Motivations for Volunteerism: Implications for Engagement and Recruitment

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As demographics and volunteering interests evolve in the United States, nonprofit organizations are refining their engagement and recruitment strategies. This pilot study is uses a mixed method approach to uncover intrinsic motivators for volunteerism, asking 1) what are the primary motivations for individuals to volunteer?; and 2) what can be learned from these motivation factors to help an organization more effectively and efficiently engage and recruit new volunteers? This study suggests three motivations for volunteerism: personal gain, commitment to cause, and education. Considering these motivation factors may help nonprofit organizations provide new ways of engaging and recruiting volunteers.

Keywords: nonprofit, not-for-profit, volunteer, volunteer engagement, volunteer recruitment

INTRODUCTION

The term volunteerism is defined, in this research, as work that consists of "freely chosen and deliberate helping activities that extend over time, are engaged in without expectation of reward or other compensation and often through formal organizations" (Wilson, 2012, p. 177). Volunteerism can be interpreted broadly such as, and not limited to, serving on the board of directors for a nonprofit organization, as a direct participant on service projects which have been formally organized, serving on a local commission, or as an unpaid contributor at a school or faith-based institution. The highest rates of volunteer activity in the United States are focused on either providing access to food or fundraising for a cause (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2019).

Though there is a plethora of research available on motivations for volunteerism, altruism, largely understood as a desire to care for others, is a notoriously difficult concept to operationalize. For example, although an individual might have altruistic qualities, they might not know how or where to engage in volunteer activities. Indeed, and for a person who has never volunteered, 'not being asked' is one reason why they have not yet engaged in volunteer work (Willems & Dury, 2017). This may make it difficult for some nonprofit organizations to determine new ways to more effectively engage and recruit volunteers; i.e. how to create an *ideal* target message for potential volunteers, so that the organization can, in turn, provide motivation for them to engage with, and serve, their organization.

This pilot study is exploratory in nature, using a mixed method approach to identify the primary motivations for volunteerism, and aims to discover information that may be useful to nonprofit organizations when trying to recruit new volunteers. This study provides an initial examination of overall motivation for volunteerism in order to provide a guidepost for scale construction and further research.

Researchers asked two related questions: 1) what are the primary motivations for individuals to volunteer?; and 2) what can be learned from these motivation factors to help an organization more effectively and efficiently engage and recruit new volunteers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Volunteerism in the United States

Volunteerism has a long history in the United States, gaining prominence in the 1700s and 1800s, when activities were often coordinated via churches or citizen groups to increase the number of charitable services available to the community (Hall, as cited in Renz & Herman, 2016). Tax policies created in the middle 1900s helped spur growth of the modern-day nonprofit sector, moving from "12,500 charitable tax-exempt organizations... along with 179,742 religious congregations" in 1940, to "more than 600,000 charitables [and] 400,000 religious congregations" by 2006 (Hall, as cited in Renz & Herman, 2016, p. 19).

In the 2018 *Volunteering in America* report by the Corporation for National and Community Service, it was found that approximately "77.34 million adults (30.3%) volunteered through an organization last year," generating $167 billion in economic value nationally (2019). Some states have higher rates of volunteerism, with Utah ranking first at 50.97%, and Minnesota ranking second at 45.12% (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2019). With an impact of this scale, the recruitment strategies of nonprofit organizations need to adapt to both the changing needs of the volunteers and to effectively respond to the way potential volunteers anticipate that volunteering will benefit them.

Volunteerism commonly involves unpaid work for a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. These types of organizations accept charitable contributions and have a legal structure with specific requirements for the state to which they are located, as well as to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The largest organization type is Human Services (33.9%), followed by Education (17.3%), Health (11.8%), Public and Societal Benefit (11.3%), Arts, Culture, and Humanities (10.7%), Religion (7.5%), Environment (4.8%), and International (2.3%) (Never, as cited in Renz & Herman, 2016, p. 85).

Table 1 shows categories of volunteerism and percentages of people nationally who volunteered for that activity in the year ending 2017, the last year for which these data are available (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2019).

TABLE 1
VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESPECTIVE PERCENTAGES

Volunteer Activities – National	Percentage
Fundraise or sell items to raise money	36
Collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food	34
Collect, make or distribute clothing, crafts, goods	27
Mentor youth	26
Tutor or teach	23
Engage in general labor, supply transportation	23
Professional or management assistance including a board or committee	21
Usher, greeter, or minister	16
Engage in music, performance, or other artistic	14
Coach, referee, or supervise sports teams	12
Provide general office services	11
Provide counseling, medical care, fire/EMS	10
Other types of volunteer activity	8
Source: Corporation for National and Community Service, 2019	

The Bureau of Labor Statistics collects volunteer data for demographics such as gender, age, family status, and education (2016a). In the last data available from 2015, volunteer rates for women were at 27.8%, while volunteer rates for men were at 21.8%. The highest percentages of volunteers came from the age groups of 35 to 44-years old (28.9%) and from the age group of 45 to 54-years old (28%). Married people tended to volunteer more than people who have never married (29.9% versus 19.9%, respectively). People with children under 18 tended to volunteer more than people without children under age 18 (31.3% versus 22.6%, respectively). Finally, college graduates tended to volunteer more than those with a high school diploma (38.8% versus 15.6% respectively) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016a). While this provides a snapshot of the 'who' is volunteering, it is also important to understand the 'why.'

