one-parameter using a different approach. Moreover, according to Shachar, Von Essen and Hustinx (2019), there is a need for a broader range of research methodologies that includes more intensive use of qualitative analysis.

Qualitative research is multidisciplinary, interpretative, political, and theoretical, while it aims to generate a sense of the wider domain of human interactions by using language to grasp concepts based

on people's experiences (Brennen, 2013). A qualitative researcher seeks to discover meanings, truths, and meaningful relationships (Brennen, 2013). According to prior literature by Srivastava and Hopwood (2009), qualitative research enables iteration which is critical for generating insight and developing meaning. Likewise, the current study is more about finding patterns and underlining meanings derived from the mentor's experiences from a certain volunteering activity in the scope of CSR. Specifically, the study aims to get greater insights into how employees experience online mentorship, so this analytical nature of this topic makes qualitative research ideal for this paper (Muthuri, et al., 2009). The content of qualitative research is meaningful relations to be evaluated rather than objective data to be measured (Kvale,1996, as cited in Brennen, 2013). Additionally, in contrast to quantitative analysis, the researcher's involvement in the study process is particularly active (Kvale, 2007).

Consequently, qualitative research is considered as the most suitable method for data gathering, and more specifically in-depth qualitative interviews, in the form of semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2007) adopting the approach of Muthuri et al. (2009). This method allows for flexibility in questioning and the discovery of new concepts and frameworks pertinent to the study issue (Evans, 2018). According to Boyce and Neale (2006, p.3) "in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation". Specifically, this method is often used to examine "detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or want to explore new issues in-depth" (Boyce & Neale (2006, p.3). Moreover, as Johnson, (2002, p.5) advocates "in-depth interviewing seeks deep information and understanding". The aim is to have new insights and thoughts from the answers of the respondents that reflect profound notions and assumptions of how they viewed the online mentorship experience. Last but not least, as in-depth interviews are a co-production of meaning between the interviewer and the interviewee, the actual understanding of how online mentorship might have influenced employee engagement is best found through deep engagement with the participants' experiences acting as mentors.

Previous to the interview process, the consent of the interviewees is necessary before each interview begins, which is accomplished by presenting the research topic and its intentions to the respondents, informing them about the duration of the interview as well as the whole process (Kvale, 2007). The interviewees were given a consent form to sign to offer their full consent for the interview and the research. Due to the fact, the interviews were being recorded it was essential to ensure the interviewees' permission to be audiotaped. Likewise, it was important to reassure them that their

personal information, such as their real name, would not be disclosed. The information revealed was just that which was relevant to the research study. Last but not least, before the start of the interviews, all participants verbally agreed to participate. After the data collection, the following first step in organizing the data was to transcribe all the interviews. As argued by Braun and Clarke (2006) the process of transcribing the interviews is an important element for the researcher to become familiar with the data and establish the initial in-depth act of interpreting. Despite the fact that it is a time-consuming process, I ensured that nothing concerning grammar or language misunderstandings has been altered through the transcription process. A total of 15 interviews were transcribed by hand to be used for the analysis. The choice has done based on the requirements in terms of time and content.

3.2. Sampling procedure

The goal of this study was to explore how online mentoring in the context of employee volunteering in the scope of CSR enhances employee engagement. This goal was reflected in a number of sample criteria. A Dutch organization was chosen as the focus of the current research. More specifically, the case of a scholarship program namely the NN Future Matters scholarship of NN Group was chosen since it fully fulfils the research's objectives.

NN Group is an international financial services firm with operations in 20 countries. The NN Group contains Nationale-Nederlanden, NN, NN Investment Partners, ABN AMRO Insurance, Movir, AZL, BeFrank and OHRA till the day of the research (NN Group, n.d.). The company launched the NN Future Matters Scholarship program in 2014. The scholarship is intended for first-generation students with a clear financial need who intend to pursue a master's degree in higher institutions in the Netherlands (NN Group, n.d.). The scholarship program aims to tackle the financial inequalities of first-generation students in the context of the corporate social responsibility initiatives of the company. The scholarship includes not only a monetary award for the prospective scholars but also a mentorship throughout the academic year to assist scholars to tackle the difficulties of studying in higher education and dealing with the complexities of higher education. Mentors assist the students in navigating Dutch society and providing them with a network at the start of their careers as well as any further assistance based on their personal experience and background. At NN Group, the employees participate in the scholarship program once per year through an employee volunteering initiative by writing a motivation letter

outlining why they aspire to become volunteers as mentors for the students. Therefore, the students once get accepted for the scholarship then pair with an NN Volunteer who acts as a mentor for the student during the whole academic year. The mentors are employees from different departments and roles within the NN Group who have shown a willingness to engage in the scholarship program as mentors and volunteers to assist a certain set of persons who are scholarship recipients.

As a result, in order to explore this topic, the research focused on workers within the NN Group who serve as mentors as part of a voluntary activity, which in this case implies the scholarship program employed by the NN Group. The interviews were conducted with employees of NN Group, who were voluntarily participating as mentors in the context of corporate social responsibility initiatives within the company of a specific academic year when the mentorship was fully online. Not everybody in the organization participates in volunteer activities, and this set of employees has special expertise with online mentoring. Nonetheless, since employees may join the program as many times as they choose, some of them may have experienced mentorship in previous years when it was physical, with in-person meetings within the scholarship program.

The interviewees were selected through a non-probability sampling method and specifically purposive sampling since the research was focused on employees who are mentors for the academic year 2020-2021 within the NN Group. As Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni & Lehmann, (2018) claim in non-probability sampling the selection is based on "personal judgement and convenience, rather than a random process determine whether a unit will be sampled from the population, the sample population is more restricted than the target population and the sampling units' probabilities of being selected are unknown" (p. 652). Specifically, according to Sarstedt et al. (2018) "in purposive sampling, selecting the sample elements is based on the researcher's judgement or expertise. The researcher only includes elements he or she deems appropriate for analyzing the effect under study" (p. 654).

According to Johnson (2002), planning and preparation are essential for conducting effective in-depth interviews. Hence, the first step was to check and confirm the availability of participants for my research study. Therefore, in January 2021, I requested the assistance of NN's Head of Corporate Social Responsibility who is also my mentor as a scholar of the program for the year 2020-2021 to reach out to participants within the NN Group. After she was accepted the request, she instructed the coordinator manager of the scholarship program to collaborate with me and send an email to the mentors of the year 2020-2021 to check their availability for my research study (see Appendix A). Through this

procedure, 15 acceptances were obtained via email accepting the invitation in order to participate in the research when the researcher would be ready to start the procedure of the data collection. Subsequently, I replied to all of them separately to inform them that the data collection would start approximately in the first weeks of April. In addition to this, I briefed them about the consent form and how the interviews would be conducted.

In April 2021, a new email was sent to all mentors who have accepted the initial invitation to confirm their availability for the interviews and plan the interview at their convenience of day and time. Furthermore, a consent form was included in the same email to be signed by them and forwarded back to me before the day of the interview. During the same period, a pilot interview was conducted with my mentor before the start of the final interviews with the participants to assess the clarity of the questions and to rule out any issues. The trial interview assisted in accessing the questionnaire and adding, deleting, or adjusting questions. Once the 15 mentors responded to my email, a consent form was sent to them to confirm their participation. The chosen participants were both male and female to get a notion of different perceptions between gender.

Then, an online meeting with a one-hour time length was set with each participant separately at their convenience about the date and time. The interviews were planned and conducted via the video conference platform Microsoft teams since it is not allowed by the company the usage another platform due to privacy reasons. The sample consists of 8 men and 7 women, a total of 15 participants. All the participants were mentors for the academic year 2020-2021 within the NN Group. The interviews were audiotaped to be transcribed word by word. Moreover, the recording started each time the participant gave me their verbal permission to start recording. Lastly, all the signed concept forms were collected through email before the interviews were conducted.

3.3. Interview procedure

Before the interview began, the researcher thanked the participants for their contribution to the research study. Following this, they were asked to give verbal consent in which they agreed to participate in the interview and be audiotaped. All participants verbally agreed to participate in the interview and to have it audiotaped and transcribed. Moreover, they were made aware that their participation in the research was voluntary and that they could stop the interview at any time. Additionally, the researcher reassured them regarding their anonymity and that the information that will be used includes their gender, the number of years they have worked for the company, the number of years they have been involved as mentors, the department in which they work and finally their role within the company (see table 1).

According to Boyce and Neale (2006), an interview protocol was developed based on the literature to guide the interview that includes all elements of the research inquiry (see Appendix B). Following Johnson (2002) recommendation, the interviewer starts with an actual protocol of questions "usually two or three introductory icebreakers to get the ball rolling" (p.10), in order to build rapport with the participants. To achieve this, I mentioned my identity as a program scholar in an attempt to establish a common ground that might have made it easier for them to discuss their experience.

The interview guide continued with introductory questions that were asked to let the participants feel more comfortable while also obtaining important insight into the experiences with an online setting and online mentoring in general. The interviewees were asked if they worked from home as an introduction question, which automatically prepared them for the topic because the conversation was about online mentoring, which was done in the context of working from home. In addition to this, they were asked to talk a little bit about themselves and their role within the company before delving into the topic by asking how they decided to become mentors.

