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# A Qualitative Study Exploring Motivation and Engagement Among Millennial Volunteers in Nonprofit Organizations

Joanne Quinones

Nova Southeastern University, jaquino02@gmail.com

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A Qualitative Study Exploring Motivation and Engagement  
Among Millennial Volunteers in Nonprofit Organizations

by  
Joanne Quiñones

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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## Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Joanne Quiñones under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Deeb Paul Kitchen, EdD  
Committee Chair

Derrick Pledger, EdD  
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD  
Dean

## Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

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Joanne Quiñones  
Name

May 1, 2019  
Date

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## Abstract

A Qualitative Study Exploring Motivation and Engagement Among Millennial Volunteers in Nonprofit Organizations. Joanne Quiñones, 2019: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Keywords: civic engagement, millennials, motivation, nonprofit organizations, volunteerism, work engagement

This applied dissertation focused on capturing the lived experiences of Millennials and explore their motivation and engagement for volunteering in a nonprofit organization. This study illustrates the importance of civic and social engagement in our society. The Millennials have been labeled as “Genme or the me generation” (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010, p. 1117; Twenge, 2006, p. 1), as they have been criticized for focusing on their own self-interest.

While millennials have been considered as being technologically savvy, since they grew up with the internet. The millennials, have a social interest in offering support to a cause versus an organization (Achieve Research Team, 2013). This study should offer nonprofit organizations with the tools and resources needed to recruit and retain Millennial volunteers.

There are four theoretical frameworks which supported this research study and they were: functionalist theory, self-determination theory, social identity theory, and role identity theory. The basis of the instrument tool was an adapted version of the Volunteer Function Inventory developed by Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, and Miene (1998). The researcher presented a series of open-ended questions to the sample population of 10 participants, aged between 22-years old to 37-years old.

The qualitative research study resulted in identifying eight themes which includes: 1) cultivating relationships, 2) gaining volunteer satisfaction from role, 3) following the call to serve, 4) advocating for moral responsibility with others, 5) helping others, 6) needing to belong, 7) developing character traits, and 8) seeking influence through social engagement. The two outliers identified as a result of the study included training and retention. The recommendation of practice presents a robust volunteer management program.

## Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Definition of Terms.....	7
Purpose of the Study .....	8
Chapter Summary .....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	10
Theoretical Framework .....	10
Overview of Frameworks and Volunteerism .....	17
Nonprofit Organizations .....	18
Volunteerism.....	20
Demographic Trends of Volunteers.....	21
Millennial Generation .....	23
Motivation.....	28
Work Engagement .....	33
Volunteer Commitment .....	36
Volunteer Satisfaction.....	38
Volunteer Management.....	41
Research Questions .....	43
Chapter Summary .....	43
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	45
Aim of the Study.....	45
Qualitative Research Approach .....	45
Selection Sites.....	48
Participants.....	48
Informed Consent.....	50
Confidentiality .....	51
Data Collection Tools .....	52
Data Collection .....	55
Data Analysis .....	59
Validity .....	61
Ethical Consideration.....	62
Trustworthiness.....	63
Potential Research Bias.....	63
Chapter Summary .....	64
Chapter 4: Findings.....	65
Sample and Site.....	65
Data Collection .....	67
Data Analysis .....	69
Developing Themes .....	71
Outliers.....	88
Summary of Chapter 4.....	92

Chapter 5: Discussion .....	94
Summary of Findings.....	94
Interpretation of Findings .....	96
Implications of Findings .....	105
Findings Related to Theoretical Framework.....	107
Limitations .....	110
Recommendations for Practice .....	110
Recommendations Future Research.....	112
Conclusion .....	113
References.....	114
Appendices	
A Site Approval Letter .....	139
B Gatekeeper Email.....	141
C Flyer to Recruit Volunteers .....	143
D Email Confirmation or Denial of Potential Participant .....	145
E Non-Disclosure Agreement Form.....	147
F Informed Consent Form for Participant.....	149
G In-Depth Interview Protocol .....	152
H Volunteer Functions Inventory .....	155
I Demographic and Group Profile.....	158
J Observation and Field Notes Protocol.....	160
Tables	
1 Age Group Population .....	22
2 Defining Features of Qualitative Research Designs .....	46
3 Demographics of Participants.....	67
4 Identifies Themes, Sub-Themes, and Frequency.....	71
5 Developing Themes and Explanation.....	72
6 Developing Outliers.....	89
Figures	
1 Millennials' Priorities .....	27
2 Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) Taxonomy of Regulatory Styles.....	32



## Chapter 1: Introduction

Over time, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the increased devastation brought upon by catastrophic forces of nature, war zones and places of famine to which the United Nations has reported a \$250 billion deficit (UNISDR, 2015). From a global perspective, efforts to support disaster management is enabled through the act of volunteerism. From a local level across the United States, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2016) reported that nearly 62.6 million people have volunteered. The human value associated with contributing to charitable works serves to support the standards of living for all persons (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 2016). The furtherance of volunteers choosing to serve is an outcry that leans towards helping people overcome hardships. Subsequently, volunteers provide their support along religious, educational, youth services, social or community service organizations (BLS, 2016). It is indicative as to how volunteers can mobilize their efforts to lend physical, emotional, and spiritual support.

Volunteers find it crucial to identify the need for fulfillment in their role and a commitment to the organization (Vecina, Chacon, Sueiro, & Barron, 2011). The framework of volunteer engagement helps individuals to identify values that are aligned with the nonprofit organization (McAllum, 2017). In understanding the factors attributed towards volunteer motivation, for-profit organizations are leading the way for nonprofits to adopt their business platforms (Dart, 2004). In adopting the business strategies, nonprofits are equipped to guide their volunteer workforce. As organizations will develop their mission statement, strategic goals, and objectives that will create unity. Currently, there are a significant number of organizations that rely on volunteers to sustain their

mission and vision (Vecina, Chacon, Marzano, & Marta, 2013). Nonprofit organizations will need to develop strategies to strengthen a new generation of volunteers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The generalized problem is that nonprofit organizations are challenged to find strategies to recruit and retain Millennial volunteers. This is attributed to the generational shift as Baby Boomers are retiring (Ertas, 2016). This shift raises the level of expectancy in determining how Millennials will undertake these lead roles. According to Cilluffo and Cohn (2018), the demographic trend in population describes a shift from 74.1 million Baby Boomers to nearly 79.8 million Millennials with expected projections of growth into 2036. As such, nonprofit organizations will need to identify the interest and values Millennials seek in helping others (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). All while the BLS (2016) reported a 24.9% reduction in its volunteer rate. This results in the need for nonprofit organizations to identify ways in which to develop its volunteer base.

In today's business marketplace four generations are found in the workplace: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials (Shaw, 2013) and Generation Z. Each generation is earmarked as pivotal and defining by its influences. Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964, and are considered as "the most optimistic generation" (Shaw, 2013). The values for Baby Boomers were prefaced on the concept that hard work pays off. Shaw (2013) stated that Generation X born between 1965 and 1980 were realists, their goals focused on balancing work and family. Millennials are also referred to as Generation Y; born after 1982 (Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012, p. 1045). The broad range in the timeline was attributed to researchers not having had a definitive timeline for Millennials. Recently, the Pew Research Center which has been researching

Millennials since onset, determined Millennials were born from 1981 to 1996 (Dimock, 2019). Millennials are recognized as the technological darlings, having been exposed to the internet, technology, and social media (Shaw, 2013) as an everyday norm.

The formative years of each generation had been influenced by their life experiences (Einolf, 2016) which, in turn, has shaped their level of motivation and engagement. In reaching their career successes, Baby Boomers worked hard to ensure career longevity and were steadfastly loyal to organizations (Shaw, 2013). Generation X'ers were sidelined while waiting for Baby Boomers to retire, they were forced to seek alternatives such as job hopping, as well as concentrating efforts to maintain a work and life balance (Fishman, 2016). The "Genme or me generation" (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1117; Twenge, 2006, p. 1) is characterized as having less experience, causing Millennials to pursue career tracks leading to promotions (Shaw, 2013). Campione (2016) indicated that among the generations, Millennials can grow dissatisfied in their roles, and are more apt to seek meaning and significance in their lives through volunteering. At stake is the expected future projections illustrating that the number of workers transitioning into retirement would be equivalent to the number of younger generations entering the workforce (Twenge et al., 2010).

Hershatter and Epstein (2010) illustrated that Millennials can be change agents within an organization. Millennials are guided to activism by placing emphasis on the issues and people in need (Achieve Research Team, 2013). The act of volunteerism is executed through planned helping, allowing for different stages that help transition volunteers through the organization by providing training, and opportunities to expand upon their skill-set and development. Chaddha and Rai (2016) emphasized the

importance in which nonprofits help volunteers to apply their “knowledge, experience, and skills of volunteers” (p. 111). Nonprofit organizations have taken measures to implement and follow a business model that will incorporate the practices found in for-profit organizations (Dart, 2004). The key drivers found in a business model concentrates on identifying its mission, values, and strategic goals in order to achieve the pinnacle of success. In nonprofit organizations, when volunteers seek to offer their services to organizations there exists some degree of shared affinity in their values and beliefs.

**Phenomenon of interest.** A strong proponent for volunteerism is bridged together by a sense of community (Omoto & Packard, 2016); thereby allowing volunteers the opportunity to offer assistance to individuals in need. Volunteering serves to support and help communities to progress forward (Snyder & Maki, 2015). According to researchers, "demographics, personality, identity, motivations, life experiences, and social contexts" (Snyder & Maki, 2015, p. 268) of individuals serve as determinants in understanding the act of volunteerism.

Cilluffo and Cohn (2017) reported a demographic trend resulting that by 2019, the Millennial population will be the biggest generation in society. Through the subsequent generational shift in place, as Baby Boomers are focused on their retirement. The baton is being passed from Baby Boomers to the Millennial generation. It is understood that nearly every generation has been encouraged to participate in measures to support civic engagement. In this study, it is important to determine the overall impact of Millennials. The generational shift and the changing demographics instill the need to better understand how to manage the Millennial landscape. Nearly, every generation has been called to lead initiatives to support civic engagement. Therefore, it is vital to understand

the measures in which volunteer commitment will be sustained in the long run. At a time of uncertainty, where there is a decline in the volunteer participation rate (BLS, 2016). In this context, a growing concern is in determining, if nonprofit organizations will be able to motivate and engage Millennial volunteers. This study offers nonprofit organizations pragmatic opportunities to maintain a competitive edge and to instill business practices (Maier, Meyer, & Steinbereithner, 2014) to recruit and retain the next generation of volunteers.

**Background and justification.** Volunteerism allows individuals to choose through their own accord to offer support to individuals and within the community (McAllum, 2017). It is a selfless act. As a result, the BLS (2016) reported that educated individuals are more apt to volunteer. McAllum (2017) reported that advanced education offers an increased awareness of societal issues. The decision-making of when individuals choose to volunteer is driven by their need to express interest in volunteer initiatives; done through careful planning and consideration; and lastly how the decision to satisfying their “own needs and goals” (Clary & Snyder, 1999, p. 156).

Due to the implications of having a multi-generation working alongside one another, it is imperative to identify ways in which to keep Millennials motivated and engaged in the nonprofit sector. As the aging Baby Boomer generation transitions towards a state of retirement (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012), Millennials are positioning themselves to take the lead. From a broader perspective, future projections indicate that by 2028; the Millennials will have surpassed Baby Boomers; and be heralded as the largest generation (Fry, 2018). This study may have implications within how leaders identify attributes that serve as a springboard to transition from for-profit to

nonprofit organizations. This study has the potential to identify motivation and engagement practices that will transcend into helping to recruit and retain its Millennial volunteer workforce. In conducting this qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher will gain a wealth of information capturing the lived experience and will conduct twelve to fifteen interviews of Millennial volunteers located within southern eastern states.

**Deficiencies in the evidence.** Employee engagement and motivation has largely been studied through human resource management (McAllum, 2017) in; business practices and in academia settings (Pinder, 2008; Shuck, 2011). Employee engagement and motivation serves to emphasize the contribution offered by paid employees while in their assigned roles (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Newton, Becker & Bell, 2014) and address its relation to organizational effectiveness (Macey & Schneider, 2008). According to Kahn (1990), the defining of engagement concentrated on the behaviors in which individuals choose to do with or without them in exchange for job performance. In the realm of business, employee engagement serves to understand the psychological conditions of workers resulting in gaining a sense of a) meaningfulness, b) safety, and c) availability (Kahn, 1990). Researchers have conducted studies to examine engaged employees in association with their work performance (Anitha, 2014; Reisjeger, Peeters, Taris, & Schaufeli, 2017; Shuck & Reio, 2014). There exists a correlation of how engaged employees will surpass expectations and pursue measures to satisfy their commitment to accomplishing business goals (Anitha, 2014).

Shuck's (2011) recommendation for scholars and human resources was to employ a collaborative approach in gaining perspective on employee engagement and its theory.

In the scope of nonprofit organizations, there are limitations found in the study of volunteer engagement (Malinen & Harju, 2017). Researchers have suggested the need to find suitable measures which will forge a relationship between nonprofits and Millennials. It has become increasingly necessary for organizations to identify ways in which to develop the next generation (Twenge et al., 2010).

**Audience.** For-profit and the nonprofit sector leaders, human resource leaders, Regional and local community organizations could benefit from the research. In addition to educators, trainers, and consultants who can help offer awareness of social behaviors exhibited among the different generations, as they relate to one another.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Commitment.** Commitment is “defined as social and emotional attachment to a role-based group, or the extent to which an individual’s relationships to others are contingent upon possessing a particular role and identity” (Walker & Lynn, 2013).

**Engagement.** Engagement “means to participate in any enterprise by self-investing personal resources, such as time, physical energy, and cognitive power” (Ponciano & Brasileiro, 2014).

**Millennials.** Millennials were “born between 1982 and 2000 ... this generation feels empowered and wants to make changes for the better” (Fishman, 2016).

**Motivation.** Motivation “is the act of stimulating someone or oneself to get desired course of action or to push the right button to get the desired reactions” (Anyim, Chidi, & Badejo, 2012).

**Volunteer Engagement.** Volunteer engagement “is related to self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (psychological

measures of well-being)” (Vecina et al., 2013).

**Volunteerism.** Volunteerism “means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization” (United Nations,2016; Wilson, 2000).

**Volunteer Organizational Commitment** “can be considered as one’s attitude toward an organization related to the willingness to dedicate a significant time and effort to the organization without monetary compensation” (Bang, Ross, & Reio, 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. The goal is to concentrate efforts on the inherent values that drives Millennial volunteers to remain committed and motivated within the nonprofit sector. The findings from this proposed study may contribute to identifying strategies that support a generation-specific platform which supports and finds value within the nonprofit sector.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 1 introduced the importance of volunteerism, as the outlook globally and within our communities have experienced numerous types of devastation. Amid catastrophes faced, individuals seek to make a difference in the lives of individuals in dire straits. The research study will concentrate on exploring motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers in nonprofit organizations. Topics to be addressed include phenomenon of interest, background and justification, deficiencies in the evidence, audience, key definitions linked to the study, and the purpose of the study. According to some researchers, Millennials are ego-centric and primarily focused on themselves, typically being referred to as “Genme or me generation” (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1117;



Twenge, 2006, p. 1). As the Millennial generation is expected to grow exponentially; (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017; Fry, 2018), through volunteerism they will have the opportunity to be change agents (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). It is necessary to understand the underlying issues supporting the commitment and motivation of volunteers. The statement of the problem is included to illustrate the need for public and private entities to support strategies to engage and retain Millennial volunteers.

Chapter 2 begins with a literature review comprising of the seminal theories and current works which supports the development of its theoretical framework. The theories supporting this study includes the functionalist theory, self-determination theory, social identity theory & role identity theory. Each gives credence to understanding the influences of individual behaviors and motivations. The chapter will provide a synopsis in the study related to exploring motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. Topics to be addressed include a historical overview of nonprofit organizations, understanding volunteerism, demographic trends of volunteers, and central areas of interest that are definitive in representing the Millennial generation. In addition, Chapter 2 will highlight the significance of engagement, both in work and volunteering. The inclusion of prosocial behaviors manifested in the areas of volunteer commitment, volunteer satisfaction, and volunteer management. The research questions include a central research question and two sub-questions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers in nonprofit organizations. This literature review concentrates on the application of three theoretical frameworks which offers insight into the attitudes and behaviors of Millennial volunteers which includes functionalist theory, self-determination theory, and social identity theory. Each theory serves as a reference point in support of this study. The scope of the literature review to follow introduces key topics: nonprofit organization history, volunteerism, volunteer demographics, Millennials, motivation, engagement, satisfaction, commitment, human resources management, and volunteer management.

### Theoretical Framework

In support of this study, the theoretical frameworks included are functionalist theory, self-determination theory, social and role identity theory. Beginning with the application of the functionalist theory, volunteerism resonates as a need to understand the way individuals choose to become involved in initiatives to support the greater good (Snyder, 1993) for mankind. Secondly, self-determination is positioned to identify types of motivations and satisfy basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Lastly, social identity theory best captures the subtle nuances associated with Millennial volunteers who are defined by their social classifications (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

**Functionalist theory.** The functionalist theory is credited with examining the relationship between people's perception attitudes and their behaviors. Even further, Katz (1960) surmised that one's attitude is driven by either an emotion or one's value system. Through its own merit, a causal link for volunteerism requires having an interest in doing

so, and advocating time to help others (Snyder, 1993). Coursey, Brudney, Littlepage, and Perry (2011) asserted that in relation to volunteering opportunities, individuals tend to focus on the job-fit and its alignment in satisfying their needs.

In examining the functionalist theory Katz (1960) revealed four functions aimed at understanding motivations and attitudes: a) adjustment function; b) ego-defensive; c) value expressive; and d) knowledge which has the capacity to influence an individuals' behavior. These functions revealed how each can be interdependent upon one another when examining the rationale attributed to an individual's attitude. Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, and Miene (1998) proposed the idea that one's attitude could satisfy and provide fulfillment in the task of helping others. Houle, Sagarin, and Kaplan (2005) suggest that functionalist theory serves as a means of assessment to examine similarity in volunteer activities, which may result in dissimilar motivational gain. It will further aid in addressing the underlying reasons for which individuals' volunteer (Houle et al., 2005).

In understanding a volunteer's motivation and potential, there are six functions attributed to supporting the functionalist theory: a) values, b) understanding, c) enhancement, d) career, e) social and f) protective (Clary, 1998; Jiranek, Kals, Humm, Strubel, 2013). In order to determine the impact of motivations in volunteering, Clary et al., (1998) developed a Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to identify behaviors and beliefs associated with volunteers. The participant study included active volunteers previously engaged in volunteer efforts and followed by the expectation of having the drive related to volunteerism (Clary, et al., 1998). The prerequisites to participate included men and women volunteers who served in supportive efforts relating to kids in

crisis, individuals facing health scares, and disaster relief (Clary et al., 1998). As a result of the study, the findings supported volunteer motivations through the application of the functionalist theory and VFI (Clary, et al., 1998).