Motivations for Volunteerism

Organizational recruitment strategies often appeal to an individuals' motivation of 'doing good for others and/or the community.' This is frequently identified in the literature as altruism (Aguirre & Bolton, 2013). Research indicates that if an individual is volunteering based on altruism, they are more likely to stay committed to the organization, work more shifts, and care more passionately about the work (Shantz, Saksida, & Alfes, 2014). Data suggest that altruism and personal motivation drive volunteerism in larger numbers. For example, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics note that 41.6% of volunteers approached the organization themselves in an attempt to volunteer (2016b). For this same period, volunteers were approached by someone in the organization (23.7%), by a relative, friend or co-worker (14.5%), by a boss or employer (1.5%), by someone else (1.4%), or by another means entirely (13.4%) (2016b).

Clary et al. theorized and tested the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) which identifies six motivations for individuals who engage in volunteer activities. The six motivations are: a) protection from life's difficulties or a means to escape life's difficulties, b) manifestation of values, or altruism, c) career enhancement, d) develop social relationships and ties, e) personal development of skills, and f) feeling better about oneself (Clary et al., 1998). In research since VFI was introduced, the two areas that continue to rise to the top on individual ranking is altruism and improving one's skills (Chacón, Gutiérrez, Sauto, Vecina, & Pérez, 2017). Thus, there is a connection between the level of altruism an individual may feel, and the likelihood they will engage in a volunteer activity.

Since 1998, many researchers have used VFI to confirm whether those factors highly correlated with volunteerism remain consistent throughout various countries, organizations, and causes (Chacón, et. al, 2017; Erasmus & Morey, 2016; Pearl & Christensen, 2017). Since its development, the VFI has been revalidated several times, each providing further evidence that the reasons people take part in volunteer activities has remained relatively constant over the past two decades. Though VFI helps explain why someone volunteers on the onset, research suggests that it is difficult to "attempt to operationalize what altruistic behavior might be" (Wolfe, 1998, p. 279). As noted previously, although an individual might have altruistic qualities, the simple problem of 'not being asked' is one reason why they may not have yet engaged in volunteer work (Willems & Dury, 2017).

It is valuable to understand how best to utilize the human desire for altruism in order to help connect them to the causes, organizations, and volunteer opportunities that they will find most meaningful. Recruiting and engaging these potential volunteers is of increasing importance as volunteerism rates have fluctuated in recent years, from 28.8% of people volunteering in 2005, to 24.9% volunteering in 2015, to 30.3% volunteering in 2017 (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019a; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016a; Corporation for National and Community Service, 2019).

Forbes & Zampelli (2014) found that people with "greater diversity in networking, more informal social networking, and more formal group involvement" were more likely to engage in volunteerism, as well as those who were "more religious," had post-secondary education, and that women volunteered more often than men (p. 238-239). This information is valuable to the nonprofit sector, and it is worthwhile to continue exploring these conversations from the lens of how best to engage and recruit new volunteers and to build on previous research.

Finally, research indicates that recruitment motivations are different than retention motivations due to the initial attraction to volunteer with an organization and the experience of participation in certain

activities (Haivas, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013). It is worth mentioning that this research study does not *directly* address retention, though it is expected become part of a larger study as this pilot is expanded via future research.

METHODS

The pilot research performed in this study used a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design. Themes developed via the qualitative portion of research (part 1) were used to inform the development of a quantitative survey instrument (part 2) that captured information useful to answering the two research questions, 1) what are the primary motivations for individuals to volunteer?; and 2) what can be learned from these motivation factors to help an organization more effectively and efficiently engage and recruit new volunteers?

Part 1: Qualitative Research

Researchers conducted five interviews with people in their personal networks, targeting interviewees who encompassed a range of volunteerism backgrounds. The goal was to leverage a maximum variation sampling method in order to offer more generalizability overall (Schatz, 2015). While limited in scope, these interviews provided researchers with important information from participants to understand, in depth, why they volunteered, allowing researchers to capture key information on motivations.

Researchers selected one volunteer who had been on a board of directors for a nonprofit; one who had served on a volunteer commission; two people who had done a great deal of faith-based volunteerism; and one who regularly participated in work-related volunteerism. Researchers gave a consent form to each potential interviewee which explained the protection of human research participants as well as the researchers' commitment to the protection of confidentiality. The research study and associated consent form were approved by the researchers' university Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Data were collected via semi-structured qualitative interviews. Interviews were conducted in-person, at a place of the interviewees' choice including their homes or workplaces. A structured set of interview questions were developed prior to the first interview. The first questions were descriptor questions and included asking about the following individual characteristics or identities: gender, age, marital status, political engagement, level of education, employment status and family status.