As the interview progressed, they were asked questions that covered all the main concepts. To begin discussing the notion of online mentoring, the interviewees were asked why they engage in the mentoring program and how they feel as mentors, employees, and individuals. Following that, questions on employee volunteering and CSR were asked to better understand how employees react to employee volunteering and corporate social responsibility inside organizations. Accordingly, because of the topic guide, the interviews were consistent. However, the semi-structured allowed to alter the sequence of

the questions, develop a new set of questions, and use follow-ups. Due to the fact the interview was semi-structured, questions that were not included in the interview guide might be asked. They were asked to provide specific examples, perceptions and to elaborate on their thoughts to gain a better understanding of their experiences. Lastly, they asked whether there was anything that they wanted to add that wasn't mentioned or asked during the interview to bring up issues important for the interviewee. All the interviews ended by thanking again the participants for their contribution to the research study.

Finally, 15 interviews were conducted lasting from 40 to 60 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in English via the video conference platform Microsoft teams. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by hand to be used for the analysis.

Table 1: Description of the interviewed employees

#	Gender	Role at NN Group	Department	Number of years worked for NN Group	Number of years volunteering as a mentor
1	Male	Business Analyst	NN	4	1
2	Female	Senior Innovation Proposition Lead	NN	10	2
3	Male	Product Owner Managed and Controlled devices	NN	20	1
4	Male	Head Credit Portfolio Management Alternative Credit	NNIP	13	2
5	Male	Transformation Portfolio Manager	NN	4	3
6	Female	Head Operations at Corporate Relations	NN	7	1
7	Female	Graduate Recruiter	NN	1,5	1
8	Female	Investment Innovation Program Lead	NNIP	6	2
9	Male	Product Owner	NN	5	1
10	Female	Senior Legal Counsel	NN	10	1
11	Male	Investments Trainee	NNIP	2	1
12	Male	Finance Transformation Actuarial Analyst	NN	3,5	1
13	Male	Financial analyst	NNIP	2,5	2
14	Female	Management trainee	NNIP	2	1
15	Female	Actuary	ABN AMRO insurance	4	1

3.4.   Method of analysis: Thematic Analysis

When it comes to analyzing the data, the most suitable method to use is the qualitative research method of textual analysis and more precisely, thematic analysis. As Braun and Clarke (2006 p.79) point out thematic analysis is considered "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". In line with this, according to Braun & Clarke (2006, p. 86) "thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts to find repeated patterns of meaning".

In particular, as Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate, there are two types of approaches, themes or patterns within data can be identified either in an inductive or 'bottom up' way or deductive or 'top down' way". Accordingly, an inductive approach implies that the established themes are strongly connected to the data themselves. In fact, this approach line with grounded theory characteristics. Therefore, Inductive analysis is data-driven since the process of coding the data is derived from data without trying to fit into previous theory. Thematic analysis's flexibility allowed for the use of inductive and deductive approaches for the analysis since the researcher structured concepts from available evidence and extracted concepts partly from previous theory (Braun & Clarke, 2012). For my research, a mixed nature of the research approach was applied, the deductive strategies were complemented with inductive categories. Themes emerged from patterns that were found throughout the data itself and also theory-driven as existing theory was applied to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Correspondingly, the analysis was carried out using the steps of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to make sense of the data (Boeije, 2010). Hence, all the transcripts were uploaded in the data analysis software tool Atlas.ti. Following this, the research began with open coding, and then the open codes were classified as axial codes. Given that axial codes function as a more general category, axial codes turned to selective codes. Thus, selective codes were created and categorized into main topics (Boeije, 2010). In detail, following the steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) the initial step to becoming familiar with the data was done not only by the manual process of transcribing the interviews and taking notes but also by repeatedly and actively reading the data. After getting familiar with the data, the files were uploaded to Atlas.ti to start the first level of analysis. Consequently, the open coding process of "breaking down, examining, comparing and conceptualizing and categorizing data" (Boeije, 2010 p. 96) started.

Following this, axial coding is the subsequent step. In this stage from open coding dive into axial coding and the codes emerge into various themes or categories. As Boeije (2010, p.109) argue "data are put back together in a new way after open coding, by making connections between categories". At this level, the main objective was to decide which elements were dominant and which were secondary (Boeije, 2010).

Lastly, the final step of analysis is selective coding. As Boeije (2010, p.114) support selective coding "refers to looking for connections the categories to make sense of what is happening in the field". Specifically, according to the author selective coding "is aimed at integrating the loose pieces and of your earlier coding efforts and can be considered a logical step after the segmenting of the data" (Boeije, 2010, p.114).

3.5. Validity, Reliability and Ethics

The two most significant components of any research are reliability and validity (Cypress, 2017). In order to maintain trustworthiness, researchers pay attention to ensuring the notions of validity and reliability in research. Consequently, several interventions were adapted to the various stages of this analysis to distribute focus to the credibility of this report. When it comes to the concept of validity, according to Kvale (2007) definition is "the truth, the correctness and the strength of a statement" (p. 123), while reliability is presented as "consistency and trustworthiness of research findings" (p. 123).

To begin with, with regard to the reliability of the interviews of this research, this is accomplished by making the research procedure as clear as feasible. To be more explicit, in order to be as impartial and transparent as possible, the researcher's steps were meticulously documented. Thus, a comprehensive explanation of how and with whom the interviews were conducted, which was continually reviewed during the analysis of results. Additionally, further decisions were made regarding the in-depth interviews, a chosen set of questions that were answered during the interview was prepared to ensure the structure of the interview (see Appendix B). In this way, the researcher guaranteed that the co-created meanings of the meetings were somewhat similar for everyone to be able to reflect and compare the results. Furthermore, a pilot interview was conducted before the start of the final interviews with the participants to assess the clarity of the questions and to rule out any issues. The trial interview assisted to gain a better understanding of their answers and ensure the

trustworthiness of the questionnaire. Finally, the main concepts used in the interview guide was linked to the theoretical framework.

Moreover, concerning the validity, all the interviews were recorded for a verbatim transcription to be employed afterwards to ensure that the exact words used by the respondents were included in the data. Furthermore, not only the researcher endeavoured to use as much data from the respondents as possible to highlight the themes discovered but also attempted to report on the behaviours as precisely as possible and to compare the findings to other theoretical constructs.

Last but not least, according to Kvale (2007) there are additional ethical implications to consider when using interviews in the research. To achieve this, the researcher gave participants a written consent form through email to obtain their permission to participate in this study. Moreover, the researcher briefed respondents about the aim of the study and the topic of the research in detail at the start of the interview. All the participants expressed their verbal and written agreement to participate in this research. All the interview recordings were kept confidential, and the transcriptions were submitted ensuring the anonymity of the respondents. The researcher assured the interviewees that no personal information would be disclosed, and the findings were reported using numbers ranging from A to O. For instance, some indicative examples are Interviewee A, Interviewee B, Interviewee C etc.

4. Results

The following chapter examines the main four themes that were identified during thematic analysis. As it was previously discussed, this research study aims to explore how does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of corporate social responsibility enhance employee engagement within companies. This results section will address the findings generated from the thematic analysis to offer a response to the research question. Accordingly, the themes are reoccurring patterns that emerged from the qualitative in-depth interviews with the mentors and each of them contributes to addressing the research question. The codes that emerge will be explained in this part by introducing the outcomes per the theme. The coding tree with the primary themes and sub-themes on which the findings were based and evaluated can be found in Appendix D.

4.1. Engagement as employee wellness

The first theme that has been identified is engagement as employee wellness. When the participants were asked why they chose to participate in the program, they mainly described the positive feelings and the psychological boost that they get involved in these kinds of activities. Apparently, This appears to be compatible with Kahn's (1990) concept of involvement, as well as the findings of Bakker et al. (2008) in their research study.

No matter gender, department, role or how many years are working or being active as mentors' (see Appendix C) employees shared the same enthusiasm when they were talking about their experience. To be more precise, being engaged in the context of CSR as mentors have reflected their positive experience in terms of how they feel as mentors and volunteers. Moreover, it appeared that employees talked about themselves or as mentors or volunteers since they connect this identity.

Employees may have viewed their participation in the scholarship program as an extracurricular activity on their calendar, but they appear to have a lot of energy to contribute to something extra in their job. All the mentors are incredibly open and eager to assist especially when it comes to students and the NN Future Matters program. More precisely, interviewee H indicated the following: "I like it, I like it, I sometimes feel even a little bit connected to it", while interview D stated: "I think it provides me with this joy and on the other hand it's it contributes to the objectives that we have as an organization",

as research by Muthuri et al. (2009) states employees perceive themselves to be citizens who give back to society.

> […] there are no material advantages, it is just a matter of joy and of course, cost time and money. But that does not matter. I am happy to spend some wealth, our personal thoughts, and fuses towards this program. So, it is just charity. (Interview D)

Employees are highly excited about engaging on social issues and offering their support, as demonstrated by Peterson's (2004) research. When questioned about the disadvantages of employee volunteering, one respondent emphasized the significance that the mentoring relationship is volunteering, as Bierema & Merriam (2002) emphasize as well. Employees, for example, are aware that it entails more work for them, but if the volunteer chooses it, they will be happy to sacrifice this time for this specific activity. This compromise occurred because this communication gives them an extra alternative that they may be missing for their everyday job. For example, being in a routine is not pleasant, but by adding an activity, a spike in energy occurs. Working in an online setting, in particular, means missing out on a lot of communication with colleagues and social life in general.

