Promoting Civic Participation among Mandatory Volunteers: The Roles of Organizational Climate Factors, Attitudes, and Self-Efficacy toward Service

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INTRODUCTION

• Post-secondary institutions in North America and beyond have established community service programs that encourage or require students to engage in community service (Meyer, Neumayr, & Rameder, 2019).

• Although this community service is not totally voluntary, their mandatory service can lead to future intention to engage in volunteering and other forms of civic action.

• According to social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), if an individual believes that he or she is rewarded for a behavior, then the individual should feel satisfied and will repeat the behavior.

• Future civic engagement is based on the feelings of self-fulfillment through their volunteering experience (Barber, Mueller, & Ogata, 2013).

• If students find prosocial values in their contribution rather than merely fulfilling the required volunteer task, their mandatory service may lead to future volunteer intentions (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999).

• Despite extensive research on volunteer motivations and their influences on various outcome variables, there remains a paucity of studies assessing organizational climate that improves mandatory volunteers' job satisfaction and develops a sense of civic responsibility.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of perceived organizational support (POS) and role clarity on volunteer satisfaction, the mediating role of attitudes toward volunteering in the relationship between volunteer satisfaction and attitudes toward civic participation, and the moderating role of self-efficacy toward service in the relationships between POS, role clarity, and volunteer satisfaction among mandatory volunteers.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

• 468 college students (75.6% females; 24.4% males) from a medium-sized university in China, who volunteered for the 7th CISM Military World Games in Wuhan, China, were invited to participate in an online survey after the event.

Instrument

• *POS*: a 3-item shorter version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986)
• *Role Clarity*: a 4-item scale of role ambiguity, based on Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman's (1970) study
• *Self-Efficacy Toward Service*: The self-efficacy toward service scale (5 items), developed and validated by Weber et al. (2004)
• *Volunteer Satisfaction*: Satisfaction with volunteering (4 items) was measured, asking respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction with their volunteer activities and responsibilities at the event
• *Attitudes Toward Volunteering*: Attitudes toward volunteering were measured, adopting 3 items from the Theory of Planned Behavior Questionnaire (Ajzen, 1991)
• *Attitudes Toward Civic Participation*: The civic participation scale (6 items) was used to measure individuals' attitudes towards civic participation (Weber et al., 2004)
• All responses ranged from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*, using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

RESULTS

• Internal consistency reliability was established as the values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were higher than the recommended value of .70 (Hair et al., 2017).

• The results of structural equation modeling showed that POS (β = .22; $p < 0.001$) and role clarity (β = .61; $p < 0.001$) predicted volunteer satisfaction (see Figure 1).
• Volunteer satisfaction positively influenced attitudes toward volunteering (β = .80; $p < 0.001$), which linked to attitudes toward civic participation (β = .37; $p < 0.001$, see Figure 1).
• Self-efficacy toward service moderated the associations between POS and volunteer satisfaction (β = .13, t = 3.68, $p < .001$) and between role clarity and volunteer satisfaction (β = .09, t = 2.60, p = .010, see Figure 2 & 3)
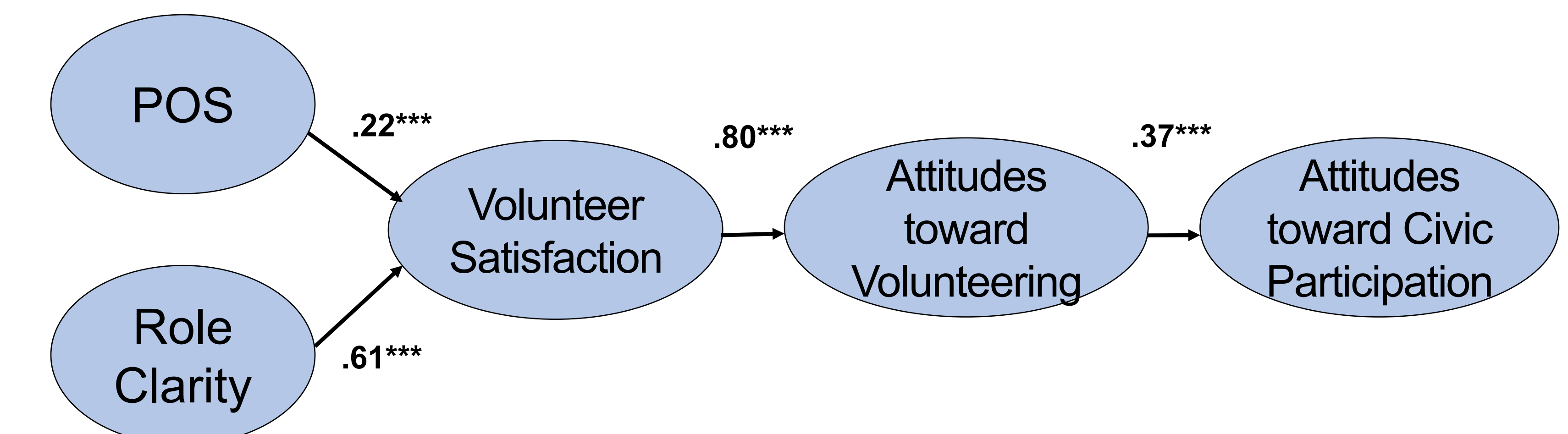
RESULTS (cont.)