Interview questions were initially structured, and after each interview, data were analyzed in order to adjust subsequent interviews, leveraging a semi-structured approach to the questions. In this case, researchers reformulated questions to gain more insight into the heart of interviewees' motivations for volunteerism. Researchers recorded each interview in its entirety and then transcribed interviews into Microsoft Word. Researchers removed any residual confidential information from the transcript before sharing their interview transcripts with one another. The transcribed interviews were then uploaded to a qualitative data analysis software.

Web-based software allowed for free-form coding. Researchers were able to "select any portion of a text for coding, whether paragraphed or not, even allowing for selection of overlapping sections to receive different codes" (Krathwohl, 2009, p. 318). During the initial coding process, researchers identified 342 excerpts suitable for coding, with text excerpts (phrases) categorized into a total of 27 unique codes. The most saturated codes were: a) networking for personal or professional reasons, b) volunteering for faith-based reasons, c) volunteering to influence social or organizational change, d) volunteering for the purpose of learning, e) using a volunteer's personal or professional expertise to teach others, and f) volunteering for the personal benefit of feeling good about helping others.

Internal consistency reliability (ICR) was tested. ICR involves the process of ensuring that a code is representative of one, and only one, category (Krathwohl, 2009). To help ensure this, researchers reviewed all initial 27 codes to ensure mutually exclusivity among codes. During this process, the researchers categorized some first order codes into axial and then selective codes, which will be discussed in the results section of this paper.

The second measure of reliability tested was inter-rater reliability (IRR), meaning the "extent to which raters judge phenomena in the same way" (Vogt, 1999, p. 143). Testing within the qualitative data analysis software allowed for the creation of two tests of IRR. Each test was 12 questions long, with a total of six unique codes tested against the original coded text. Researchers demonstrated a Pooled Cohen's Kappa of 0.74 and 0.49. This result is well within Cohen's threshold of 0.41 for inter-rater reliability within qualitative analysis (McHugh, 2012).

Finally, construct validity was tested, to provide evidence that data reflect a true and accurate depiction of what participants intended to express (Lavrakas, 2008). In order to assure construct validity, researchers specifically included questions that would aid in the discovery of *motivations* for volunteerism, rather than relying on anecdotal evidence. This was particularly useful in the context of using qualitative research (the selective codes) to develop meaningful survey questions for the quantitative portion of research.

Part 2: Quantitative Survey

In part 2, a quantitative survey was developed based on the information gained in part 1 (the qualitative research). The qualitative portion of the mixed-methods study concluded with the construct Motivation for Volunteerism (see results section) containing three dimensions identified as themes in part 1 of the research: a) personal gain, b) commitment to cause, and c) education/teaching.

Personal gain included the sub-constructs: a) family, b) personal network, and c) professional network. Commitment to cause included the sub-constructs: a) organization commitment, b) religious commitment, and c) influence change. Education/teaching included the sub-constructs: a) teaching others, b) providing expertise to an organization, and c) personal education. The resulting quantitative survey attempted to determine whether the dimensions identified in part 1 were indeed factors of motivation for volunteerism in this study. Survey items were developed to test each sub-construct within each individual dimension, with each independent variable representing one construct that resulted from the thematic review process in part 1.

The quantitative portion of research used a cross-sectional design, allowing researchers to test possible associations and relationships, especially with descriptor data (Krathwohl, 2009). Convenience sampling was used, based on the informal networks of the researchers. The pilot survey was emailed to 83 potential participants, based on the selection criteria. The total response rate for the quantitative survey was 48% (40 responses out of a total 83 requests). Respondents included full-time students and non-students, professionals and nonprofessionals, and were of mixed genders, political ideologies, education levels, family statuses, and marital statuses. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 85. The survey was distributed online, and included an informed consent page, demographic questions, plus additional 27 items, representing three questions for each of the sub-constructs identified in the qualitative portion of the research.

Researchers considered internal consistency reliability when developing the survey, defined as "the consistency with which all items measure the same thing" (Krathwohl, 2009, p. 414). Cronbach's alpha was tested on each of the sub-constructs to measure internal consistency reliability—this is reported in the results section. There is a drawback to cross-sectional design with a non-probability sample. Often, they lack internal validity because it's "often very difficult to control all possible sources of extraneous variation" (p. 197). Secondly, there are limitations with sampling error. The researchers addressed this limitation through sampling variation.

Construct validity was tested via exploratory factor analysis, as the instrument included several constructs that have not been previously validated (Krathwohl, 2009). Factor analysis conducted for this purpose will be presented in the results section of this report. Following exploratory factor analysis, researchers also conducted an exploratory review with descriptive data, as well as correlation matrices, and ANOVA.