> so, this is something you need to make time for […] prioritizing well and making sure that you have enough time for your day-to-day jobs and that you know the things they would expect from you […] when you're going to be this do this voluntary job that you can also do it with a 100% motivation and then you have time for it. I think if you are going to do it for like 20% or more being there talking to your mentor or your mentee, it wouldn't help (interviewee C)

Employees may regard education and the younger generation to be a highly important issue of interest and by helping them they get a nice feeling of contribution. One of the responders, for example, emphasized the fact that these students require as much assistance as possible. Employees appeared to have an inner urge to give their entire selves to this company-organized activity since it will undoubtedly have a favourable impact without underlining emotions. For example, interviewee A stated: "they are the youngsters, and they need as much guidance as they can. So, I was happy to help"

[…] And then this year, when they said, Okay, there is an option to actually teach or mentor university students, I said, Yeah, why not? That is a good option. Because […] the university people they are the youngsters, and they need as much guidance as they can. So, I was happy to help […] (interviewee A)

In addition to this, all the participants were asked how they feel as mentors. Most respondents reveal the psychological enlargement they get from helping others, as well as feelings of happiness and fulfilment. It appears that people gain an inner satisfaction that is translated into a source of joy by assisting others, particularly those in need.

[…] actually, I think I feel grateful that I can help somebody in developing themselves, getting a degree in the Netherlands developing as a student towards to somebody who will go in first steps of the career, I feel very good (interviewee C)

Interestingly, the majority of the employees, both men and women who serve as mentors in the scholarship program have previously or are currently actively involved in corporate volunteering initiatives outside of the company. Some examples of external volunteering include coaching people or giving classes to students. Thus, volunteering is an essential component in their corporate but also personal lives because it looks that it may provide them with a significant boost in how much better they feel by participating in this. Therefore, this observation is consistent with Breitsohl and Ehrig (2016) research.

[…] before NN also I was mentoring other people, like juniors from my preschool or juniors from my university. So, I am not new into the role of mentoring per se. […] I am excited, but it is not much of a surprise for me (Interviewee A)

In addition to this, most of the mentors have previously experienced specifically coaching as a form of employee volunteering and continue to be active in this kind of activity participating incorporate activities within NN. That is to say that, having the mentoring experience outside of the company may be positively related to then choosing to become a mentor within NN. Another mentor, for example,

interviewee A stated: "I've participated in a couple of mentoring programs before but not through the company", or interviewee L said that: "So, I joined the NN Futures Scholarship mentoring program and I'm also participating in the refugee talent hub mentoring, which is a similar mentoring program". This demonstrates that they had a favourable time performing in similar activities and are now seeking similar activities to participate which is strongly associated with the sense of energy expressed by Bakker et al. 2008.

Furthermore, when the mentors were asked to explain why they chose to join, other motivations relating to their wellbeing emerged. Reasons to choose to become a mentor comes from internal motivation based on previous personal experiences, adding value, and making a positive impact in society. Employees feel great when they contribute more, as interviewee N described: "I feel really nice because, like I mentioned, it's extremely nice to spend your leisure time helping someone else". When employees were asked how they feel as mentors, the responses are usually highly positive and energetic with all participants expressing emotions of pleasure. Volunteering provides critical assistance to those in need as well as the community. As a result, mentors by helping students and the community gives them a natural sense of success and also provide them with a feeling of identity.

However, according to research by Kahn (1990) in engagement, individuals' reveal themselves physically apart from cognitively and emotionally during their job. However, the pandemic has provided the final impetus for businesses and organizations to go virtual as mentioned by Brynjolfsson et al., (2020). Consequently, during the interviews, participants compared online and offline mentoring, as well as the virtual volunteering experience and remote working. Interestingly, throughout the interviews, mentors argued concerning the advantages and disadvantages of both virtual and physical mentoring by providing examples of both to emphasize not only the importance of face-to-face interaction but also the significance of potential hybrid meetings.

Correspondingly, based on their experiences regarding mentorship improvement, hybrid appears to be a good potential to them. The majority of the mentors seek to explain that a combination of meetings would be the key for them to feel more connected with the mentee. For example, as interviewee O mentioned: "It would be nice to combine both", while interviewee B tried to explain how combining meetings would be beneficial for both, demonstrating how the relationship between mentor and mentee would be considerably stronger if they combined both.

I think it would be nice if we could have combined it also with at least one or two face to face meetings, you know, one, in the beginning, to really get to know each other, I do think face to face is really important to make a full picture of the person in front of you, you get a different impression when you meet somebody in person and maybe also towards the end of the mentoring relationship. You know, it is nice to see your mentee go on his or her way and have a sort of like a closing moment (Interviewee B)

This reflects a psychological connection that employees may be lacking when mentorship is provided online. It appears that they do not feel very comfortable in an online setting, while all respondents indicated that they feel that physical mentorship encourages a deeper connection between mentors and mentees, recognizing the fundamental need for human interaction and connection. Particularly, as participant 3 points out, "nonverbal communication accounts for 80% of all communication". As a result, a large number of signals are being missed in an online setting. Moreover, in comparison to an online meeting, all the participants believe that having a face-to-face connection gives the mentee more confidence to trust and open up to the mentor.

I must say, I think, mentorship, my personal experience, that it works better when you have a face-to-face connection because then the mentee has also a little bit more confidence to actually open up to the mentor (Interviewee B)

Interestingly, all of the mentors have experienced previously some kind of physical volunteering either within or outside of the organization or specifically face to face mentoring. Thus, the participants recognized both the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual environment. Thereby, even though all the respondents acknowledge the benefits in terms of convenience for the online mentorship, it appears that these advantages cannot outweigh the significance of the face-to-face interaction for them. Specifically, as participant 1 stated: "it is not the same as having a face-to-face communication". However, the main conclusion by all the interviewers is that the primary benefit of online mentoring is the flexibility it enables. As participant 4 points out "it provides some sort of efficiency".

[…] Geographical demographics are extended, you can basically mentor people who are far from

your own region, for example, somebody into Africa or Asia, for that matter, or in a position

who cannot come to have a direct face to face interaction […] (Interviewee A)

However, the only slight disadvantage that they can think of is that although it offers some degree of flexibility, it also adds some degree of distance.

there's still a distance because you can physically meet each other. But I think that's just the flip side

of the coin. of the advantage of being flexible to meet up online, that flexibility is there on the one

hand, but on the other, the distance is also there. Apart from that, I do not feel any particular

disadvantages. (Interviewee L)

Thus, fully online mentorship has a slightly negative impact on the relationship and deeper connection between mentor and mentee, which is translated in less fulfilment and happened for the employee. In general, this represents the influence that this situation has on the employee working in the company, as well as the problems they encounter as entirely remote workers and online mentors. All the responses indicated a level of dissatisfaction, with a lower level of enjoyment being online. Without this connection, mentors are unable to acquire a sense of community, satisfaction and psychological boost when serving as mentors even though they recognize all the benefits of convenience and flexibility of the online mentorship. Accordingly, these results contradict Bakker et al. (2008) since it appears that the online environment gives a modest degree of enjoyment while the entire mentorship experience provides satisfaction and fulfilment to the participants.

4.2.   Engagement as employee dedication towards the company

Through the analysis, it became apparent that the following theme is engagement as employee dedication towards the company. Employees are proud to support the company by joining in these types of events whenever they see the company contributing to core values that are important to them. For example, interviewee I mentioned: "definitely that I feel very proud". Likewise, empirical research by De Gilder et al. (2005) has been proven that volunteering appears to have a positive impact on

corporate attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, employees appeared to value every CSR activity in which they may participate, regardless of division, gender, or years of employment within the company as previously mentioned. This is translated into organizational loyalty, devotion, and commitment, which is tightly linked with the second component of engagement, which is dedication (Bakker, et al., 2008) and more precisely expresses their pride in working for the company. All the interviewees were enthusiastic about corporate social responsibility topics and they appeared to be constantly willing to participate in such activities without reluctance. Furthermore, when asked why they chose to participate in the mentoring, the most common response is because the NN Future matters scholarship program is part of the CSR program.

> I was always part of the NN CSR program, which is the Corporate Social Responsibility program. So, I do value that whatever you learn, or whatever you experience is that you should impact others in whatever capacity you can, and that is why when they started with the CSR program, I registered myself to see how I can add value to the society (Interviewee A)

In addition to this, mentors are also asked to describe their motivations in terms of employee volunteering. Interestingly, neither of the respondents appear to have even a mildly negative perception of either corporate or individual volunteering activities outside of the company. It is apparent that when it comes to employee volunteering-related questions, their replies are consistently favourable, reflecting dedication and connection to whatever is linked to the organization's leadership. Furthermore, the fact that these efforts are coordinated by the firm makes it easier to engage with them than if they had to do it themselves. As a result, this is aligned with what Rodell et al. (2007) have said that their desire to participate stems from the fact that these activities are organized by the firm.

