

Predicting Volunteer Motives Among Faculty and Staff

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ABSTRACT

Our goal was to explore how motives predicted whether an individual volunteers at a civic and social organization. Results indicated that value motives predicted volunteerism at civic and social organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, researchers have been interested in understanding the motives of faculty and staff involved in community volunteer activities.

Clary et al. (1998) have proposed six motivational functions that are served by volunteering: *Values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement* motives.

Value motives focus on opportunities that facilitate the expression of ideals related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others.

Understanding motives permit new learning experiences and affords an individual the chance to share knowledge, skills, and abilities that might otherwise not be shared.

Social motives are concerned with social relationships.

Career motives revolve around career planning, development, and advancement goals (e.g., networking, documenting skills, training).

Protective motives reduce negative features of one's self-image (e.g., reducing anxiety or guilt about being more fortunate than others).

Enhancement motives are related to personal development or personal growth.

Research has demonstrated support for the six functions identified by Clary et al. (1998) (see Houle, Sagarin, & Kaplan, 2005; Okun & Schultz, 2003; Okun, Barr, & Herzog, 1998).

However, little or no analysis has been done to identify the function or the number of functions (i.e., motives) that would predict volunteering at civic and social organizations.

Thus, our goal was to explore which of the six functions identified by Clary et al. (1998) predicted volunteerism at civic and social organizations.

We hypothesized that value motives would predict volunteerism at civic and social organizations because such organizations could fulfill the expression of altruistic and humanitarian concerns.

METHOD

Participants. Data were obtained from 47 faculty and staff at Penn State New Kensington. The study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board, and all participants consented to the study.

Measures. Faculty and staff completed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998). The VFI consists of 30 reasons individuals volunteer. Each item is rated in terms of its importance to the respondents. Items were rated on a seven-point scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*extremely important*).

Cronbach's alphas are presented in Table 1 below.

Motive	Cronbach's Alpha
Values	.91
Understanding	.86
Social	.85
Career	.89
Protective	.83
Enhancement	.90

In addition, respondents were also asked if they currently volunteer at a civic or social organization.

RESULTS

Using the enter method, a significant model emerged, $F(6, 40) = 2.30, p = .05$. The model accounted for 15% of variance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.15$). As expected, value motives were strongly linked to volunteerism at civic and social organizations.

Motive	B	SE B	β	p
Values	-.03	.02	-.45	.03
Understanding	-.001	.02	-.01	.96
Social	.02	.01	.29	.14
Career	.008	.01	.12	.49
Protective	.006	.02	.07	.78
Enhancement	-.02	.02	-.35	.16

DISCUSSION

Of the six motives identified by Clary et al. (1998), only values predicted volunteerism at civic and social organizations.

According to Clary et al. (1998), value motives allow the person to volunteer in order to express or act on an important value. It appears that those who volunteered saw the connection between the service opportunity and their values.

To increase volunteerism at civic and social organizations, such groups should communicate their values to potential volunteers and offered an array of tasks that could satisfy an individual's values function.