



Evaluation of Industrial Sector Contributions to Socio-Economic Governance Using CSR Internalization Factor of Employee Volunteerism

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Abstract

Industrial sector development is the key driver of modern industrialization and in this paper, it has been shown that it can be optimized by the application of standard socio-economic governance principles. When this attribute is viewed alongside corporate policies on social responsibilities of an organization, then, its internalization factor could be used to reinvent or prioritize societal progress. The study focused on the evaluation of the measurable impact of employee or corporate volunteerism policies and practices on the industrial sector and the society at large. It found that corporate volunteering policies are made in response to changing societal expectations and aspirations. This means that employee volunteerism is a direct consequence of a corporate need for creating social stability for optimal economic benefits. Thus, the study finds that volunteerism comes at a cost on the organization and as such is directly dependent on the corporate decision of the organization and individual decision of the employee. In order to ascertain the impact of this effort on socio-economic governance, directional integrators, volunteering intensity and individualized persistence were used as assessment benchmarks which indicated that the success of the volunteering efforts is significantly dependent on an employee's personal efforts irrespective of his organization's policy. Further, findings indicate that volunteering is decision based and as such, the volunteer is at liberty to convert or expand his personal volunteer effort into corporate program by re-organizing the content of his efforts within the available resources and space.

Keyword: continuous work engagement, altruistic ideologies, selfish proclivity, industrial scale volunteering, directional integrators, volunteering intensity, volunteer engagement, active decision parameters

1. Introduction

Socio-economic governance deals with the direct deployment of cardinal socio-economic resources relevant to the promotion of workplace, to engender balanced distribution of equitable resources, public funding for social amenities, stimulating public private partnership, etc. Further, corporate governance connotes integrated efforts geared towards cardinal relationships between shareholders, stakeholders and other persons affected by a company's goods or services. Thus, economic and social objectives draw its relevance from the organization's impact on its community.

In view of the foregoing, the corporate interest of individuals and their organizations are likely to be subsumed under a governance structure that sustains host community values. Consequently, the goals of corporate governance that are incidental to socio-economic benefits as stated by the Africa Peer-Review Mechanism ^[1] is relevant in this regard and can be relatively viewed as follows:

- i) providing an enabling environment and effective regulatory framework for economic activities.
- ii) ensuring that corporations act as good corporate citizens with regards to human rights, social responsibility and environmental sustainability
- iii) promoting the adoption of codes of good business ethics in achieving the objectives of the organization
- iv) ensuring corporations treat all stakeholders (shareholders, employees, communities, suppliers and customers) in a fair and just manner.
- v) providing for accountability of corporations and directors.

In view of the foregoing, it has been further suggested that corporate social responsibility should be made a cardinal component of businesses on the basis that modern business success or survival is significantly dependent on its ability to respond to the expected dynamics of changing societal expectations and aspirations.^[2] It should be noted that this submission is further strengthened when viewed alongside the conceptual definition which highlights corporate social responsibility in the following view:

“Whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns on their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.”^[3]

The foregoing definition concerns accountability and transparency in voluntary ways that stimulates corporate responsibility and sustainability of anticipated outcomes^[4]. Consequently, CSR in respect of socio-economic governance implies *the optimization of the critical components of a business that enhances or ensures its profitability within the confines of law and ethical considerations*. These considerations must be supportive of sustainable business practices, whose profitability is on the basis of compliances with extant laws, administrative regulations and ethics. Additionally, socio-economic governance is interrelated to the idea of corporate citizenship within the context of the internalization factor of employee volunteer concept.

Consequently, measurable industrial sector contribution to socio-economic governance would take into account the multifaceted attributes of integrated corporate social responsibility which are determined by the nature of strategy deployed in the management of an organization, whose corporate ethics extends beyond the profit objectivity into multi-dimensional interests of stakeholders as exemplified by employee volunteering factor.^[5]

As has been observed, employee voluntarism is an industrial engagement program designed to stimulate individual employee's interest to partake in different CSR obligations of the company. Thus, while CSR is obligatory on the organization, the members of staff that are drafted to implement the program are required to do so voluntarily.^[6]

Further, as observed in Volunteering Australia 2006 as cited in [6], CSR programs are a:

“Way for staff to participate in the expression of the CSR values espoused by their employer giving them the opportunity to connect in a more meaningful way with these values”.^[7]

Thus, employee volunteerism depicts a series of socially beneficial actions undertaken by employees of an organization outside their employment terms of engagement. It should be further noted that employee volunteerism also implies an individual's resolve or determination to contribute his or her time and energy resource to activities that will enhance societal welfare without direct financial benefit or return to the employee or the organization that has engaged that employee.^[8]

In view of the foregoing, this paper is an attempt to measure the contribution of the practice of employee volunteerism in the industrial or production sector on the socio-economic governance benefits of any defined environment. This implies that the following parameters could be used as the basis for the evaluation of the input of industrial based corporate volunteerism services (another term for employee voluntarism).

2 Employee Voluntarism and Socio-economic Speculations

Under the culture of corporate governance employee voluntarism is crucial to the practice of CSR, especially as it concerns giving out corporate resources or using corporate investment proceeds to

support societal developments. As has been observed, giving out corporate resources is not in tandem with known economic models.^[9] Accordingly, Derecskel and Nagy [9] observed that the implication of this view enhances the fact that free giving of corporate resources is alien to sound economic principles on which goods and services are exchanged.

It should further be noted that employee volunteerism as a corporate policy is a function of *altruistic ideologies* which has been argued to portend some hidden selfish proclivity, notwithstanding the fact that employee volunteerism is founded on altruistic values of an organization, thus implying that not all volunteering efforts is altruistic in nature.^[10] Importantly, CSR embedded volunteerism programs of organizations could be seen to be motivated by profit and image making anticipations.^[11] This implies that volunteerism comes at a cost to the individual employee and his or her organization. Thus it is therefore the extent that an organization is willing to go in terms funding or application of other resources of the organization, towards helping others.

Additionally, Derecskel and Nagy have argued that in employee volunteering efforts in terms of *per capita* input, the value of accruable benefits must be compared with the actual cost of the volunteering effort. They further argued that this comparison adequately fixates the exercise within the boundaries of corporate levels of participation, where on a larger scale it should be treated as an institutionalized activity with capacity to result reduction in the cost of volunteering. In view of the foregoing it could be safely concluded that institutionalized based employee volunteering which in this paper is viewed as industrial scale volunteering is quit rewarding when deployed as an active CSR strategy.

Consequent on the foregoing, the impact of employee volunteerism on socio-economic conditions places it within ethical behaviors that are relevant to the advancement of an individual's long time interest in personal development.^[12] This means that in addition to accomplishing a corporate policy, the individual volunteer also has interest in personal development which could be promoted by involvement in the employee volunteering scheme. Further, it is imperative to mention that the interest of the operators of an organization drives their corporate needs^[13] and corporate needs drives volunteerism policies and expenditures. The resulting benefits from these permutations appear speculative, since there is no means of empirical measurement of the organization's benefits accruable from specific volunteer effort especially where some employees embark on volunteerism on the basis of acquiring more skills in furtherance of their experiences, professional standing and status. It also aides their suitability and preparedness for future work challenges.

It should be noted that where CSR strategy are not clearly detailed or defined, social norms and general expectations may become the axis for employee volunteerism.^[9] This clearly imply that, the fundamental motivation where clear CSR strategy in this regard is lacking is altruism which can be divided into three broad categories namely: (i) mutual altruism which deals with individual manger or corporate interest (ii) empathy altruism, which considers issues of willingness to help (iii) docile altruism which deals with general expectations of the public^[14]. Consequently, it was suggested in [14] that volunteerism is not CSR, but significantly, possess some components of it, especially, where it is viewed as corporate volunteerism,^[15] where participants consciously implement corporate socially endearing programs for their organizations.

Given the circumstances of the views expressed above, suffice to mention that corporate volunteerism portends a sense of profitability to the organization whose businesses interest are expected to soar after a well conducted corporate volunteerism exercise. This paper is therefore of the finding that employee volunteerism or corporate volunteerism is only a clandestine speculation for profit and image making for the organization. In view of this conclusion it is important to also stress that in addition to corporate

objective of the organization, individual employee also have their own self motivating factors that drive their interest to participate.