> I think it's a good initiative, I think everybody wants to have a contribution beyond just their job. Not everybody, but a lot of people. And sometimes it is more difficult to organize it outside your workplace, so then maybe you end up not doing the effort. So, if it is easier to do it through the company that you work in then for me, you know, I jumped on the opportunity, let's say, right, because it's there. people organize it. I do not need to get in touch with a new organization. I do not need to search for what I mean, of course, I choose what I want to volunteer for. But it is just easier. It is simpler. And I do think it also motivates employees to see that the company

means more than just profit-generating, even though to its core, any company is about that. But it also does something, you know, for people and society. And that connects you a little bit more to the company. (Interviewee B)

Apparently, corporate social responsibility as a strategy within the firm has a significant impact on the employee's decision to stay or leave the company for another opportunity as demonstrated by Peterson's (2004) research. According to one participant, there is no conflict in choosing to work for NN, which has a strong CSR policy, over another firm known for unsustainable practices or failing to make a beneficial contribution to society. Previous studies by Brammer et al. (2007), Peterson (2004), Turker (2009) agrees with the fact that there is a significant presence of CSR within the firm is directly connected to the workers' willingness to work for the company and appears to strengthen their loyalty and commitment. This is perfectly expressed by the following perspective.

in my work I'm also involved in the new laws on social corporate responsibility, and, for example, the climate action plans we have to draw and it really makes me proud and makes me want to stay with NN, yes, for example, a former colleague of mine, we used to work for the same company before I worked for NN and he worked for Shell and he once contacted me would you be interested in joining Shell and I thought always Oh, Shell is a nice company, It's very close to my home but now I know it's, well, I'm not sure if I want to work for Shell, because they are really a different company doing well different things from NN, we are adding something and they are destroying a lot, so yes, It really makes me want to stay with NN (Interviewee J)

One participant argues that is more connected to how an employee feels about the company rather than the connection with the company. According to the insights, it appears that the most prevalent sentiment in terms of CSR appears to be the pride for employees that they work in an organization that has a human dimension along with being socially and environmentally responsible. Specifically, interviewee J explained that "it adds more value to the pride than the connection because you're proud of the company you work in because you that they are doing well but also showing their social responsibility".

In addition, most of the participants claimed that they contribute to these types of initiatives on a regular basis. Specifically, they constantly mentioned numerous examples of initiatives that they have participated. Additionally, the participants appear to be rather positive about what the company has been doing in terms of CSR, considering the company as social and underlining the necessity of having this side apart from the continual focus on profitability.

> I think we do a lot as a company. So, my view is that we are quite a social company. I think in the current society companies also have a responsibility to do more than just go for profits, so I think NN is well on track. And we're constantly exploring new initiatives or new ways to give back to society or to look for sustainable solutions. So yeah, I have a very positive view, I think […] this is one of the things that has, that also connects me to the company and that that also makes me say that I am proud to work for NN because we do all these types of initiatives […] it like I said it, I think it increases the connection. I think I'm happy to work for a company that profiles itself in such a way that I think is important (interviewee N)

Thereby, it follows that the employees regardless of department or role appeared to place a high value on corporate social responsibility, which can be connected with advocacy within the company. Mentors operate in many positions and departments inside the firm such as finance, investments, communication, innovation etc. (see Appendix C). However, even employees who work in roles far from society with no societal connection to their position, value CSR and express a connection to the firm by participating in these initiatives. Similarly, employees have the same interest in terms of corporate social responsibility activities inside the firm, regardless of gender, department, job, or how many years they have worked or been involved as mentors.

4.3.   Engagement as learning and development at a personal and corporate level

The third topic is engagement as a means of learning and development. From the interviews with mentors, it is suggested that mentoring can serve as a personal learning experience. According to the research by Zhang et al. (2016) mentoring has been proven to benefit both mentors, mentees and

organizations. Specifically, mentors might have a variety of impacts on the mentee, either directly or indirectly, through their discussions. From the perspective of mentors, all of these influences are viewed as learning opportunities. Consequently, they may be able to learn and grasp things differently, from a new perspective, as professionals. For example, interacting with the mentoring enhances the responders' abilities in terms of how they develop solutions for their projects within the firm. Furthermore, if they recognize that something they are doing in connection with the mentee is not working, they may change their approach for a new strategy in their work. As a result, it provides a chance for exposure to other methods of doing things. However, even before they acquire a piece of new knowledge from mentoring as individuals, they are already considering how it might be utilized internally within the firm. This is nicely demonstrated by the following:

> it also learns me a little bit about how to coach, so what works, what doesn't work, how many times do you meet, does it work if you do it over the phone or everything, so that was for me as well, a journey on learning how to become a better coach (Interview E)

Coaching skills are at the top of the list for personal learning. For example, when employees were asked what motivated them to become mentors, the majority of respondents mentioned coaching abilities that they wish to develop or learn more about apart from offering back to society as citizens.

> […] I wanted to do more coaching because being an actuary is a lot of computer work, I also want to focus on the development of skills […] So mainly focus on coaching, and that was part of the description in the online mentorship. So, I thought it was Yeah, it was interesting. Yeah. Volunteering job to do. (Interviewee P)

All these new capabilities are being returned to the firm by the employees, and that this might potentially form and strengthen relationships inside the organization. Moreover, it appeared that they develop a lot of skills while serving as mentors, which they were aware may be a recognized engagement number for the company, but for the employees, it symbolizes learning and progress while doing something valuable to society. To put it another way, it's all about contributing back to the society and workforce while also receiving something in return.

[…] for me, I think that is like improvement in the skill that you can influence other people, you can impact maybe impact to your company or society, maybe get to know more people, you know, get to be able to talk to people see, if you share similar thoughts, stuff like that, It is always nice, maybe better nicer for people who are more motivated like, like I said, my engagement is being more motivating factor for them but definitely, in my case, that's the case. (Interview H)

In addition, volunteering is a great opportunity for the participants to use their abilities to benefit students, while also learning a new skill that might lead to a qualification. According to previous research by Bierema and Merriam (2002), employees realize the benefits of performance and seek any opportunity to attain it. As a result, mentorship is regarded a nice learning opportunity not only to enhance coaching abilities as previously discussed but also to build new talents or high demand skills that cannot be improved when working within the company. Nonetheless, on why they choose to become mentors in that context, it appears that many highlight that they acquire a new set of outstanding capabilities as individuals while becoming mentors, who indeed that the skills they obtain bring them back to their job as employees. Furthermore, they appreciate the fact that is related to students and the younger generation. Even though mentorship is a corporate strategy, employees tend to have their attention on the personal impact that this can have on them as individuals rather than the corporate environment. The findings primarily reflect the personal factors that motivate employees to participate in corporate volunteer programs.

one of my goals was to be one of my personal goals is to become an inspirational leader. […] it is a hobby of mine to train and to coach people, the coaching, coaching people, something I have been doing for the last 15 years or so and getting people into their power (Interviewee C)

Employees are influenced by these activities as individuals, which means that they bring to their role as employees all the new characteristics that they gain from not only mentoring but also from other volunteering activities in which they participate at NN. Even though personal motivations are frequently mentioned as the most critical factors for employees to engage in corporate volunteering activities, corporate reasons are also addressed extensively. Many of them, recognize benefits in terms of networking within the company. Especially, due to the fact that the company

sifted to remote working, and this influences the connection between the employees. For example, it can be a challenge in terms of meeting new colleagues, learning what is happening in other departments and having a comprehensive view of the organization.

It appears, apparently that corporate driving reasons are the next factor for employees to engage in corporate volunteering programs in terms of professional development, and, in this particular case, in the mentorship program. Specifically, one interviewee pointed out that participating in these initiatives can bring visibility to you in other parts of the company. In fact, interviewee L stated explicitly that by participating in these types of activities, volunteers have the opportunity to broaden their networking and meet colleagues from different functions: "Getting to know other employees from other departments" or interviewee M explained:

> mostly is that you have contact with your colleagues outside of working hours, so you can learn more about themselves, become more familiar with them. And of course, it's that you get to know with other colleagues from other BUs and other departments, So, you broaden your networking, you expand your network that it can help you also in your work because they know you, they may have to face eventually in the end, So, they know you and you can contact them whenever you want, yeah, I mean, for work-related stuff, so, it's easier communication.

Corporate reasons are associated with advantages they acquire from volunteering within the organization and bring back to their role as employees. Such benefits are often translated into capabilities, mindset, soft skills, or just any brand-new knowledge. In general, all respondents appear to agree that personal motivation outweighs organizational motivation as they see it to participate in these types of activities. One of the interviewees, participant N clearly stated that: "So, it is really personal driven from my perspective. I want to say there is really a corporate goal behind it. Besides that, you know, that we help our society and those things". Unexpectedly, corporate driving motivations for development appear to be less important for employees than the previously mentioned personal reasons, but this knowledge they bring it back to the company.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The current research study aimed to explore how does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of corporate social responsibility enhance employee engagement within companies. The theories discussed were related to the concepts of corporate social responsibility, employee volunteering, online mentorship, and employee engagement. The subject was examined using a business case and more specifically a scholarship program, namely the NN Future Matters scholarship. Qualitative in-depth interviews were performed with 15 workers both male and female from the NN Group who were serving as mentors for the 2020-2021 academic year of the scholarship program. In order to categorize and evaluate the findings of the in-depth interviews, thematic analysis was performed, following the steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). Through the analysis, three major themes were identified in order to provide an answer to the present research question as follows: *How does online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of CSR enhance employee engagement*?

5.1. Main Findings

Accordingly, three main themes were found based on the results that are connected to the characteristics of what employee engagement implies and stands for. To begin, the first topic revealed is *engagement as employee wellness*, the second theme uncovered is *engagement as dedication towards the company* and the third theme revealed is *engagement as learning and development at a personal and corporate level.*

To begin with, generally, employees view the mentoring experience via the scholarship program very positively regardless of their gender or the department that they work for or the role that they have (see appendix C), they all expressed the same passion while discussing their experiences. Every employee acknowledges the company's societal duty, and they appeared to prefer to work for a company that handles these societal issues than a firm with no societal responsibilities to society. Employees are eager to donate their time so that they can participate in an organized activity arranged by the firm to assist a group of individuals. Especially, when it comes to students, it shows that they are passionate about mentoring them because their relationship provides a lot of benefits to them as individuals on how they feel but also on how they aspire to grow as persons. Furthermore, employees have largely favourable

sensations, and the only negative part of their positive feelings and psychological boost is tied to the online component, as they miss both the physical aspect and the connection that offers a face-to-face engagement.