Through VFI, the values function inherently supports an individual's interest to contribute to the greater good or for the well-being of others (Houle et al., 2005; Clary et al., 1998). An example would involve efforts for disaster relief, feeding the homeless, or a mission's trip. The understanding function helps to broaden one's learning curve and offers the opportunity to develop and apply one's level of competence through their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Clary et al., 1998). The social function helps to individuals to connect and develop relationships with like-minded people, a shared commonality. The career function helps individuals to pursue opportunities for growth (Clary, 1998; Katz, 1960). The protective function helps to minimize feelings of remorse associated for one's good fortune, as opposed to others (Clary, 1998). The enhancement function serves to protect one's ego (Clary, 1998). Houle et al., (2005) study focused on aligning volunteer tasks and motives in association to the functions.

In order to assess the attributes of functional analysis in relation to volunteerism, Finkelstein (2008) conducted a study of 192 hospice volunteers to determine their volunteering motivations. The participants completed a VFI questionnaire based on the six motives. The study resulted in understanding that satisfaction was gained due to the connection garnered from the experience, along with the desired interest to help another (Finkelstein, 2008). The perspectives on applying the functionalist theory stems from the organization's treatment of participants, suggesting the validity of seeking the "perceptions and feelings" of the participants (Erasmus & Morey, 2016; Penner, 2002).

In some ways it mimics, the need associated for individuals to seek respect and appreciation from an organization. The same is applicable for a nonprofit organization. In closing, the functionalist theory is central to recognizing that as individuals seek to volunteer, the resulting motives in doing so offers a different perspective for everyone (Houle et al., 2005; Katz, 1960; Snyder, 1993). Interestingly, the application of completing a VFI survey is not without criticism. Shye (2009) is challenged from the reliance of the VFI motives which are not exclusive to identifying all the reasons in which one is motivated to volunteer. Even further angst is raised by the manner that volunteers choose to express individual motivations, as it is not an exhaustive list (Shye, 2009).

**Self-determination theory.** Beginning with self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2008) asserted how the significance of one's life is the extent in which it was experienced (Ryan & Deci, 2008). The authors affirm that the basis of self-determination theory centers on the understanding of human behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Moreover, Haivas, Hofmans, and Pepermans (2014) report that self-determination theory blends the level of satisfaction gained from one's experience and "social environments" (p.327) as it relates to their needs. Lee, Reisenger, Kim, and Yoon (2014) conducted a study of 489 volunteers who participated in an Expo in Korea which measured satisfaction and attitudes of volunteers. The expo served as a one-time, "mega-event" (p.38) where the study focused on the advantage of intrinsic rewards in correlation to the motives and principles inherent in volunteers as opposed to motivation gained from outside influences (Lee et al., 2014). Subsequently, there are three innate psychological needs which support self-determination theory includes autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Frendo,

2013: Ryan & Deci, 2000b). The psychology of self-determination theory suggests how the experiences can shape one's life (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

In satisfying the three psychological needs, autonomy allows individuals to choose the best decision for themselves (Paulin, Ferguson, Jost & Fallu, 2014; Frendo, 2013). The feeling of autonomy is present when individuals choose of their own accord and willingly seek to make decisive choices (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Competence demonstrates having a skillset (Ryan & Deci, 2000); indicative of possessing knowledge. Relatedness identifies the desire for a feeling of connectedness with others (Frendo, 2013). It gives rise to the forging sense of community; acceptance from others. Pioneers, Ryan and Deci (2008) have heralded self-determination theory to help gain an understanding of the different types of motivation.

In part, the theory of self-determination also identifies mini-theories to substantiate its relevance in understanding human nature. The mini-theories serve as a conduit in relation to gaining perspective of satisfying "basic psychological needs" (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 656). The theories included a) cognitive evaluation theory; b) organismic integration theory; c) causality orientation theory; d) basic psychological needs theory (Ryan & Deci, 2008) and goal content. The mini-theories influencing this study includes cognitive evaluation theory and organismic integration theory. Cognitive evaluation theory focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2008) and in determining the contributing factors influencing an individual. Overall, SDT helps in determining the "intention to continue volunteering" (Wu, Li, & Khoo, 2016, p. 1266).

**Social identity theory.** It is systemic to place emphasis on our identities to identify ourselves. Through the contributions made by volunteers, it is understandable to

recognize the influence gained from a social and role identity theory. The framework of social identity is supported by the concept of symbolic interactionism (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Stryker, 2000). Mead (n.d) introduced the concept of symbolic interactionism, it implies a focus on one self; and suggests we gauge our behaviors in relation to others. Social identity helps us to gain perspective on how we see ourselves (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Berg (2004) asserted on the uniqueness of people, and in how they communicate. In gaining an understanding of how lives are lived, our learning stems from human behavior not instinct. With a renewed interest in social identity, Ellemers, Haslam, Platow and van Knippenberg (2003) declared upon the relational effect found between an individual's work behavior and their associating in social groups. Early works illustrated behaviors and biased practices when conflicts arose.

Early works on social identity theory; examined the patterns of individual and social situations. Jenkins (2008) argument contradicts the concept that behavior is influenced by one's identity and attested how identity helps in giving individuals meaning. Among the four types of identities: core identities, social identities, group identities and role identities correlate with the idea of self. Theorists suggest that core identities are the inherent qualities in which we possess (Serpe & Stryker, 2011; Mead, n.d.). In the study of behavior, social identity theory addresses the way in which individuals describe themselves within a social context (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Group identity focuses on the feelings of connection discovered within group membership or connection (Mead, n.d.). Through identity theory, emphasis is placed on the significance of how future behavior is influenced by one's social roles and identities (Serpe & Stryker, 2011). Tajfel and Turner's (2004) study contributed to the concerted effort of

understanding the influence of social and role identities for Millennials. The theorists focused on how social groups offer individuals their identity (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Thereby, offering volunteers the opportunity to assess the influence of individual roles, and encompasses a social identity gained from others.

**Role identity theory.** The role identity theory places emphasis on the multi-faceted roles assumed by individuals (Hogg, Terry & White; 1995). An individual may carry the role identity associated with a title, a position, or an age group. In the role of a volunteer, individuals gain a sense of esteem for their efforts in helping others. Marta, Manzi, Pozzi & Vignoles (2014) asserted volunteers who are happily engaged, the expectations within role identity theory supports the idea of commitment and long-term involvement. Essentially, Thoits (2012) suggested that volunteer work aids in providing emotional well-being to individuals. It is understood that volunteers carry on the task of managing different roles and in doing so, the tasks aid in the development of one's identity (van Ingen, 2016) and can help to determine long-term volunteer involvement.

Marta et al., (2014) conducted a longitudinal study of 440 participants over the course of three years to determine the purpose of role identity theory. The study findings resulted in the determination of how a volunteer's role identity is strongly influenced through behavioral intention (Marta et al., 2014). The emphasis for organizations is to encourage individuals to offer a direct path for volunteers to have clarity in their roles (van Ingen & Wilson, 2016). The level of engagement and commitment gained by volunteers creates significance in fulfilling one's "purpose and meaning in life" (van Ingen & Wilson, 2016, p. 15). According to Chacon, Vecina & Davila (2007), the model of role identity is reached once an individual's self-awareness is equated as a volunteer,



which results in the volunteer role being representative of their identity.

In support of role identity theory, Stoner Perrewe, and, Munyon (2011) concentrated on the behaviors representative of assuming extra-roles which may also result as a clear indicator for the work contributed by volunteers (Marta et al., 2014). In pursuit of satisfying individual role identities, the driving influence of organizational citizenship behavior is through intrinsic motivation (Stoner et al., 2011). Volunteer work has the capacity to offer a sense of purpose to one's life (Thoits, 2012). Furthermore, it serves as a precursor for volunteer performance and retention (Marta et al., 2014). This serves as a pragmatic way to connect the behaviors related to a volunteer role and placing emphasis on an individual's assumed identity as a result of their role (Marta et al., 2014). Millennials place significance in title roles and in developing their skillset. Essentially, Thoits (2012) suggested that volunteer work aids in providing emotional well-being of individuals. As a "Genme or me generation" (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1117; Twenge, 2006, p. 1), criticism lodged against Millennials as being selfish and egotistic (Paulin et al., 2014), yet possessing the willingness to contribute more to others. Tajfel & Turner (2004) applied consideration of status hierarchies in relation to how groups were formed.

### **Overview of Frameworks and Volunteerism**

Each of the theoretical frameworks offers awareness in determining what contributes to the behaviors and motivations by individuals. Through functionalist theory, the context centered on the attitudes and motivations which would encourage participation. The tool used is the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI). The VFI is a 30-item questionnaire that assesses motivations and attitudes in association with these six functions: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social and protective (Clary, et al.,

1998). While the VFI is a popular tool, it has also been met with criticism. The naysayers question the number of functions in relation to motives.

Based on individual behaviors, self-determined theory supports the study by providing definitive insight to the machinations of people behavior and their life's experience (Ryan & Deci, 2008). In focusing on determining one's experience and motivations, it gives way to gaining an understanding of individual needs. Lastly, social identity helps to lay the groundwork in understanding the importance of relationships and connections individually and within a group setting. The theoretical frameworks serve to offer insight into the behaviors of volunteers to offer their services to nonprofit organizations. As such, it is vital to gain a perspective on the historical significance found within nonprofit organizations.

### **Nonprofit Organizations**

In the rich tapestry surrounding nonprofit organizations, while it is important to share in its past, it is vital to look at its current day status. Nonprofit organizations have evolved. Beginning with society, the presence of nonprofit organization has been present for decades (Hammack, 2002); along with the supportive efforts from the government (Norris-Tirrell, 2014). From a historical perspective, the richness of volunteerism is deeply embedded by acts of benevolence from one to another. Following the American Revolution, the influence of decrees by the British which offered U.S. communities direction by assuming its practices and customs (Norris-Tirrell, 2014; Hammack, 2002). From the late 1800s, the need for voluntary associations developed due to the casualties of war, famine, and to human suffering (Norris-Tirrell, 2014).

Later in the twentieth century, each individual state obtained authority to manage

nonprofit organizations (Hammack, 2002). The interest in volunteering has perpetuated from the early origins in forming the United States and is rooted in the country's foundations and principles (Jaskyte, 2016). The Internal Revenue Services (2016) heralded nonprofit organizations with the designation of a 501c3, as a tax-exempt charitable organization. There are numerous types of charitable organizations which offer humanitarian relief, supporting human rights, health organizations, religious organizations, and foundations (United Nations, 2016) .

In the last three decades, nonprofit organizations have adopted and mirrored the business and strategic goals found in the business sector (Maier et al., 2014; Dart, 2004). As leaders of nonprofit organizations focused on establishing their vision, mission statement and organizations goals (Maier, et al., 2014) for continued sustainability. It raises the concern of identifying what actions are deemed to be business-like for a nonprofit, since for-profit organizations business practices are heralded as business marvels (Dart, 2004). Nonprofit organizations have used traditional business processes as a barometer to remain effective. Maier at al., (2014) suggested that nonprofits are adopting business-like processes and placing emphasis on its recruitment choices.

McHargue (2003) identified commonalities that would be applicable for non-profits to adopt, in order to remain agile and competitive against other entities. In a comparison of a for-profit employees versus a non-profit volunteer, this gives rise to understanding how for-profit organizations make a concerted effort to develop its employee base (McHargue, 2003), whereas nonprofits normally do not have the opportunity to invest in volunteer growth and development. It clearly would be conducive for nonprofits to emphasize learning and leverage volunteer skill sets. Even as the skill

sets acquired should be transferable across other entities, it is important to focus on the sheer magnitude in how volunteerism aids our communities.

### **Volunteerism**

The act of volunteerism is recognized as a form of prosocial behavior and helps to substantiate why and when aid is offered to individuals (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). At first glance, volunteerism efforts through individuals have had the opportunity to influence change from a world's eye view to regionally, and locally (Shantz, Saksida, & Alfes, 2013). Snyder and Omoto (2008) identify six features that are definitive of the act of volunteerism:

- a) expectations are for volunteers to participate through their own volition;
- b) volunteers make a deliberate effort in offering aid to others;
- c) activities for volunteering occurs continuously over time;
- d) the choice to volunteer is without monetary gain or as a means of discipline;
- e) the act of volunteering centers on supporting individuals or groups in need;
- and
- f) the concept of helping others is garnered through other entities.

The State of the World's Volunteerism report by the United Nations (2016) offers a brief overview of volunteers' efforts to influence on a global, country, or local level by aiding those faced with hardships, emergencies, catastrophes. The decision to volunteer is not made lightly. Clary et al. (1998) suggest that "volunteers (a) often actively seek out opportunities to help others; (b) may deliberate for considerable amount of time about whether to volunteer, the extent of their involvement, and the degree in how particular activities fit with their own personal needs; and (c) may make a commitment to an

ongoing helping relationship that may extend over a considerable period of time” (p.1517). It is conceivable for nonprofit organizations to establish reliance of a volunteer workforce, in turn, offers volunteers the opportunity to help organizations fulfill their strategic goals and missions.

The concept of volunteerism is centuries old and reaches within the scope on a local, national, and global level. In understanding the complexities associated with nonprofit organizations, it is important to identify the key elements that drive participation by volunteers. In understanding the factors that influence volunteerism, it is important to place emphasis on its historical framework beginning with prosocial behavior. According to Schroeder and Graziano (2015) prosocial behavior serves to reflect the manner in that action is taken to help others. The actions reflect a focus on deciphering the influence associated with “helping, altruism, volunteerism, and cooperation” (Schroeder, 2015, p. 5-6).

The study of volunteerism concentrates on discovering the rationale to explain why volunteers choose to help; and the steadfast measures taken to remain motivated and engaged in their roles. In relation to nonprofit organizations, volunteers are attracted to helping to support organizations missions (Renz, 2016) and goals. As early as the 1950’s, at least “90 percent of nonprofit organizations came into existence” (Hall, 2005, p. 3). The demographic trends offer perspective on the types of individuals who have a vested interest in volunteering.

### **Demographic Trends of Volunteers**

As reported by the BLS (2016), there were nearly 62.6 million people who have volunteered through various organizations. Further analysis from the BLS (2016) reports,

illustrates a comparison across gender, age, race and ethnicity groups, marital status, education, and organization type. The volunteer standard for men reflected few changes, and while there was a slight decline for women from 28.3 to 27.8 percent, the BLS (2016) reports that along gender lines, women surpass men's volunteer rate. Age group population (see Table 1) illustrates individuals aged from 35 to 44-year-olds and 45 to 55-year-olds remain high, whereas the lowest age group is attributed to 20 to 24-year-olds at 18.4 percent (BLS, 2016).

Table 1  
*Age Group Population*

Age Group	Volunteer Rate
16 to 19-year-olds	26.4 %
20 to 24-year-olds	18.4 %
25 to 34-year-olds	22.3 %
35 to 44-year-olds	28.9 %
45 to 55-year-olds	28.0 %

Note: BLS, United States Department of Labor; 2016.

The BLS (2016) respectively identified three types of organizations that individuals seek to volunteer with and includes: 1) religious types; 2) an educational or youth center, or 3) prone to serve as advocates in social or community service organizations. According to Shye (2010), the results of the demographic trends inherent in volunteer types are persons with higher education and salary; and focused on religion. Agostinho and Paço (2012) emphasized that volunteers are affluent and educated. According to the BLS (2016), when assessing which gender was prone to volunteering, the women surpassed the men. Another point of interest focused on a generational outlook.

Understandably each generation has their own nuances which help to distinguish

between their expectations, personal and cultural styles (Shen Kian, Wan Yusoff, & Rajah, 2014). From a generational perspective, the focal point of interest by Millennials centers on addressing the issue and finding ways in which to find viable options and resolutions (Achieve Research Team, 2013). Due to Millennials being recognized as being born during the technology age, nonprofits will need to focus on the platforms in which Millennials rely upon in their communications (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Through the evolution of social media platforms, organizations have had to reevaluate how to connect with Millennial volunteers. The urgency suggested by Paulin et al., (2014) is that nonprofits need to develop tactics to engage Millennials. Indicative of the studies by Paulin et al., (2014) suggested that the suitable way to garner interest from Millennials is by appealing to how rewarding it would be to help others, as opposed to the individual self-benefits.

Overall the appeal for Millennials is based on expanding upon social causes, helping to gain clarity and maintain interest. Furthermore, as there are a vast number of individuals volunteering across the age-groups, the interest in Millennials is a result of the continued misrepresentation Millennials the inherent emphasis of Millennials being type casted as the “Genme or me-generation” (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1117; Twenge, 2006, p. 1). Overall, the demographic trends suggested that volunteers are well-educated and findings result in an increased awareness amongst the Millennial generation. According to Howe and Strauss (2000), the distinctiveness of the Millennial generation emerges as having acquired social habits for the better part of society.

### **Millennial Generation**

Millennials are expected to surpass baby boomers; this change is attributed to the

aging workforce, as baby boomers are near retirement or affected by death (Cilluffo & Cohn, 2017; Ertas, 2016). The Millennials grew up during the age of the internet, and they are distinctive due to the manner in how they communicate and connect with other generations. They are born from the generation whose parents represented the baby boomers (Ertas, 2016) and whose work ethic is seen in stark contrast to the Millennials (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). The Millennials observed the hard work, commitment, and loyalty by baby boomers (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

In turn, as organizations were downsizing, the baby boomers were subjected to dismissals and layoffs (Gong, Greenwood, Hoyte, Ramkisson, & He, 2017; Loughlin & Barling, 2001). The Millennials are culturally more diverse than preceding generations (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Taylor & Keeter, 2010), and may be attributed to globalization. Yet, the Millennials are misunderstood, as well. In gaining a fresh perspective of Millennials, the factors that influence and propel them forward are driven by their characteristics, civic engagement, digital age, and corporate social responsibility.

**Characteristics.** Millennials are perceived as the “Genme or me generation” (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1117; Twenge, 2006, p. 1); their preferred style is to work in teams (Kaifi et al., 2012) and being involved in work that is appealing to them (Williams, 2015). Collaboration is central to how Millennials are prone to working (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010) with others. Teamwork and garnering feedback from others are preferred communication styles by Millennials. This offers Millennials the reassurance that they are esteemed and validates their contribution to the organization (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Smith and Nichols (2015) addressed how Millennials are poised to lead. Fishman (2016) counters against the concept that Millennials view themselves as entitled but



rather live with the expectation in becoming tomorrow's leaders.

In opposition to the baby boomers, Millennials seek more in exchange for earning a salary. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) dispelled against the idea of Millennials having vast differences from other generation; they are not any more unselfish, or more family-oriented than other generations. For nonprofits organizations, leaders must recognize that Millennials are driven to change by organizations being transparent and in the embodiment of its organizational values (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Overall, as other generations have been stymied by viewpoints related to ethnic or cultural barriers; the Millennials are recognized as a diverse generation (Ng & McGinnis Johnson, 2015). Through diversity and having a global imprint in society, the Millennial generation does possess the desired willingness for civic engagement. Efforts to volunteer and offer one's services help to enhance Millennial skillsets. Due to the challenge of the longevity of baby boomers in the workplace, Millennials have sought alternatives deemed invaluable to their development (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). The Millennial influence is centered on positively impacting the lives of others from a local or global perspective.