3. Highlights of Socio-economic Measuring Benchmarks

In an attempt to measure the impact of volunteerism on the socio-economic landscape of the industrial sector, it is important to state that several studies have adopted several models of measurement; including double prong anticipations to volunteer^[16] frequency of volunteering efforts^[17] and measure length of volunteering service^[18].

As could be observed, each of these indices for determination of the volunteering effort is connected to the research question and anticipated objective of the verifying study. Thus, the decision or anticipations of a volunteer program may portend operational cost effects, while measuring the improvements in skills. Thus, the employee volunteering effort could be benchmarked by the relevant frequency or length of the volunteering activity. Therefore, whichever way it is viewed, the identified yardsticks are significantly limited in themselves as to form the basis of any credible assessment.

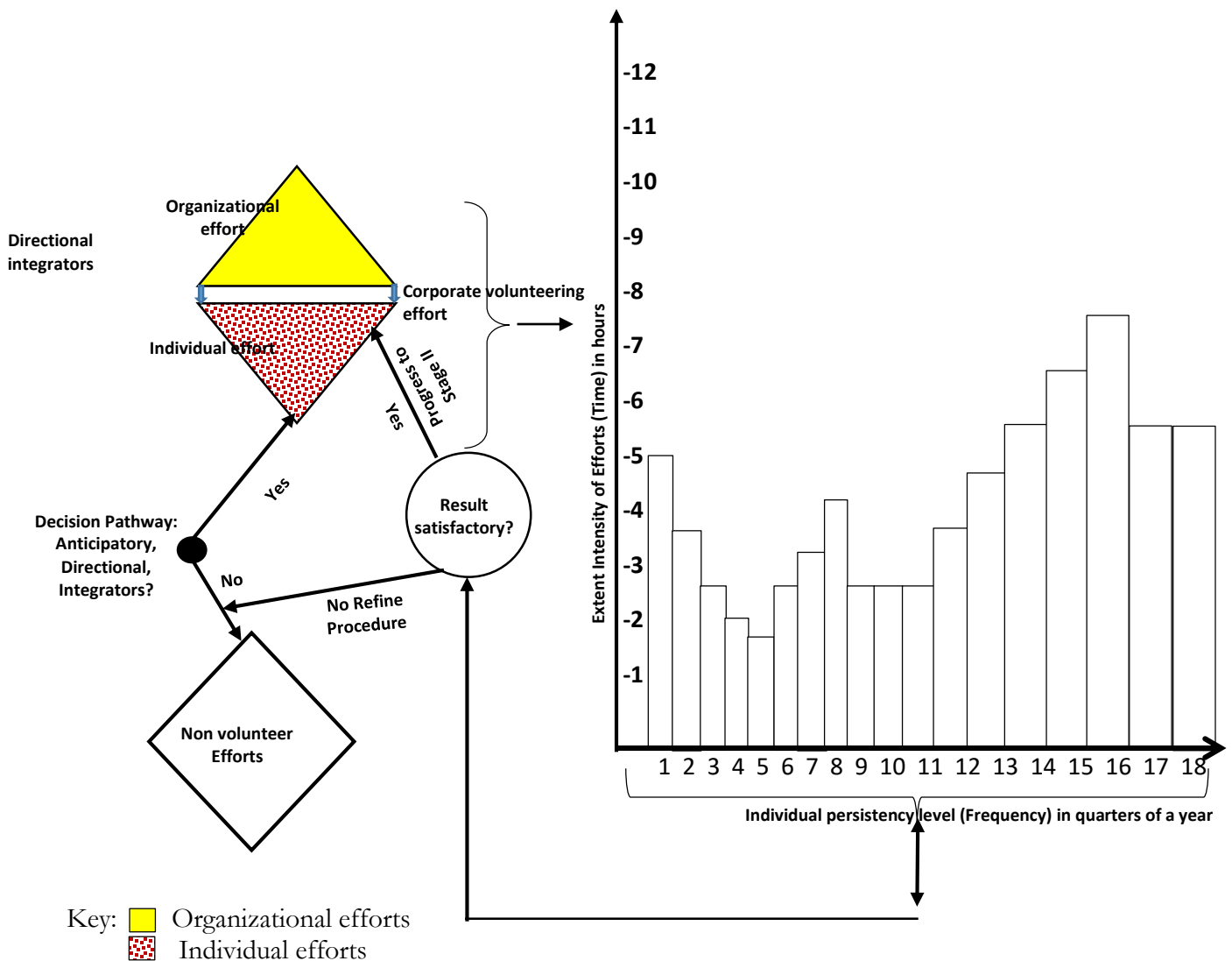


Figure 1: Decision Pathway Simulation of a Volunteer in a CSR Program

In view of the foregoing, the study shall adopt a more practical approach in the use of certain tested parameters incidental to work motivation ^[19] which significantly relies on a specialized framework for reaching targeted decision. ^[20] As a follow-up of this decision pathway analysis, Pinder [20] argued that certain parameters or measurement yardstick could be deployed to define (i) directional integrators (ii) volunteering intensity and (iii) individualized persistence. It should be noted that this framework is significantly dependent on an employee's personal efforts irrespective of his organization's policy. As in figure 1 above, employee volunteering efforts could be viewed as a means of service progression which draws inference from supporting personal and corporate resources.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that the decision to volunteer is crucial to any performance measuring yardstick. This imply that such decisions must be based on available information with respect to the nature of the service to be rendered, cost of the venture on the organization and expected benefits in terms of individual employee anticipations of experience acquisition and other incidental benefits.

Further, on the basis that intensity is measured in terms of hours committed to the effort within the week, and persistency deals with regularity or frequency, of the volunteer engagement; it could be safely said that within the four years and six months of the assessment of an individual volunteer effort in an organization, the graph of progression shows that the impact of decision to purchase goods or services from the volunteer's organization based on the volunteer's effort was lowest at the 1st quarter of the 2nd year. The reason for this low performance can be attributed to many variables. However, the 