Furthermore, one trend that was discovered is that employees are proud and committed to the firm for which they work, that they are loyal to their organization, and that they have a good degree of connection with the company. They claimed to feel a sense of belonging and that they understand the organization's objectives. Finally, mentoring via volunteering teaches employees new skills such as coaching, and one of the reasons people join the program is to learn and grow themselves along with contributing to society. They appear to be inspired by this experience, creating a fresh viewpoint on many subjects and acquiring new abilities, or they strengthen their present talents and return to their role as professionals.

Based on the findings, engagement as employee wellness seems to be associated more with the corporate volunteering activity within companies and corporate social responsibility aspect, while learning and development at a personal and corporate level aspect are more related to the mentorship experience. To be more specific, the former emphasizes the fact they feel special because they participate in employee volunteering activities, and they also feel empowered because of the company's obligation to society, and they are grateful and devoted to the firm, which implies that the well-being is actually associated with the notions of volunteering under the framework of CSR activity within organizations. On the other hand, mentoring focuses on the skills that they acquire which means the mentoring is more about learning and growing as individuals, while the other two aspects of volunteering and CSR are more connected with the values that they have as persons and employees since they appreciate organizations in order to work there.

According to Kumar and Pansari (2015), employee engagement consists of five components namely satisfaction, identification, commitment, and loyalty, as well as performance. The current research findings totally accord with these three kinds of features. To be more explicit, apparently, mentorship plays a significant role in increasing psychological meaningfulness and wellbeing, employees acting as mentors feel delighted and invigorated while participating in meaningful volunteering activities. Thereby, this finding is consistent with the emotional element, which is correlated with how employees feel, according to Kular et al. (2008). Engagement as wellness is completely related to the aspect of identification since Kumar and Pansari (2015) define employee attachment as the emotional state.

Employees are engaged, as it indicates they are emotionally invested in their firm and its aims. Employees are dedicated to their daily tasks, and they are concerned about their outcomes. This motivates employees to go above and beyond and to put out maximum efforts.

However, it appears that online mentorship enable engagement enhances psychological meaningfulness because of the volunteering component and the CSR emphasis, but the online setting is a negative aspect for all the employees. Likewise, according to (Kahn, 1990) engagement requires being both physically and psychologically present. Furthermore, the online environment and lack of connection reduce a little of the psychological boost, which implies a bit of employee identification is sacrificed. This also implies that they are likely to be less satisfied than they would be in a hybrid experience. As a result, employees become less satisfied, implying that they now lack a portion of one of the characteristics of engagement, namely satisfaction.

The findings for the online setting experience provide numerous insights into the new way of working within companies in a hybrid workforce. A hybrid work model which combines in-office and remote work in an employee's schedule seems to be the most preferred. Employees demonstrate all the benefits of a hybrid model for mentorship in the context of corporate volunteering since they are lacking the psychological connection in a fully online setting. Hybrid mentoring seems to be appreciated by the employees than fully online and this easily can be reflected in hybrid working as well rather fully online as main employees' preference for the new ways of working.

Furthermore, the following topic is connected to the second component of employee engagement, which is dedication according to (Bakker et al. 2008). Employee volunteering and CSR have a significant impact on business devotion, as a consequence of which these components are frequently stated as reasons to participate in the program. Moreover, the second theme is the same as one of the aspects of Kumar and Pansari (2015) namely employee dedication. The demand for organizations to perform is always growing. Competition is fiercer and there is growing pressure within companies since the notion of lifetime employment has also fallen out of favour. As a result, the fact that mentorship fosters sentiments of pride give reasons to be tied to and loyal to an organization, making workers vital contributors to the company's success since they feel a major part of it.

Thereby reflecting on this, such employee volunteering programs appear to be recommended as a strategy for increasing employee dedication across organizations. Such employee advocacy has a tremendous impact on the organization because by engaging in the mentorship program, employees get a considerable positive influence that turns into a commitment to the company.

Following, the third theme is engagement as learning and development at a personal and corporate level. According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), significant degrees of activation define employee engagement within companies. In detail, the employees appeared to have a specific interest in acquiring new knowledge or have exposure to the organization. Therefore, they are eager to make the most of their opportunities as professionals, and they seek out opportunities to volunteer and to take on new tasks. This can be explained as people in today's competitive workplace place a high value on the opportunity to advance their abilities. As a result, people are significantly more likely to stay loyal to their company if they can grow as individuals and advance their careers. Thus, the third theme for this research see is very connected with more the one aspect of loyalty toward the organization. Having employees the chance to gain new skills and expand their talents via work, will automatically raise employee motivation.

In conclusion, this research succeeded in providing an answer to the research question. The findings revealed that mentorship has an indirect effect on the three aspects of mentors' engagement, which is consistent with the literature's notion of engagement as defined by Kahn (1990) and Bakker et al. (2008). In addition to this, the three themes discovered are strongly related to the five aspects that Kumar and Pansari (2015) mentioned namely employee satisfaction, employee identification, employee commitment, employee loyalty and employee performance. However, it was discovered that an online setting reduces the level of communication, connection, and psychological boost, which can be reflected in the knowledge they obtain or the satisfaction and inspiration that they could experience without online or, as they suggested, combining face to face and online meetings for different occasions, implying that a hybrid model would increase the level of engagement than a fully online setting.

Reflecting on the results, the main common characteristic is that all the mentors have already a level of engagement within the company since all the mentors are active in different corporate volunteering initiatives within the company, while all of them seem to be very passionate about volunteering and CSR topics. Mentorship is well viewed as a voluntary activity by employees, presumably due to the fact that it provides several personal benefits. Reflecting upon this, most corporate volunteering programs offered by the company are shorter in duration than the scholarship program. During the interviews, they indicated that they were involved in a variety of activities inside the firm. Mentoring in the context of the scholarship program requires the employees more time in their agenda to commit to this since lasts for the whole academic year. It seems that employees who are acting as mentors choose to interact with the mentorship, a long-term period volunteering initiative within the company as this can

have a significant impact on them as individuals since they regard it as a source of both giving and learning. Hence, this can be translated as more benefits for mentors on a corporate and personal level, which means more connection and more engagement in a long period in this initiative.

According to Lukka (2000), mentorship can result in long-term commitment. Hence, the mentorship can become a competitive strategy for companies to engage their employees for a longer time by making employees participate in one volunteering within the company which lasts longer than shorter on time frame actives organized by companies. This research suggests mentorship as a factor affecting engagement. Mentorship appears to be a good choice for businesses since this research confirms with Galbreath (2009) that CSR as a strategy has several organizational benefits.

The qualitative design asked for a small sample, which led to lower generalizability of the findings. However, in terms of the generalizability of the results, the sample can be representative of the population in different companies since all the employees either have previously experienced mentorship in different settings not only in the context of the scholarship program or experienced volunteering within or outside of the company various times. Thus, the sample size was fairly representative throughout the firm because the overall number of mentors each year is around 40 employees, thus conclusions about the results are possible because the interview was done with the greatest number of individuals depending on the methodological criteria. In addition to this, it can also be generalized to various types of mentorships as most of the participants have already experienced coaching.

According to the study's literature review, it emerges that the findings of this study confirm the relevance of some theoretical debates and, in some respects, offer new insights. Specifically, the present thesis extended the knowledge of academic literature on employee volunteering within companies. In addition, by examining a specific case, the research manages to be able to narrow down the circumstances under which volunteering can occur. Following the suggestions of Overgaard (2019) and Shachar et al. (2019), the paper investigates one type of corporate volunteering and more specifically how employees experience one form of employee volunteering in the scope of CSR. Furthermore, the societal importance of this work derives from the fact that it increases understanding of why volunteerism is dropping while corporate volunteering is increasing (Rodell et al., 2017), as it offers various benefits to the employees at a corporate and personal level. The learning and development component, in particular, appears to be a very important cause in which corporate volunteering is increasing, while another factor is the volunteering activity is coordinated by the firm. Furthermore, the

fact that the activity includes a social side toward society as well as a learning opportunity makes the activity even more appealing. Moreover, the study provides evidence in terms of how employees experience volunteering in an online setting.

In addition, this research provided a new view on how the concepts of online mentorship, CSR and employee volunteering can be connected and thus suggests that future research in employee engagement within companies should be taken into serious consideration these concepts as significant factors for achieving higher levels of employee engagement within companies, but also delve into hybrid contexts where volunteering may be done.

5.2.   Limitations

By conducting a qualitative approach, the study was able to provide an answer to the research question. Even though this study is valuable to academia and businesses, the research study has several limitations. Thus, reflecting upon the study certain limitations and weaknesses must be considered if the study will be conducted on a larger scale.

First and foremost, the first limitation lies in the fact that all the mentors were conscious of the fact that the researcher was one of the scholars of the scholarship program offered by the NN Group. Accordingly, all the participants were aware of the researcher's connection with their employer. Thus, this means that all the answers that they gave during the interviews might be influenced based on this evidence. For instance, if the researcher had no previous relationship with the company that the participants were working the responses might be slightly different in terms of how they positively perceived all these activities organized by the company. Respondents may have highlighted more negative aspects while discussing, which indicates that the study's findings might differ.

