

ABSTRACT

Identification of an individual's motivational need and desired volunteer work enables volunteer administrators to capitalize on the motivation a person brings to the organization as well as to make effective use of the role by being cognizant of the levels of participation behind the differing volunteer assignments. The Motivation by Maslow Questionnaire was used to identify motivational needs of 35 helpline (crisis) volunteers, and three categories of volunteer work were used to classify their levels of participation. Implications for improving volunteer commitment to the formal voluntary organization and recruitment and retention strategies relative to volunteer motivational needs are discussed.

What Are the Motivational Needs Behind Volunteer Work?

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In order for progress and integrity to be realized in our society, we must develop greater respect for individuals and strive to understand, in a personal way, their needs, fears, and desires, and then relate to them (Cull & Hardy, 1974). Volunteerism allows citizens to respond to those in need of help and therefore move from passive observers to active participants in solving community problems. Our country is becoming increasingly dependent upon voluntary organizations to provide the physical and psychological support services that can no longer be supplied by government alone (Keyton, Wilson, & Geiger, 1990). Kantrowitz (1989) reports that after years of apathy Americans are volunteering more than ever, and that according to a 1987-1988 survey by Independent Sector, an umbrella organization for most of the major charitable groups in the United States, 45% of people surveyed said they regularly volunteered. It was estimated that 80 million adults gave 19.5 billion hours of volunteer service in 1987. In a time when public funding for social services is being drastically cut and the need for services is increasing, volunteers fill the service gap.

Without volunteers to provide leadership, carry out tasks, and deliver services, many organizations and the services they provide would cease to exist. However, volunteers are not entirely a free source of help. They are, in many respects, equivalent to employees of the organization in that they require job descriptions, in-service training programs, supervision, and well-planned rewards for their meritorious service. There is substantial cost in terms of recruitment, training, and supervision (Cull & Hardy, 1974). The increasing size and complexity of non-profit organizations require a more sophisticated volunteer administration to recruit, train, and retain their volunteers. Understanding an individual's decision to enter into a voluntary action setting, participate in voluntary activity, take on a leadership role, or leave the setting is a challenge for the volunteer organization.

Identification of an individual's motivational needs and desired volunteer work can enable volunteer administrators to capitalize on the motivation a person brings to the organization and make effective use of the volunteer work by being cognizant of the levels of partic-

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ipation behind the differing roles. Sorting volunteers into categories assists the administrator to obtain a "picture" or profile of current members. It can also help to attract new members by targeting a specific profile relevant to the agency's service and to retain members by utilizing appropriate rewards for service.

THE CONCEPT OF NEEDS AS MOTIVATION

The concept of needs seems to have become important since Maslow (1943) first introduced his theory. He began by identifying the motivation from within the individual in terms of human drives. He suggested that all human beings have certain needs that drive or motivate their behavior and that they can be sorted into five major categories: (1) survival needs; (2) safety and security needs; (3) the need to belong; (4) self-esteem needs; and (5) self-actualization needs. Categorizing volunteers according to Maslow's motivational needs can demonstrate the range of reasons for volunteer participation.

Wlodkowski (1985) suggests that one person cannot really motivate another. He addresses the topic of adults' motivation in a way that is applicable to voluntary settings. One of the six aspects of motivations he identifies is needs, which he defines as internal forces that lead to goal attainment. He suggests that managers should consider ways of recognizing and fulfilling needs that bring people to voluntary organizations. This recognition can help managers plan programs that will produce steadier performance, better attendance, and longer duration of service (Ilsley, 1990).

Scheier (1980) speaks of "motivational paychecks." Since volunteers are not paid in money, the mostly intrinsic rewards they receive are their only pay. Volunteers will not ordinarily become involved in helping others unless they are in some sense helping themselves at the same time.

Briggs (1982) compared the results of a survey of employee work satisfactions and areas of greatest importance to a survey of volunteers using a similar measure which was modified to eliminate references to pay. In both surveys, for paid employment and volunteer work, growth and esteem needs were most important. However, social needs were also among the highest for volunteers, but not for paid workers. In both studies social aspects of the work were named as the source of greatest satisfaction. She concludes:

Volunteers then, are distinctly different from paid workers, in that they value different aspects of a job assignment. People who are prospective volunteers arrive at a program's door, for the most part, not with overflowing altruistic motives, but with real needs for self-growth, for work experience, for building self-esteem, for enjoyment, for building relationships with others, for contributing to valued goals, for affiliating with an organization or its staff, and so on. Many times (consciously or unconsciously) they are looking to the volunteer program to satisfy one or a healthy combination of those needs not currently being met by their paid work or their home situation.

