

# ***Development of a Scale to Measure Attitudes Toward Volunteers***

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When the W. K. Kellogg Foundation supported Adelphi University's Center on Volunteerism the accepted proposal stated that as one evaluation strategy a scale would be found, or constructed, that related to volunteers' "self-image" and would be used in a pre-post format as a measure of the project's impact. This study reports the attempts to secure such a scale, the subsequent construction of the scale, evidence of the scale's utility and recommended use for the scale.

In an attempt to secure an existing scale a computer search of Psychological Abstracts 1967 through March 1978 was done. The descriptors used were: "volunteer personnel," "volunteer civilian personnel," "self-concept", and "self-perception". This search netted eleven studies, none of which included relevant scales. Inquiries were made in writing and by telephone to sources such as the National Information Center on Volunteerism and the National Center for Voluntary Action. Also personal inquiries were made to nationally known individuals in the field of volunteerism. These efforts failed to uncover any existing scales. It was then determined that a scale would have to be constructed. All those communicated with stressed the need for such a scale. For example, one letter stated, "You have embarked on a very important study, and also a VERY COMPLICATED ONE.

These efforts at a literature search not only pointed to the need to develop a scale but much information, including articles and bibliographic references, was gathered that would be used to construct items to build a scale. The literature stressed two points related to volunteerism. First, the amorphous character of volunteerism and second, the heterogeneous nature of the volunteer population. The scale needed to elicit attitudes that could be perceived within and generalized to countless settings. Volunteerism is interwoven into the fabric of all our social and cultural enterprises. It is not unique to any of our descriptive demographic benchmarks such as age, sex, geography, education, or even, enterprise. Thus, any scale would have to be widely generalizable and yet be sensitive enough to stimulate a respondent's attitude. One such scale is Kogan's (1960), "Attitude Toward Old People Scale." Kogan developed a scale that was generalizable enough to cut across a most vague and heterogeneous construct, the aged, and yet was sensitive enough to discriminate attitudes among a wide variety of persons and perspectives. The scale has had a remarkable record as an evaluative and diagnostic tool (Woog and Goldman, 1975).

Kogan's scale uses a seven-point Likert format ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7) omitting a neutral point (4). This was done in order to help the respondent "take a stand". It is composed of thirty-four items, each of which contains

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a positive or negative statement regarding the aged. Scoring reverses positive items so that a single score results with a low score indicating more positive attitude. To construct a scale to measure attitudes toward volunteers the same format was chosen with a minor scoring modification that results in a high score indicating a more positive attitude towards volunteers.

The first draft of the scale was composed of forty-four statements each intended to present a positive or negative image of the volunteer. Respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the portrayal. The scale instructions established a context of what the respondent felt "people" generally believed. This context was established in order to reduce "socially acceptable" responses and thus minimize the "fakability" of the scale. Items were found from Selvidge (1978), Frost (1977), Durrette (1977), Barberto and Hall (1977), Ekstrum, Harris and Lockheed (1977), McCarty (1976), Carter and Peterson (1976), and Hodge and Johnson (1970). The initial collection of items was then categorized; a list of categories with sample items, positive and negative, follows.

TABLE I  
CATEGORIES AND POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ITEMS  
FROM ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTEERS SCALE

<u>Category</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Professional - Volunteer Relations	The best delivery of services is by a volunteer-professional team as each brings different knowledge and services to serve the client.	It is generally thought that when volunteers provide direct services to clients, the professional gives up the reward of direct contact with the client.
Motivations for Volunteering	People volunteer because helping others adds to one's daily living.	It is believed that a person volunteers because of guilt feelings.
Characteristics of Volunteers	Most people believe that volunteers are as responsive to supervision as are paid staff.	It is generally thought that since volunteers only work a few hours a week they are not as committed as the professionals.
Results of Volunteerism	Provision should be made for listing volunteer work on employment application forms.	People believe that when a volunteer doesn't show up, it makes no real difference.

The items in the Kogan format, were then utilized in five different settings in order to result in a scale which had sufficient evidence of validity and reliability and an efficient number of items. Validity evidence is an attempt to demonstrate that what you think you are measuring is, what you are measuring. Reliability evidence relates to the stability of the measure. If you measure something inconsistently than you cannot do so accurately. Thus you lose validity. A measure must show evidence of both reliability and validity in order to be of any use. The next two sections of this paper specify how evidence of validity and reliability were obtained. This presents the evidence that allows such a scale to be used.