RESULTS

Results – Part 1: Qualitative Interviews

The analyses of qualitative data were conducted in three steps. First-order codes were determined, then axial coding was conducted to create second-level themes, and finally, selective coding was completed to identify overall themes found in these data.

First-order codes were developed using the inductive coding technique. Table 2 shows the initial codes and frequency used during the interviews.

TABLE 2
FIRST-ORDER CODES AND FREQUENCY

First-Order Codes	Frequency
Commitment to the cause	12
Family interest / Family reasons	15
Influence organizational change	6
Influence social change	17
Influenced by others	7
Keeping a tradition alive	8
Learning for personal interest	4
Learning for professional interest	7
Life-changing experience	9
Networking for personal interest	17
Networking for professional interest	15
Make the organization better	9
No one else to do it	14
Organizational commitment	12
Personal benefit	30
Possesses expertise or knowledge	10
Accomplished what I wanted to accomplish	3
Feeling "burned out" as a reason to quit	5
Frustration that others don't show a commitment	7
Interferes with school or professional commitment	1
Interferes with social life	5
Religious reasons	30
Teaching others / Education	36
Time Commitment	25
Use expertise to "give back"	32
Work related	6
Total	342

After review of the first order codes, axial coding was implemented to determine second-level themes. Table 3 shows the themes developed based on the axial coding. The results of categorizing the codes created six second-order axial codes. The researchers determined the second-order codes by further categorizing the first-order codes based on patterns and commonalities that emerged amongst the first order codes.

TABLE 3
SECOND-LEVEL THEMES AND FREQUENCY

Second-Level Themes	Frequency
Networking	39
Commitment to the cause	46
Organizational commitment	47
Teaching others / Education	89
Personal benefit	75
Demotivation	46
Total	342

The second-level themes were analyzed for mutual exclusivity and depth by reviewing categories that had similarities. Common topics were amalgamated to develop three main constructs, or overall themes, for this research study: a) personal gain, b) commitment to cause, and c) education/teaching. Excerpts are provided below to help illustrate the essence of themes and their derivation.

It is noted that demotivation factors (i.e. reasons not to continue volunteering) were removed from analyses at this point, because they relate more closely to retention factors rather than engagement and recruitment factors and therefore were outside the scope of this research.

Likeness in Networking and Personal Benefit

The overall theme of personal gain was derived from the integration of the two second-level themes, networking and personal benefit, as both refer to the same general benefit of volunteerism (a personal gain). The following are quotes that demonstrate the likeness of these categories.

Networking Excerpts

"My original motivation was that it was a change of fields for me, in a sense, going from biomed to facilities, and I thought this was a great way to learn more about the field that I was in. Network with my peers in the community."

"What I like most about volunteer for [organization], it's a good opportunity for me personally to network and communicate with people in leadership roles."

Personal Benefit Excerpts

"So, in my time this group has received the highest award available nationally for the first three times in its history. And so being recognized on a national level at their highest level, sure, I'll take credit for that. That happened while I was in the lead."

"Joining [organization] was really about my personal growth. At the time I did not have much knowledge of [it] but I really wanted to grow in a student organization."

Likeness in Organizational Commitment and Commitment to Cause

It was determined that organizational commitment and commitment to cause were similar in that participants referred to it as 'doing good work for a good cause.' The following are quotes that demonstrate the likeness in these categories.

Organizational Commitment Excerpts

"I also volunteered for my church and have done that regularly for my church for the last 60 years ... the activities there were worthwhile because I felt I was helping my community of my church to grow, to be more aware of each other, to reach out beyond our community ... become more prayerful, become more aware of the needs."

"I've been a very minor role, but I've helped I guess to secure some funds, provide, you know, word of mouth, talking, speaking positively of [organization]. Making people have awareness of [organization] has been important to me."

Commitment to Cause Excerpts
"Most of the ways that I found out have been people reaching out to me asking me to be involved or through my work which they also send out messages through email asking for volunteers. Then I will look at the information and then if it's a cause that I'm interested in supporting then I will volunteer."
"So, what would motivate me? You know would be something I felt very strongly about, it could be religious, it could be social, it could be economic, but if I felt strongly about the issue, I would join in whatever it took."

Likeness in Education and Teaching

The education/teaching code was derived from a single second-order code: education/teaching. The following excerpts demonstrate the essence of this theme.

Education/Teaching Excerpts
"And I led several projects where we were teaching about financial education or even teaching people about entrepreneurship and other things."
"So, whether we go to a preschool or fifth grade group... the joy I get out of that is 'look at this book, don't you want to go to the library and get it yourself, wasn't that a fun book!' And very often there's a lesson learned in the series."
"I do volunteer... I like to do where it's more teaching... going back off of if you teach a man to fish you will feed him for a life if you give a man a fish you feed him for a day. With [organization] I really enjoy that because it is teaching skills to students."

Overall Qualitative Themes

Table 4 shows the three overall themes that were used as the focus for the quantitative portion of the research study.