Strong support for the relationship between needs and satisfaction is found in a series of studies in vocational rehabilitation at the University of Minnesota called the "Work Adjustment Model" (Lofquist and Davis, 1969) where the basic premise of the theory is that individuals will seek to maintain a "fit" or correspondence between themselves and their environment. Although the "Work Adjustment Model" is intended for paid employment, it provides a theoretical foundation and rationale for the use of an instrument to measure needs of volunteers, for matching volunteer needs to a task, and for using the construct of satisfaction as a measure of how rewarded a person feels from his or her volunteer work.

VOLUNTEER WORK ROLES

Jenner (1982) has identified three different roles of volunteer work: (1) consciously chosen primary work; (2) supplement to other, primary work; and (3) as a vehicle for entry or return to employment. An individual's orientation to volunteer work will interact with and influence involvement in voluntary activities. The typology rests on the conviction that a volunteer's conscious reasons for volunteering can be used as a basis for classification (Jenner, 1982). Differences in roles, therefore, would be related to differences in demands and participation. In general, she found that people who identified volunteer work as their primary career will be highly involved, contribute significant amounts of time, and make significant demands on the experience. The career orientation implies a progression of activities and positions, and a long-term commitment to volunteerism as serious work. However, most people view volunteering as a supplement to the more important aspects of their lives (Tomeh, 1973) and therefore expect less from their volunteer experience. Individuals who have made a conscious decision to use volunteerism for career development are likely to have a significant commitment to a long-term goal, along with involvement in a current activity that is considered important to them. They may channel much of their work energy to volunteerism (like the career volunteer) or divide it (like the supplemental volunteer). They differ in that they consciously use voluntary activity as a means to a future, self-oriented goal outside the realm of volunteerism (Jenner, 1982).

The present study examines the motivational needs of voluntary activity and role selection in a formal voluntary organization. Formal volunteerism can be defined as a service that is addressed to a social need defined by the organization, performed in a coordinated way in an organizational context, and rewarded by psychological or other benefits (Ilsley, 1990). A volunteer is defined as a person

who, out of free will and without wages, works for a non-profit organization which is formally organized and has as its purpose, service to someone or something other than its membership (Jenner, 1982).

METHOD

Participants

Thirty-five crisis line volunteers at a large, urban community service organization were surveyed. Although the agency provides a variety of counseling and community services, its primary branch is the 24-hour crisis line, which is staffed by approximately 70–100 volunteers, 13 paid staff members, and 7 on-call paid counselors who mostly work the overnight shift. Volunteers must undergo 60 hours of crisis intervention training, sign a contract to complete at least 6 months of work, agree to work at least one 3½ hour shift per week, and attend three in-service training programs every 6 months (a requirement of the American Association of Suicidology).

Materials

Participants were asked to complete the Motivation by Maslow Questionnaire (MbM) (Sashkin, 1986), which consists of 20 statements that may or may not describe how respondents feel about their jobs and work lives. The questionnaire is designed to help respondents discover and better understand the major factors in their work lives by identifying motives that are important to them. Although the MbM Questionnaire is based on the classic motivation theory of Abraham Maslow, it does not identify a hierarchy of needs, but focuses instead on four (of the five) categories of needs and the respondent's relative standing within each category. It is assumed that those completing the questionnaire will have their survival needs met. It measures the importance an individual places on: (1) Safety and Security (in terms of work)—economic security, a comfortable standard of living, and a feeling of safety; (2) Social and Belong-

ingness—social interaction, the feeling and need for belonging; (3) Self Esteem—the feeling that you are worthwhile as an individual, that you “matter”; and (4) Self-Actualization—the search for self-development. Each of the four scales of the questionnaire has a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25 points. Each statement is scored on a 5 point Likert-type scale with response options ranging from “completely true and accurate” to “not true and accurate.” Scores of 20 or more on any scale are considered high and suggest that the motives measured by the scale are important to the respondent. Scores of 15 to 19 are moderately important, scores from 10 to 14 are considered low, and scores below 10 suggest that the motives measured by that scale are not important to the respondent.

In addition, participants were instructed to complete a short survey attached to the questionnaire. They were asked to assign themselves to one of three categories, depending on the role volunteer work plays in their lives. The categories are defined by Jenner as follows: (1) Primary—“Volunteer work is my main career or work activity; it is the key part of my work life” (which may also include employment, homemaking, school, etc.); (2) Supplemental—“Volunteer work is a supplement to other parts of my work life”; and (3) Career Instrumental—“Volunteer work is a way to prepare me for a new (or changed) career, or to maintain skills and contacts in a career I am not actively pursuing at this time.”

Demographic data collected included sex and length of service with the organization (less than 1 year, 1–3 years, 3–5 years, and over 5 years). Respondents were asked to check volunteer work, sex, and length of service on a paper attached to the questionnaire.

Procedure

A cover letter, MbM Questionnaire, and work role and demographic survey were distributed to 65 volunteers at the agency via their mailboxes. The question-

naire was removed from the test booklet which contained an interpretive guide for scoring. The cover letter described the nature of the study and the categories of motivational needs and the categories of volunteer work roles.

