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*Personality, Job Resources, and Self-Efficacy  
as Predictors of Volunteer Engagement  
in Non-Governmental Organizations*

ABSTRACT

As volunteer engagement in non-governmental organizations vary between individuals, it is vital to get to know its predictors. It can be of profit to volunteers and the ones who profit from their activities. The aim of present study was to examine a model explaining volunteer engagement examining volunteer self-efficacy as a mediator and personality traits, job resources (skill variety and autonomy) as its predictors.

Respondents (N = 165) were asked to fill in questionnaires accessible on-line. Those consisted of demographic questions as well as Ten-item Personality Inventory (TIPI), and three measures adjusted to volunteer environment: Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), and Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

Results. Results of hierarchical regression analyses showed that conscientiousness, skill variety and self-efficacy are statistically significant predictors of volunteer engagement. It was shown that the effects of conscientiousness and skill variety on volunteer engagement are mediated by volunteer self-efficacy.

*KEYWORDS: engagement; personality traits; job resources; self-efficacy; volunteerism.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Understanding engagement in volunteerism is of prominent importance as more than 20% of people in Europe (European Parliament Special Eurobarometer 75.2, 2011) undertake voluntary work which usually answers to important social needs. Moreover, they do so without any economic reward, devoting their free time and, very often, financial resources. Thus, it is vital to research and reveal factors that are associated with volunteer engagement as this could help NGOs in retaining current and attracting new volunteers in organizations.

Since Psychological research on engagement in volunteer activity has started relatively recently (e.g., Bekkers, 2005; Vecina, Chacón, Sueiro, & Barrón, 2012) there is a need for more empirical evidence that could extend our knowledge and provide ground for evidence-based practice (Bakker, 2011) in NGOs. As every action takes place in a specific context, studies taking into account personal, along with contextual variables, are recommended when explaining behavior (Funder, 2006). Therefore, in this study, we aim at explaining further how engagement is related to personality traits, available organization's jobs resources, and self-efficacy beliefs. Research focusing on work engagement has previously been conducted in paid work settings (Bakker, 2011); however, it is slowly gaining more attention from other, non-work-related fields (Vecina et al., 2012). Understanding how personality and job resources explain volunteer engagement on the individual and organizational level may offer new insights and, as a result, provide further recommendations for NGOs best practices.

## VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Volunteering is a planned, prosocial, and long-term behavior that occurs mostly in NGOs (Penner, 2002). This type of activity is vital in meeting social needs as well as in contributing to the development of local communities and to the welfare of societies (Lewis, 2014). However, volunteering rates differ internationally ranging from 8% to 57% in various European countries (European Parliament Special Eurobarometer 75.2, 2011). In Poland, where this study was carried out, 9% of the population takes part in voluntary work (European Parliament Special Eurobarometer 75.2, 2011).

Given that volunteerism is a non-profit activity (Lewis, 2014), a question arises why individuals engage in it. There is some evidence showing that personal factors (Bekkers, 2005; Haivas, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013; Millette & Gagne, 2008) as well as organizational practices (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009) are related to engagement in volunteerism, however we are still far from fully understanding this phenomenon. When attempting to answer this question a concept of work engagement, which is widely used in studies on paid employees, may be applied here (Bakker, 2011). As employees and volunteers are quite often responsible for more or less the same tasks, this suggests that the work engagement concept fits also in this environment (Vecina et al., 2012).

Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007, p. 141) which consists of three components: vigor – a commitment to work hard, and one’s mental resilience; dedication – involvement and perceiving work as significant, inspirational, enthusiastic, challenging, and bringing a sense of pride; and absorption – a focus and complete engrossment in one’s work (Bakker, 2011; Łaguna, Mielniczuk, Żaliński, Wałachowska, 2015; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Engaged individuals are more likely to work harder and are

characterized by higher levels of a discretionary effort than those who are disengaged (Bakker, 2011). Work engagement is similar, however, the research findings show that it is distinct from related concepts such as flow (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) and workaholism (Gorgievski, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2010; Schaufeli, Martinez, Marques Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002). Research has confirmed the three-factor engagement model (vigor, dedication, absorption) as stable and also as applicable to domains other than work (Schaufeli et al., 2002); however, research applying it to other settings is scant.