Moreover, the qualitative design required a small sample size, resulting in decreased generalizability of the findings. However, the sample of this study includes the maximum number of participants according to the methodological guidelines. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, numerous adjustments were made to the study technique. For example, the interviews took place fully online via Microsoft Teams. Even though a camera was used during the meeting for the researcher to notice their nonverbal communication and allow to make eye contact, the quality of the camera and internet connection might decrease these observations such as smiles, turning heads for examination. An online interview eliminates in-person

connection, eye contact and distances the interviewer from the interviewee. Instead, an in-person interview would be preferable to capture nonverbal communication such as body language, moves of their hands or any additional visual clues. Additionally, due to the fact that the year that the research was conducted marked as the first year that the mentorship was shifted to online mentorship and the first time this type of circumstance in terms of working and mentoring at the same time online was encountered, it might have affected several employee responses. The shift to online mentorship took place since covid 19 restrictions. Therefore, the participants' responses may not be unbiased and may be influenced by this evidence when compared to the previous year's condition of the balance working from home or fully remotely.

5.3.   Suggestions for future research

This section provides recommendations for future research. Hence, concerning the aforementioned limitations, there are several paths that the current study can serve as a starting point. Thus, if the research is conducted further, it is advisable to consider all the previously mentioned elements to strengthen it. Additionally, several suggestions for further research can be made.

The first recommendation is the use of mixed methods, to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods on the current topic. Specifically, to conduct interviews with surveys to get a better understanding of the topic. Triangulation of various sources will offer insights into the many aspects of the concept of employee engagement. Moreover, an interesting suggestion would be to investigate multiple types of mentorships within companies and their possible influence on employee engagement. Furthermore, another suggestion is that due to the fact this study concentrated on a single firm, it would be interesting to compare multiple companies in future studies. Additionally, another suggestion for future research would be the exploration of different types of virtual volunteering or hybrid model volunteering initiatives companies and their impact on the business's environment.

Taking everything into account, the present study contributed to existing theories while also providing new insights on the topics of online mentorship, employee volunteering, corporate social responsibility, and employee engagement. Hopefully, the insights, limitations and recommendations of the current research will expand the field of exploration even further.

List of references

Abraham, S. (2012). Job Satisfaction as an Antecedent to Employee Engagement. *SIES Journal of Management*, *8*(2), 27-36.

Aguilera, R. V., Rupp, D. E., Williams, C. A., & Ganapathi, J. (2007). Putting the S back in corporate social responsibility: A multilevel theory of social change in organizations. *Academy of management review*, *32*(3), 836-863. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.5465/amr.2007.25275678

Aguinis, H., & Glavas, A. (2012). What we know and don't know about corporate social responsibility: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, *38*(4), 932-968. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206311436079

Albrecht, S. L., Bakker, A. B., Gruman, J. A., Macey, W. H., & Saks, A. M. (2015). Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(1), 7–35. https://doi.org/10.1108/joepp-08-2014-0042

Ali, I., Rehman, K. U., Ali, S. I., Yousaf, J., & Zia, M. (2010). Corporate social responsibility influences, employee commitment and organizational performance. *African Journal of Business Management*, *4*(13), 2796-2801.

Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International journal of productivity and performance management*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 308-323. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008

Bani-Khalid, T. O., & Ahmed, A. H. (2017). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): A conceptual and theoretical shift. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 7(1), 203-212. doi:10.6007/IJARAFMS/v7-i1/2626

Bakker, A. B., & Bal, M. P. (2010). Weekly work engagement and performance: A study among starting teachers. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, *83*(1), 189-206. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1348/096317909X402596

Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2008). Positive organizational behaviour: Engaged employees in flourishing organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *29*(2), 147–154. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.515

Basil, D. Z., Runte, M. S., Easwaramoorthy, M., & Barr, C. (2009). Company support for employee volunteering: A national survey of companies in Canada. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 85(2), 387-398. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9741-0

Baumgartner, R. J. (2014). Managing corporate sustainability and CSR: A conceptual framework combining values, strategies and instruments contributing to sustainable development. *C orporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 21(5), 258-271. https://doi- org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/csr.1336

Bean, N. M., Lucas, L., & Hyers, L. L. (2014). Mentoring in Higher Education Should be the Norm to Assure Success: Lessons Learned from the Faculty Mentoring Program, West Chester University, 2008–2011. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *22*(1), 56–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2014.882606

Bhattacharya, C. B., Korschun, D., & Sen, S. (2009). Strengthening stakeholder–company relationships through mutually beneficial corporate social responsibility initiatives. *Journal of Business ethics*, *85*(2), 257-272. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9730-3

Bhattacharya, C.B., Sen S., Korschun, D. (2011). *Leveraging Corporate Responsibility: The Stakeholder Route To Maximizing Business And Social Value*. Cambridge University Press: 1st edition.

Bierema, L. L. & Merriam, S. B. (2002) E-mentoring: Using Computer-Mediated Communication

to Enhance the Mentoring Process, *Innovative Higher Education*, 26(3), 211–227. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1017921023103

Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input.

Brammer, S., Millington, A. and Rayton, B. (2007). The contribution of corporate social responsibility to organizational commitment.*The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(10), 1701-1719.https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09585190701570866

Branco, M. C., & Rodrigues, L. L. (2006). Corporate social responsibility and resource-based perspectives. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *69*(2), 111-132. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9071-z

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Breitsohl, H., & Ehrig, N. (2017). Commitment through Employee Volunteering: Accounting for the Motives of Inter-Organisational Volunteers. *Applied Psychology*, *66*(2), 260–289. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12092

Brennen, B. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. New York: Routledge https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315435978

Brynjolfsson, E., Horton, J. J., Ozimek, A., Rock, D., Sharma, G., & TuYe, H. Y. (2020). *COVID-19 and remote work: an early look at US data* (No. w27344). National Bureau of Economic Research. DOI: 10.3386/w27344

Caligiuri, P., Mencin, A., & Jiang, K. (2013). Win-Win-Win: The Influence of Company-Sponsored Volunteerism Programs on Employees, NGOs, and Business Units. *Personnel Psychology*, *66*(4), 825–860. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12019

Carroll, A. B. (1999). Corporate social responsibility: Evolution of a definitional

    construct. *Business & society*, *38*(3), 268-295. https://doi.org/10.1177/000765039903800303

Carroll, A. B. (2016). Carroll's pyramid of CSR: taking another look. I*nternational journal of*

    corporate social responsibility, 1(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40991-016-0004-6

Carroll, A. B. (2015). Corporate social responsibility: The centerpiece of competing and

    complementary frameworks. *Organizational Dynamics*, 44(2), 87-96.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2015.02.002

Carroll, A. B., & Shabana, K. M. (2010). The business case for corporate social responsibility: A

    review of concepts, research and practice. *International journal of management reviews*, *12*(1),

    85-105. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00275.x

Chaudhary, R. (2017). Corporate social responsibility and employee engagement: can CSR help in

    redressing the engagement gap? *Social Responsibility Journal*, 13(2), 323–338.

    https://doi.org/10.1108/srj-07-2016-0115

Cho, S., Chung, C., & Young, J. (2019). Study on the Relationship between CSR and Financial

    Performance. *Sustainability*, *11*(2), 343. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11020343

Cycyota, C. S., Ferrante, C. J., & Schroeder, J. M. (2016). Corporate social responsibility and employee

    volunteerism: What do the best companies do? *Business Horizons*, *59*(3), 321–329.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.01.004

Cypress, B. S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives,

    strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*,

    36(4), 253- 263.https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253

De Gilder, D., Schuyt, T. N., & Breedijk, M. (2005). Effects of an employee volunteering program

    on the work force: The ABN-AMRO case. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *61*(2), 143-152.

    https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10551-005-7101-x

De Roeck, K., Marique, G., Stinglhamber, F., & Swaen, V. (2014). Understanding employees'

    responses to corporate social responsibility: mediating roles of overall justice and organisational

    identification. *The international journal of human resource management*, *25*(1), 91-112.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.781528

Dhanesh, G. S. (2014a). CSR as Organization–Employee Relationship Management Strategy.

    Management Communication Quarterly, *28*(1), 130–149.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318913517238

Du, S., Bhattacharya, C., & Sen, S. (2010). Maximizing Business Returns to Corporate Social

    Responsibility (CSR): The Role of CSR Communication. *International Journal of Management*

    Reviews, *12*(1), 8–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00276.x

Du, S., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2015). Corporate Social Responsibility, Multi-faceted Job-

    Products, and Employee Outcomes. Journal of Business Ethics,131(2),319–335.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2286-5

Duthler, G., & Dhanesh, G. S. (2018). The role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and internal CSR

    communication in predicting employee engagement: Perspectives from the United Arab

    Emirates (UAE). *Public Relations Review*, *44*(4), 453–462.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.04.001

Eby, L. T., & Allen, T. D. (2008). Moving toward interdisciplinary dialogue in mentoring

    scholarship: An introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72(2), 159-167.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.02.005

Edinger-Schons, L. M., Lengler-Graiff, L., Scheidler, S., & Wieseke, J. (2019). Frontline Employees as

    Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Ambassadors: A Quasi-Field Experiment. *Journal of*

    Business Ethics, *157*(2), 359–373. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3790-9

Ensher, E. A., Heun, C., & Blanchard, A. (2003). Online mentoring and computer-mediated

    communication: New directions in research. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *63*(2), 264–288.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-8791(03)00044-7

Evans, C. (2018). In Lewis, J. (Ed.) *Analysing semi-structured interviews using thematic analysis: Exploring voluntary civic participation among adults*. 55 City Road, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526439284

Gabriel, M. A., & Kaufield, K. J. (2008). Reciprocal mentorship: An effective support for online instructors. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *16*(3), 311-327. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13611260802233480

Galbreath, J. (2009). Building corporate social responsibility into strategy. *European business review*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 109-127. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/09555340910940123

Gatignon-Turnau, A. L., & Mignonac, K. (2015). (Mis) Using employee volunteering for public relations: Implications for corporate volunteers' organizational commitment. Journal of Business Research, 68(1), 7-18. Retrieved from: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0148296314001970

Ghobadian, A., Money, K., & Hillenbrand, C. (2015). Corporate Responsibility Research: Past—Present—Future. *Group & Organization Management*, *40*(3), 271–294. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1059601115590320

Gill, R. (2015). Why the PR strategy of storytelling improves employee engagement and adds value to CSR: An integrated literature review. *Public Relations Review*, *41*(5), 662–674. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.02.012

Glavas, A., & Kelley, K. (2014). The Effects of Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Attitudes. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *24*(2), 165–202. https://doi.org/10.5840/beq20143206

Graafland, J., Van de Ven, B., & Stoffele, N. (2003). Strategies and instruments for organising CSR by small and large businesses in the Netherlands. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *47*(1), 45-60.