**Civic engagement.** Twenge et al., (2012) reported that Millennials are community-centric, interested in civic engagement, and are focused on the greater good, as it relates to activism and the environment. Millennials are seeking greater meaning in and out of their work environment. It is the subsequent desire to make an impact on society. While on the job, Millennials are interested in seeking work-life balance, their interest is beyond receiving a salary (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Millennial cohorts are driven to their career goals, as well as through supporting community goals.

McGlone, Spain & McGlone (2011) conducted a study on organizations that integrate

social responsibility into their business and its effect on Millennials. According to McGlone et al., (2011), Millennials are more apt to volunteer -- when it is driven by social influence of organizations advocating volunteerism.

Taylor and Keeter (2010) conducted a telephone survey to interview Millennials aged 18 and older. They sampled 2,020 Millennials with 851 interviews conducted over a landline, and 1,169 interviewed on their cell phones. From their study, Figure 1, highlights the priorities considered important to Millennials. The top three findings illustrated that the Millennial priorities focused on family, relationships and helping others. Burstein (2013) views Millennials as pragmatic idealists, individuals who are passionate about their values. This desire encourages positive changes for the benefit of others.

In developing a relationship and rapport with nonprofit organizations, Millennials need to identify mutual core values (Gorczyca & Harman, 2017). Traditional communications will not work towards engaging Millennials. Paulin et al., (2014) recommended that nonprofits use strategies of social network sites to garner the interest of Millennials. Social media tools have the capacity to quickly engage Millennial volunteers. Paulin et al., (2014) conducted two studies which used Facebook pages to garner interest and awareness of two socially trending causes. Burstein (2013) suggested that to make changes, Millennials are aware of their capability to assemble their peers and propel them forward. As a result, organizational leaders can recognize the use of social media as a resourceful method to engage and communicate with volunteers, and its audience. For nonprofits, this highlights the effectiveness and the talent gained from Millennial volunteers who are adept in technology and are savvy (Kaifi et al., 2012).

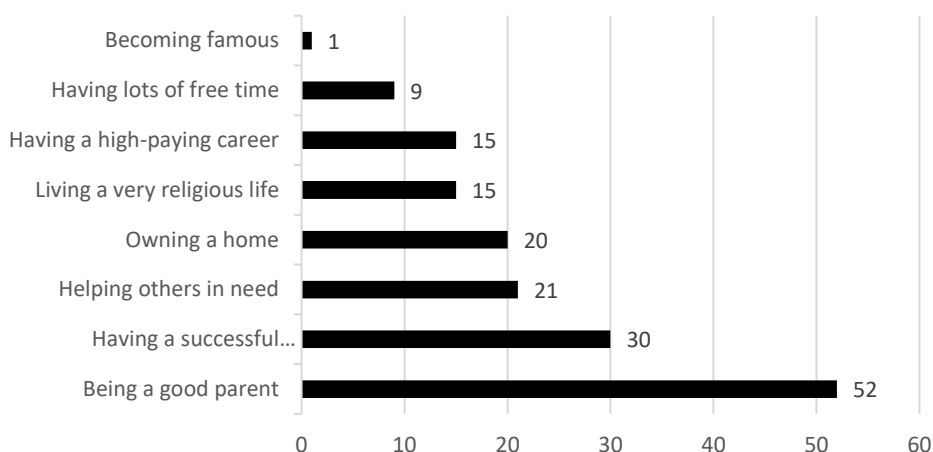


Figure 1. Millennials' priorities.

**Digital age.** The digital age has revolutionized how we connect with others, nearby or across the region. Millennials are considered to be the technologically savvy generation (Rissanen & Luoma-Aho, 2016; Twenge et al., 2010) that emphasizes the importance of community and seek meaning to their positions (Campione, 2016). Through technology, Millennials have embraced social networks and have established communities within these realms (Winograd & Hais, 2011). In using social media, Millennials are boundary less and able to connect on a global platform through various channels. Typical technological tools include the use of e-mail, smartphones, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, video chats, and the creation of social profiles. Interestingly, a causal effect that may occur with the reliance of technological tools, Millennials may be challenged by diminished social skills in communicating directly with others and may disregard social cues (Williams & Turnbull, 2015).

**Corporate social responsibility.** In its early years, corporate social responsibility (CSR) focused on philanthropic efforts through financial contributions to selected groups (Frederick, 2018). Today, corporations have advocated measures to develop opportunities in corporate volunteering (Nave & do Paço, 2013). The opportunity to engage in

organizations with a strategic plan for CSR allows Millennials to gain skills and experience, while also helping to leave a positive imprint in society. Millennials are drawn to organizations who support initiatives for (CSR) and these skilled workers seek to align with organizations whose values align with their own identity (Story, Castanheira, & Hartig, 2016). For organizations, this serves as an opportunity to broaden its brand and to illustrate responsibility within the community.

Organizations are focusing on leveraging the talent pool by illustrating the importance of CSR business platforms, and efforts in “gaining a competitive advantage” (Magbool, 2017, p. 540). From philanthropic efforts to social activism, CSR can help guide volunteering efforts to support company initiatives or individual interests (Rodell, Breitsohl, Schröder, & Keating, 2016). Longenecker, Beard, and Scazzero (2012) conducted a study of organizations with formal volunteer programs. A total of 519 employees participated in the survey. The findings revealed that participants developed their social and professional skills; improved work relationships, increased satisfaction, and offered the opportunity for “work-life balance and to “give back to their employer” (Longenecker et.al., 2012, p. 11).

### **Motivation**

In understanding the implications of motivation found within a traditional for-profit organization, nonprofit organizations need to apply different processes. The two types of motivations are intangible reward and tangible rewards. From the onset, intangible rewards are identified as intrinsic motivators offering individual to feel content by the deed (Gorczyca & Harman, 2017; Phillips & Phillips, 2010). Whereas tangible rewards are based on determining the value that can be applied to the task, albeit

identified as extrinsic motivation (Ryan, 2000).

Gorczyca and Harman (2017) conducted a study exploring intrinsic motivation by Millennials and intent to give in relation to charitable organizations. Nonprofit organizations should seek to can gain a better understanding of “Millennials attitudes, values, and behaviors” (Gorczyca & Harman, 2017, p. 2). The study surveyed 140 Millennials “attitudes to help others; towards charitable organizations; intent to donate and intrinsic motivation” (p. 8) which resulted in “a moderately strong and positive relationship between the latter” (Gorczyca & Harman, 2017, p. 9). Furthermore, the study results in providing nonprofit organizations with the opportunity to enhance knowledge to shape Millennials volunteer efforts in finding their work enjoyable, to appreciate their work ethics and to allow them to have full reign in their tasks (Gorczyca & Harman, 2017).

**Organismic integration theory.** Ryan and Deci (2000) introduced a sub-theory called organismic integration theory which concentrates on amotivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. Amotivation is indicative of a lack of “intention to act” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). Intrinsic motivation is the inherent desire or interest in an activity; whereas extrinsic motivation has the expectation of receiving an exchange or reward. In addition, organismic integration theory also includes four stages of extrinsic motivation: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Beginning with external regulation, Frenzo (2013) has illustrated the means in which individual behavior is dependent upon external influences based on the interest “to avoid punishment or obtain rewards” (p. 5). Introjected regulation causes individuals to

pursue the activity yet endure an internal sense of pressure brought upon through “to act out of guilt or anxiety” (Frendo, 2013, p. 5). Through identified regulation, as an individual recognizes the importance of the task, they are also personally “motivated by external rewards” (Frendo, 2013, p. 5). Lastly, integrated regulation is by far the best example of how extrinsic motivation is influenced by “goals, values and beliefs being assimilated into the self” (Frendo, 2013, p. 5).

**Causality orientations theory.** This theory is supported by three orientations: autonomy, controlled and impersonal (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Furthermore, Ryan and Deci (2008) attributed autonomy orientation as the means for individuals to gain awareness of their needs and which serves as guides to manage their behaviors. Through autonomy orientation, Soenens, Berzonsky, Vansteenkiste, Beyers, and Goossens (2005) suggested when individuals seek prospects, it is driven by their “values and interests” (p. 430). Within the context of controlled orientations, individuals rely on cues to help regulate behavior; and impersonal orientation is the way individuals feel as though they are powerless (Soenens et al., 2005; Ryan & Deci; 2008).

Through impersonal orientation, individual perceptions suggest they are “being influenced by factors which they have limited intentional control” (Soenens et al., 2005, p. 430). The researchers, Soenens et al., (2005) conducted a study to measure motivational orientations and identity style of 367 Belgium students aged 17 to 25. The findings from the study resulted in distinguishing the manner in behavior are linked to their “sense of identity” (p. 437).

**Motivation types.** Self-determination theory identifies six types of motivation: amotivation, and intrinsic motivation with four distinct types of extrinsic motivation

which includes external, introjected, identified, and integrated motivation (Kanfer, 2016). At its simplicity, motivation is the inherent way in which action is taken. In relation to volunteerism, there are two distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which resonate through intangible and tangible rewards, respectively.

Volunteers who are inclined towards intrinsic motivation do so out of having a deep-rooted interest in the matter of learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Volunteers whose focus is driven by an extrinsic motivation do so with the expectation of receiving something in return. It is feasible to recognize that the reasons for volunteering are innumerable (Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Nov, & Berson, 2013). In relation to the different types of extrinsic motivation, Ryan, and Deci (2000) introduced a sub-theory of self-determination theory referred to as organismic integration theory (OIT). Within the context of OIT, Figure 2 illustrates the taxonomy of motivational types in existence. In focusing on these motivational types, it can be beneficial for nonprofit leaders to understand what volunteers' value. Any volunteer task not associated with a monetary reward helps to understand why individuals choose to volunteer, as well as contributes to supporting the behavior (Bang et al., 2013). As a result, Figure 2 is representative of Ryan and Deci's (2000) study distinguishing between OIT taxonomy of regulatory styles. In consideration of comparing volunteers to non-volunteers, Breitsohl and Ehrig (2017) emphasize that the reason to volunteer stems from unselfish interest. Relatively, each group has a vested interest in the greater good, and welfare for others. Volunteering can be done individually or on behalf of a company.

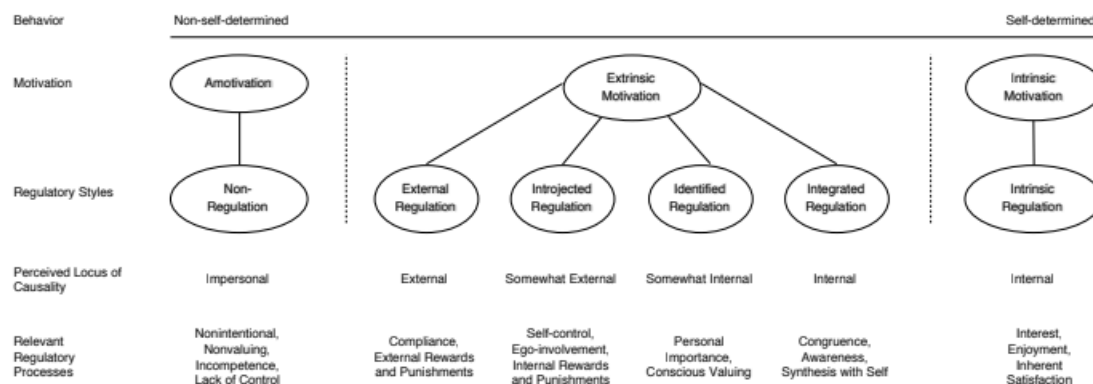


Figure 2. Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) Taxonomy of Regulatory Styles. Adapted from Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78. Copyright 2000 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted by permission.

The motivation associated with volunteering can help to increase organizational commitment and help towards the defining of one's social identity (Breitsohl & Ehrig, 2017). Vecina and Fernando (2013) conducted a study on pro-social motivations with the focus in assessing if interest was based on pressure or pleasure. The findings from the study resulted in determining pleasure-based prosocial motivation was indicative to happiness and having worthwhile feelings associated with volunteering.

According to Ryan and Deci (2008), external regulation and introjected regulation serves as controlled motivation. External regulation is positioned as a type that is reserved for merits and consequences; whereas introjected regulation serves as a mechanism that results in an "internalized motivation" (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 662). Expectations from individual participations lean to the idea that their behavior is contingent upon the resulting action (Bidee, Vantilborgh, Pepermans, Huybrechts, Willems, Jegers, and Hofmans, 2013). Controlled motivation is recognizing that motivation for the activity or task is not an inner desire to satisfy. Haivas et al. (2012) suggested controlled motivation is conducive to reward or punishment, as well an



avoidance of guilt. Identified regulation and integrated regulation are autonomous motivation. Identified regulation leads to individual awareness of the relative importance of the activity and is synonymous to one's personal goals (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Integrated motivation offers a direct connection between the motivation and inherent values (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Furthermore, self-determination theory supports the idea that satisfying one's basic needs is a natural precursor for wholeness in one's development (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Moreso, Haivas et al. (2014) deduced that it offers individuals the potential for growth and development in a positive light. In having taken careful steps in providing an illustration of how motivation influences individuals, another aspect focuses on work engagement. The matter of work engagement serves to support how to maintain interest among individuals.

### **Work Engagement**

The term work engagement and employee engagement has been used interchangeably. Gallup management was among the first to coin and take an active approach in identifying a traditional definition of engagement found in the workplace. Kahn (1990) is credited as having contributed towards its development and having helped to solidify comprehension by distinguishing between the two types of engagement: personal engagement and personal disengagement. Herzberg (1968) introduced motivation hygiene theory which contributed in identifying factors related to job attitudes. Herzberg's (1968) study identified five influencers of motivation and they included: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Employee engagement focuses on work attitudes, characteristics, and actions undertaken

by individuals (Macey & Schneider, 2008). In the same capacity in which organizations rely on workers to be engaged, it is also inherent for volunteers to be full of zest and find happiness in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Vecina et al., 2011). According to Kahn (1990), individuals make a choice in determining their satisfaction and contentment without losing their self-identity. Scholars Macey and Schneider (2008) suggested engagement is represented by determining an individual's sense of: a) job satisfaction, b) organizational commitment; c) psychological empowerment; and d) job involvement.

Kahn (1990) asserted that there is not one clear definition of engagement.

According to Saks and Gruman (2014), the word engagement has been an issue of contention, as there has been little agreement, as it relates to its definition, its significance and in measuring engagement. As for its name, it has become widely accepted as employee engagement, along with two additional classifications which include job engagement, or work engagement (Saks & Gruman; 2014). At issue is employee engagement which has a multitude of definitions, and researchers continue to raise the added concern of defining its significance within organizations. Kahn's (1990) approach deciphered engagement by evaluating the three types of engagements: total engagement, state engagement, and behavioral engagement. Overall, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) affirmed three reasons in which engaged workers are recognized as star performers, it is attributed to having positive emotions, good health, and the ability to mobilize resources. It can be said that an engaged worker has the capacity to positively influence others (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) defined three frameworks in association with employee engagement:

- engagement is a positive emotional connection to an employee's work,

- engagement is affective, normative, and continuance commitment, and
- engaged employees are inspired to go above and beyond the call of duty to help meet business goals.

Organizations and leaders continue to remain focused on identifying how work engagement can be better managed. As the overall intention is to have employees who find satisfaction in their career and job choices. Little and Little (2006) asserted there were some problems associated with engagement; primarily a lack of clarity in its meaning and it was not measurable. Considering the influencers of work engagement, the mitigating influences found in volunteer engagement is in stark contrast to work engagement.

**Volunteer engagement.** Malinen and Harju (2017) addressed limitations abound in the study of volunteer engagement, as it is relatively undefined. As researchers have agreed that an engaged worker may contribute to the effectiveness of the organization. Therefore, it is understandable that nonprofit organizations attempt to model business practices and processes (Dart, 2004). It is conducive for nonprofit organizations to be clear and decisive in determining the needs of the organization in association to completion of tasks. Disengaged workers may be affected by the underutilization of their skillset and ambiguity in their roles and notably, a significant decline in individuals volunteering (Harp, Scherer, & Allen, 2016).

According to the BLS (2016), the decline in volunteer rate is nearly 25%. Harp et al. (2016) conducted a study using the instrument Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, within its context it concentrates on presenting a set number of questions related to work, resulting in the determination of specific measures to determine workers level of passion,

interest, and connectedness to its work. In applying the concepts of motivation and engagement, it becomes inherent the need in which to support a volunteer's longevity to remain committed and satisfied in their subsequent roles. Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) take the position that organizational alignment is essential to employee engagement which in turn, helps to improve performance. Overall, the concentration of organizational alignment should be reflected through its infrastructure, to instill an increased level of engagement (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Vecina et al. (2011) conducted a study with 245 volunteers whose focus was on measuring volunteer engagement, volunteer satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to remain. The results of this study support the idea that "volunteers experience high levels of engagement" (Vecina et al., 2011, p. 15). In gaining perspective of the nuances of volunteer engagement, the next section concentrates on the encouragement of volunteer commitment.

### **Volunteer Commitment**

Through the course of volunteering, it becomes beneficial for organizations to gain knowledge as to what measures are vital for volunteers to remain committed in their roles. According to Burke and Reitzes (1991), commitment is intertwined with identity theory, as it relates not to the behaviors but rather to the predicated meanings associated with role identity. The act of commitment is illustrated by an individual's eagerness to volunteer (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Burke and Reitzes (1991) commitment intertwined with identity theory, as it relates not to the behaviors but rather to the predicated meanings associated with role identity. The act of commitment is illustrated by an individual's eagerness to volunteer (Burke & Reitzes, 1991).

Finkelstein's (2008) findings reported that social motives showed a connection to

length in service. As a result, recommendations were for organizations to have a full grasp of volunteer motives from the onset, which would help them to be aligned with their interests (Finkelstein, 2008; Houle, Sagarin, & Kaplan, 2005). Moreover, Houle, Sagarin, and Kaplan (2005) sought to measure the significance of volunteer motivation to tasks assigned. This in direct correlation to functionalist theory, whereby “volunteerism may serve more than one motive” (Houle, Sagarin, Kaplan, 2005, p. 342) and it is plausible for volunteer interest to benefit when motives and task interest are aligned.

Under the circumstances, there are three types of helping offered through volunteerism and they include: spontaneous, planning, and sustained helping (Clary et al., 1998). Spontaneous helping may be attributed to emergencies or catastrophes. According to Snyder and Maki (2015), emergency helping can be an event, or an immediate need, whereas as planning and sustained helping can conceivably last for a short or a lengthier period. The authors conducted a validation study of 369 undergraduate students who were required to volunteer within their local community (Clary et al., 1999). The study placed emphasis by asking the volunteers to share their perceptions and to identify the importance of what was gained from the experience (Clary et al, 1998). For the participants, it resulted in a display of continued interest in volunteering and examined the need of offering continuous help (Clary et al., 1998).