Questionnaires and booklets were numbered. The completed questionnaires were scored and returned to their corresponding booklet, and results were given to the participants. Thirty-five questionnaires were completed for analysis using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

The data were pooled from 35 respondents, 24 female and 10 male (one datum missing). Length of service for the majority of respondents, 44%, was between 1 and 3 years, while 22% service for 5 years or more, 19% for less than 1 year, and 15% had volunteered for between 3 and 5 years. With regard to work, the majority of respondents, 57%, were in the Supplemental category, and 17% were both Primary and Career Instrumental volunteers (9% of data missing).

The majority of respondents placed moderate importance on Safety and Security (46%), Self-Esteem (74%), and Social and Belongingness (66%). Self-Actualization was the only scale in which the majority of volunteers placed high importance (57%).

Table I: Percent of Volunteers Who Scored High, Moderate, and Low on the Motivation by Maslow Questionnaire

Scale	SS	SE	SA	SB
High	37	9	57	17
Moderate	46	74	37	66
Low	17	17	6	17

Note: N=34 (10 male and 24 female). The four scales measured include: (1) Safety and Security (SS); (2) Self-Esteem (SE); (3) Self-Actualization (SA); and (4) Social and Belongingness (SB).

Correlational analysis (Goodman and Kruskal’s Gamma) did not reveal any significant relationships between length of

service and the amount of importance placed on each of the four motivational scales or work. This might be due to the relatively small sample size. It is interesting to note, however, that for the Self-Actualization scale, twice as many respondents (8) scored in the "high" range as compared to the "moderate" range (4) for the largest length of service category, 1–3 years.

DISCUSSION

The Motivation by Maslow Questionnaire (MbM) can be used to introduce basic concepts of motivation in a volunteer training program. It is easy to administer and score, and can be used not only as a means of categorizing volunteers, but as a reference point for administrators to help volunteers understand more clearly their internal needs and motivators. It can also be of value in providing need fulfillment on a more individual basis in designing rewards for service.

The majority of people who volunteer at the (service) organization are supplemental volunteers who are motivated by the need to self-actualize. Volunteers in this category are searching for self development, the effort to become all that they can be. They have goals similar to those of the service organization whose purpose is to help others or to do things for others (Heidrich, 1988). They may want to be involved in social reform and solving community problems, and they feel they can contribute something to society.

In order to retain self-actualizing volunteers, volunteer administrators can arrange meetings where the volunteers can offer opinions about organizational structure and procedures, and allow them to make important decisions. Volunteer administrators need to understand that many self-actualizing volunteers seek a chance to be involved in action that alleviates a problem. Administrators can maximize learning and developmental activities and facilitate an organizational climate that allows volunteers to be self-supporting (Ilsley, 1990).

In recruitment strategies (Heidrich, 1988) the organization can: (1) use language reflective of this group's concern with the good of society in communications (brochures, newsletters, etc.); (2) emphasize the social need for the service the organization provides; (3) send the message—"If you want to help solve this problem, join our organization."

Yet, the possible interaction of role and motivation may be important. Those self-actualizers who see their role as supplemental may feel overwhelmed if given excessive pressure or responsibilities, such as mandatory committee meetings. These volunteers may be more comfortable if they are given the opportunity to develop within the organization, but in such a way that they may forge their own paths.

Volunteers placed moderate to high importance on safety and security (in terms of work)—economic security and a comfortable standard of living. Volunteers who are motivated by Safety and Security, or a volunteer whose work role is Career Instrumental, parallel the business and professional volunteer organization where the occupational and/or economic interest of members is paramount (Heidrich, 1988). They tend to use volunteer activity to develop business contacts and leads, advance their careers, establish networks with other community leaders, gain status in the community, and enhance their image.

Recruitment and retention strategies for volunteers motivated by Safety and Security should include: (1) emphasizing career-related benefits in recruitment messages; (2) focusing on the status of those already in the organization; (3) describing the amount of time needed to volunteer in the organization in the lowest common denominator; (4) showing how membership can lead to self-improvement by providing workshops; (5) recruiting via networking (encouraging existing members to recruit their business and professional associates); and (6) making special efforts to introduce new members with common

interests (Heidrich, 1988).

These techniques will be particularly important for volunteers motivated by social needs and having a Primary work role. Administrators cognizant of this specific interaction in some of their volunteers may invite them to serve on committees, work on newsletters, organize activities, or take an active role in agency planning.

The majority of volunteers (74%) placed moderate importance on self-esteem. Volunteer administrators can use many forms of recognition to satisfy the need for self-esteem. Formal awards presented to volunteers or public praise helps volunteers to feel they have accomplished something as a result of their efforts, and can help give them the feeling that they are worthwhile and valuable to the organization.

A voluntary organization and its volunteers are in a reciprocal relationship and the organization has an obligation to meet the needs of its volunteers. If the organization does not respond to the needs of its volunteers, morale will fall and volunteer turnover will rise.

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