### Reliability Strategies

The scale was administered to two distinct populations in a test re-test design in order to estimate stability of scores. The first group was comprised of members of the COV Community Advisory Board, 16. This group represents a sophisticated population in the field of volunteerism. All the respondents were managers of volunteer programs and/or had an extensive record of volunteer activity. The scale was administered in May and June of 1978 with a thirty-day interval between testings. In addition to responding to the items, the respondents were asked to note any questions they had about format and/or content of items. These comments were later used for qualitative validity analysis.

The second group used for reliability study was undergraduate education majors taking a summer course in education methods, 20. They were distinctly younger than the first group by an average of twenty years per individual and all of them professed a naivete in the field of volunteerism. The scale was administered in a test re-test design with a four-week interval between testings. This group was asked to respond to the items but was not requested to comment on form or content. The results of these reliability studies will be reported later.

### Validity Strategies

There were three distinct validity strategies each responding to a different question. The first asked the question, "Will a panel of experts in volunteerism agree with the substance of the item--do they make sense?" Items were given for reaction to the members of the Community Advisory Board, the COV staff and to Sarah Jane Rehnborg of Rehnbridge Associates: Consultants in Volunteer Management. All items that they suggested as being inappropriate were listed.

The second question was: "Can it be empirically demonstrated that the items cast as negative and positive are so?" Twenty, master level registered nurses were asked to respond to the items by indicating whether they thought the items presented a positive or negative image of the volunteer. Items with at least a seventy-five percent agreement with the original designation, or a validity coefficient of at least .87, were deemed empirically valid. Of the original forty-four items, thirty-three met this criterion.

The third question was: "Is the scale valid enough to identify hypothesized differences--can it be used in hypothesis testing?" This is the most stringent test of a measure (Cronbach and Meehl, 1956).

During the summer of 1978 Sarah Jane Rehnborg presented a one-day seminar to masters level students taking a course in pursuit of their educational certification in supervision at Slippery Rock College. The students ranged in age from thirty to forty-five, used volunteers in their professional work, but were judged to be relatively naive in the area of volunteerism. The title of the guest seminar was, "Volunteers Today". About a week prior to the day of the presentation the original form of the scale was sent to each student. Each was asked to bring the completed form to class. Of the twelve participating students, eight did so. At the close of the presentation the scale was readministered. It was hypothesized that as a result of the presentation, i.e. of intervention, students would demonstrate significantly more positive attitudes, as measured by the scale, toward volunteers than prior to the intervention. The data was analyzed using a "t" test methodology. Although the number of participants was small (8), and the intervention was of short duration, a significant change in the hypothesized direction was found. This notably limited empirical study, using the scale for the purposes of hypothesis testing, was encouraging as a demonstration of the validity of the scale.

### Resultant Scale

As a result of the content validation strategies, the validity co-efficient study and the panel of experts, five forms of the test emerged all from test administrations using the original draft form. These are as follows:

- Form A. The original draft of the scale resulting in forty-four items.
- Form B. The original draft deleting all items that did not meet the seventy-five percent criteria or were judged by experts to be substantively deficient (inappropriate) resulting in twenty-nine items.
- Form C. The original draft deleting all items that were judged by experts to be substantively deficient (inappropriate) resulting in thirty-three items.
- Form D. The original draft deleting all items that did not meet the seventy-five percent criteria resulting in thirty-three items.
- Form E. The original draft deleting all items that were commonly identified using the seventy-five percent criteria and were judged by experts to be substantively deficient (inappropriate) resulting in thirty-seven items.

The goal was to select the one form that demonstrated the greatest degree of empirical validity and reliability and yet was the most efficient. As such, the empirical strategies, which included both reliability studies and the validity study using a predicted hypothesis of change, were analyzed independently for each of the five forms. Two questions were paramount. First, did the scale, no matter what form, demonstrate a sufficient level of evidence of reliability and validity to be judged to have usefulness? Second, did one form emerge that showed a greater degree of evidence and was efficient?

Table II presents the results of analyses of the scale for each of the five forms. For the reliability studies the means and standard deviations for each test administration and the resultant coefficient of reliability (r) using a Pearson product moment analysis are reported. For the validity study pre and post means, standard deviations, and the resultant probability level of "t" for each of the five forms are reported.