Bang et al., (2013) illustrated how effective a positive attitude, a strong will and determination not driven by financial gain contributes to a committed volunteer. Organizational commitment is distinguished by affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Bang et al., 2013). Van Vianen, Nijstad, Voskuil (2008) suggested that affective commitment focuses on the established

relationship between a volunteer and an organization. Further distinguishing that normative commitment concentrates on volunteers gaining a sense of accountability and desired trait for involvement (Van Vianen, Nijstad, & Voksuijl, 2008). Decidedly, continuance commitment is the decision made by the volunteer to remain with an organization (Van Vianen et al., 2008). In understanding the level of commitment involved, Penner (2002) suggested that most participants do not choose impulsively in deciding to volunteer, it may be driven by a personal desire to commit or an inadvertent request from a peer that instills interest. This invokes the need to determine levels of commitment in association to satisfaction for volunteers.

### **Volunteer Satisfaction**

Van Vianen, Nijstad, Voskuijl (2008) study focused on the volunteer motives and contributions associated with “personality fit, culture fit, affective commitment and turnover intention” (p.157). The study resulted examining how personality fit led to the interest in satisfaction and affective commitment, which was attributed to the long-term commitment to an organization (Van Vianen et al., 2008). Volunteerism is a long-term event and yet there are outside influences that raise awareness (Snyder & Omoto, 2008; Penner 2002); organizations on a national level such as United Nations, AmeriCorps, and Red Cross. Penner (2002) noted the effect surrounding the September 11, 2001 tragedy left local charities with an overwhelming response of individuals offering to volunteer or lend support to others.

In making the final determination to volunteer with a nonprofit organization; one’s attitude is driven by the significance for the role and organization (Bang, et al., 2013) and “motivation and satisfaction” (Chacon et al., 2007, p. 627). Maki & Snyder

(2017) examined the types of behaviors exhibited from a volunteer's role, and how it intertwines with Clary's functional approach. Through the introduction of a volunteer typology which includes "administrative, animal, autonomy, dependency, donating, build, environmental, and political volunteering" (Maki & Snyder, 2017, p.8). Their approach was to illustrate that volunteers having an interest in their roles, helps to maximize volunteer satisfaction (Maki & Snyder, 2017). While there are differences to explain why individuals volunteer, Kenyatta, and Zani (2014) asserted the importance of connection, as family members might be associated with the organization; it allows the opportunity to connect with others on a social level; and even that it offers a sense fitting in. Through the importance of establishing connections, the desired result is to maintain longevity for satisfaction and retention of volunteers (Maki & Snyder, 2017).

Finkelstein (2008) asserted that volunteer satisfaction gives way to acceptance of functionalist analysis in determining what influences volunteering. From a volunteering perspective, Finkelstein's (2008) study hospice care long-term volunteers where focus centered on time vested in the act and time invested in service. The study participants applied Clary's volunteer function inventory to determine individual motives in association with the six functions: values, understanding, social, career, protective and enhancement (Clary, 1999; Finkelstein, 2008). The results from the study indicated that the overall fulfillment of the participants was derived from serving and assisting others; thereby the motives that emerged as key to their volunteering had been attributed to values and understanding.

Chacon et al. (2007) study introduced a three-stage model of the length of service as volunteers focusing on organizational commitment. The researchers believed that it is

self-evident that the initial interests in which individuals first became interested; after time they may no longer be deemed as vital to continuing to volunteer. Yet it is also within the early stages of volunteering, whereby the level of commitment is not yet reached (Chacon et al., 2007). Their study focused on three types of intention to remain as a volunteer: a 6-month outlook, a 12-month outlook, and a 24-month outlook. The results of the study illustrated that intention was indicative to the duration of service in volunteering Chacon et al., 2007).

In assessing volunteer commitment, Bang et al., (2013) suggested that one's attitude based on the role and organization is pivotal in making the final determination. The commitment to volunteer can be driven by previous volunteering organizations, sheer interest, or personal conviction, and from shared relationships with others (Nencini, Romaioli, & Meneghini, 2016). A study by McNamee and Peterson (2016) resulted in identifying high stakes volunteers who were committed to firefighting helping victim advocacy groups or kids at risk. The researchers sampled the volunteers and their supervisors and conducted "interviews, focus groups, field observations, and document analysis" (p. 279).

McNamee and Peterson's (2016) study resulted in placing emphasis on the importance of socialization; it is a critical component for high stakes volunteers. In addition to placing emphasis on proper recruitment efforts, as to ensure volunteer motives serve to support its community versus as a means for the volunteer to overcompensate in an area lacking in their own lives (McNamee & Peterson, 2016). Motivation and engagement are key drivers in helping to distinguish as to the level of satisfaction and commitment exhibited by Millennial volunteers. Agostinho and Paço (2012) suggested



that fulfillment in volunteering is indicative of a gained assurance of support for the nonprofit organization and improved relations with peers. In understanding how, these serve as integral components to volunteerism, there is an opportunity in which to gain balance through volunteer management. This can result in offering increased added value.

### **Volunteer Management**

The significance of volunteer management has causal ties to Human Resources Management (HRM) (Carvalho & Sampaio, 2017; Studer, 2016). It centers on establishing a viable management structure to foster practices in “recruiting, coordinating, leading, supporting, administering, and organizing volunteers as well as strategic oversight” (Knepper, D’Agostino, & Levine., 2015, p. 213). Each of these areas is comprised to help motivate and engage unpaid staff, as they continue to support nonprofit organizations. This further fosters the need for leaders to expand upon the areas supporting volunteer management which works to “nurture” the relationship (Studer, 2016). According to Manetti, Bellucci, Como, and Bagnoli (2015), as nonprofit organizations rely on volunteer workers to help satisfy their strategic goals, it would be beneficial for nonprofits to invest in the recruitment and training of volunteers. The overall objective is to retain volunteers in the long-term, requiring the need to establish protocols to support volunteers (Knepper et al., 2015).

Organizations choosing to adopt a stringent set of practices that are interwoven into HRM can help to increase value in its selection process. It is recognizable that the contributions made by volunteers are significant in that it helps to foster increased opportunities in which organization can further invest in supporting its local community.

McNamee and Peterson (2016) recommend the importance in properly screening volunteers, as it is vital to understand the expectations from the volunteer and to provide them with the tools and resources needed through their supportive role. While there is an ebb and flow in the number of volunteers working, it is inconceivable for organizations to sustain itself without their contributions. In efforts to maintain a strategic edge, Hager and Brudney (2015) recommend an adaptation of applying “toolbox” management practices to support all facets of volunteer management initiatives. It would serve as an added benefit for organizations to utilize the resources in for-profit organization and transfer them to nonprofit organizations as the measure to maintain an effective organization. Knepper et al. (2015) support the adoption of management practices, concentrating on establishing regular communication with volunteers; screening and matching their skill sets, providing clarity on assignments, and emphasizing the need for a continuation of training and development.

**Human resource management.** Future HRM leaders can take a concerted effort in utilizing Bakker & Demerouti’s (2008) model of work engagement, to identify job demands resource. It should be simply understood that engaged workers, perform well in their roles (Bakker & Demerouti; 2008) and are apt to take on additional tasks. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) assert that as Millennials are adept at gathering and showcasing their skills, they need to learn to validate and understand of the need for Millennials to “knowledge workers” as information is readily available to them. It is increasingly self-evident for organizations to identify opportunities in which organizations can provide clarity to volunteers and their subsequent roles.

Resulting Chacon et al.’s, (2007) longitudinal study were strategies in which

organizations could employ with volunteers. Due to the uncertainty in knowing the length of involvement by volunteers, Chacon et al., (2007) proposed the need to ask volunteers directly as to their interest and commitment to volunteer; this may maximize their satisfaction as a contributing factor to an increase in volunteer service. As opportunities abound for human resources to implement measures which are central to having an engaged volunteer workforce in place. It may further aid in developing strategies that support initiatives to recruit a presence and Millennial platform, which supports and finds value within the nonprofit sector.

### **Research Questions**

The focus of the research questions is geared towards exploring the lived experiences of Millennials who volunteer in nonprofit organizations. It is especially important to understand how to find satisfaction through motivation and engagement among volunteers. The results from this study serve to illustrate the benefit of volunteering, in order to for volunteers and nonprofit organizations to work together in one accord by offering support and stability within their communities.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore motivation and engagement of Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization:

Central question: How do Millennials describe their experience in volunteering?

Sub question 1: What motivates Millennials to volunteer?

Sub question 2: What circumstances influence your decision to remain committed to volunteer in a nonprofit organization?

### **Chapter Summary**

Through exploring the motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers

in a nonprofit organization, the literature review addresses four theoretical frameworks. The frameworks encompassed a concentration of attitudes established by functionalist theory; motivation types of self-determination, and the significance of social and role identity theory based on the volunteer identity. The key areas central to the research study includes nonprofit organization history, volunteerism, demographic trends, Millennial attributes, and motivation, engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and volunteer management. These topics help to illustrate the volunteer's willingness to serve.

Chapter 3 will address the methodology associated with this qualitative phenomenological study. This section addresses fact-finding methods pursued through the data collection and data analysis and focuses on preserving the data. Through this chapter, considerable attention was focused on the relation between researcher and participant, and identifying the measures needed to protect the interview and data gathering process.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter focuses on selecting the methodology suited for this research study. Followed by a brief introduction about the aim of the study, along with highlighting the central research question and two sub questions. Through further explanation of the methodology, it is necessary to differentiate between the types of qualitative research designs and sampling approach. This chapter will concentrate on identifying the selection sites, the participants, confidentiality, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration, trustworthiness, research bias, and study limitations.

#### **Aim of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study will be to explore motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers in nonprofit organizations. The aim of the research will be to address any gaps found in recruiting and retaining Millennial volunteers. The following research questions are driven by this study:

Central question: How do Millennials describe their experience in volunteering?

Sub question 1: What motivates Millennials to volunteer?

Sub question 2: What circumstances influence your decision to remain committed to volunteer in a nonprofit organization?

#### **Qualitative Research Approach**

In selecting the methodology design, it is necessary to distinguish between the practicality of the two methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. In applying a quantitative approach, it is based on trends, relationships, and variables, resulting in statistical analysis, and generalizations (Creswell, 2015). The complexity and robustness of a qualitative approach captures the subtle nuances to “empower individuals to share

their story” (Creswell, 2013, p. 47) in real-time settings (Yin, 2011). Through the selection of a qualitative research, the desired goal was to gain perspective of the lived experience of the phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). According to Patton (2002), a phenomenological research concentrates on gaining “the meaning, structure, and essences of the lived experience” (p.104). Yin (2011) further adds, it is the pursuit of “studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions” (p. 8).

In choosing from the research designs, Creswell (2013) includes the five approaches found in qualitative research: narrative approach, grounded research approach, ethnographic approach, a case study approach, and a phenomenological approach. From Creswell’s (2013), there are definitive features attributed to the research design, a broad overview is illustrated in Table 2: Defining features of qualitative research helped in determining the appropriate research design. An unbiased approach helped to examine the differences among the approaches and determine which is better suited for the research study.

Table 2  
*Defining Features of Qualitative Research Designs*

Approach	Design Features
Narrative	Collect stories from individuals Tells of individual experience, their identity and how they view themselves Researcher may reorganize the participant stories into a chronological format
Phenomenological	Description of phenomenon; a concept or idea Exploring the phenomenon with a group of participants Addressing the essence of the participants experience
Grounded	Researcher seeks to develop theory garnered from steps, processes, or action Reflective notes created by researcher to share observations and learning’s Conduct series of interviews to identify the developing theory
Ethnographic	Depicts culture of a group, culture-sharing Capture the rituals and social behaviors found among cultures Analysis of culture-sharing; addressing how they function
Case Study	Focus on the study of a real-life case, or multiple cases Identify themes, issues, or specific situations Address a unique case, problem, or concern

Initially, the narrative approach was considered, as it was used to gather

information through a series of stories (Creswell, 2013); and further sharing as to why something occurred. The narrative approach was considered; however, it was not selected as its focus was on gaining knowledge of one's life story (Creswell, 2013). The grounded approach allowed for the theory to be developed as a result of the study (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013); thereby allowing the researcher to work backward in its development (Marshall & Rosman, 2016). The grounded approach was considered; however, the intent was not to develop or generate theories. Whereas an ethnographic approach was established to examine differing cultures (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013), it served to focus on "patterns of interaction roles, ceremonies, and rituals" (Marshall & Rosman, 2016, p. 17) within the cultural group. An ethnographic study was not under consideration due to the length of time required to gather and conduct research. Finally, a case study approach focused on studying a case and illustrating its complexities (Creswell, 2013). A case study approach had not satisfied the needs of this study, and was removed from consideration.

According to Creswell (2013), a phenomenological study focused on understanding the common themes, which the participants unknowingly share, as a measure to understand their lived experience. In support of conducting a qualitative research study, the research design that best supports this study is a phenomenological approach, which captures the "essence of the experience" (Creswell, 2013, p.76) of participants. In understanding the essence of the experience, Moustakas (1994) suggested that it offers an enrichment and clarity to "everyday situations, events, and relationships" (p. 47). The researcher's objective concentrated on capturing the "meaning given to the real-life events by the people who live them" (Yin, 2011, p. 8).

## **Selection Sites**

The selected sites for this study represented by two nonprofit organizations with approximately 837 members located in the southeastern United States. The population study sites represent a culturally diverse and progressive nonprofit organization. From each site, the racial and ethnic groups represented are Hispanics at 45%, Blacks at 30%, Whites at 20%, and other groups at 5%. The first site location has approximately 637 members and the second site location has approximately 200 members. The nonprofit organization has a workforce of 20 full-time and part-time employees to help manage approximately sixty volunteer groups led by volunteer leads. The volunteer leads manage from five to 20 volunteer workers. In efforts to seek participants for this qualitative research study, the proprietor for the nonprofit organization had provided the researcher with a site approval letter (see Appendix A) to conduct the study at their facilities.

## **Participants**

The target sample for this qualitative research study included 15 participants who are identified as Millennial volunteers from either location site. Once approval is granted by the Institution Review Board (IRB), the researcher sent the gatekeeper an email (see Appendix B) and flyer (see Appendix C) to assist in recruiting potential participants. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to gain an understanding of the research (Creswell, 2013). In selecting the participants, the criteria included: 1) participants must be active volunteers in the nonprofit organization, 2) participants must have volunteered within a range of two to five years in the nonprofit organization, 3) the participants must be aged between 22-years-old to 37-years old and present their license as proof of age. Upon satisfying all criteria, confirmed participants received an email confirmation (see



Appendix D).

Through qualitative research, a purposeful sampling was selected with the intention to select potential participants who would contribute to the study, and provide pertinent information (Jupp, 2006) about their experience; and provide information-rich content in examining the research study (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling offers researchers the opportunity to gain significant information in which to gain insight into the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). According to Creswell (2013), it is imperative that the “participants have experienced the phenomenon” (p.155). Through purposeful sampling, the researcher sought the assistance of a gatekeeper who provided the researcher with referrals, and who helped make introductions of the researcher to potential participants (see Appendix B) through email or in person.

Due to the nature of a qualitative research study, a gatekeeper’s role helps to support the process between the researcher and potential participants, while also protecting their organization (Creswell, 2015; McFayden & Rankin, 2017). Throughout the research study, the researcher and gatekeeper collaborated to identify potential participant, site needs, and to maintain confidentiality. In support of the relationship between the gatekeeper and researcher, McFayden and Rankin (2017) asserted that the success of the study would be attributed to keeping the gatekeeper apprised of early planning needs. In the nonprofit organization, the gatekeeper is a full-time employee whose role is to support the day-to-day business management needs. All potential participants received a flyer (see Appendix C) to recruit potential participants. From the flyer, the researcher conducted informational sessions to provide a synopsis about the study, its purpose, and invited individuals to participate in the study. The researcher

contacted potential participants through email or phone to inquire, if they would be interested in participating. If yes, then the researcher sought to determine, if they successfully meet the criteria. The researcher sent eligible participants an email to confirm their participation in the study (see Appendix D). For individuals who do not meet the criteria, they received a notice of decline through email (see Appendix D).

The next step required the researcher to send the participants with a non-disclosure agreement form (see Appendix E), informed consent form for participant (see Appendix F); and an in-depth interview protocol (see Appendix G). Each participant was asked to sign the non-disclosure agreement and informed consent form and return completed documents to the researcher. The researcher presented demographic and group profile questions (see Appendix I) to the participants. If the documents are not signed prior to the start of the interview, the researcher had extra copies of the non-disclosure agreement and informed consent form for participants to sign. In turn, the researcher scanned the documents through the Apple phone application, Genius Scan to provide an electronic copy to the participant. The researcher placed originals in a manila folder with the participant's labeled pseudonym/identification number. Each manila folder was stored away in the Sentry file box.

### **Informed Consent**

In this research study, the participant received a non-disclosure agreement form (see Appendix E) which serves to maintain confidentiality; and an informed consent form for participant (see Appendix F) which is required by all participants. The researcher presented the informed consent form, orally and in writing to the participant. The participant was given time to review and sign the consent form. The non-disclosure

agreement served to inform the participant that their identity would be protected, and it is mutually agreed that the confidentiality of all parties is deemed privileged information. The informed consent form was used to acknowledge that participation is voluntary, and offered participants of their authority to withdraw from the research study at any time. During this time, the researcher provided the participant with details about the research study, and how the data would be used in the research study (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). The interview session was scheduled for approximately 60 minutes, and the researcher presented a series of open-ended questions for the participant to respond. The researcher discussed with the participant the need to obtain verbal and written permission to record. In addition, the researcher explained to the participant that all recordings will be transcribed and available to them for their individual review of the transcription. The researcher used a Sony ICD digital audio voice recorder which was supported by Sound Organizer, its software application. In conjunction, the researcher relied on the use of Nuance Dragon Naturally Speaking, a speech recognition software.

### **Confidentiality**

Once the participants had been selected, the researcher obtained permission from the individuals to give their consent to participate in the research study. The meaning of informed consent implies that the individual has a full understanding of the research study and are assured that they were treated in an ethical and respectful manner (Creswell, 2015). Due to questionable research practices from past studies, ethical guidelines principles and statutes were established to protect human subjects (HHS, 2016, National Institutes of Health [NIHS], 2016. Even further, the American Educational Research Association Code of Ethics (2011) implores education researchers to embody

five principles: a) professional competence; b) integrity; c) professional, scientific, and scholarly responsibility; d) respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity; and e) social responsibility. The code of ethics serves to support and offer researchers expectations of preserving standards in place for participants. This study aided in providing confidentiality through establishing pseudonyms for participants. This identification number preserved and protected communications between the researcher and participant. In preserving research material, audio recordings, observation notes, and transcriptions from interviews were stored in a locked Sentry fire and safe resistant file box in which was only be accessible to the researcher. Any electronic documentation was stored electronically and on multiple hard drives. In accordance with IRB, all research records will be kept for a minimum of 3 years (Nova Southeastern University, 2011).