1st to 3rd quarter of the 3rd year witnessed a flattening of the curve indicating a consistency of result over a period of 9 months. The direct relevance of this result is the gradual rise of the impact of decision volunteer on the entire process which showed increasing rise for five consecutive quarters until a flattening drop in the last two quarters. This undoubtedly shows that the social and capital gains benefits accrual to the company is at the heart of the volunteer efforts of its employee; since it is a more effective way of determining the success or otherwise of the volunteerism program of the organization.

It should be noted that in terms of the identified parameters above, the study shall consider separately the link or supporting structure of the graph component of figure 1. In the section that follows, the relevance of figure 1 would be discussed alongside the active decision parameters.

3.1 Directional Integrators and Analyzers

As could be noticed in the graph, directional integrators are components of the volunteer programs that deals with an individual's considerations for decision making which is geared towards assuming volunteering responsibilities on a regular basis as opposed to the use of same time and resources for other well-meaning activities, such as gaming, sports, working, family get together etc. It also deals with the decision of more members of the public who, on the basis of the employee volunteering effort decide to purchase the goods or use the services of the volunteering employee's organization instead of any other competitor.

Thus, directional integrators also analyze results of comparative studies between employees that are willing to devote time and resources to volunteer activities and the employees that do not engage in such. In this model of performance assessment, it has been suggested that decision to volunteer should be treated as the foundation of the measurement effort ^[16] consequently, Peterson ^[21] used targeted recruitment methods to test the effectiveness of this model which requires responses whether individuals volunteered without finding out the reasons why they volunteered. Consequently, this model aggregates the decision of the employee without specifically considering reasons why they volunteered.

The relevance of the foregoing is that, when viewed from the perspective of figure 1 above, it shows that directional integrators bye-passes the means of decision making and analyzes the question as to

anticipatory basis for the decision and direction to volunteer. The implication of this situation is that if the responses is positive it progresses to the stage of effort analysis where the organizational and individual's efforts are placed alongside each other and evaluated on the basis of possible benefits accruable to the organization and the indirect benefits that can be received by the individual volunteer employee.