These analyses suggested the following findings:

- All forms for both reliability studies showed respectable levels of reliability, all greater than .68, for an attitude scale to be administered to groups rather than individuals.
- Both groups in the reliability study, although very different in composition from one another, derived comparable means and standard deviations. This comparability held up when compared to the post-test means of the validity sample but not for the post-test standard deviations, all of which were greater.
- For the validity study all forms resulted in higher post-test scores. However, only forms B and E were significantly greater at probability less than .05.
- Form B of the scale resulted consistently in the higher reliability coefficients, greater than .72, and was the most sensitive in finding a significant difference between pre and post administration (probability, .0134).

TABLE II

RESULTS OF TWO RELIABILITY AND ONE VALIDITY STUDY  
FOR ALL FIVE FORMS OF THE ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTEERS SCALE

Format	A(44)		B(29)		C(33)		D(33)		E(37)	
	Group 1*	2**	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Test 1 Means	195.81	191.6	143.4	140.4	156.3	154.4	155.9	158.3	172.5	175.6
Test 1 Standard Deviations	20.48	23.2	15.8	16.1	22.1	18.8	18.9	20.6	22.8	21.7
Test 2 Means	190.68	194.3	140.8	142.5	150.0	156.2	153.4	154.3	166.9	177.2
Test 2 Standard Deviations	25.83	26.31	16.8	16.7	21.2	19.4	20.2	21.1	23.9	19.6
Test re-test Reliability (r) <sup>s</sup>	.698	.694	.732	.721	.687	.694	.696	.714	.684	.686

\* N = 16

\*\* N = 20

	Group 1		2		1		2		1		2	
Validity Study***	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test	Pre Test	Post Test
Means	180.50	200.63	124.13	142.13	143.25	159.25	143.88	159.38	157.38	176.00		
Standard Deviations	32.2	31.0	23.0	24.3	33.0	30.0	29.3	2.0	32.3	30.9		
"t" test probability	0.354		0.0134		0.0512		0.0720		0.0204			

\*\*\* N = 8

These findings pointed towards use of Form B as the revised version of the scale. This version was also the most efficient in that it had the least number of items. What emerged was a short and simple scale with evidence of validity, content and empirical, and reliability. Although the scale needs more validation with greater numbers and more diverse groups and a great deal more item analyses, it would seem that at this juncture it can make a contribution to measuring persons' attitudes toward volunteers.

The scale has been used now for its original intent. It has been administered to a sample of 177 college freshmen, 121 faculty members and 382 lay volunteers. Eventually, these three groups will be re-administered the scale in the fall of 1980 and the responses will be compared to the currently collected responses. It is hoped that there will be a positive change which will reflect upon the impact of COV. However, even this pre data shows two interesting findings that, hopefully, will lead to further research. First, the average, mean, scores of the three groups show an interesting difference; students, 146, volunteers, 145 and faculty members, 139. Obviously there is a difference in attitudes, as measured, between students and volunteers as compared to faculty members. Second, when the data was collected for faculty members and students it was categorized by department or major. For faculty members little difference was found across departments. For students, however, it was found that a number of students, 35, either did not respond to listing a major area or stated that they were "undecided". The mean for these two groups was 137, substantially less than for the overall Freshmen, 146. This finding is certainly intriguing.

Hopefully, future use of the scale will prove its utility in many diverse settings such as exist in the field of volunteerism. One possible use is that of an evaluation tool in order to measure the effects of programs and/or training experiences. Another use is as a diagnostic tool wherein a group is given the scale and then it is used for discussion purposes such as how attitudes are formed, or specifically when problems appear as uncovered by the scale actions can be planned in order to ameliorate those problems. Finally, the scale can be used to investigate research problems that seek to compare attitudes of various groups and try to discover reasons for differences in attitudes.

The scale in its entirety follows. It should be noted that depending upon the group to whom it is administered the identifying questions will vary. The enclosed form was used for the students. For example when the form was used for volunteers the identifying questions looked like this:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

#### ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTEERS SCALE

Before you respond to the scale please indicate the following:

Have you ever heard of Adelphi University's CENTER ON VOLUNTEERISM (COV)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

If you responded yes, please indicate how you heard of COV.