The concept of work engagement may be also applied in explaining voluntary activities (Vecina et al., 2012). Volunteers' engagement is as desirable as it is in the case of employees, as both groups perform certain tasks, often similar, to which they devote their time and effort. Moreover, they present allied levels of commitment and duty-bound behaviors within the organization. The main difference between volunteers and employees is that volunteers receive no payment for their work; however, they still experience the same profits and setbacks in their everyday responsibilities that are present throughout companies operating for profit. The work engagement model was successfully applied in a very limited number of studies focusing on volunteers. Vecina and colleagues (2012) in two conducted studies supported the three-dimensional structure of the engagement in a volunteer sample. They showed that the higher the engagement was, the higher the volunteer satisfaction during the first stage of volunteer activity, and that satisfaction led to the intention to remain in the organization. Engagement was also positively associated with organizational commitment and, through this, with the intention to remain in the organization in a sample of former volunteers.

Taking previous research into consideration the work engagement model is considered as useful in analyzing engagement in NGOs, but requires further research. In particular, little is known about the antecedents of volunteer engagement. When explaining

human behavior, both personal and situational roots are important (Funder, 2006). In this study, we investigate the role of personality traits, job resources, and self-efficacy as predictors of volunteer engagement. The model explaining volunteer engagement including the mediating role of volunteers' self-efficacy as motivational variable (Bandura, 1997) is outlined and tested.

#### PERSONALITY TRAITS AND ENGAGEMENT

Personality traits are basic personal characteristics that might play a prominent role in engagement in volunteer activity. The traits included into the Big Five personality model: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism (as the opposite of emotional stability), and openness to experience (Goldberg, 1992; Gosling, Rentfrow & Swann, 2003) are frequently studied in paid work contexts (e.g., Kim, Shin, & Swanger, 2009; Laguna & Purc, 2016; Langelaan, Bakker, Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006). Despite this, to date, there is limited evidence on the relationships between engagement and each of the five personality traits. Kim and colleagues (2009) found, for example, that the most important predictors of engagement are conscientiousness and neuroticism (the latter being negatively correlated with it). Moreover, weak interrelations were found for extraversion as well as agreeableness. Other research findings show that engaged employees are characterized by low levels of neuroticism and high levels of extraversion (Langelaan et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Personality traits were also studied in relation to engagement in non-work activities and prosocial behavior. Conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience were positively interrelated with environmental engagement (Hirsh, 2010; Milfont & Sibley, 2012), and individuals who scored higher on openness to experience were found to be more willing to participate in nonpolitical associations and cultural organizations (Bekkers, 2005). Taking into consideration research on

paid work engagement and engagement in other activities that has been mentioned previously, we hypothesize that personality traits are related to engagement in volunteer activity. More specifically we expect that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience are positively related to volunteer engagement.

#### JOB RESOURCES AND ENGAGEMENT

Job resources are such work characteristics and assets that may result in reduction of physiological and psychological costs related to work activity and considerably influence job demands (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). As such, job resources are considered as potential situational cues of work engagement (Bakker, 2011). Employees who profit from high job resources experience low job demands, and the relationship between job resources and demands influences work engagement (Bakker et al., 2007). Moreover, job resources correlate positively with organizational commitment (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008), and they can start a motivational process that ends up in engagement and is enhanced by the influence of personal resources (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Thus, job resources predict the intensity of work engagement in employees (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007).

Two work design characteristics – autonomy and skill variety – are considered to be important job resources in achieving work goals (Mauno et al., 2007; Morgeson & Campion, 2003; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). They influence the reduction of job demands and stimulate personal development and growth (Mauno et al., 2007). Skill variety is defined as the extent to which an individual has to use a set of different skills in order to accomplish a variety of work tasks (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). By using various skills a person may become more engaged in a performed task.

Autonomy is understood as the extent to which a job allows an individual to be independent, decisive, free, and able to choose tools to accomplish tasks on *carte blanche* terms (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

To date, there is limited evidence on how job autonomy and skill variety affect work engagement, even in for-profit organizations. Previous research shows that skill variety has a considerable impact on work engagement (Kim et al., 2009). Moreover autonomy and work engagement have a positive lagged effect on each other and those relations were found to be mediated by employees' self-efficacy as well (Mauno et al., 2007). Based on those studies, we hypothesize that also in NGOs skill variety and autonomy are positively related to volunteer engagement.