TABLE 4
THREE OVERALL QUALITATIVE THEMES

Overall Themes	Frequency	Percent of total
Personal Gain	114	39
Commitment to Cause	93	31
Education/Teaching	89	30
Total	296	100

Based on the results of the qualitative analysis, a model was developed based on the identified themes. Figure 1 shows three dimensions of motivation of volunteerism: a) personal gain, b) commitment to cause, and c) education/teaching. The model in Figure 1 was used as the basis for the quantitative analysis, with a scale developed to test each of the first order and second-level constructs.

FIGURE 1
MEASUREMENT MODEL OF FACTORS OF MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEERISM
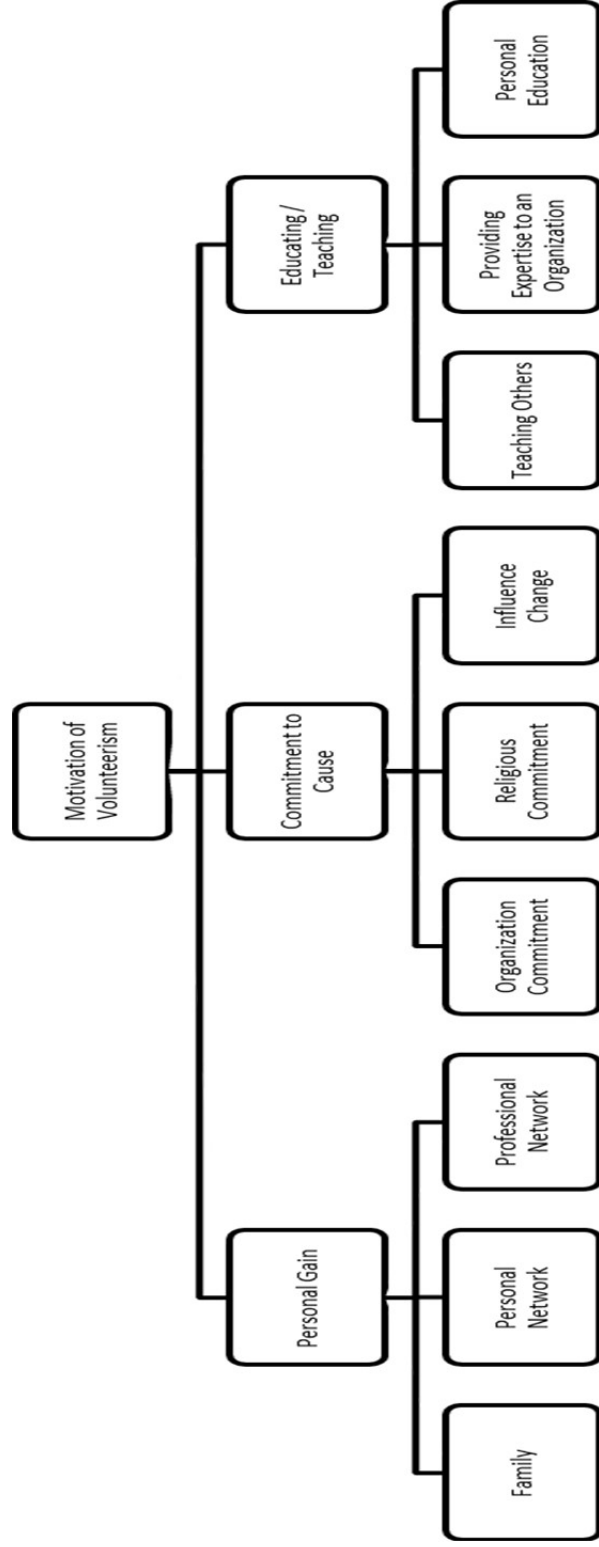
Results – Part 2: Quantitative Survey

Survey items were developed to test the three main constructs identified in part 1: a) personal gain, b) commitment to cause, and c) education/teaching.

Each was tested using the nine sub-constructs identified in part 1, thus totaling a scale of 27 questions. Initial testing of sampling adequacy was completed via KMO.

Further, Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to assess the scale and any multi-collinearity that may exist within the scale.

Finally, factor analysis was used to test for convergent and divergent validity among constructs. Results of the KMO (0.704) and Bartlett's test (0.00) (see Figure 2) are each within the appropriate threshold as proposed by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010).
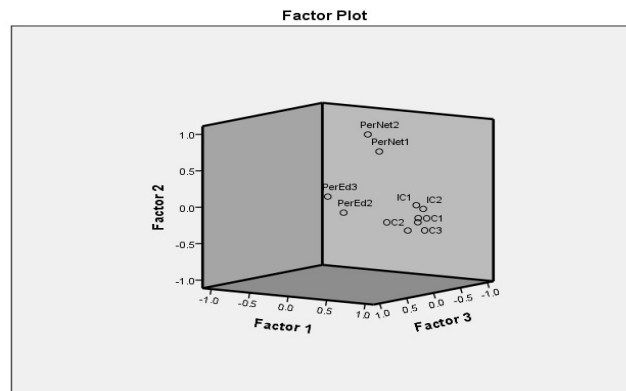
FIGURE 2
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST RESULTS

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.704
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	184.000
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was chosen for validation testing because this research did not utilize a previously validated scale (Suhr, 2015). As variables were removed from the analysis, three factors evolved. Each of these tests sufficiently justified the 3-factor model indicated by the factor analysis as well as the results of the initial qualitative analysis.