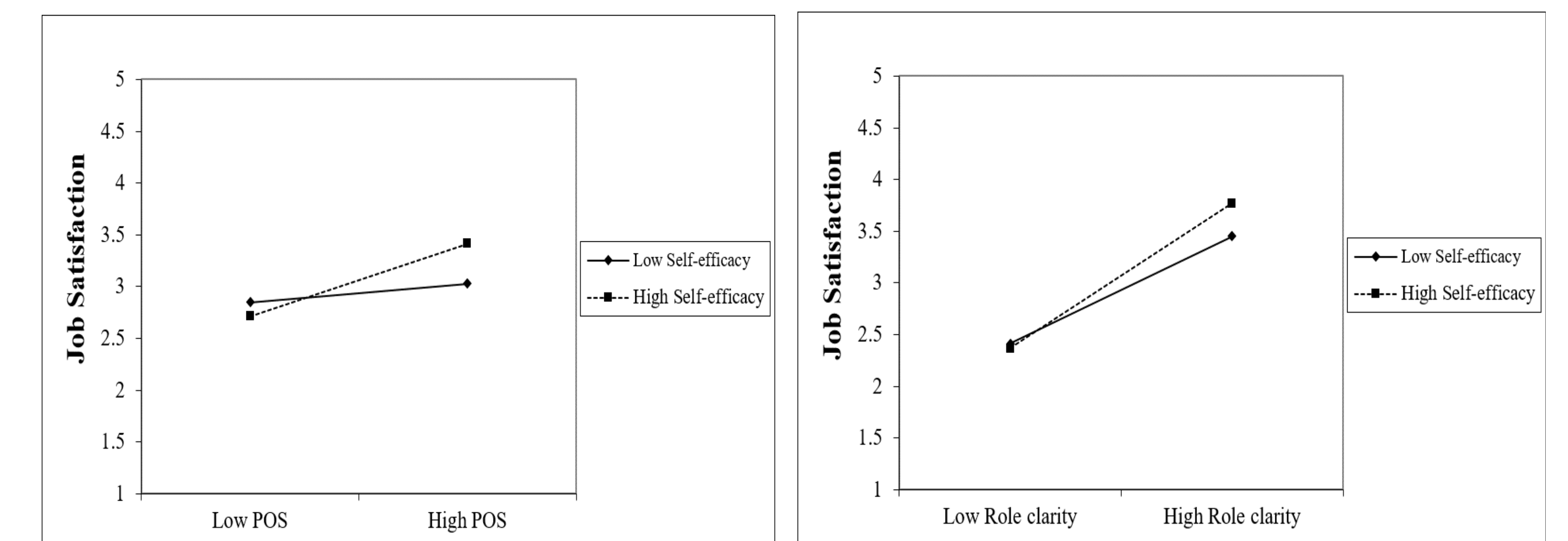

Figure 1. Structural model
Note. ***$p < .001$

Figure 2. The interaction effect of POS and self-efficacy on volunteer satisfaction.

Figure 3. The interaction effect of self-efficacy and role clarity on volunteer satisfaction.

Note. Volunteer satisfaction is an unstandardized predicted value.

DISCUSSION

• The findings indicate that if mandatory volunteers believe that their organization values and appreciates their contribution, they will find a sense of purpose and fulfillment from their volunteer experience, which can alter their desire for future civic participation.
• This study highlights the essential role of self-efficacy toward service in strengthening the effects of organizational climate factors on volunteer satisfaction.
• POS and role clarity might be beneficial for mandatory volunteers to increase their self-efficacy and volunteer satisfaction.
• These findings extend our knowledge of mandatory volunteering about how to enhance volunteering attitudes to increase the likelihood that mandatory volunteers will return to the organization or continue to participate in civic activities.