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Age: Younger than 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
25 - 35 \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_ 36 - 55 \_\_\_\_\_  
56 or older \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do you volunteer work for this agency? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the total number of hours per week that you are engaged in voluntary activities?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the following:

- Volunteer activity is my main source of work. \_\_\_\_\_
- As a retired person volunteer activity is my main source of work. \_\_\_\_\_
- Other paid employment is my main source of work. \_\_\_\_\_

However, after the identifying questions of interest are structured the rest of the form from the title on, should remain intact.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS STANDING \_\_\_\_\_

#### WOOG'S ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTEERS SCALE

On the following scale, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Circle the number which you believe best describes your feelings, using the following scale.

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Strongly disagree | 5. Slightly agree |
| 2. Disagree          | 6. Agree          |
| 3. Slightly disagree | 7. Strongly agree |

1. People believe that a woman volunteers to assist her husband and/or children.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
2. It is believed that a person volunteers because of guilt feelings.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Professionals believe volunteers don't have the knowledge and/or skills necessary to work with clients.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
4. It is generally thought that when volunteers provide direct services to clients, the professional gives up the reward of direct contact with the client.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
5. People believe that when a volunteer doesn't show up, it makes no real difference.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Retired people can find real meaning to life through volunteer work.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
7. It is generally thought that since volunteers only work a few hours a week they are not as committed as the professional.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
8. It is generally thought that voluntary agencies misappropriate funds.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Professionals believe that volunteers lack perspective and tend to make snap judgments.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 5 6 7 \_\_\_\_\_

10. People believe that if volunteers are trained to provide services that professionals are now providing, it will mean a loss of professional jobs and prestige.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
11. People realize that volunteers are a necessary part of American Society.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
12. Professionals need training in the skills of conducting successful volunteer programs.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
13. Most professionals believe that volunteers lack commitment to agency policies.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
14. Most people believe that volunteers are as responsive to supervision as are paid staff.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
15. Volunteers should be able to receive college credit for their volunteer work experience.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
16. People volunteer because helping others adds to one's daily living.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
17. People believe that volunteering by women serves to reinforce the second class status of women because it does not further their financial independence.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
18. People think that because volunteers don't get paid they come and go as they please.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
19. People view the typical volunteer as a white, middle class, married woman between the ages of 25 and 44.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
20. After all is said and done, volunteers do not have to cope with the real problems of everyday workers.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
21. The best delivery of services is by a volunteer-professional team as each brings different knowledge and services to the client.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
22. People believe individuals volunteer to gain social status and recognition.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
23. Most people believe that individuals volunteer because they have nothing better to do with their time.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7
24. Professionals believe that volunteers don't remain with the agency long enough to justify the time and effort necessary to properly train and supervise them.
- 
- 1 2 3 5 6 7



25. The reward for voluntary service is not what you receive for it but what you become by it.
- 
- 1                  2                  3                  5                  6                  7
26. When discussing volunteers, people say that volunteers come and go but problems remain.
- 
- 1                  2                  3                  5                  6                  7
27. Because of their flexible schedules, volunteers can offer services to clients outside professional working hours.
- 
- 1                  2                  3                  5                  6                  7
28. Provision should be made for listing volunteer work on employment application forms.
- 
- 1                  2                  3                  5                  6                  7
29. Volunteerism gives young people opportunities to accept social responsibility through community service work.
- 
- 1                  2                  3                  5                  6                  7

The scoring is as follows: For items 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 21, 25, 27, 28, and 29 the specific number circled is entered in the left-hand margin as it appears. For items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 26 the scoring is reversed and entered in the left-hand margin. Reverse specifically means that if 1 was circled a 7 is entered, if 2 a 6, if 3 a 5, if 5 a 3, if 6 a 2 and if 7 a one. For example, if for item number 3 a person circled 2 you would enter a 6 in the margin. Once all the scores, either intact or reversed, have been entered in the margin all 29 are added together. This sum is the score on "Woog's Attitudes Toward Volunteers Scale".

It is hoped that anyone who choses to use the scale will communicate the results to this author in order to continue to validate the scale and to begin to develop appropriate norms. What is now available is a short, simple methodology in the form of an attitude scale in the field of volunteerism.

#### Footnotes

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<sup>3</sup>For broad discussion of validity and reliability a good source is Jum Nunnally, PSYCHOMETRIC THEORY, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967.

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