3.2 Volunteering Intensity and its Impacts

This model considers the extent or number of times an individual makes himself available for volunteer services or engagements over a period of time under consideration. It is important to note that the key focus of this model of assessment is to comprehend in detail the likely causes and incidental or related consequences of the size of employee willingness, readiness and availability for volunteer services. In support of this self-report in terms of personal time log in respect of individual volunteer efforts,^[21] the scope of volunteering activities,^[22] have also been used to discuss the impact or intensity of the volunteering effort; scale and size of volunteering activities have also been used by researchers such as Rodell^[23] to assess the intensity of volunteering. Pursuant to the foregoing, studies have faulted the use of time in terms of the number of hours that an effective volunteering effort can be self-reported^[24]; these studies have opined that such reporting by an individual as to his number of invested hours is unreliable as there is no empirical means of claim validation, such as measurement or assessment repetitions.

It is therefore the view of this study that if the employer or the organization has a corporate policy of activities logging on a daily basis of the time spent by the employee and same verified by a mechanism set by the employer and accepted by the employee; such mechanism would not only be a validating process but also a confidence building measure which can attest to the reliability of the data generated from such exercises. In this regard, intensity of the volunteering effort is an impactful measure which could be adopted in the evaluation of the effectiveness of employee CSR volunteering activities of an organization. Relatedly, this performance could be directly measured from the sales or service outputs of the organization within the period of the exercise.

Further, in order to reinforce the impacting force of volunteering intensity with respect to scale-based measurement conditions as canvassed by Brockner^[17] and Rodell^[23], their findings indicated that the validating issues encountered in time-based intensity measures are not likely to become issues owing to the fact that scale-based measures are conducted on the basis of generally agreed scaling parameters defined by a set of known and acceptable standards. Thus, measurement of this sort of evaluation are not susceptible to validating irregularities and results rejections. This is ably made clear in Figure 1 where the bar heights could be used to ascertain the trend and direction of events.

4 Individualized Persistence in Volunteerism

This assessment model relies on the extent of an individual's volunteering effort. Thus, it imply that the cardinal objective of this measurement strategy is the determination of the highest impact of volunteering on the individual employee and the organization that he works for, over a period of time.^[18] In this regard, longevity of volunteering efforts has been viewed as a crucial part of volunteering^[25] and within this context, scholars have argued that persistency may not be strictly attributed to the volunteering effort and as such should not be considered as a crucial factor of its definition since it can also be described as a discrete event or an episode in the chain of occurrences.

In the foregoing regard, individual persistency cannot be considered within the framework of continuous activity^[26] since it is not a regular salary based activity that could be described as *continuous work engagement*. In practical terms, persistence in volunteerism implies continued volunteering which

deals with an assessment of the accruable benefits to the employee volunteering programs, for organizations that volunteer. Consequently, volunteering efforts is a decision-based event in the sense that a volunteer is at liberty to convert his personal volunteer effort into a corporate volunteer program by simply re-prioritizing and re-orientating his objectives. In this regard the structural implication of figure 1 is that, it presents a means of pictorial measurement in proportional ratio of increasing or reducing direction, intensity and persistency. This means that research questions and issues for evaluation should form the basis of any active approach or procedure that should be adopted in the measurement of performance indices that should define the success or otherwise of any personal or corporate volunteering effort.

5 Assessment for Investment Expansion: The Challenges of Healthy Volunteerism

It is important to note that while volunteer efforts are relevant in the scheme of CSR, it is necessary that the result of these efforts are measured for purposes of investment or expansion of businesses or services. In this regard, healthy volunteerism enhances the ability of the individual employee to make projections with respect to the skills that are required to achieve the purpose. Thus, certain draw banks have been identified in various studies that has inhibited the progress of performance evaluation, with respect to individual and corporate volunteerism. ^[27]

In view of the foregoing, the following drawbacks were identified in the LGB Associates Study [27]:

- i. *Deficiency in skills knowledge and capacity:* - based on the study, corporate institutions were found not to possess manpower that has adequate capacity in terms of knowledge and skills in order to carry out effective assessment of the impact of employee volunteerism on industrial sector development. Thus, lack of relevant technical expertise is a major drawback to the gains of employee volunteerism in industrial concerns.
- ii. *Inadequate Assessment Methods:* - the study observed that corporate volunteerism is all about change. This implies that volunteerism must produce an impact on the social consciousness of the target audience. This anticipated gain of volunteerism is further disparaged by the fact that available methods of performance or result assessment are inadequate and as such cannot be reliably deployed as basis of evaluation of the impact of corporate volunteerism.
- iii. *Inclusive Multivariable Impact Determination:* - the presentation of LGB Associates Study indicates the complications arising from many attendant variables incidental to the assessment of the impact of corporate volunteerism on socio-economic conditions of societies under review. Further, it is also important to underscore the fact that results in terms of social changes accruable from volunteerism (in respect of its positive impacts) cannot be particular attributable, as to concretely make some inferences with respect to specific benefits resulting from the particular CSR in terms of volunteering or NGOs under the sponsorship of the companies.
- iv. *Unreliable Data and Communication Inefficiency:* The study findings supported other independent results when it found that a balance must be established between measured qualitative and quantitative data. This is to prevent the usual skewed results from unreliable data and hence, the necessity for data with qualified human metrics.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

It has been observed that societal expectations for corporate organizations is the bedrock of CSR initiatives, especially employee volunteerism policies of corporate institutions. This view is predicated

on the fact of the value impacting notion of volunteer work that portend enormous socio-economic value driven chain.^[28] Considerably, employee volunteerism has significant impact on socio-economic variables such that in Canada its contribution to GDP is far in excess of agriculture and vehicle manufacturing sectors.^[29] The implication of this finding is that:

- i. volunteering employees should be a sizable chunk of a nation's workforce.
- ii. the contribution of time and related resources far outweigh the contribution of money when it comes to socio-economic parameters for development.
- iii. the United Nations Statistics Division^[30] realizing the importance of volunteering urged nation states statistical agencies to incorporate data on volunteer outputs into general accounting for non-profit institutions (NPIs).
- iv. volunteering is both beneficial to the employee and his organization, it also delivers positive dividends to the society.
- v. volunteering promotes socio-economic inclusions and integration, thus creating a sense of individual contribution, satisfaction, fulfilment and general benefits of employee well-being.

Further, it should also be noted that since volunteer work is an integral part of informal work, its relevance is on a growing dimension thus requiring policy makers to review and prioritized. Consequently, employee volunteerism as an unpaid service can be distinguished within the framework of nonprofit institutions (NPIs) situated within production capacities of national economies.

In addition, employee volunteerism has been shown to be capable of producing tangible results whose assessment are in congruence with the ILO policy on decent work outputs which enhances human agency, responsibility, dignity and actualization of self-worth. Consequently, volunteer work contributes immensely to the realization of ILO objectives.

It should further be noted that what cannot be counted cannot also be effectively measured. This view is sustained by the understanding that Figure 1 is heavily dependent on the decision of the organization and its employees to volunteer, their time and resources. The implication of this view is that where there is lack of operational data, planning for volunteer work is extremely difficult. This lack of effectual data inhibits the ability to deploy crucial operational resources in effective manners.

Further, since employee volunteering is not a CSR, policy makers in organizations and nonprofit institutions need well anticipated information blueprints which will guild the volunteering efforts within the bounds of their scope of activities and budgets, while anticipating the indirect returns on such investments.

In view of the foregoing; the following are recommended:

- i. any effective measuring model must possess the element of comparability which deals with conceptual development of models or approach that could serve as the basis for comparative assessment with other equally effective models.
- ii. for the evaluation of any volunteer effort that could contribute to national socio-economic development, any proposed model of measurement must be consistent with the feasibility parameter. This implies that it must contain an expanded range of possibilities among users. This means that such model must be actively sensitive to demographic conditions, such as language, culture, region, and any other likely disparaging factor.
- iii. it is further recommended that for effective measurement of employee volunteer efforts, cost effectiveness of desired model is crucial. This means the model of assessment of the benefits of employee volunteerism must be cost effective, which feat could be achieved by reason of proper planning on the basis of proper resource distribution.

- iv. It is also recommended that validation means attributable to effective assessment of employee volunteering efforts must be significantly effective. This calls for strategic optimization of all available information on the basis of reduction of questions to very relevant aspects of the evaluation.
- v. Any effective measurement parameter must be reliable. This reliability issue bothers on the results of surveys that has adequate scope and material coverage. The population of the survey should be designed with trustworthy technical conditions that disclose some reasonable extent of reliability for the means of evaluation.

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