A Factor Plot (see Figure 3) was used to chart the three dimensions of the motivation of volunteerism. Cluster 1 contains the dimension personal gain and includes the sub-construct of personal networking. Cluster 2 contains influencing change and organizational commitment, representing commitment to cause. Cluster 3 represents education/teaching.

FIGURE 3
FACTOR PLOT AND DIMENSIONS OF MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEERISM

Data were rotated using Promax data rotation, which is appropriate given the correlations that exist among variables (Ford, MacCallum & Tait, 1986). The additional rotation helped further clarify resulting factors. Figure 4 shows results of the EFA and identified three factors which represent the themes initially identified in the qualitative portion of the research.

Factor 1 comprised five items representing the higher order factor commitment to cause and contained the sub-constructs organizational commitment and influencing change, and scores fell between 0.883 and 0.771 respectively.

Factor 2 comprised two items representing the higher-order factor personal gain and contains the sub-construct personal networking; scores were 0.981 and 0.784 respectively.

Factor 3 comprised two items representing the sub-construct personal education; scores for these items were 0.852 and 0.703 respectively, and Factor 3 no longer included teaching others or providing expertise, the implications of which will be further explored in the discussion.

FIGURE 4
PATTERN MATRIX

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor		
	1	2	3
OC3	.883		
OC1	.863		
IC2	.843		
OC2	.810		
IC1	.771		
PerNet2		.981	
PerNet1		.784	
PerEd2			.852
PerEd3			.703

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Based on the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) results, it was determined that the original qualitative model (see Figure 1) did not adequately represent the results of the quantitative analysis. A revised model of factors was developed (see Figure 5). Motivation for volunteerism still contained three dimensions, but the inclusions had changed. Family and professional network were removed from personal gain; religion was removed from commitment to cause; teaching and providing expertise were removed from education/teaching. Subsequent language has been revised to discuss the third dimension as education only, rather than education/teaching.

FIGURE 5
REVISED MEASUREMENT MODEL OF MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEERISM
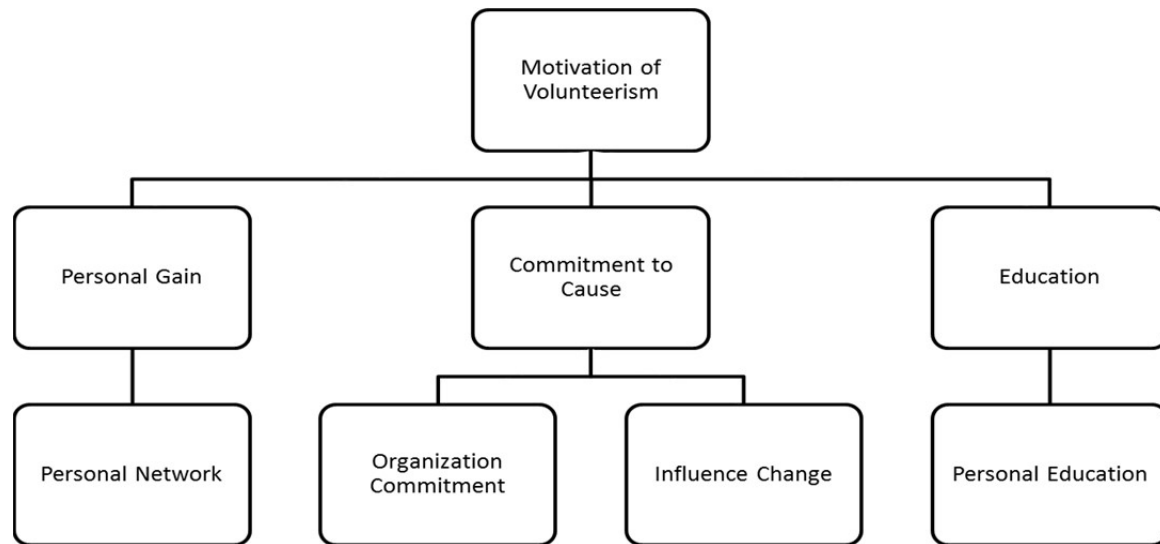
A correlation matrix (see Table 5) was completed to determine whether relationships existed between age, political engagement, and level of education, and the dependent variables of personal gain, commitment to cause, and education.