Grant, A. M. (2012). Giving Time, Time After Time: Work Design and Sustained Employee Participation in

Corporate Volunteering. *Academy of Management Review*, *37*(4), 589–615.

https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.0280

Gully, S. M., Phillips, J. M., Castellano, W. G., Han, K., & Kim, A. (2013). A Mediated Moderation Model of

Recruiting Socially and Environmentally Responsible Job Applicants. *Personnel Psychology*, *66*(4),

935–973. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12033

Hamilton, B. A. & Scandura, T. A. (2003). E-Mentoring: Implications for organizational learning

and development in a wired world, *Organizational Dynamics*, 31(4), 388–402.

https://doi.org/10.1016/s0090-2616(02)00128-6

Hunt, D. M., & Michael, C. (1983). Mentorship: A Career Training and Development Tool. *Academy of

Management Review*, *8*(3), 475–485. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1983.4284603

Illia, L., Romenti, S., Rodríguez-Cánovas, B., Murtarelli, G., & Carroll, C. E. (2017). Exploring

corporations' dialogue about CSR in the digital era. *Journal of business ethics*, *146*(1), 39-58.

https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2924-6

lsrud, A. (2008). How corporate social responsibility is defined: an analysis of 37

definitions. *Corporate social responsibility and environmental management*, *15*(1), 1-13.

https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.132

Jiang, H., & Men, R. L. (2017). Creating an engaged workforce: The impact of authentic

leadership, transparent organizational communication, and work-life enrichment.

Communication research, 44(2), 225-243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215613137

Johnson, J. M. (2002). In-depth interviewing. *Handbook of interview research: Context and

method*, 1. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412973588

Jones Christensen, L., Mackey, A., & Whetten, D. (2014). Taking Responsibility for Corporate Social

Responsibility: The Role of Leaders in Creating, Implementing, Sustaining, or Avoiding Socially

Responsible Firm Behaviors. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *28*(2), 164–178. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2012.0047

Jones, D. A. (2010). Does serving the community also serve the company? Using organizational identification and social exchange theories to understand employee responses to a volunteerism programme. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *83*(4), 857–878. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317909x477495

Jones, D. A., Willness, C. R., & Madey, S. (2014). Why Are Job Seekers Attracted by Corporate Social Performance? Experimental and Field Tests of Three Signal-Based Mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal*, *57*(2), 383–404. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0848

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. *Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(4), 692–724. https://doi.org/10.5465/256287

Koch, C., Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, S., Bögel, P. M., & Adam, U. (2019). Employees' perceived benefits from participating in CSR activities and implications for increasing employees engagement in CSR. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*.

Kram, K. E. (1985). Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman

Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of the Mentor Relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, *26*(4), 608–625. https://doi.org/10.2307/255910

Kvale, S. (2007). Doing interviews. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781849208963

Kumar, V., & Pansari, A. (2015). Measuring the benefits of employee engagement. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, *56*(4), 67. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/measuring-benefits-employee-engagement/docview/1694713041/se-2?accountid=13598

Lim, J. S., & Greenwood, C. A. (2017). Communicating corporate social responsibility

    (CSR): Stakeholder responsiveness and engagement strategy to achieve CSR goals.

    Public Relations Review, 43(4), 768–776. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.06.007

Loosemore, M., & Bridgeman, J. (2017). Corporate volunteering in the construction industry:

    motivations, costs and benefits. *Construction Management and Economics*, *35*(10), 641-653.

    https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/01446193.2017.1315150

Lukka, P. (2000). Employee volunteering: A literature review*. Institute for Volunteering*

    Research.

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The Meaning of Employee Engagement. *Industrial and*

    Organizational Psychology, *1*(1), 3–30.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2007.0002.x

Margolis, J. D., Elfenbein, H. A., & Walsh, J. P. (2009). Does it Pay to Be Good. . .And Does it

    Matter? A Meta-Analysis of the Relationship between Corporate Social and Financial

    Performance. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. Published.

    https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1866371

McWilliams, A., Siegel, D. S., & Wright, P. M. 2006. Corporate social responsibility Strategic

    implications. *Journal of management studies*, 43(1): 1-18.

    https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00580.x

Mehta, D., & Mehta, N. K. (2013). Employee engagement: A literature review. *Economia. Seria*

    Management, *16*(2), 208-215.

Mirvis, P. (2012). Employee Engagement and CSR: Transactional, Relational, and Developmental

    Approaches. *California Management Review*, *54*(4), 93–117.

    https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2012.54.4.93

Muthuri, J. N., Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2009). Employee Volunteering and Social Capital: Contributions to Corporate Social Responsibility. *British Journal of Management*, *20*(1), 75–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2007.00551.x

NN Group. (n.d.). *Our company and who we are*. Retrieved September 30, 2021, from https://www.nn-group.com/our-company/who-we-are.htm

NN Group. (n.d.). *Positive change in communities*. Retrieved September 30, 2021, from https://www.nn-group.com/our-company/positive-change-in-communities/positive-change-in-communities.htm

Noe, R. A. 1988. An investigation of the determinants of successful assigned mentoring relationships. *Personnel Psychology*, 41(3): 457-479. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1988.tb00638.x

O'Neill *, D. K., Weiler, M., & Sha, L. (2005). Software support for online mentoring programs: a research-inspired design. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 13(1), 109–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611260500040617

Overgaard, C. (2019). Rethinking volunteering as a form of unpaid work. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *48*(1), 128-145. DOI: 10.1177/0899764018809419

Pajo, K., & Lee, L. (2011). Corporate-Sponsored Volunteering: A Work Design Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *99*(3), 467–482. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0665-0

Peloza, J. (2009). The Challenge of Measuring Financial Impacts From Investments in Corporate Social Performance. *Journal of Management*, *35*(6), 1518–1541. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309335188

Peterson, D.K. (2004a), "Benefits of participation in corporate volunteer programs: employees' perceptions", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 33 No. 6, pp. 615-627.

https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/00483480410561510

Peterson, D. K. (2004b). The Relationship between Perceptions of Corporate Citizenship and
Organizational Commitment. *Business & Society*, *43*(3), 296–319.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650304268065

Plewa, C., Conduit, J., Quester, P. G., & Johnson, C. (2015). The Impact of Corporate Volunteering on CSR
Image: A Consumer Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *127*(3), 643–659.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2066-2

Robertson, I.T. and Cooper, C.L. (2010), "Full engagement: the integration of employee
engagement and psychological well-being", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*,
Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 324-336. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437731011043348

Rodell, J. B. (2013). Finding meaning through volunteering: Why do employees volunteer and
what does it mean for their jobs?. *Academy of Management Journal*, *56*(5), 1274-1294.
https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2012.0611

Rodell, J. B., Booth, J. E., Lynch, J. W., & Zipay, K. P. (2017). Corporate volunteering climate:
Mobilizing employee passion for societal causes and inspiring future charitable action. *Academy
of Management Journal*, 60(5), 1662-1681. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0726

Rodell, J. B., Breitsohl, H., Schröder, M., & Keating, D. J. (2016). Employee volunteering: A
review and framework for future research. *Journal of management*, *42*(1), 55-84.
https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0149206315614374

Rodell, J. B., & Lynch, J. W. (2016). Perceptions of employee volunteering: Is it
"credited" or "stigmatized" by colleagues?. *Academy of Management Journal*, *59*(2),
611-635. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.0566

Russell, J. E., & Adams, D. M. (1997). The Changing Nature of Mentoring in Organizations: An

Introduction to the Special Issue on Mentoring in Organizations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 51(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1997.1602

Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2014). What Do We Really Know About Employee Engagement? *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *25*(2), 155–182. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21187

Sange, R., & Srivasatava, R. K. (2012). Employee Engagement and Mentoring: An Empirical Study of Sales Professionals. *Synergy (0973-8819)*, 10(1), 37–50.

Sarstedt, M., Bengart, P., Shaltoni, A. M., & Lehmann, S. (2018). The use of sampling methods in advertising research: A gap between theory and practice. *International Journal of Advertising*, *37*(4), 650-663. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348329

Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The Measurement of Work Engagement With a Short Questionnaire: A Cross-National Study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701–716. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164405282471

Schaufeli, W.B., Leiter, M.P. and Maslach, C. (2009), "Burnout: 35 years of research and practice", *Career Development International*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 204-220. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/13620430910966406

Schie, S. V., Guentert, S. T., & Wehner, T. (2011b). No corporate volunteering without volunteers. *International Journal of Business Environment*, *4*(2), 121. https://doi.org/10.1504/ijbe.2011.040170

Seele, P., & Lock, I. (2015). Instrumental and/or deliberative? A typology of CSR communication tools. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *131*(2), 401-414.