#### SELF-EFFICACY AND ENGAGEMENT

A variety of converging evidence shows that self-efficacy beliefs have a prominent role in various human activities (Bandura, 1997, 2009). The concept of self-efficacy expresses the judgments people formulate about their own capacity to act in specific situations or to cope with specific tasks (Bandura, 1997). Considered as a motivational variable, self-efficacy has been found to have an influence on emotions, intentions, actions, and thought patterns (Bandura, 1997; Laguna, 2013). Work engagement is found to be related to a positive upward spiral with self-efficacy in employees (Bakker, 2011; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007) and in entrepreneurs (Laguna, Razmus, & Żaliński, 2017). Because of the availability of resources and high levels of self-efficacy, employees are often more engaged, motivated and, consequently, successful in their tasks.

Volunteer self-efficacy is defined as the ability or confidence to do volunteering activities in various situations (Wang, Wei, Harada, Minamoto, Ueda, Cui, Zhang, Cui, Ueda, 2010). It turned out to be related to volunteers' actions direction, their effort put in

performance, as well as how and for how long they will persevere in the face of an adversity (Wang et al., 2010). The stronger the volunteers' self-efficacy, the stronger is their intention to complete a behavior and to achieve goals. Taking into account these findings, we hypothesize that volunteer self-efficacy is positively related to volunteer engagement.

Previous studies permitted questioning about the relationships between personal characteristics, job characteristics, and volunteer engagement, considering volunteer self-efficacy as a mediator between personal and organizational characteristics and engagement. Self-efficacy is found to mediate a positive reciprocal relationship between autonomy and work engagement in employees (Mauno et al., 2007). It also coincides with job resources and contributes to work engagement levels (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). What is more, motivation is found to partially mediate the relations between extraversion, agreeableness, and volunteering (Carlo, Okun, Knight, & Guzman, 2005). Thus, we expect that volunteer self-efficacy mediates the relationships between personality traits and volunteer engagement as well as between job resources and volunteer engagement.

Summing up, we hypothesize that personality traits are related to engagement in volunteer activity. We also expect that skill variety and autonomy at work, as well as volunteer self-efficacy are positively related to volunteer engagement. Moreover, we expect that volunteer self-efficacy mediates the relationships between personality traits and volunteer engagement as well as between job resources and volunteer engagement.

## METHOD

### Participants and Procedure

Respondents taking part in this study were 171 NGOs' volunteers from Poland. Two of them, who dedicated less than 1 hour



per week to volunteer activity, were excluded from further analyses as well as four volunteers whose volunteer activity exceeded 70 hours per week. In the remaining sample of 165 volunteers working for various NGOs (mainly associations and foundations), 126 were females (76.4%), their age ranged from 17 to 44 years ( $M = 23.72$ ,  $SD = 4.63$ ). Most of them were university students (111; 67.3%), 34 (20.6%) were employed, and 20 (12.1%) were high school students. They had worked as volunteers for a period of between one month and 10 years ( $M = 23$  months,  $SD = 34.71$ ), devoting from 5 to 60 hours per week to volunteer activity ( $M = 16.7$ ,  $SD = 13.4$ ).

Respondents were contacted by the social networks of NGOs in different regions of Poland. They were asked to fill in a set of questionnaires accessible on-line. A link and password were passed forward using social forums and email. The informed consent from participants has been obtained and they agreed to take part in the study without any rewards. The confidentiality and anonymity of the data were ensured. The set of questionnaires were provided in the order in which they are described below.

### Measures

*Big Five personality traits* were measured using the Polish version (Łaguna, Bąk, Purc, Mielniczuk, Oleś, 2014) of the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, et al., 2003). This is a short ten-item measure highly suited for online surveys that contains two questions per each of the five personality dimensions to be answered on a five-point scale (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*). Total score for each dimension is an average of two items. Due to only two items for each construct the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is for TIPI scales is rather low: .62 for Extraversion, .36 for Agreeableness, .57 for Conscientiousness, .47 for Emotional stability, and .52 for Openness to experience .52 in this study. Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , however, is not good reliability indicator for such short measures (Gosling et al.,

2003). The scales show good test-retest stability from .76 to .83 (Łaguna et al., 2014).