### **Data Collection Tools**

Through conducting a qualitative phenomenological study, the tools which were applied included an in-depth interview protocol and field notes. Traditionally, qualitative research reflects language that is either verbal or written texts as opposed to numerically as needed for quantitative research (Polkinghorne, 2005). In a qualitative study, the interest is to gain knowledge from the richness of the participants' lived experience (Englander, 2012; Kvale, 2007).

**Interview protocol.** In conducting a qualitative research study, the researcher created an interview protocol based on the Volunteer Function Inventory – VFI (see Appendix H). The VFI concentrates on the motivation and potential of volunteers across six functions. The six functions include: values, understanding enhancement, career, social and protective (Clary et al. 1998). The in-depth interview protocol (see Appendix

G) consists of 12 questions and allows the researcher to ask the participant two questions representative of each function. As the in-depth interview protocol form is modeled after the VFI, since this study relates to educational purposes, permission levels are not required.

In its traditional application, the VFI has been primarily used to capture quantitative statistical data. Although results garnered from quantitative studies, may identify existing problems; rarely do they offer an understanding or meaning of the participants' interpretation of the questions (Hochstetler, 2013; Mallinson, 2002; Manderbacka, 1998). In support of this research study, the interview questions were based on the VFI (see Appendix H). The interview protocol focuses on the inherent motivations of significance to volunteering which includes career, social, protective, values, understanding, and enhancement functions. During the interviews, the researcher provided a conceptual definition to describe each function to the participant. Each function is assigned two open-ended questions. In total, the open-ended interview questions are twelve. The questions allow the opportunity in which the participants can provide their individual perspective or feedback on the phenomenon. The objective offers a participant the opportunity to freely express themselves, and to illustrate the significance and meaning of their experience (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) in relation to the research study of volunteering.

The VFI was developed by Clary et al., (1998) and served to “measure the functions served by volunteerism” (p. 1518). In determining reliability and validity of VFI, the researchers conducted three studies to test each stage: “recruitment, satisfaction, and commitment” (p. 1519) in volunteering. VFI has been used in studies conducted by

Chacon, Perez, Flores, and Vecina, (2011); Bang et al., (2013); and Erasmus and Morey, (2016). Permission was granted to use this instrument, if it relates to “non-commercial research and educational purposes” (Clary et al., 1998) (see Appendix H). The original VFI concentrates values, understanding, enhancement, career, social, and protective functions (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

**Field test.** In support of determining the validity (Reed, 2014) associated with applying the VFI, the in-depth interview protocol was field tested with individuals representing Millennial volunteers but were not participants in the study. In choosing to conduct a field test, it resulted in addressing obstacles and increase reliability (Reed, 2014) in the use of the in-depth interview protocol. The researcher selected three individuals, or reviewers, to participate in the field-testing. At the start, these individuals received an email and verbal instructions which served to inform them that they are not participants in the study. Their only role is to determine the appropriateness of the research questions, clarity, and conciseness in determining which questions would best suit the participants. Based on the comments and feedback received from the reviewers, revisions to the in-depth interview protocol were made.

**Field notes.** Angrosino (2007) recommended the following manner in which to cultivate organized field notes: (a) to provide a statement describing the type of location and descriptors of the setting; (b) to capture the number of participants, and general characteristics; age, description and gender; (c) to provide a chronology of events having occurred; (d) to include descriptors for the behaviors and interactions observed; and (e) to obtain a record of conversations or verbal interactions. During the interview, the researcher used the observation and field notes protocol (see Appendix J). Its use aided

the researcher in capturing the participant's reactions "body language, tone of voice" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 143), along with other subtle nuances. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) gave credence to the use of field notes for interviews, as it aids the researcher to grasp participant meaning. The researcher recorded key phrases or behaviors exhibited by the participant while ensuring to remain engaged with the interviews. From the in-depth interviews and field notes gathered, the researcher transcribed the data obtained from the interviews.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection and data analysis procedures helped to establish the processes taken to conduct a qualitative phenomenological research study. The data collection represents the information obtained from the in-depth interviews of the participants. The data analysis represented the researchers' approach to interpreting the data. The researcher provided details on the step-by-step approach applied through this research study: the site location, in-depth interviews, and field notes.

**Site location.** In selecting the site location, Elwood and Martin (2000) reflected at the significance of micro geographies as it relates to spatial relations in research. The relational aspect concentrates on the roles and identities of how participants perceive themselves, as well as how it relates to the researcher and to the site (Elwood & Martin, 2000). For this qualitative study, the researcher solicited assistance from the gatekeeper for the site selection. The gatekeeper serves in the capacity of granting the researcher access to potential participants (McFayden & Rankin, 2017). In this instance, the gatekeeper is a full-time employee who helps to manage the day-to-day business management needs of the nonprofit organization. The gatekeeper reports directly to the

owners of the nonprofit organization. The gatekeeper applies his management skills to developing essential processes within the nonprofit organization. Subsequently, the gatekeeper is an integral member of the nonprofit organization. The gatekeeper provided a flyer to recruit volunteers (see Appendix C) to participate in the research study. For this research study, the gatekeeper served as an initial point of contact to help to introduce and identify potential participants to the researcher. In protecting the confidentiality of the participant, the gatekeeper assisted the researcher to identify areas in which to conduct interviews. This action serves to minimize any distractions or interruptions. The researcher reserved a private office to conduct the in-depth interviews at the organization's main location. Due to its central location, the site location offers flexibility and convenience to the potential participants. The location provided privacy for the participant to allow the individual to speak freely during the in-depth interview.

**In-depth interview.** The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview. The researcher presented a series of open-ended questions to the participant. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the participants and this provided participants the opportunity to detail the meaning of their experience (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). Jacob and Furgerson (2012) recommend listing questions from easy to difficult; in doing so, it serves to establish parameters in which to develop rapport between the researcher and participants (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). Given the nature of a semi-structured approach, the interview process had the flexibility to allow the participant to respond to questions out of order. This is beneficial to support the natural flow of the conversation between participant and interviewer.

The researcher sent an email invitation to selected participants to confirm their



participation in the research study. The researcher sent a non-disclosure agreement, informed consent form, and the in-depth interview protocol for the participant. The researcher informed the participant that the interview was scheduled for sixty-minutes and provided location details. The participant was asked to sign the documents and return them to the researcher. Prior to the start of the in-depth interview, the researcher discussed the importance of the paperwork. The researcher sought consent verbal and written permission by the participant to use a recording device. The goal of the researcher was to engage the participant and develop rapport throughout the interview process. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher announced to the participant that the recording would commence. If the participant chose against allowing the recording during the interview session; then the researcher pursued to handwrite the participant's response, along with having stipulated that the interview session would move at a slower pace. Due to the slower pace, the interview extended to 90 minutes.

In addition, the researcher presented a copy of the signed documents to the participant and provided the participant with a pseudonym/identification number with the acronym, MV\_NPO listed on the in-depth interview protocol (see Appendix G) followed by three digits to represent each participant. Each identification started with the number "0" using 001 to reflect the first participant and ended with "010" to reflect the final participant. From the start of the in-depth interview, the researcher presented a series of questions to establish rapport between the researcher and the participant. The research questions consisted of open-ended questions to the participant and allowed the participant to share their experience. The initial questions served to build rapport between the researcher and the participant. After the participant provided their response, the

researcher would prompt and probe the participant to further express themselves. Prompt techniques include “silence, repeating the question, and the use of words such as why, what, how, and who” (Rowley, 2012, p. 266).

**Field notes.** The researcher used their field notes to capture basic information relating to the study details, date of the event, description of the setting, and nonverbal cues and language exhibited from the participant (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). During the interview, the researcher took field notes from their observation of the “participants’ behaviors, facial expressions, gestures, bodily tone, clothing, and other nonverbal” (Polkinhorne, 2005, p. 143) communications. During the interview process, the researcher captured the participant’s emotions, tone, and cues in association with the questions presented, and to their response. From using field notes, the researcher was aided in framing the data gathered from the interviews. Even further by capturing the nonverbal reactions of the participants (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018), the researcher listened intently and observed participant reactions, as they responded to the interview questions presented. The researcher relied on creating short notes or key phrases, in order to maintain eye contact (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018) with the participant.

**Data saturation.** In a qualitative research study, data saturation is reached once the researcher has determined that no new information emerges (Bowen, 2008; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Mason, 2010) from the interviews. The researcher continued to interview until data saturation is achieved. In reaching saturation, the researcher then moved forward to avoid a loss of perspective (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) of the study. The researcher scheduled interviews for 10 participants. The significance of reaching data saturation indicates that the richness and depth of data has been met (Morse, 2015). If

data saturation has not been met, then the researcher will continue interviewing until data saturation has been met.

### **Data Analysis**

The phenomenological process seeks to address the exact nature of the lived experiences exhibited by the participants. The data from this study comprised from the in-depth interviews and field notes. In determining the accuracy garnered from the research study, and transcriptions, the researcher relied on two processes: internal and external validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In efforts to maintain internal validity, the researcher relied on analyzing and synthesizing key data points from the transcriptions and analysis of themes. The researcher read through the transcripts two times to ensure data accuracy. In efforts to maintain external validity, the researcher relied on the participant through member checking. This served as a process to allow each participant with the opportunity to review their transcript, to make needed corrections or to clarify their responses. In this manner, the participant can validate whether the researcher captured the essence of the lived experiences.

The researcher transcribed using the field notes protocol (see Appendix J), this served as a supplement for the transcriptions of the in-depth interviews. The researcher used the field notes protocol (see Appendix J) to capture the subtle nuances, reactions, nonverbal cues, and emotions expressed by the participant during the in-depth interview. The general information found in the field notes included study details, location, time, and the participant's pseudonym/identification number. The researcher relied on the use of field notes to help support the richness of the data collected.

Upon confirmation of content accuracy by the participant, the researcher listened

to the audio recording in conjunction or immediately following in order to gain the richness of the data. Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggested the need for researchers to be immersed in the data for increased familiarity. The in-depth interview transcripts and field notes from the participants were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document, and then imported into Nvivo 12. In transcribing through Microsoft Word, the researcher integrated them for coding. As Saldaña (2016) recommended researchers get comfortable with coding on paper to gain familiarity and ownership in coding. However, the researcher relied on using Nvivo which is a standardized qualitative analysis software.

Following the completion of importing the transcriptions to Nvivo 12, the researcher began to code. The researcher focused on developing emerging themes and seeking patterns from the transcriptions (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012). The researcher concentrated on re-reading the transcriptions repeatedly. From the field notes, the researcher relied on them to support the participant's in-depth interview transcripts. Upon continuous re-reading, the researcher sought out quotes or significant statements from each transcription in order to gain an understanding of the how the participant experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Smith et al., 2012). While Creswell's (2013) suggested applying a lean coding approach, whereby the researcher did not code every sentence but rather focus on finding fewer and redundant coding. Saldaña (2016) opposes a lean approach, as any exclusion may result in not knowing its range of full impact. By using field notes, the researcher placed emphasis between facial gestures, filler words, and body language which may add value to the findings. In order to maintain consistency in coding, the researcher created a code book (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). From this endeavor, the researcher relied on Nvivo software to aid in qualitative

analysis of text, data and visuals generated from this study. In reading through the transcriptions, the researcher concentrated on conducting line-by-line searches to determine any shared commonalities or patterns existing between the participants. From the data analysis, the researcher identified codes, themes, and sub-themes resulting from the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Based on the coding analysis, the researcher interpreted the data to be able to and share results with participants.

### **Validity**

Yardley (2017) identified four criteria demonstrating validity through qualitative research which includes sensitivity to context; commitment and rigor; transparency and coherence; impact and importance. Through qualitative analysis, the researcher remained sensitive to the data presented by the participants, and to their interpretation. Through sensitivity to connect, the researcher placed emphasis in developing rapport and empathy for the participant (Smith et al., 2012). Through commitment and rigor, the researcher established a suitable balance between probing, and the subtle nuances associated with nonverbal cues during the participant interview (Smith et al., 2012); along with the researcher having gained familiarity in understanding the topic, to offer thorough analysis (Yardley, 2017). In gaining transparency and coherence, the researcher provided clarity of the different stages of the research study, and this serves to illustrate how the researcher reached interpreted the data (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012). The final criteria associated with impact and importance determined whether the data offers thought-provoking results (Smith et al., 2012; Yardley, 2017). In addition, the researcher identified how validity is substantiated further through internal and external checks.

Through internal validity, the researcher read the transcript against the participant recording twice to check the data for accuracy. In turn, member checking results in the participant determining the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2015). This served an opportunity in which the researcher was able to ask the participant, whether the analysis accurately tells their story (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Through external validity, the researcher provided the participant with an emailed copy of the transcription to review within 72 hours. The participant had an opportunity to review the transcription for accuracy. If adjustments were needed, the participant could mark-up or add notations directly onto the transcript. The participant was asked to return the transcription through email to the researcher within 3 days to confirm its accuracy or make revisions.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2003) recommended researchers provide participants with informed consent and, confidentiality, as well as participant protection from any harm. The researcher provided a non-disclosure agreement and informed consent to the participant. The researcher assigned a reference number for all audio, transcriptions, and field notes to preserve participant identity (see Appendix B). The significant measures taken to protect the identity served to minimize against any data breaches. It also invoked and preserved confidentiality for the participant choosing to become part of the study, providing definitive measures to protect any personal identity or identification. In protecting the participant from harm, it is important to discuss generalized issues surrounding the study, address any expectations resulting from the study (Ritchie et al., 2003). The data comprising of electronic and hard copy was stored away. For the electronic data, the researcher password-protected computer files. For hard

data, the transcriptions and field notes will be maintained in a manila folder and be held in a Sentry file lock accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the research study, the research data will need to be preserved and protected after three years. All relatable documents such as text, audio files, transcriptions, and field notes will be shredded and destroyed three years after the conclusion of the study.

### **Trustworthiness**

The activities of prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation were deemed as ways in which to determine the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Member checking helped to substantiate external validity, as well. Through prolonged engagement, the researcher maintained communication with the participants to keep them informed of the research process. Triangulation was validated through the “researchers’ lens” (p. 127) and had been captured from the various methods employed by the researcher which included interviews and field notes (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Through member check, the researcher had requested each participant to review transcripts generated from the in-depth interview sessions. In doing so, the accuracy of the content generated from the interview sessions was validated by the researcher. In efforts to achieve internal validity, the researcher listened to the recording two to three times to ensure they have accurately captured the participant responses in verbatim.

### **Potential Research Bias**

From the onset, the researcher’s objective provided clear examples of experiences attributed to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). During the interview process, the researcher shared their early involvement in volunteering within a variety of nonprofit

organizations. Through bracketing, the researcher removed any pre-conceived ideas developed and allow the phenomena to be fluid in its development (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). From the participant selection process, the researcher sought volunteers who are open to sharing their lived experiences. The researcher captured and noted the participant's reactions and expressed responses resulting from the in-depth interviews and field notes. Through member checking, the researcher relied on feedback or comments from the participant's review of the study findings to check for accuracy (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Through the data collection process, the researcher kept a reflective journal to capture notes associated with the research study. This served to support an audit trail.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 focused on applying a qualitative, phenomenological research designed to explore motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. In determining the population and participants, a purposeful sampling was selected. The chapter also provided a discussion of the data collection and analysis used in the research study. The data was a result of transcriptions generated from in-depth interviews and field notes.



## Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. The nonprofit organization selected to participate in the research study was a religious type. These findings were based on the recruited participants which were aged between 22-years-old to 37-years-old. For this study, the research questions were driven by the following central question and two sub-questions, which are as follows:

Central question: How do Millennials describe their experience in volunteering?

Sub question 1: What motivates Millennials to volunteer?

Sub question 2: What circumstances influence your decision to remain committed to volunteer in a nonprofit organization?

From the data collection process, the findings generated were a direct result from the in-depth interviews and field notes. The interview protocol helped to capture essential themes, categories, and patterns gained from the participant interviews. Chapter 4 concludes with providing coding and data analysis of the research studies. Highlighting the developing themes, sub-themes, and outliers resulting from the participant interviews. The aim of this research study was geared towards identifying the inherent values for Millennial volunteers to remain committed and motivated in the nonprofit sector.

### Sample and Site

A purposeful sampling approach had been used in selecting participants to explore motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. The researcher wanted to gain rich-data of the lived experiences of the potential participants (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). In selecting a nonprofit organization, the

researcher gained the assistance of a gatekeeper to help identify potential participants. The gatekeeper served as a point of contact for the nonprofit organization between the potential participants and the researcher.

The gatekeeper sent an email and flyer (see Appendix C) to seek potential participants. In turn, the researcher contacted potential participants through email to recruit for the research study. The researcher conducted informational sessions with the potential participants. The initial sample pool consisted of 15 participants. During the selection process, three participants withdrew from the research study citing imminent travel plans for the holiday seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas. One participant withdrew from the research study citing health conditions, and one participant never responded to the researcher.

The sample pool resulted in the recruitment of 10 participants. From the flyer and phone calls to the participants, the researcher sent each participant an email (see Appendix D) to confirm their participation in the study and worked towards arranging an interview schedule. From this email, the researcher sent participants a non-disclosure agreement form (see Appendix E), the consent form for participant (see Appendix F) and, a copy of the in-depth interview protocol (see Appendix G).

**Demographics.** The sample size consisted of 10 participants located in the southeastern United States. The selected participants represented millennial volunteers aged between 22-years-old to 37-years-old and whose volunteer service ranged between two to five years. The participants represented included five males and five females. The racial and ethnic groups represented includes; one White and nine Hispanics. The marital status of the participants includes: one married and nine singles. In addition, the general

breakdown in their education illustrated that one participant had an MBA degree, five participants had completed their Bachelor's degree, two participants had completed their Associates Degree, and two other participants attended college but had not graduated with a degree. Table 3 provides the demographic data for the 10 participants which includes the number of volunteer groups which they had been involved.

Table 3  
*Demographics of Participants*

Participant	Gender	Education Level <sup>1</sup>	Age	Service Years	# of Groups Involved In
MV_NPO_001	M	AA	22	2	1
MV_NPO_002	F	BS/BA	32	3	5
MV_NPO_003	M	BS/BA	26	5	1
MV_NPO_004	M	< 2	23	2.5	2
MV_NPO_005	F	BS/BA	34	3.5	3
MV_NPO_006	M	BS/BA	30	3	2
MV_NPO_007	F	< 2	28	4	2
MV_NPO_008	F	AA	23	2	2
MV_NPO_009	M	MS/MBA	27	2.5	3
MV_NPO_010	F	BS/BA	24	4	4

Education Levels; Associate Arts (AA); Bachelor Science (BS)/Bachelor of Arts (B/A); Masters Science (MS); Masters Business Administration (MBA)

### Data Collection

Through data collection, the researcher relied on two sources: in-depth interview and field notes to triangulate the data resulting from the interviews. After gaining participant interest, the researcher contacted each participant by email or phone to arrange a suitable time to conduct the interview. The participants expressed interest and were enthusiastic to participate in the study. Due to availability of potential participants, the researcher conducted interviews from November 18, 2018 to December 9, 2018.

