

Recovery Experiences Bridge the Gap Between Volunteering and Work Outcomes

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Introduction

- Job-demands resources theory asserts that work depletes a person's resources and these resources are built back up through recovery experiences (Kinnunen & Feldt, 2013).
- Volunteering can facilitate the recovery experiences of mastery, psychological detachment, control, and relaxation (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Mojza et al., 2011).
- Research shows even demanding volunteer work in terms of mental, physical, and emotional demands can still serve as opportunities for recovery (Mojza et al., 2010).
- Volunteering has been shown to positively influence work outcomes such as organizational commitment and job-related skills (Peterson, 2004).
- This research uses recovery experiences to bridge the gap between volunteer activity and work-related outcomes

Hypothesis 1: Mental, physical, and emotional volunteer work demands will positively influence psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control

Hypothesis 2: Recovery experiences (psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control) will positively influence organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control will mediate the relationship between the volunteer work demands (mental, physical, and emotional) and the work-related attitudes (organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work engagement).

Method

Participants

Participants included 298 employed adults who also volunteer outside of work. A little over half the participants were female (56%) and had an average age of 36 years old ($SD = 10.50$). The number of hours volunteered each month ranged from one to 41 hours ($M = 10.09$, $SD = 8.70$).

Measures

- Volunteer Work Demands.** Adapted from Van Veldhoven & Meijman (1994)
- Recovery Experience Questionnaire.** Sonnentag & Fritz (2007)
- Organizational Commitment.** Meyer & Allen (1984)
- Job Satisfaction.** Adapted from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh (1983)
- Work Engagement.** Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker (2002)

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Mental	2.60	0.60	(.87)									
Emotional	2.05	0.65	.56**	(.85)								
Physical	1.74	0.71	.42**	.60**	(.93)							
PsyDetach	3.77	0.99	.10	-.02	-.12*	(.88)						
Relax	3.24	1.04	.11	.05	.07	.35**	(.89)					
Mastery	3.87	0.80	.40**	.25**	.01	.20**	.29**	(.81)				
Control	3.59	0.91	.18**	.13*	.04	.18**	.37**	.40**	(.82)			
OrgCom	3.46	0.97	.18**	.24**	.04	.11*	.26**	.24**	.24**	(.86)		
JobSat	3.83	0.96	.10	.09	.07	.07	.13*	.20**	.22**	.69**	(.94)	
WorkEng	4.66	1.19	.24**	.27**	.26**	.04	.17**	.26**	.31**	.73**	.75**	(.94)

Note. $N = 96$. Diagonal values are the internal consistency estimates for each scale. PsyDetach = psychological detachment; relax = relaxation; orgcom = organizational commitment; jobsat = job satisfaction; working = work engagement. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Volunteer Work Demands and Recovery

- Standardized estimates in Figure 1 show partial support for Hypothesis 1

Recovery and Work Outcomes

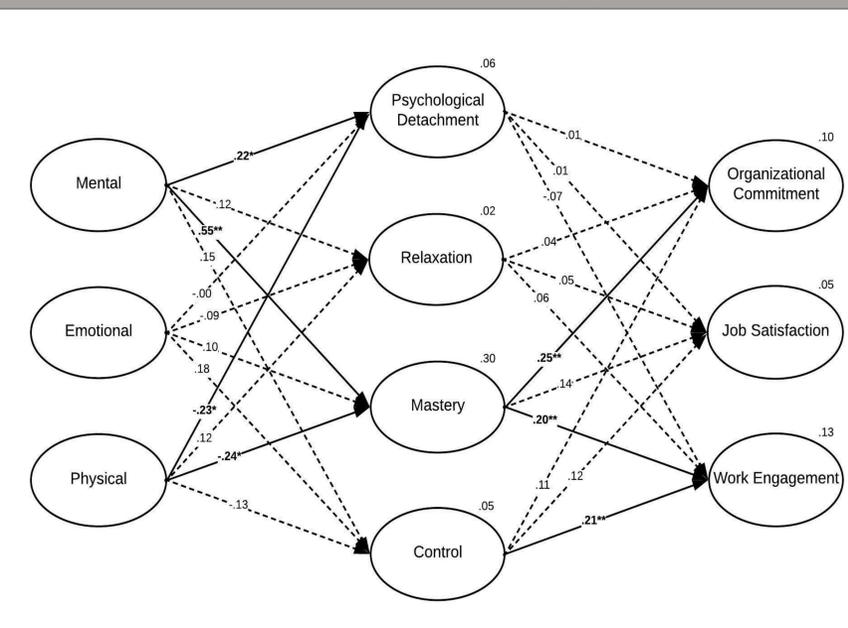
- Standardized estimates in Figure 1 show partial support for Hypothesis 2

Mediation and Full SEM Model

- Good global fit: $\chi^2 (1284, N = 286) = 2288.85$, $p < .001$, TLI = .90, CFI = .90, and RMSEA = .05
- Mediation model partially supported: organizational commitment ($Y = .266$, $p = .006$), job satisfaction ($Y = .169$, $p = .037$), and work engagement ($Y = .220$, $p = .015$)

Figure 1

Standardized estimates for the direct effects of the proposed structural model



Note. $N = 96$, R^2 displayed to top right of endogenous constructs. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

Summary of Results

- Mentally and physically demanding volunteer work has mixed influence on recovery experiences
- Demonstrated that recovery experiences outside the workplace influence organizational outcomes, specifically, mastery and control positively influence organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and engagement
- Initial support for proposed model of recovery experiences bridging the gap between volunteering and work outcomes

Theoretical Implications

- Expansion of job-demands resources theory in terms of supporting the idea that the mental demands of volunteer activity differ from those experienced during paid work
- Further, this demanding volunteer work can facilitate recovery which in turn positively influences workplace outcomes

Practical Implications

- Volunteer managers can take pride in the findings that even mentally demanding volunteer work can still provide recovery however, they should try to limit or combat the negative effects of physically demanding volunteer work.
- Organizations should encourage employees to volunteer as a way to actively replenish resources
- Organizations could take an active role by sponsoring a volunteer program