Three other measures, described in detail below, were modified versions of widely used instruments. They were adjusted to measure constructs in relation to volunteer activity. More specifically, we rephrased the general versions of scales to match the specific context of volunteering. It was obtained by defining work more specifically using the phrase 'voluntary work' in scales' items (instead of 'work'). Similar modified versions of those measures were successfully validated in previous studies (e.g., Salanova, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2011; Vecina et al., 2012).

*Autonomy* and *skill variety* were measured with two modified scales from the Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ): autonomy and skill variety (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). These scales were adjusted to volunteer environment by using the phrase 'voluntary work' instead of 'work', e.g., "My voluntary work requires the use of a number of skills," "My voluntary work gives me an opportunity to make decisions on my own," and rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). There are four items relating to skill variety and nine to autonomy and total score for each dimension is an average of scale items. The reliability Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in this study for skill variety is .89 and for autonomy .92.

*Volunteer self-efficacy* was measured using the modified version of the General Self- Efficacy Scale (GSES; Luszczynska, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2005). The items were adapted by adding the phrase 'voluntary work', e.g., "Thanks to my resourcefulness, I can handle unforeseen situation in my voluntary work" (see similar modification: Laguna et al., 2017; Salanova et al., 2011). The scale consists of ten items answered on a 4-point scale (1 = *hardly true*; 4 = *exactly true*). Total score was calculated as an average of all items. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of this scale in this study is .90.

*Volunteer engagement* was measured using the modified version of the short Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). It measures work engagement and its three dimen-

sions: vigor, dedication and absorption and consists of 9 items (3 items per each dimension). They are rated on a 6-point scale (0 = *never*; 5 = *very often*). To adapt this measure, 'work' was defined more specifically as 'voluntary work' (similarly as in other studies; Vecina et al., 2012) i.e., "My voluntary work inspires me" (dedication); "I feel happy when I'm engrossed in my voluntary work" (absorption); "I am bursting with energy in my voluntary work" (vigor). Total score for volunteer engagement is an average of all 9 items. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of this scale in this study is .86.

### Data Analysis

To test the study hypotheses, multivariate hierarchical regression analysis was applied. Four subsequent models were tested. To control for basic demographic characteristics, in the first model (Model 1) age and sex were entered as the first set of predictors of volunteer engagement. In the next model (Model 2) five personality traits were added into the regression equation. Subsequently, in addition to those variables job resources: autonomy and skill variety were entered (Model 3). In the final model (Model 4) volunteer self-efficacy was included additionally to all variables present already in the regression equation. Such approach allows to include basic personal (demographics and personality traits) as well as situational predictors (job resources) when explaining volunteer engagement, as it is recommended by Funder (2006), and permits to assessed how many variance of the dependent variable they explain. Next, mediating role of volunteer self-efficacy was tested.

## RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations between study variables were presented in Table 1. All correlations between personality traits and volunteer engagement as well as between job resources

and volunteer engagement were positive and statistically significant what preliminarily confirm study hypotheses. Moreover, correlations between five personality traits and between personality traits and job resources were positive, however weak to moderate, and not all of them were statistically significant. This suggests that no multicollinearity problems exist and this was confirmed by the Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) test for all independent variables; VIF scores ranged from 1.096 to 1.703 (Mason & Perreault, 1991).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations between Study Variables ( $N = 165$ )

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	23.73	4.63										
2. Sex <sup>a</sup>	1.23	0.43	.23**									
3. Extraversion	5.09	1.40	.01	-.09								
4. Agreeableness	5.43	1.08	.02	-.16*	.15							
5. Conscientiousness	5.33	1.28	.00	-.18*	.23**	.34***						
6. Emotional stability	4.67	1.32	.08	.15*	.14	.21**	.14					
7. Openness to experience	5.84	1.10	.04	-.03	.49***	.25***	.32***	.16*				
8. Skill variety	4.08	0.86	.18*	.03	.31***	.09	.21**	.16*	.26***			
9. Autonomy	4.10	0.76	.04	.02	.16*	.23**	.36***	.24**	.34***	.53***		
10. Self-efficacy	3.22	0.43	.15*	.00	.36***	.16*	.37***	.25***	.45***	.40***	.43***	
11. Engagement	3.83	0.66	-.01	-.19*	.19*	.26***	.35***	.18*	.22**	.30***	.30***	.38***