**Interview process.** The researcher organized 10 interviews and arranged to meet between 30 to 60-minutes. At the start of each interview, the researcher discussed and

informed the participants about the research study, and informed them that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the interview at any. Each participant signed the consent form and non-disclosure agreement.

At the onset of the interview session, the researcher informed participants the need to record the interview session and to take notes. The researcher requested verbal consent from the participant to record the interview. During the interview, the participant was informed that while responding to the questions, there might be instances, where the participant may be prodded to illicit more details. The audio recorder was turned on and the researcher proceeded with asking the questions from the in-depth interview protocol (see Appendix G). In conjunction, the researcher used field notes to capture follow up responses by the participants. The field notes were also transcribed to capture meaningful content provided by the participants. The researcher captured verbal and nonverbal cues presented by the participants. At the close of each interview session, the researcher informed the participant that the transcribed interviews would be sent within three days through email. Each participant was informed they would have one week to review and make any necessary changes and that they would receive in the email a signed copy of a consent form and a non-disclosure agreement.

**Data saturation.** Data saturation occurs when no new information is generated from an interview. For this research study, data saturation was determined after the final session with participant 10. The researcher noted the responses from the participants who provided similar replies, and any attempts to prod for additional content, did not illicit new information.

## **Data Analysis**

At the completion of each interview, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings and written field notes for each participant. The researcher utilized the audio recorder to automate the transcription process by using Sound Organizer and Nuance Dragon Naturally Speaking Software applications. The final transcriptions were created by using Microsoft Word. The researcher used Nvivo 12 for data analysis. The transcriptions were kept stored on a Toshiba external hard drive to protect the data. The original interview and field notes for each participant were placed in a manila folder.

**Internal reviews.** From the data analysis, the transcripts were authenticated by the researcher at a minimum of two times. The researcher listened to the audio at a slower speed rate to capture the participants' responses. This served as an internal check to ensure accuracy in transcribing the interviews. A few punctuation edits were made to the transcripts and use of common filler words like, um's and uh's were enclosed in parenthesis.

**External reviews.** In conducting member check, the researcher emailed the transcriptions to the participants and offered them the flexibility to respond with any corrections or final confirmations within five days. Subsequently after five days, the researcher contacted the participants and four participants confirmed no changes. A second reminder sent to the remaining participants who had not responded. Due to the non-response, the researcher made the determination that the transcripts were approved. The researcher tallied the total number of pages of data which resulted in 88 pages. The in-depth transcripts resulted in 77 pages with 10 field notes with a summary sheet.

**Data analysis process.** After having finalized and authenticated the transcripts,

the researcher applied a qualitative methodology to identify themes resulting from the transcripts. The software, Nvivo 12 was used by the researcher to conduct data analysis by collecting and coding the data. The one exception, field notes had not been uploaded into Nvivo 12 in order to avoid duplication. From the data analysis, the researcher identified patterns of words and phrase from the transcripts through Nvivo 12. For the researcher, the software aided in helping to compare and to contrast the information obtained from the transcriptions and field notes.

**Theme development.** From the in-depth interviews, each participant presented the significance associated with volunteering in a nonprofit organization which also serves as their place of worship. From conducting the data analysis through Nvivo 12, the researcher identified eight themes, seven sub-themes, and two outliers. The researcher relied on the transcriptions and field notes to identify the themes. The development of the themes resulted in 50% of the participant responses from the interview protocol. From the identified sub-themes, the researcher found content which supported the explanation and their relation to the themes. From the results of the findings, outliers were identified. Outliers are a result of when the data presented by the participants is inconsistent with most of the data (Salkind, 2010). From this research study, the outliers yielded less than 50% of participant responses yet more than 10% of participant responses.

As a result of the study, the identified themes include: (1) cultivating relationships, (2) gaining volunteer satisfaction from role, (3) following the call to serve, (4) advocating moral responsibility among individuals and groups, (5) helping others, (6) needing to belong, (7) developing character traits for personal growth, and (8) seeking influence through social media engagement. Table 4 illustrates how each participants file

interview and how often the participants mentioned words related to the themes. For example, all 10 participants had referenced the importance of taking the time to cultivate relationships with others; gaining volunteer satisfaction from their roles, and helping others.

**Table 4**  
*Identifies Themes, Sub-Themes, and Frequency*

Themes and Sub-Themes	Participant Files Referenced	Total # of References
1. Cultivating relationships	10	48
2. Gaining volunteer satisfaction from role	10	32
3. Following the call to serve	7	21
4. Advocating moral responsibility among individuals and groups	7	18
Sense of duty	6	13
5. Helping others	10	17
6. Needing to belong	9	15
Building community	5	7
7. Developing character traits for personal growth	5	10
Self-esteem	7	15
Confidence	5	10
Humility	5	9
Compassion	4	4
8. Seeking influence through social media engagement	7	8
Fear of missing out	3	3

### **Developing Themes**

From the transcriptions, the participants shared about their experiences in volunteering in the nonprofit organization. Some participants shared their personal stories of knowing that their desire to serve is based on their relationship to God and in following his principles. The participants expressed the importance of serving other people, as a means of offering God's love. There was a shared message from the participants of putting aside their egos, and feeling the need to pitch in and help in whatever capacity needed. Table 5 explains the developing themes.

Table 5  
*Developing Themes and Explanation*

Themes	Explanation
Theme 1: Cultivating relationships	Efforts made to develop genuine friendships and connections with others.
Theme 2: Gaining volunteer satisfaction from role	Individual gratification in role performance and contribution to the organization.
Theme 3: Following the call to serve	The desired will to follow one's purposes; considering the act of service as their calling.
Theme 4: Advocating for moral responsibility among individuals and groups	Promoting moral responsibility by understanding between right and wrong; to abide, duty.
Theme 5: Helping others	The act to which one will offer aid or assistance to another.
Theme 6: Needing to belong	The desired interest to be a part of something bigger than oneself; it offers a sense of connection with others.
Theme 7: Developing character traits for personal growth	The development of an individual's value or belief system.
Theme 8: Seeking influence through social media engagement	Behaviors are driven by the perceived influence of others within our society.

**Theme 1: Cultivate relationships.** Cultivate relationships illustrates efforts towards developing genuine friendships and connections with others. From the data analysis, Table 4 illustrates that all 10 of the participants recognized the significance in cultivating relationships with one another. This action is supported by mission/vision statement of the nonprofit organization which places emphasis on the value of “relationship, relationship, and relationship.” The teaching within the nonprofit organization takes the position of promoting healthy relationships. The significance of relationships – primarily begins with having a relationship with a spiritual entity which in this setting, it is God. The second aspect of relationship is based on connecting with others through special events, services, and group meetings. Lastly, this centers on the



relationship one has within the local community. There is an overwhelming sense of a vested interest by the participants to develop healthy relationships, as indicated by the following responses:

*“I’m a faith-based individual, you know, has faith in God and I feel that that is something that the Lord, God wants us to have; always the human connection. I think for reasons of just helping each other out and pulling each other up and sometimes bringing each other down (laughter) and helping us stay accountable and just growing as, in our faith.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_002)

*“I love the quote, “no man is an island” (Donne, 1923). (Um) cause, we're really not, we were created to be in connection: one with God and then one with others ... volunteering is definitely an important thing when, when building relationships.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_009)

This participant described the need to be transparent, and genuine. *“By volunteering here, you got to know people in general. Get to know people to, develop more of a friendship and relationship aspect to where it's not just a hello/goodbye.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003)

In general, participants expressed the need to offer support and encouragement to one another. One participant responded by extending the relationships beyond its normal parameters. In this manner, the concentrated effort looks to develop balanced and cohesive relationships.

*“The connections you make with people that can help you in ways outside of the organization can help you more in financial ways, or just ways that they can plug you in other places, to help you in your career, personal life.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

Participants examined how simple overtures can be made to enhance established relationship. This resulted in a display of affection or words to uplift another. At its core, participants responded to having an openness with one another. A simple gesture of kindness has the capacity to unite all types of people.

*“I think sometimes, and the simplest way you can help somebody in need perhaps one is in need of a hug, something simple as that, or a smile, a word of affirmation or encouragement.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

*“It has broadened my relationships with so many different types of people. From so many different like demographics, people that I would have never thought I would even like have relationships with and it's interesting because in building these relationships, you learn so much more about yourself and other spheres.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)

**Theme 2: Gaining volunteer satisfaction from role.** From the research study, the participants expressed their level of gratification from their volunteering efforts with the nonprofit organization. Table 4 illustrates that all 10 of the participants expressed having gained volunteer satisfaction. From among the participants, the benefits of volunteering leaned towards contributing for a good cause and through offering hope to others. The participants were aware of their ability to influence change in the lives of others within the nonprofit organization. Participants expressed the reward gained from volunteering, it was not in monetary reward but it increases their level of fulfilment and gratification in supporting others. Some of the influences, which garnered encouragement for the volunteers, included peer support, as the intention of establishing and building trust offers contentment. The participants’ responses are as follows:

*“I’ll say that when I’m able to bless one person’s life that by my act of serving them or volunteering or whatever is able to help a person or give hope to someone’s heart that for me is more than enough.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_002)*

*“Just knowing that I am able to do my part in the greatness the grand scheme that is (um) church and like helping others get to Christ and just the fact that I can play the smallest of roles, is amazing and so it definitely makes me feel accomplished.”*

*(Participant MV\_NPO\_007)*

*“It just changes who you are actually as an individual and it develops you to be more mindful of other people, it’s definitely done that for me. Being more selfless, think of other people.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)*

*“It makes me feel good, that what I do, the minimal thing a part of this organization is helping thousands and hundreds of people coming to the church and accept God and just bring people closer to God. (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)*

*“My faith in the word of God and trying to live out what it says and trying to live out what we say we believe. It is what volunteering means and I know at the end of the day, God will reward me, whether uh you know whether financially or in many other aspects in life and not or you know, yet that’s pretty much what influences my decision.”*

*(Participant MV\_NPO\_006)*

*“When you volunteer and you see other people ... you see the need that they have. Um you know definitely it makes you feel and um, it makes you feel grateful for what you have and your also grateful because you know that if you were ever in their situation there’s people wanting to step up and help you as well.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_009).*

**Theme 3: Following the call to serve.** For the participants, this is their desired

will to follow in one's purpose or in their calling. As a result, seven participants felt compelled to pursue volunteering as their purpose. From the interviews, four of the participants identified themselves, as pastoral kids, their parents teaching the gospel to families or church member. Each participant expressed tending to others at a very young age and growing into the mindset, which links passion to spirituality and to people. For the participants, their interest was fueled by the principles of the nonprofit organization and with the added opportunity to aid the organization in helping others have a relationship with a spiritual entity, God.

*"It makes me feel happy, makes me feel like I have a purpose it makes me feel like I'm doing something worthwhile because I feel that my life has to be in God's will."*

(Participant MV\_2018\_NPO\_002)

*"It feels good to give back him specifically in this nonprofit organization that \*name redacted.\* I was sewn into a lot, a lot of people poured their time and their effort even their money and finances into me into my future and so it helps, not helps it makes me feel good that I can do the same to the next generation uh, it is, it is always better to give than it is to receive."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_004)

*"I know that a lot of people do it as a sense of like, people they say that people, who don't have Christ they do it, as a sense of like um a need to feel better about themselves sometimes or they really just act of giving or giving, or something. It's in their nature um, but for me, the main thing that fuels me to even serve is the love that God has given me, so freely and how patient he has been with me."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

*"It is my home church. (Um) and I also believe in the vision of the pastors and really believe in the organization."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

From the interview, two participants had parents who were actively involved within the community and instilled values for them to be civic-minded. The participants offered help towards feeding the homeless, worked at the soup kitchen, helped local missions' group. In pursuing those avenues, one participant remarked, *"when you do something you like, you never really work a day in your life."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003).

*"I grew up in church and I've obviously as followers and believers in Christ, we believe that you know we have to serve others so, (um) I guess the answer to that will be my belief, my belief influenced my decisions volunteer nonprofit organization."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

Two participants shared childhood memories of areas with an increased population of homeless in the local area. Participant MV\_NPO\_009, shared having been curious and asked their parents and pointed towards the direction of a homeless person. It was a pivotal moment, as this fueled the desire to help the less fortunate. Participant, MV\_NPO\_010, vividly recalls the first encounter to help others. It was during family outings to a nearby fast food restaurant with the family, where the participant would plead to help feed another family. The parents would purchase a meal, and the participant would then proceed to offer the meal and to talk with the homeless persons. The participant responses are as follows:

*"Align with their values. I believe that their steady foundation, are founded on God's principles. They believe what I believe, they believe in things that I was raised up to believe so it just aligns perfectly with my life. I think it's not about finding the perfect church; I think it's about finding the church that aligns best with who you are as a core*

*individual.*” (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)

**Theme 4: Advocating for moral responsibility among individuals and groups.**

The need to promote moral responsibility by understanding the difference between right and wrong, many of the participants felt inclined to apply God’s principles over their lives. Its sub-theme; feeling a sense of duty helps to support our own moral convictions Table 4 illustrated that seven participants recognized their need to be morally responsible through their volunteering. The instruction of abiding in God’s principles, for some participants their journey began during their formative years, whereas others experienced this phenomenon later as young adults. The participants’ responses are as follows:

*“My decision was my connection and my relationship with Jesus Christ and that’s why I serve and that’s why I chose to do nonprofit organization because I’ve come to know him as a good father, he’s a good person, he is perfect it’s amazing but he doesn’t fail us.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_002)

*“I volunteer at, at the church I attend. So, you know, the culture that we have here is, you know, you save to serve and you serve to get people saved. (Um), you know that is embedded in who we are and what we've done. So, if my job is to help people, what better ways than by serving people.* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003)

*“I think it’s because as it’s for God. I think to me, in my mindset, it’s like for the fact that it’s for God. You should even like do it 110 percent. You are not being paid, it’s kind of like an honor for what we do, to serve God is an honor.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

*“I grew up in church and I’ve, obviously as followers and believers in Christ, we believe that you know we have to serve others. So, (um) I guess the answer to that will be*

*my belief, my belief influenced my decisions volunteer nonprofit organization.”*

(Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

**Sub-theme: Feeling a sense of duty.** In the capacity to support moral responsibility, as a sub-theme, feeling a sense of duty falls in line with the inherent responsibility felt to act. For the participants, they expressed their desire to mirror the ways of Jesus. From Table 4, the data analysis resulted in determining that six of the participants were compelled by feeling a sense of duty. This action is achieved by encouraging one another to raise the gauntlet and offer support to one another.

*“The fact that I can make a difference in somebody life and that’s it, and I can facilitate like if we put it in spiritual aspect. I mean to me volunteering or serving is basically me being a facilitator so they can encounter Jesus.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

*“As Christians, Jesus came to serve as he did the most selfless act ever. So, putting or giving of your time and energy and focus on others is another selfless act, is how you can serve them.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

*“I’ve always had a positive view of volunteering. It’s always been a sense of just being able to give back from what you have, being able whether that’s your resources or your time, or whatever else it maybe you’re being able to get back to the community and help those who may be less fortunate or who just need the help.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_009)

**Theme 5: Helping others.** Helping others serves to offer aid or assistance to another. The participants expressed their efforts to offering their time and offering an opportunity for others to share their challenges. Table 4 illustrates that 10 participants

recognized this theme. Some responses by participants are included as follows

*“I love helping people...I have had friends that have been, I want to kill myself and I have had to sit there for hours and talk them off the ledge. Some friends that have been addicted to drugs and had to go at 4am to go pick them up at a party somewhere, and it’s not that I’m forced to do it. It’s because I’ve decided as myself to put it on my shoulders to help.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

In a recent matter, a participant shared the affliction of a young student. The student had confessed to being bisexual and her parents were outraged. Even with the participant’s biblical beliefs at hand, the participant showed more concern over the student’s welfare and her state of mind. The expressed care and concern for her far surpassed a lifestyle choice.

*“Creating that safe space, where it’s okay to talk to me, you know, I do put it out there that while I don’t agree with the lifestyle, but that doesn’t mean you can’t talk to me. I think that’s more of what has helped from here; you know it’s caring for the actual person and who they are.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003)

Two participants felt compelled to link arms with others in part to share the gospel. Yet more so, the participants shared their life struggles and conveyed a sense of empathy and understanding to others. One participant touched individuals through her melodic singing voice, and the other participant lends a listening ear to offer support and understanding.

*“Knowing that I’m able to help bring others into the presence of Christ. (Um) and be able to share my experiences and my stories so that others can relate with me, (um) that has been the most gratifying thing that I feel. Um just being able to connect with*



*others and show them like its okay you're going to be fine, and the grass is greener on the other side.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_007)*

*“I've seen a lot of people; um I've seen how helping other people has been so beneficial for them and for me. Um, I have seen, I've seen other people be grateful. I've seen other people come to me and say you know, if it wasn't for you helping me in taking the time you know I don't think I would've been able to get to where I am, or get out of what I was in.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_2018\_009)*

Through efforts to encourage others, some participants lead groups to encourage further engagement and the opportunity to get to know; one's wants or needs. The gestures do not require a huge investment. Some participants offered words of affirmations, encouragement, a smile, a hug, storytelling, and even spending time together. In applying these actions, participants served to encourage along their life's journey.

*“I think sometimes, and the simplest ways you can help somebody in need maybe somebody is in need of a hug, something simple as that, or a smile or word of affirmation or encouragement.” (MV\_NPO\_005)*

*“We can all contribute is (uh) words of encouragement. You know, there are some people I've met. I've spoken to some young men here, and they're going through some hard times. They're going through stuff that I've gone through so I'm able to help them out.” (MV\_NPO\_006)*

**Theme 6: Needing to belong.** For the participants, they were driven by the need to be part of a group and to establish a connection with others. Table 5 offers a brief explanation of the desired interest by participants to be involved in something bigger than

themselves. The sub-theme of building community emerged due to the participants need to belong which was offset by establishing a connection with others. A total number of nine participants validated this theme. Participant MV\_NPO\_009 equated belongingness to Donne's (1923) quote, "no man is an island" whose work declared a connectedness to life and land. Participant responses are as follows:

*"I think uh for me personally I've always wanted to be part of group always want to be (um) with people ... So, I think having a sense of belonging connection with other people is really important for me."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

*"I've seen them more confident, I've seen them more like assertive, and like they found a purpose in church and it's like they're not just coming here to come but feeling like they're part of something, that's what volunteering does, it makes you feel like you are a part of something."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_002)

*"It's very important for me to be part of a community, of a church community for me, and I am a social butterfly. (Uh) so, it is important for me to have social connections with others. (Um), I genuinely go out and talk to people, see how they are doing, you know to see what's going on."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

*"I definitely think that belonging somewhere and being able to have that connection with others is definitely something vital."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_009)

**Sub-theme: Building community.** From the participants, the intent to build community serves as an offshoot to the theme, needing to belong. The participants seem inclined to show support and encouragement to others. The participant responses indicated the following:

For example, according to Participant MV\_NPO\_2018\_010, within the nonprofit

organization, there is another group of younger aged children who are involved in learning about the merits of volunteering.