TABLE 5
CORRELATION ON FACTORS (1)

Correlation on Factors	Mean of Personal Gain	Mean of Commitment to Cause	Mean of Education
Age	0.205	-0.094	0.127
Political engagement	-0.265	-0.342*	-0.043
Level of education	-0.472**	-0.048	-0.145
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Results showed a significant, negative relationship between personal gain and level of education, with R = -0.47 and p ≤ 0.00. Results further showed a significant, negative relationship between commitment to cause and political engagement, with R = -0.34 and p ≤ 0.04.

Researchers next sought to explore the potential for a mediated model, to test whether the dependent variables could serve as independent variables; i.e. intrinsic motivation to volunteer. The three independent variables included commitment to cause, personal gain, and education. The three dependent variables included hours volunteered per month, number of organizations volunteered at in the past year, and number of organizations volunteered at over a lifetime (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
CORRELATION ON FACTORS (2)

Correlation on Factors	Hour Volunteered Monthly	Number of Organizations - Past Year	Number of Organizations – Lifetime
Mean of Personal Gain	0.087	0.139	-0.02
Mean of Commitment to Cause	0.312	0.232	0.395[*]
Mean of Education	0.267	0.192	0.183
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Results showed a significant correlation between commitment to cause and number of organizations volunteered at over a lifetime, with R = .40 and p ≤ 0.02.

A T-Test/ANOVA (see Table 7) was performed to test whether a significant difference existed between number of hours volunteered and demographic questions. Results showed two areas, gender and employment status, *approaching* significance; p = .08 in both cases. These data suggest that women tended to volunteer more often than men. These data also suggest that those who identified as not currently working tended to volunteer more hours than those who were currently working.

TABLE 7
T-TEST/ANOVA

T-Test/ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	2.289	5	.458	2.191	.082
	Within Groups	6.267	30	.209		
	Total	8.556	35			
Age	Between Groups	2.839	5	.568	.687	.637
	Within Groups	24.800	30	.827		
	Total	27.639	35			
Marital Status	Between Groups	12.000	5	2.400	1.333	.277
	Within Groups	54.000	30	1.800		
	Total	66.000	35			
Family Status	Between Groups	3.532	5	.706	.885	.504
	Within Groups	22.350	28	.798		
	Total	25.882	33			
Employment Status	Between Groups	7.822	5	1.564	2.228	.077
	Within Groups	21.067	30	.702		
	Total	28.889	35			

DISCUSSION

The pilot research conducted in this study helps to provide some insight into how and why people choose to take part in volunteer activities; i.e. their motivations for volunteerism. The analysis conducted in the qualitative portion of research (part 1) seems to suggest that the three overall themes, a) personal gain, b) commitment to cause, and c) education, are good indicators of motivations for engaging and recruiting volunteers.

In the analysis of quantitative research (part 2), the relationship between personal gain and level of education, as well as commitment to cause and strength of political engagement, are worth further

exploration. So, too, is the finding that when using the dependent variables as independent variables, results seem to suggest a mediated model based on commitment to cause factors specifically, which can be further tested during the expansion of research. Differences between gender and employment status are also useful. We provide a guide for future research and suggestions for research expansion beyond this pilot study. We also provide a discussion about the practical applicability of these findings to the nonprofit sector, particularly as they seek to engage and recruit new volunteers.

Finding 1: Personal Gain and Level of Education

Results indicated that there was a significant, negative relationship between the amount of education that a participant completed, and the amount of personal gain perceived to motivate his or her volunteer activity. These results suggest that as a person completes more education, they are less likely to seek out volunteer activities for the purpose of personal gain.

These results have some important implications for individuals within the nonprofit community who want to engage and recruit new volunteers. Specifically, it suggests that the ways in which they market new opportunities should be fine-tuned to fit the desire, or lack thereof, to participate in volunteer opportunities on the dimension of providing personal gain. For example, if a nonprofit organization needs more volunteers who have specific expertise in a field (i.e. someone who is more highly educated), it would be best to focus on *other* motivation factors, such as appealing to the persons' commitment to the cause, rather than trying to market the volunteerism as a personal gain opportunity.

In the reverse, organizations could spend more time touting the benefits of the position to a younger (or less educated) potential volunteer pool, highlighting ways that the specific volunteer activity in question could look nice on a resume, and/or identifying precisely how the position could help the volunteer build desirable job skills. This can prove to be especially useful for those who are close to achieving a degree, but do not yet have the work experience needed to secure a full-time position. Trying to communicate the specific skills that would be developed via the volunteer position could benefit this demographic greatly.

Finding 2: Commitment to Cause and Political Engagement

The significant relationship between political engagement and commitment to cause may help organizations better understand to whom engagement and recruitment efforts may be more effective, especially for organizations engaged in activities or programs that are likely to appeal to a more specific set of political ideologies. Those who identified as having strong political engagement showed the most interest in volunteering based on commitment to a cause, while those who consider themselves non-political were less likely to volunteer based on their personal commitment to any specific cause.