Notes. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$  (two-tailed); <sup>a</sup> 1 = female, 2 = male

The result of multivariate hierarchical regression analysis showed that age was statistically significant predictor of volunteer engagement while sex was not (Table 2, Model 1). The younger

a person was the higher was his/her engagement in volunteerism. After entering five personality traits (Model 2) the percent of variance explained in the dependent variable increased from 3 to 15, however, only conscientiousness occurred a significant predictor of volunteer engagement. People higher in conscientiousness were more engaged in voluntary work. In this model also emotional stability was close to reach a level of statistical significance. Job resources, added to the next model (Model 3), significantly increased the variance explained to 19%, but only skill variety and conscientiousness reached the level of statistical significance while autonomy and other personality traits not. When volunteer

Table 2. Results of Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Volunteer Engagement ( $N = 165$ )

Variables in the model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age	-.20*	-.15 <sup>+</sup>	-.16*	-.15*
Sex	.04	.01	-.02	.04
Extraversion	-	.05	.01	-.02
Agreeableness	-	.11	.11	.12 <sup>+</sup>
Conscientiousness	-	.23**	.19*	.15 <sup>+</sup>
Emotional stability	-	.13 <sup>+</sup>	.10	.08
Openness to experience	-	.06	.03	-.02
Skill variety	-	-	.20 *	.17 <sup>+</sup>
Autonomy	-	-	.06	.02
Self-efficacy	-	-	-	.23**
Model fit				
$F$	3.26*	5.14***	5.17***	5.52***
Adjusted $R^2$	.03	.15	.19	.22
$\Delta R^2$	.04*	.15***	.04*	.03**

Notes. Standardized  $\beta$  regression coefficients are reported for each model; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; <sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$ .

self-efficacy was added to the model (Model 4) it turned out to be a significant predictor that accounts for additional 3% of explained variance in volunteer engagement<sup>1</sup>.

To test the hypotheses that volunteer self-efficacy served as mediator between personality traits and job resources on one hand and volunteer engagement on the other, a mediation analysis was performed using the PROCESS macro for simple mediation (Preacher, Hayes, 2004). This procedure estimates an indirect effect using a bootstrapping technique. Bias-corrected bootstrapping was conducted in the present analyses using 1000 repetitions. The relationships between one of personality traits: conscientiousness and volunteer engagement fulfilled all mediation criteria and was found to be significantly mediated by volunteer self-efficacy. In the analysis performed for conscientiousness the regression coefficient (controlled for age which was n. s.) decreased from .35 ( $p < .001$ ) to .30 ( $p < .001$ ); indirect effect = .31, and 95% confidence interval does not include zero which confirms the mediation effect. With regards to job resources, the mediation of volunteer self-efficacy occurred for the relationships between skill variety and volunteer engagement. The regression coefficient for skill variety (controlled for age which was n. s.) decreased from .31 ( $p < .001$ ) to .19, ( $p = .017$ ); indirect effect = .16 and 95% confidence interval does not include zero confirming the mediation effect.

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<sup>1</sup> In an additional analysis, interactions between personality traits and job resources were entered as predictors; none of them turned out to be statistically significant. Further regression analyses carried out explaining each of three dimensions of volunteer engagement show that conscientiousness and emotional stability were statistically significant predictors of vigor, while agreeableness and conscientiousness were significant predictors of dedication to volunteer activity, and none of the variables reach statistical significance level explaining absorption.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide new insight into the role of personality traits and of NGOs' organizational resources in explaining engagement into volunteer activity. They also verified the model explaining volunteer engagement by a mediating role of volunteer self-efficacy. The findings concerning personality traits support some of the previous research results revealing conscientiousness to be related to environmental engagement (Hirsh, 2010; Milfont & Sibley, 2012) and to work engagement in employees (Bakker, Demerouti, & Brummelhuis, 2012). Our findings add new evidence showing that people higher in conscientiousness are also more convinced that they are able to perform voluntary work successfully (i.e., are higher in volunteer self-efficacy) and are more engaged in it. In previous studies neuroticism was found to be negatively while agreeableness positively interrelated with engagement (Milfont & Sibley, 2012; Strobel, Tumasjan, & Sporle, 2011). This is in line with the findings of the present study, showing a positive, however weak, relation between emotional stability as well as agreeableness and volunteer engagement. Our results, however, do not confirm the role of extraversion and openness to experience, even if they are important for environmental engagement (Milfont & Sibley, 2012).