*“Sometimes, you have to put yourself aside and focus on others. So, (um), it’s very important for me to be part of a community, of a church community.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

*“Before I started serving, I was very to myself. And (um), I started first serving in the welcome team and that really helped me build relationships with people that are like-minded like me. And just being able to, (um), have relationships with people that are doing life the way that I want to be doing life as well.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_008)

*“Being able to see people trust you enough with the situations and the things that they’re going through and then being able to see them you know go through the process of getting out of whatever situation they were in.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_009)

*“It developed my character in a way that no other place because its just reminding yourself of how small you are and how big everything is around you and the reality of the world and realizing that there’s so much to do, it opens your eyes.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)

**Theme 7: Developing character traits for personal growth.** Prior to volunteering, many participants recognized how they were personally challenged by their perceived flaws. Through volunteering, the participants expressed how their character traits had markedly improved. The participants have recognized the positive long-term effects influenced by volunteering. In assessing their efforts, participants acknowledged receiving something more tangible than financial rewards. In addition, there were four sub-themes identified which benefitted the volunteers, these includes self-esteem,

confidence, humility and compassionate.

*“It has impacted my life because I have, I am who I am because of what I've done in an organization in a nonprofit a lot of people find their identity in work and that's great but I found my identity in Christ and I found so much more value in serving in church and loving God and loving others and I think that I am who I am, because of what I've done in church so I think it's like so ingrained in who I am.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_002)

*“The culture that we have here is you know; you save to serve and you serve to get people saved. (Um), you know that's embedded in who we are and what we've done so if my job is to help people what better ways than by serving people.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003)

*“It has made me feel more capable when it comes to team related things. I used to do a lot of things on my own, so that has definitely grown in that area.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_007)

**Sub-theme: Self-esteem.** Participants shared the influences associated with experiencing an increased self-esteem and acceptance from their contributions. The participants expressed authenticity in their self-examination of how volunteering has helped them to overcome negative behaviors. The participants' actions represented the desire to move beyond expectations and fears in their efforts to volunteer, and how these positive behaviors transferred to other areas of their personal lives.

*“I volunteer for anything and it's become who I am.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

*“It has helped me in my confidence and my abilities in my job where I am not as afraid. I guess or insecure about certain issues so that it has helped.”* (Participant

MV\_NPO\_002)

*“Once you see what it does to other people. Because truly when you volunteer here, it’s for the benefit of other people not really yourself that really changes everything.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003)

*“It has made me feel more capable when it comes to team related things. I used to do a lot of things on my own, so that has definitely grown in that area but not necessarily career wise.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_007)

*“it builds self-confidence in yourself of how much it is that you can handle. Not just in volunteering but in everything, cause you’re like I can handle that I’m a strong individual because I push through and I’m not going to quit.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_2018\_010)

**Sub-theme: Confidence.** The participants expressed how their level of self-confidence increased through volunteering. From the participants, they expressed focusing less on their flaws, and were able to confront their insecurities and fears. The participant responses are as follows:

*“It has helped me in my confidence and my abilities in my job where I am not as afraid. I guess or insecure about certain issues so that it has helped.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_002)

*“Leading worship has helped my insecurities, and I would never ever have thought that would be a thing, but it was. There was a girl who pulled me aside. She was like, you like, it was silly, and I guess, you helped me realize that I don’t have to put myself in a box.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_007)

*“It builds self-confidence in yourself of how much it is that you can handle. Not*

*just in volunteering but in everything, cause you're like I can handle that I'm a strong individual because I push through and I'm not going to quit.*" (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)

**Sub-theme: Humility.** Participants expressed having gained a sense of humility through volunteering. Through humility, participants were aided by the actions of individuals who exhibited trust and vulnerability with others. Participants reflected on how humility had helped them to push past their own circumstances.

*"We can all help out somewhere in this. There is no job that is, oh no, I don't do that because I just don't want to. It's a matter of if; you are able to do it."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

*"I don't volunteer for the rewards or any benefits, I volunteer because people need help (um), and they need people who are willing to give, to step up and do that. (um), so, so it makes me feel it makes me, makes me feel good but also it makes me feel humbled at the same time. (Um) because you see the need of people and you say you know, thankfully where I am, I'm okay and I'm grateful that I have the opportunity to be able to help those who are in need."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_009)

*"It just changes who you are actually as an individual and it develops you to be more mindful of other people, it's definitely done that for me. Being more selfless, think of other people."* (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)

**Sub-theme: Compassion.** The participants expressed an understanding of offering compassion for others and themselves. The sense of compassion emerges from the relationships and through offering encouragement to others. In part, a participant had expressed having grace for newcomers who were trying to make improvements to their

lives. The participant responses are as follows:

*“The benefits are how to deal with people and how to communicate with people. I believe, from what I’ve seen, even people my age or around my age or younger, even older people, they are not necessarily to good at talking to complete strangers and start a conversation and finding something you know and so it has helped me in that aspect.”*

(Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

*“Benefits, (um) growing in my relationship with others, and (um) kind of just having a more grateful heart for, and more grace for newer people wanting to do things over and do things right.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_008)

*“I think being able to be there for people emotionally is so important (um), being able to be in relationship with people and let them know that, hey you know I'm here for you, for whatever you need I think that's definitely one of the most important things.”*

(Participant MV\_NPO\_009)

**Theme 8: Seeking influence through social media engagement.** The participants expressed the importance of social media engagement. Two participants had expressed the importance of how technology has the capacity to positively impact the nonprofit organization. Two other participants expressed their underlying need to remain connects, as they perceived themselves to be social butterflies and suffer from the fear of missing out. According to MV\_NPO\_006 who helped to facilitate with a youth group, the group initially would connect online to determine, if any youth members were interested in getting together. When a consensus is reached, the youth group will then find a suitable place to connect in person. These participants have relied on a social platform to engage and connect, this serves as their normalcy.

Further adding, “*how it’s really big importance of how we want to basically show who we are thus social media, through the internet*” (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

“We like, all want instant gratification and we’re not willing to stick it through to see what’s on the other side.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_010)

“*I am a social butterfly uh, so, it is important for me to have social connections with others.*” (Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

**Sub-theme: Fear of missing out.** Fear of missing out drives millennials to make a concerted effort to remain connected primarily through social media, followed along within their social circles. Table 4 illustrates three participants afflicted with the need to remain connected. The participant responses are as follows:

“(Um), I think it is pretty vital not for myself but I can’t speak for everyone my age but there’s this thing called FOMO. Fear of missing out and I feel like a lot of us have that (um) not fear but that thing we don’t want to miss out, we want to be a part of something.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

“*I am a person that needs to be connected at all times I have a big fear of missing out phobia, if you will I need to be connected and engaged at all times cause if its not, it's just like, oh what am I going to do today?*” (Participant MV\_NPO\_004)

### **Outliers**

From the data analysis, there were two outliers mentioned by participants which were not considered to be a theme. Nonetheless, the added value of identifying outliers can offer supplementary insight to the findings. The two outliers identified were training and retention.



Table 6  
*Developing Outliers*

Outliers	Explanation
Training	Offers individuals rudimentary instruction to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities in their volunteer role.
Retention	Concentrates on finding viable tools and resources to keep volunteers interested and engaged in the organization.

**Outlier 1: Training.** Notably, some of the participants did make the correlation of how volunteering provided development to their learning, and skill development. Notwithstanding, challenges in providing the appropriate tools and resources needed for proper training. In one example, a participant shared having decided to shadow one of her two volunteer groups. It was a spontaneous worship service, whereby the leader selected a song that was not found on their normal track list. After the initial angst of observing her peers, the participant was comforted by the learning opportunity which presented itself. The participant realized that had she not been present to job shadow; she would not have known where to obtain the archived song. Up until this moment, there were times of despair and an internal struggle with being involved in this group, as both of her volunteer groups required her to arrive earlier than expected. For her, she now understood, “there are benefits of being here early and like being prepared and being ready.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_007)

Another participant has shared the measures taken to self-learning. *“I started um in this portion of serving or, um and volunteering um I've learned so much through taking pictures, videos, um video editing through all the people that have helped me and the things I've learned that I have had to learn to figure it out.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_001)

A participant shared first impressions in volunteering which had been, *“I can’t mess up, if you do, it’s okay because you’re learning but you have to strive for no mistakes because everything we do is for our purpose. (Um), I remember the very first few times that I was to volunteer, there, they literally asked who wants to do it. I said, I’ll do it. I don’t know how, I’ll do it. They just said learn quickly so that it doesn’t come out bad and that’s really what caused the learning curve.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_003)

A participant shared between the difference of how he had been trained in his previous church, and how he “had to figure out how to deal with (uh) people differently ... my expectations for them were not like over here. Like I understand, they were like baby Christians. I understand like they just wanted to get involved in the beginning. I just have to have a lot of patience in teaching them, some of them have a sense of responsibility, some of them don’t have a sense of dedication.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

As well as another participant expressing “from what I’ve seen, even people my age or around my age or younger, even older people, they are not necessarily to good at talking to complete strangers and start a conversation.” (Participant MV\_NPO\_006)

**Outlier 2: Retention.** The participants recognized how their involvement was driven by their spiritual beliefs. Notably, it led one participant to offer support and encouragement within different facets of the nonprofit organization. As volunteers, many of the participants had actively led in numerous volunteer groups; averaging from involvement within one to five groups at the same time. The participants repeatedly expressed the need for others to seek to volunteer. At different instances, participants having commented on how little time is required to make a commitment to volunteering.

Yet, a participant shared having observed a young adult and had counseled on the need to take a step back to reflect on volunteer commitments and to the groups in which the young adult was involved in at the nonprofit organization. The participant expressed the importance of taking time off from volunteering, *“as it’s easy to fall into the trap ... of love for Jesus.”* Participant MV\_NPO\_005)

The participant discovered the young adult had been actively volunteering in 6 different groups within the nonprofit organization. The participant raised the concern to the young adult citing possibly becoming overburdened, feeling tired and missing out by serving. The participant recommended being involved in 2 to 3 volunteer groups. Sometime afterward, the participant shared, *“three months had lapsed, and the young adult had disappeared for 2 weeks citing the need for a break.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_005) After returning to the nonprofit organization, the young adult had shared the need to re-evaluate their participation and had withdrawn from three groups.

A participant recognized having *“to (uh) throughout the years, to give up responsibility as a team lead to other people... now I know how to uh not just do all the work myself but then delegate to other people.”* (MV\_NPO\_003)

A participant shared the experience relating to their involvement within two groups, *“I’m going to be very honest, I kind of saw it as a drag particularly because in the \*redacted\* role you have to be here as early as the other "redacted" team has to be. And at the beginning, I was so put off because I love sleeping in.”* (MV\_NPO\_007)

Another participant shared feeling about volunteering. *“Oh, well there’s a lot of different facets sometimes I love it, sometimes I’m like no, I wish I was home watching Netflix. I think volunteering although it can be fun and although it can be fulfilling and*

*although you can be applying like your gifts and talents and learning by yourself, and that's incredible but I think at times it can be frustrating. Because, it is a sacrifice. So, I think volunteering, always feels sacrificial.”* (Participant MV\_NPO\_2018\_010)

The next section includes a summary of the research findings, and the developing themes and outliers resulting from this qualitative study.

#### **Summary of Chapter 4**

The findings of this study were a direct result of the in-depth interviews held with the 10 participants by the researcher. The participants shared their thoughts and feelings and were quite candid in sharing their perceptions from their lived experiences. The findings resulted in identifying eight themes which explored motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. From the in-depth interviews, the researcher identified two outliers. The themes are as follows:

Theme 1: Cultivating relationships

Theme 2: Gaining volunteer satisfaction from role

Theme 3: Following the call to serve

Theme 4: Advocating for moral responsibility among individuals and groups

Sub-theme: Feeling a sense of duty

Theme 5: Helping others

Theme 6: Needing to belong

Sub-theme: Building community

Theme 7: Developing character traits for personal growth

Sub-themes: Self-esteem; Confidence, Humility, and Compassion

Theme 8: Seeking influence through social media engagement

Sub-theme: Fear of missing out

Outlier 1: Training

Outlier 2: Retention

From Chapter 5, the researcher will expand on the themes, sub-themes, and outliers. In addition to providing, a discussion of interpretation of the study results and any limitations associated with the study. The researcher will offer recommendations for future research and a summary of the study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore motivation and engagement among millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. In conducting a phenomenological study, the focus was to gain insight into the lived experience and perceptions of the participants (Creswell, 2013). The researcher conducted 10 in-depth interviews allowing the participants to describe their experience in their capacity as a volunteer within the nonprofit organization. The major section of this chapter will provide a summary of the study findings, along with an interpretation, and relevance of the study's findings. This research study was guided by one central research question and two sub-questions. The research questions were:

Central research question: How do Millennials describe their experience in volunteering?

Sub-question 2: What motivates Millennials to volunteer?

Sub-question 3: What circumstances influence your decision to remain committed to volunteer in a nonprofit organization?

This study offers leaders and organizations who are seeking to gain knowledge of the intrinsic values which motivate and engage millennial volunteers. In conclusion, the researcher will provide a discussion of the limitations, recommendation for the practice and recommendation for future research.

### Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to explore motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. The millennials who have been type-casted as the "Genme or the me generation" (Twenge et al., 2010, p.1117; Twenge, 2006, p.1), where

their focus was internalized on themselves. This study sought to provide perspective in determining how to best position millennials and identifying the reasons for which they express their passion within a nonprofit organization. From Chapter 2, the theoretical frameworks supporting the research study includes Functionalist theory, Self-determination theory, Social and Role Identity. As a result, the researcher adapted the Volunteer Functions Inventory (see Appendix H) to an In-Depth Interview Protocol (see Appendix G) which encompasses open-ended questions based on the six functions.

From conducting ten in-depth interviews, the participants provided descriptive responses to questions from the Interview Protocol. From the interviews, the participants identified the significance of serving people in need, and how they were driven by their reverent love for God. The knowledge gained from this study can benefit organizations of all types. As the participants desire has been to promote positive change. Through this study, the participants provided insight into what drives engagement and motivation through their volunteering. Understandably, nonprofit organizations and leaders can invest in its volunteer workforce.

The findings contribute to examining the inherent values and characteristics which influence motivation and engagement of millennial participants in a nonprofit organization. From the 10 interviews, the analysis of the transcripts resulted in identifying eight themes, six sub-themes and two outliers. The themes are as follows: (1) cultivating relationships, (2) gaining volunteer satisfaction from role, (3) following the call to serve, (4) advocating for moral responsibility among individuals and groups with a sub-theme; feeling a sense of duty, (5) helping others, (6) needing to belong with a sub-theme for building community, (7) developing character traits for personal growth, and

four sub-themes of self-esteem, confidence, humility, compassion, and (8) seeking influence through social media engagement and a sub-theme: fear of missing out.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The narratives of the participants provided their viewpoint for their contributions as volunteers within a nonprofit organization. In connection to the questions based from the Interview protocol, the participants provided descriptions of what draws them to volunteer in a nonprofit organization, and, the participants expressed the inherent desire to draw upon the need to serve God and to serve others. In this section, the researcher will provide interpretations of the themes and significance of these findings.

**Theme 1: Cultivating relationships.** From this research study, cultivating relationships was described as the desired intent to establish authentic and blossoming relationships. Notably, the importance of relationships was consistent with the mission and value statements identified from the nonprofit organization. Ryan and Deci (2000) introduced through the self-determination theory, three psychological needs attributed to human motivation which includes “competence, autonomy, and relatedness” (p.68). Relatedness helps to enhance relationships (Hadden, Smith, & Knee, 2014). The focus is in finding resolute ways in which to expand and broaden relationships with others. The participants recognized the importance in establishing healthy relationships which served to nurture the connections made with others. It would be deemed vital to take the time to invest into one another. This finding is interpreted as that in working towards developing relationships, it simply requires making an investment in one another. The participant responses centered on broadening the relationship through making the time to connect separate from the nonprofit organization. In this manner, the concentrated effort looks to



develop balanced and cohesive relationships. Some participants shared how volunteering extended into their professional careers in helping them with their relationships with others, learning to have increased patience and understanding, while working together as a team. This finding was interpreted to suggest moving away from falsities or facades and find a way to entrust in showing our true selves. The finding was supported by Omoto & Packard (2016) equated it to a sense of establishing connection with others, where common interests are shared.

**Theme 2: Gaining volunteer satisfaction from role.** From this research study, all the participants expressed having achieved volunteer satisfaction. Cnaan & Cascio (1998) identified five traits significant in volunteer satisfaction and tenure, “motivation to volunteer, liking people, involvement in advocacy, involvement in administrative work, and life satisfaction” (p.20). The participants expressed the gratification they felt in being able to contribute in the lives of others. Campione (2016) asserted the importance of finding meaning in one’s work. This can yield positive outcomes in determining the volunteer satisfaction of participants, as a possible increase to their commitment level. According to Wong, Chui, Kwok (2011), volunteer satisfaction is measured by three aspects: “personal gain, relationship within organization, and relationship with peers” (p.19). This finding interpreted as to how intrinsic rewards can help to achieve volunteer satisfaction. Subsequently, volunteers can play a larger role within an organization, as their individual contributions helps to sustain an organization. It is without question that an individual’s sense of self is dependent upon their role (van Ingen & Wilson, 2016). The contributions offered by the participants was driven by a sense of hope and betterment for the welfare of others. It would not be a selfish act but would rather serve

as a selfless one. Volunteer satisfaction offers individuals the opportunity to maximize ways in which they can help and support others. Some participants expressed how volunteer satisfaction transcends into their professional roles. Campione (2016) referred to this as job absorption, whereby volunteer work can expand into other areas.

**Theme 3: Following the call to serve.** In choosing to follow one's calling, participant responses addressed the desire to serve God, serve others and to serve within the nonprofit organization. The call to serve was equal to the love one has for God. Kent, Bradshaw, and Dougherty (2016) likened vocational calling to knowing one's meaning and purpose. Further suggesting that a "calling carries a deeper moral obligation to oneself and others (Kent, Bradshaw, & Dougherty, 2016, p.347). The participants who subjected themselves to the call, did so in order to receive God's infinite love. The call to serve expands upon the need to find meaning in one's life (Campione, 2016). The call to serve requires commitment of one's time, a participant likened serving others as falling in line with God's expectation. Mencken (2013) explained that individuals with religious beliefs possessed a strong image of God. For some of the participants, their call to serve was enhanced by their belief system of having a benevolent image of God. This finding interpreted obedience to their belief system, as participants abided with their desire to follow biblical principles and values in which they learned. It is not mutually exclusive that serving others can be beneficial and rewarding to others.

**Theme 4: Advocating moral responsibility with others.** From the descriptive responses by the participants, moral responsibility and sense of duty were values learned from their parents, from educational systems, or from secular organizations. Moral responsibility, it serves as the manner in how we hold others accountable for their

behaviors; as well as how they act or react (Pink, 2009) in any given situation. The conviction in which the participants felt compelled to express the impactful role that God plays in their lives, offers insight into their perspective. Their relationship with God was at the forefront of the interviews, and added to their desired interest in adhering to the application and standards set forth in the Bible. The participants expressed a strong inclination of honoring God, and it was made visible from the numerous volunteer roles and tasks in which they were involved in. This finding interpreted how willingly the participants allowed for God's will take precedence over their lives.