Sekar, S., & Dyaram, L. (2017). What drives employees to participate in corporate volunteering programs? *Social Responsibility Journal*, *13*(4), 661–677. https://doi.org/10.1108/srj-06-2017-0097

Shachar, I. Y., von Essen, J., & Hustinx, L. (2019). Opening up the "Black Box" of "Volunteering":

On hybridization and purification in volunteering research and promotion. Administrative

Theory & Praxis, 41(3), 245-265. Retrieved from:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10841806.2019.1621660

Sheel, R. C., & Vohra, N. (2016). Relationship between perceptions of corporate social

responsibility and organizational cynicism: the role of employee volunteering. *The International*

Journal of Human Resource Management, *27*(13), 1373-1392.

https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1072102

Slimmer, L. (2012). A teaching mentorship program to facilitate excellence in teaching and

learning. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *28*(3), 182-185.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2011.11.006

Stoeger, H., Duan, X., Schirner, S., Greindl, T., & Ziegler, A. (2013). The effectiveness of a one-year online

mentoring program for girls in STEM. *Computers & Education*, *69*, 408–418.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.07.032

Tsourvakas, G., & Yfantidou, I. (2018). Corporate social responsibility influences employee

engagement. *Social Responsibility Journal*, *14*(1), 123–137.

https://doi.org/10.1108/srj-09-2016-0153

Turker, D. (2009). How Corporate Social Responsibility Influences Organizational Commitment.

Journal of Business Ethics, *89*(2), 189–204.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9993-8

Valentine, S., & Fleischman, G. (2008). Ethics Programs, Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility and

Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *77*(2), 159–172. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-

006-9306-z

Van Schie, S., Guentert, S. T., & Wehner, T. (2011). No corporate volunteering without

volunteers.*International Journal of Business Environment*, 4(2), 121-132. Retrieved from:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Susan_Van_Schie/publication/264834766_No_corporate_volunteering_without_volunteers/links/55db0e2208ae9d6594922182/No-corporate-volunteering-without-volunteers.pdf

Wang, Z., & Sarkis, J. (2017). Corporate social responsibility governance, outcomes, and financial performance. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *162*, 1607–1616. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.06.142

Whitten, D. L. (2016). Mentoring and work engagement for female accounting, faculty members in higher education. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *24*(5), 365-382. https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13611267.2016.1275391

Zhang, Y., Qian, Y., Wu, J., Wen, F., & Zhang, Y. (2016). The effectiveness and implementation of mentoring program for newly graduated nurses: A systematic review. *Nurse Education Today*, *37*, 136–144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2015.11.027

Appendix A: Email for participants

help needed - qualitative interviews for thesis scholarship student Inbox ×

Laat, E.S. de (Emily) 20 Jan 2021, 11:34 (6 days ago)

to me

Dear NN Future Matters scholarship mentors,

Your help is needed! One of our Future Matters scholars, Maria Florou, is working on her thesis and wants to answer the question '*How does online mentoring in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility enable or constrain employee engagement within companies*'. She wishes to perform her research within our company, and wants to perform qualitative interviews with you, the Future Matters scholarship mentors!

What does Maria ask?

- 12-15 persons for an online qualitative interview about the mentoring experience within the scholarship programme
- Takes about 1 hour
- The interview needs to be recorded
- A consent form will be send to follow the guidelines of the university
- The interview responses will only be used for the purposes of the master thesis research and she will ensure that any information included in the report does not identify you as the respondent.

The input for these interviews are not only relevant for her, but of course also for our scholarship programme. This can be very useful to improve the programme in terms of mentoring or to use as proof that a programme like this one adds value on so many levels!

If you would like to participate in an interview with Maria, please let me know asap (first come, first serve basis). I will give your name and e-mail address to Maria and she will be in touch with you to plan the interview! If you have more questions about the thesis or the interview, you can also contact Maria directly (cc).

Best,

Q Search mail

17 of 299

- A consent form will be send to follow the guidelines of the university
- The interview responses will only be used for the purposes of the master thesis research and she will ensure that any information included in the report does not identify you as the respondent.

The input for these interviews are not only relevant for her, but of course also for our scholarship programme. This can be very useful to improve the programme in terms of mentoring or to use as proof that a programme like this one adds value on so many levels!

If you would like to participate in an interview with Maria, please let me know asap (first come, first serve basis). I will give your name and e-mail address to Maria and she will be in touch with you to plan the interview! If you have more questions about the thesis or the interview, you can also contact Maria directly (cc).

Best,

Emily de Laat
Programme Manager Future Matters – The Netherlands
Corporate Relations / Corporate Citizenship

NN Group N.V.

Appendix B: Interview guide

Interview Guide

Examining online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering as a practice of CSR and employee engagement – The case of NN Future Matters Scholarship

1) **Consent**
- Thanked the participants for their contribution to the research study.
- The participants are made aware of the purpose of the interview and are asked to give consent for the recording.

2) **Icebreaker and introduction**
- Are you working from home?
- Could you tell me about yourself and your role within the company you work for?
- How long have you been working in the company?

3) **Online mentorship**
- How many years are you a mentor? or it is the first time that you become a mentor?
- How did you decide to become a mentor?
- What are your motivations to become a mentor in relation to the personal level?
- What are your motivations to become a mentor in relation to the corporate level?
- How do you feel as a mentor?
- What are the advantages of online mentorship?
- What are the disadvantages of online mentorship?
- What are the differences from the past? (Physical mentorship vs online mentorship, if it is a first-time mentor, maybe he/she knows from other mentors their experiences
- To what extent does online mentorship play a role in your connection with the company? (examples/elaborate)
- To what extent does online mentorship play a role in your communication within the company?
- To what extent does online mentorship play a role in your pride within the company?
- Any specific experience you want to share with me in relation to online mentorship?

4) Online mentorship in the context of employee volunteering - Employee Perceptions concerning Employee volunteering

- What is your view on employee volunteering within companies?
- What is of high importance to you when it comes to participating in employee volunteering initiatives?
- What do you find important in your work or company and in choosing to engage with employee volunteering?
- What are the advantages of employee volunteering within companies?
- What are the disadvantages of employee volunteering within companies?
- What skills does employee volunteering bring?
- To what extent do employee volunteering initiatives connect you with the company?
- To what extent do employee volunteering initiatives play a role in your internal communication within the company?
- Do you participate in other initiatives in the context of employee volunteering?
- Are any particular experiences you want to share concerning employee volunteering? - Examples from other volunteering experiences within the company)

5) Employee volunteering as a practice of CSR

Companies used to link their CSR strategy with employee volunteering. Many highly regarded companies link employee volunteerism to their corporate social responsibility strategy.

- What is your opinion on your company's CSR initiatives?
- Can you share with me what your company is doing on CSR?
- What aspects do like or like less about it?
- Could you tell me what motivates you to participate in CSR initiatives?
- To what extend affect your connection?
- To what extend affect your company pride?
- To what extent do the CSR initiatives affect your involvement within the company?
- Any particular examples you want to share?

6) Employee engagement

- To what extent do you feel involved within the company?

- In which ways you are involved within the company? - Examples

- What is in the company that makes you feel this involvement?

- What is in the company that makes you want to be involved?

- To what extent do you feel part of your company?

- To what extent do you feel connected with your company?

- To what extent are you satisfied with your involvement within the company?

- What are the biggest challenges for you when it comes to employee engagement?

- Any changes that can be made to improve your involvement within the company?

- To what extent are you satisfied with the way your organization has managed the communication challenges?

7) Conclusion

Closing Questions

- Lastly, is there anything about the online mentorship experience that has not been discussed during the interview, but you would like to address?

- Is anything else that I did not ask, and you think is essential to be mentioned?

Thank you very much for your participation in my research study. If you have anything to ask you can contact me at any time. I wish you a good day.

Appendix C: Participant's information

#	Gender	Role at NN Group	Department	Number of years worked for NN Group	Number of years volunteering as a mentor
1	Male	Business Analyst	NN	4	1
2	Female	Senior Innovation Proposition Lead	NN	10	2
3	Male	Product Owner Managed and Controlled devices	NN	20	1
4	Male	Head Credit Portfolio Management Alternative Credit	NNIP	13	2
5	Male	Transformation Portfolio Manager	NN	4	3
6	Female	Head Operations at Corporate Relations	NN	7	1
7	Female	Graduate Recruiter	NN	1,5	1
8	Female	Investment Innovation Program Lead	NNIP	6	2
9	Male	Product Owner	NN	5	1
10	Female	Senior Legal Counsel	NN	10	1
11	Male	Investments Trainee	NNIP	2	1
12	Male	Finance Transformation Actuarial Analyst	NN	3,5	1
13	Male	Financial analyst	NNIP	2,5	2
14	Female	Management trainee	NNIP	2	1
15	Female	Actuary	ABN AMRO Insurance	4	1

Appendix D: Coding Tree

Engagement as employee wellness

      Happiness

      Psychological boost

      Joy

      Values

      High levels of energy

Engagement as employee dedication towards the company

      Commitment

      Connection with the company

      Proudness

      Good working conditions

      Loyalty

Engagement as learning and development at a personal and corporate level

      Skills of mentoring

      Networking

      New learnings from volunteering

      Capabilities

      Exposure to new experiences