The present study findings revealed that job resources add small but significant proportion of variance explained in volunteer engagement. Skill variety and autonomy are considered as resources that may be influenced by companies to a certain extent, and in other studies they were found to be important for work engagement in employees (Bakker et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2009; Mauno et al., 2007). Our results have confirmed the role of skill variety for volunteer engagement; however autonomy occurred less important for this activity. Perceiving NGOs as offering a possibility to utilize different skills and dealing with variety of tasks in voluntary work is positively related to volunteer self-efficacy

and to engagement in this work. This suggests that by using different skills people develop their sense of competence (Bandura, 1997) and thanks to that they are more dedicated to their voluntary activities and fulfill them more vigorously. This new insight from present study offers some practical recommendations for NGOs concerning their work design strategies.

Volunteer self-efficacy confirmed its prominent role for volunteer engagement. This result goes in line with those from other studies concerning paid work settings (Laguna et al., 2017; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Our findings confirmed the prominent role of self-efficacy in volunteering, that was suggested by other study findings as well (Wang et al., 2010). Self-efficacy is considered to be one of the personal resources that help people to impact upon and successfully control their working environment (Bandura, 2009). In this way it may also increase the engagement in volunteering.

#### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

There are some limitations related to the sample, as more women than men took part in the study and this limits the extrapolation of findings. The proportion between men and women, however, is similar to that in the population of volunteers in Poland, where the study was carried out – women constitute around 60% of volunteers (Przewłocka, Adamiak, Herbst, 2013).

Another limitation is the use of brief measures of personality traits. They are especially useful in on-line surveys (Gosling et al., 2003), however they are less reliable than longer measures and may undermine the role of personality traits (Credé, Harms, Niehorster, & Gaye-Valentine, 2012). Also, common method bias should be considered more in depth in future studies. Nonetheless, further studies are needed to investigate the role of personality traits in relation to volunteer activity more extensively. To our



knowledge, this study is the first effort and our findings await cross-validation, including cross-cultural replication.

The present study applied cross-sectional design. Therefore, mediating mechanisms revealed here should be further tested using longitudinal study designs. We recommend this for future studies to allow drawing causal conclusions. Moreover, it is vital to continue the research with the use of the volunteer engagement model (Vecina et al., 2012) as the extension of the work engagement model (Bakker, 2011). Our research brings new evidence that it is fruitful also in contexts other than paid work.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

NGOs are considered to be vehicles that might bring progressive and important changes to societies (Lewis, 2014). Thus, volunteer engagement is of prominent importance not only for those ones who profit from their activities. Being engaged and satisfied seems to be especially important for volunteers as performing activities that they choose by themselves. Organizations should consider raising their attractiveness and their possibility of bringing the right kind of candidates, in particular, those ones with high level of conscientiousness. The focus should be put on showing opportunities from which a person may benefit the most as a volunteer (Przewłocka et al., 2013).

What is important, NGOs may redesign work environment to make sure volunteers are able to utilize various skills and this way develop their competences. Variety of tasks and skills used during voluntary activities instead of putting a strict focus on a specific specialization seems to be a good strategy, which may maintain engagement of volunteers. Furthermore, engagement can be increased by providing opportunities for volunteer self-efficacy development. It may be valid also for volunteers with certain competencies and expertise as NGOs offer possibilities for their

further growth. By adjusting volunteer projects and the working environment to their interests and skills, by providing trainings, mentoring programs, positive feedback and supervision, organizations can raise their volunteers' efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). This, in turn, may result in an increase in volunteer engagement.

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