Nonprofits walk a fine line between lobbying for causes and lobbying for particular *candidates,* and under no circumstances can a nonprofit engage in a "political campaign activity" (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019b). However, and with some restrictions, nonprofits can and do lobby for *causes,* and as such, consideration should be given as to how best to appeal to these potential volunteers. Recruitment and engagement of people who strongly believe in the mission from the lens of a political viewpoint may prove fruitful for some nonprofit organizations.

Finding 3: Commitment to Cause as an Independent Variable

There are some implications for the significant relationship between someone who rates commitment to the cause as an important motivation for their volunteerism and the number organizations they have served over a lifetime. This result has implications for volunteer engagement and recruitment. Importantly, it is known that when one has increased levels of commitment, they are also more likely to stay connected within an organization (Aguirre & Bolton, 2013). Working hard to retain volunteers who are particularly driven to the cause may be one way to increase the number of total hours given (i.e. more hours volunteered by fewer people), rather than trying to seek out more volunteers who are less motivated by the cause (i.e. fewer hours by more people).

This finding has another potential implication, which is for nonprofits to consider, if they have not already, partnering with other organizations in the sharing volunteer resources. Given that those with a high commitment to any particular cause appear more likely to volunteer at multiple organizations over their lifetime, these results suggest that those with high commitment to the cause may be more receptive to volunteering at multiple places with similar missions. Joining forces with other similarly minded nonprofit organizations, such as collaborating on events using the same or similar volunteer pools, may be worth exploration. These data suggest the effort could be rewarding for both organizations, especially if volunteer pools are tight or dwindling.

Finding 4: Gender, Employment Status, Number of Hours Volunteered

Finally, the relationships approaching significance, i.e. the number of hours volunteered and gender (i.e. women tending to serve more hours than men), and employment status (i.e. those who are not working tending to serve more hours than those who are working), will be something to look at further in the expansion of this research to see whether and how, in a larger sample size, these two areas could be further explored in order to maximize engagement and recruitment opportunities based on gender and employment status differences.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed a mixed-methods research design that included both a qualitative interview study and a quantitative survey. This pilot study has proved useful because it has led researchers to seek a better understanding of motivation factors that could be leveraged to benefit nonprofit organizations looking to engage and recruit volunteers. While the results are preliminary, a few key important results emerged. First, the initial validation of the survey is a key factor in identifying constructs most conducive to motivation for volunteerism. Second, exploration of the relationships between key demographic variables and various dependent variables, such as the number of hours one volunteers, provides some insight into retention efforts which will be further explored in the expansion of research. Finally, the use of mixed methods to guide the transition from interview to survey development led to insights that may have otherwise been undiscovered.

Implications for Future Research

As an extension of this study, we propose a three-pronged approach to further explorations. First, given the implications of creating a validated scale for volunteer motivation, we advocate for further exploration of the survey instrument itself, including testing the scale on a larger sample from a wider array of backgrounds. The revised model presented in Figure 5 should be considered during the development of the second phase of research, given the fact that both personal gain and education appear more similar than dissimilar. Trying to find the nuance between when a volunteer is motivated by personal gain via personal education, versus when a volunteer is motivated to educate and teach others would be useful to understand and may offer further insights into the engagement and recruitment of new volunteers.

Second, we wish to further extend the discussion on the implications of demographics, particularly age and generational differences, both in their motivation to participate in volunteer activities and in the number of volunteer hours they are willing to commit to in a given year or in their lifetime. Importantly, as our population ages, not only will the number of individuals who are able to volunteer decline, but simultaneously the need for healthy, capable volunteers will increase. Too, while it is known that volunteering as an activity improves the health of older individuals (Barron, Tan, Yu, Song, McGill & Fried, 2009; Tan, Xue, Li, Carlson & Fried, 2006), a better understanding of what may motivate an individual to volunteer, no matter their age is an important task; recruiting and retaining more older individuals to volunteer would promote their health and the health of the organizations for which they volunteer.

Finally, we wish to consider testing as a mediated model in the next phase of research. It was interesting to see that the dimension of commitment to cause was both theorized and resulted in a significant relationship as a dependent variable within the demographic portions of the research, yet the variable became a theorized and significant independent variable in the second portion of the analysis. This suggests that a strong commitment to cause may act as a mediator between demographics previously identified as having a relationship with likelihood to volunteer, and actual volunteering activity.

Importantly, two criteria for theorizing a mediated model are the impact that the mediated variable has on the dependent variable and the direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the case of this pilot project, it appears that both of these criteria may be met. Thus, we suggest further research that investigates the variable of commitment to cause as a mediated variable between traditional demographic variables that have been tested in the past.

Thus, this pilot study, while needing further refinement and clarification through study extension, provides some key evidence as to the nature of volunteerism. Maybe more important, it provides us with some key takeaways for nonprofit organizations to consider when looking to strengthen their volunteer engagement and recruitment efforts.

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