*Sub-theme: Feeling a sense of duty.* Volunteering serves as an act of free will, yet for the participants there was a sense of duty which emerged from the study. As participants worked towards supporting the goals of the organization, they felt their contributions were an essential part to the functioning role (Gallant, Smale, & Arai, 2017). From the participant responses, there was a sense of obligation to help individuals in need. From the descriptive responses by the participants, their obligation resulted in helping the homeless by offering meals. This finding interpreted, the participants sense of duty was learned through parental instruction, and other positive influences set forth. This finding interpreted, the significance in establishing a of sense of duty, whereby the participants served in order to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Gallant et al. (2017) proposed duty as a “need to fulfill expectations or unmet needs of self and other” (p.589).

**Theme 5: Helping others.** The participant responses illustrated the rewards and benefits gained from choosing to help others. Yeung (2018) asserted the core belief offers concern and support over the social welfare of others. This finding was interpreted as

suggesting there were a variety of ways to help individuals within a community. Participants responded by sharing the specific measures taken in offering comfort. They listened, and protected others from self-harm. The participants had taken decisive steps to offer their assistance.

**Theme 6: Needing to belong.** From the descriptive responses by participants for the theme, needing to belong, there was an inherent desire to establish bonds with others. Baumeister & Leary (1995) identified two criteria to support the need to belong: 1) making a concerted effort to meet on a regular basis with others; and 2) an opportunity to develop genuine care and reciprocal concern for one another's welfare. This finding was interpreted to support Baumeister and Leary's theory of the desire for like-minded people to come together to develop a sense of camaraderie and connection. This study finding was confirmed by Krause's (2016) study which explored how a person's place of worship helps to satisfy the need of belonging due to the relations that emerges with others. The participants responses explained the significance of being involved in something greater than themselves. The participants derived satisfaction from others who willingly set out to connect with the nonprofit organization, as well as to maintain relationships with others. Baumeister & Leary (1995) contended that the idea of pure contentment was found in developing personal relationships with others and that it was easy to form social bonds.

**Sub-theme: Building community.** The participant responses which supported this theme, addressed the innate desire from volunteering was to be a part of community. Omoto and Packard (2016) introduced psychological sense of community (PSOC) which was indicative of the need to establish connections to a larger part of the community, and

in turn to pursue the interests found within the community. Building community offered individuals the opportunity to get involved in the civic and social platforms representative of the nonprofit organization. Le Penne (2017) suggested that belonging to a community allows for satisfying a need to create a “sense of indispensability, worthiness, self-respect, and autonomy in individual’s self-perception” (p,535). The participants gained insight from building community with others, as it has the capacity to be life changing and can contribute to the betterment of our society. This finding interpreted, how the participants evolved from their experiences which offered opportunities to develop other individuals and to contribute to our communities. Omoto & Packard (2016) suggested that from PSOC, there should be an increased level of motivation to volunteers and support within the community.

**Theme 7: Developing character traits for personal growth.** The participant responses reflected by the theme of developing character traits for personal growth helped to broaden interpersonal skills. From the interest to volunteering within a nonprofit organization, the participants were rewarded by receiving intrinsic rewards. This finding was interpreted as to how the participants identity initially was in stark contrast to whom they were becoming. The sub-themes identified were self-esteem, confidence, humility, and compassion.

**Sub-theme: Self-esteem.** It is evident that organizational experiences have the capacity to contribute towards determining one’s self-esteem (Mayer, Fraccastoro, & McNary, 2007; Pierce & Gardner, 2004), as well as helping to increase one’s sense of self-worth. The opportunity to put aside our personal challenges in order to help comfort or bring aid to another human being can be rewarding. The participant responses

explained an inner drive to move past their fears and doubts, and through connecting with others in order to make a positive difference in the lives of others. This finding was interpreted as that self-esteem helps the individual to feel encouraged and fulfilled through their selfless act of volunteering. My finding was supported by Omoto & Packard (2016) emphasized that individuals with high self-esteem would intentionally seek to help others. Yet through volunteering, one participant expressed that volunteering helped in finding their voice. In turn, the positive results associated with self-esteem crossed over to different part of their professional lives. From their successes or in overcoming a situation, individuals were further rewarded by having a “positive image” (Pierce & Gardner, 2004, p.594).

***Sub-theme: Confidence.*** The participant responses to the theme confidence was indicative from measures taken to pursue volunteering, they received an added sense of self-confidence. The satisfaction raised by self-confidence, highlights how it helps individuals to maintain their decorum, and continue pressing forward regardless of a given situation or circumstances. The level of confidence received served to enhance the participants presence. The increased confidence manifested the participants sense of self, i.e., their self-esteem. Through the continued support within a nonprofit organization, the participants acquired new learning new skills which helped to alleviate insecurities and raised one’s level of confidence.

***Sub-theme: Humility.*** In assessing the significance of humility, over time there were inconsistencies and misconceptions as to its true meaning. As defined by Merriam-Webster, humility means “freedom from pride or arrogance: the quality or state of being humble” (2019) and is used interchangeably with the word modesty. Humility was

deemed a religious and spiritual virtue. Wright, Nadelhoffer, Perini, Langville, Echols, and Venezia (2017), associated the word humility with “God or some higher power” (p.4). From the descriptive responses of humility by the participants, they were pleased to place their emotions aside to willingly engage in an act of service. Their act of doing good, contributed to the lives of others. This created a healthy sense of well-being. Wright et al. (2017) conducted a study of nearly 2000 adult participants to measure humility which determined that nurturing humility serves as a positive result. This results in coming to terms with the idea that humility helps to reduce individual focus of self, and greater focus on the needs of others. Nielsen & Marrone (2018) equated humility as a Christian position under God’s reverence, and from a moral position for which humility was, “the recognition of one’s dependence on others” (p.806).

***Sub-theme: Compassion.*** The descriptive responses by the participants expressed the need to offer emotional support to others. It was also necessary for the participants to display moments of grace and acceptance. Mongrain, Chin, and Shapira (2010) likened compassion to existing through, “a sense of caring, empathy, and sympathy” (p.1) for others. This finding interpreted was that regardless of the circumstances, it would be challenging to see the suffering of another without feeling compelled to offer support or assistance. This resulted in letting go of any misconceptions, and make a concerted effort to unite in arms with another. Lopez, Sanderman, Ranchor and Schroevers (2018) asserted that “compassion for others and self-compassion seem to be beneficial for individuals’ psychological well-being” (p.326). Lopez et al.’s (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study of 328 people which focused on “compassion and self-compassion” (p.326). The findings interpreted from the study was to indicate that the results for

women expressing compassion for others was higher than males, yet it did not result in being “related to psychological well-being” (p.328) and self-compassion was closely linked to “negative and positive indicators” (p.325). Lopez et al. (2018) suggested that the findings are indicative to readily offering compassion to others as opposed to oneself.

**Theme 8: Seeking influence through social media engagement.** As the digitally savvy pioneers, the participant responses reflected upon the significance in which social media was an integral part of their daily lives. Social media serves as a platform and tool which has provided volunteers with the capability to remain engaged and connected with others nearby and across borders. In the past several years, as social media has exploded, it serves as a viable form of communication. For individuals, the increased usage of social media has offered instant connections among people and virtual strangers. This can add to the innate desire to gain approval, based on the number of responses received, and can become a stressor. The use of social media tools offers an immediate response to users, and gives a false impression of instant connection. The described lived experiences of the participant reflected on the desire to connect through social media. Paulin et al. (2014) conducted a study to determine, if using only a social media platform would be enough to garner the participation of millennials. The researchers found in efforts to gain engagement from Millennials, organizations were better suited to “appeal to the benefits other derive than to benefits to the self” (Paulin et al., 2014, p.342).

**Sub-theme: Fear of missing out (FOMO).** From the descriptive responses by the participants who declared their need to remain socially engaged through the usage of social media tools. The participants expressed how they were social butterflies, and experienced the effect of fear of missing out (FOMO). The influence of FOMO created



an influx of status updates across social media platforms, where individuals keep others informed as to their activities for the moment or day (Reer, Tang, & Quandt, 2019). The caveat to FOMO, creates “feelings of irritability, anxiety, and inadequacy” (Abel, Buff & Burr; 2016, p.34). Overuse of social media occurs when users have recognized how, it fully takes over one’s every moment, and can result in negative stressors.

### **Implications of Findings**

This qualitative research study focused on identifying what influences millennials to volunteers within a nonprofit organization. The study was designed to explore motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. The problem statement recognized how nonprofit organizations were challenged in recruiting and retaining millennial volunteers. As a result of the research, the following implications of the study includes:

- Need to develop an onboarding platform for volunteers.
- Need to develop an assessment tool to determine knowledge, skills, and abilities of volunteers.
- Need to develop a learning path for volunteer development.
- Need to balance the number of roles in which participants can concurrently volunteer.

**Need to develop an onboarding platform for volunteers.** From interpreting the findings from the research study, interestingly, the participants had varied means in which they decided to become volunteers at the nonprofit organization. Some sought it as a place of solace and through chance selected the organization. Others expressed having been invited by a friend, and then having been admonished or encouraged to get

involved. From the nonprofit organization perspective, it would be beneficial to develop an onboarding plan to provide greater detail of the responsibility, the roles, and expectations of the volunteer. It would be important for the nonprofit organization to look at the quality of participation versus the quantity. The added benefit in developing an onboard platform ensures agreement and buy-in across all levels of the nonprofit organization. The nonprofit organization instilled a two-week training program which serves as a membership drive. It was devised to inform potential volunteers with general information about the leaders, the vision, and values. Under this process, leaders determined are then equipped to determine, where within the nonprofit organization the volunteer is best suited to work.

**Need to develop an assessment tool to determine knowledge, skills, and abilities of volunteers.** From the interviews, some of the participants had expressed having been involved in previous volunteer work. It would be beneficial for the nonprofit organizational leaders to have knowledge of the volunteer's prior experience in volunteering. The finding interpreted how beneficial it was for the nonprofit organization to gain competitive advantage from knowing the volunteers skill-set. From the standpoint of encouraging people to recognize and utilize one's gifts and talents, it would make sense for the nonprofit organization to develop a database to track and record areas of expertise or knowledge. In part, under most circumstances, a general request is made and there are instances where time is of the essence, and quicker action is required. This would also help to highlight the successes and milestones reached throughout the duration of their involvement with the nonprofit organization.

**Need to create a learning path for volunteer development.** As indicated, the

nonprofit organization offers a two-week introductory training program. As a participant of the nonprofit organization, they can choose to get involved in a connect groups which serve to provide the volunteer with biblical instruction on various studies. In the capacity of their volunteer role, it would be beneficial for the nonprofit organization to create a 90-day learning path to get volunteers acclimated to their functioning role. Through these measures, it would be helpful to align the volunteers with a peer or mentor who can help guide them through their growth and development within the organization. This approach would ensure that the volunteers were knowledgeable of all facets of the organization, and the nonprofit organization can develop learning opportunities within their local community and abroad. As a result, it would help to build up the competence and confidence of the volunteer.

**Need to balance the number of roles in which participants can concurrently volunteer.** From the research, except for two participants, most of the participants were involved in numerous roles at the same time. It would be helpful to stipulate prior to their volunteering with the nonprofit organization, as to the number of roles in which they can actively pursue to volunteer in. In part, when individuals feel overburdened by tasks, and obligation, the initial step was avoidance or automatically withdrawing from their volunteer obligation. It would be helpful for the volunteer leaders of the nonprofit organization to assess the general commitment of every volunteer. The assessment in determining the number of roles assumed by one participant would help them to address the need to seek additional volunteers who can help to support the nonprofit organization.

### **Findings Related to Theoretical Framework**

As a basis of the literature review found in Chapter 2, the theoretical frameworks

which supported the research study includes: Functionalist Theory, Self-determination theory and Social Role identity. The frameworks offered greater understanding of how they were interwoven to support the concepts found from the research and further expands upon the underlying interest to discover the significance of motivation.

**Functional theory.** The functional approach helps to understand the motivational influences which support volunteering. The six functions include: 1) values; 2) understanding; 3) social; 4) career; 5) protective; and 6) enhancement. The framework of functionalist theory supports the findings of the study, as it offers insight into examining individual attitudes and behaviors (Clary et al., 1998). The functional theory concentrates in explaining the how in gaining an understanding of the decision to volunteer, it may be offset by the desired interest to remain committed to the organization (Clary et al., 1998). From the participants, there was an overwhelming desire exhibited in volunteering with the nonprofit organization. In following biblical principles, the participants were apt to transfer their knowledge and help towards developing others.

**Self-determination theory.** This theory seeks to gain an understanding of human behavior and the psychological needs resulting from competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to Deci & Ryan (2000) focus lies in determining one's motivation and in satisfying our needs, we are contributing towards our "psychological health or well-being" (p.229). As a result of this research study, from the participants responses the motivation and satisfaction resulted from intrinsic rewards offered during volunteering. Through SDT, Frenco (2013) expressed that volunteer motivation is driven by intrinsic rewards. In part, it begins by the choice of free will, where participants have the autonomy to select their area of interest within the

organization. From the participants perspective, it is also rewarding to receive acknowledgement of one's accomplishment or in receiving acceptance from another person as to their commitment to the nonprofit organization. From a study by Wu et al., (2016) intended to test the "relationship among competence, intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and intention to continue to volunteer" (p. 1266). The study consisted of 180 Special Olympics volunteers from China which resulted in the determination that intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction was driven by competence (Wu et al., 2016) and its significance is to provide understanding of "volunteer intention" (p. 1275).

**Social identity theory.** Ashfort and Mael (1989) explained this concept, as a way in which people "classify themselves and others into various social categories" (p. 20). The authors further conveyed that the classification helps to determine one's relation to its environment, further adding the "perception of oneness or belongingness" (Ashfort & Mael, 1989, p. 21) with others. For the participants, it is indicative that a key part of their identity is based on the preconceived ideas of their generational status, as being solely concerned by their own self-interest. In retrospect, the participants search in building community and seeking connectedness provides insight as to the importance of relationships.

**Role identity theory.** One's self identity was helpful in making the determination of one's role (van Ingen, 2016). Once deciding to join the nonprofit organization, many of the participants assumed multiple roles. In part, it was their innate desire to volunteer, and to serve within the nonprofit organization. The participants were passionate in sharing how their roles helped to positively impact the lives of others, even while a participant declared that their satisfaction was not derived by their role, but rather through

the relationship with God and with others. As interesting for the participants who felt that their participation was in obedience to God, and listening to God's will for instances where they would need to step in and comfort others during their challenges. In a study conducted by Thoits, (2012) which resulted in the increased time spent involved in volunteer activities, led participants to experience "emotional and bodily well-being" (p. 373).

### **Limitations**

1. The participant may have offered curt responses to not say anything that creates a negative connotation surrounding the nonprofit organization.
2. The participant may have biases or may be geared to expressing thoughts that might be viewed favorably by the senior staff or leaders.
3. The study may result in inconsistent or inaccurate data.
4. The study had a small number of participants and is limited to only one site.
5. There is the potential for bias on behalf of the researcher.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

**Provide an onboarding training program.** After completing a volunteer screening, it is recommended for a staff member to conduct volunteer orientation for prospective volunteers. The onboarding process serves to provide the volunteer with general information related to the nonprofit organization's mission, vision, and projected goals. A facilitator would provide a topical overview of an organizational chart and the different department functions. This will give the volunteer information as to the different volunteer roles available, as well as the role requirements and volunteer expectations. From onboarding, each volunteer would receive a handbook which outlines policies and

procedures within the nonprofit organization.

**Provide a competencies database tool to capture volunteer skill-set.** As

volunteer's transition from other organizations, there is a wealth of untapped potential. It is recommended that leaders, or Human Resources identify and capture the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its volunteers. For example, a leader may discover a volunteer speaks multiple languages and would be able to interpret for the team. Or, if a volunteer completed CPR training, and a life-threatening emergency occurs onsite and help can be made available. In doing so, the nonprofit organization and its leaders would be knowledgeable of the competency level of its volunteer base. This too, will help support the nonprofits efforts in developing a viable succession plan.

**Provide comprehensive training and development plan for volunteers.**

Leaders can create a 90-day training and development plan. From the research study, a participant expressed how some volunteers did not feel comfortable talking to strangers. The nonprofit organization can provide general customer service training. From volunteering for a specific role within the nonprofit organization, it is recommended that a leader provide an in-depth overview and training to the volunteer. The leader should train for unexpected scenarios or emergencies, this would offer the volunteer satisfaction and gain confidence in fulfilling their duty. In addition, the leader would identify a mentor for the volunteer.

**Provide mid-year and annual performance assessment of volunteers.** It is a

customary practice of for-profit organizations to conduct evaluations on job performance of its hired staff. Yet, conducting a mid-year and annual assessment of volunteers is not the norm in nonprofit organizations. This serves as a great opportunity for leaders to

determine, whether the volunteer has the skill-set or if the volunteer is not a good job-fit in the role. Previous circumstances focused primarily on filling the role or finding an able-body for the volunteer position. Now, leaders can be assured in having a good job-fit in the role. Best in talent, and in developing practices. It is recommended for leaders to conduct a mid-year assessment to help determine, whether the volunteer is achieving success, failures, or address opportunities for continued growth in the nonprofit organization.

**Provide a targeted communication and social media platform.** In the current state of globalization, it is recommended that leaders develop a consistent communication plan to attract potential volunteers or first-time visitors. It is vital for a leader or communication team to concentrate in finding varied tools to capture the interest of potential new-comers. Then, it is important to devise a communication plan that can be used to track and measure individual engagement. This would help the leader determine which tools are deemed satisfactory in connecting with people. In society, today, many of the typical social media tools have changed. As some individuals become disenfranchised by their use, it is vital to identify ways in which to connect with everyone involved within the nonprofit organization.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommendations to expand upon further research recognized from this study includes the following:

1. Replicate the study with a larger sample of participants.
2. Select a location across borders, and outside of southeastern states.
3. Focus on participants whose years of service ranges between five to ten



years.

4. Change participant to reflect different generations, or mixed ages.
5. Consider a different type of nonprofit or for-profit organizations supported by a volunteer base.
6. Select participants who are episodic or crisis volunteers to study.
7. Conduct a mixed research study of volunteers and volunteer leaders.

### **Conclusion**

In Chapter 5, the researcher provided a summary of findings, interpretation of finding, implications, and findings related to the theoretical framework, limitation, recommendations for practice, and for future research. This research study was able to explore the motivation and engagement of millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. The basis of the research questions was reviewed and the implication for their contributions to the study were discussed. The research study offered insight into the lived experiences of the 10 participants whose love for God and to serve others was highly revered. In conclusion of this research study, may the findings contribute to gaining awareness of volunteer potential across nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

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Appendix A  
Site Approval Letter



**SITE APPROVAL LETTER**

Nova Southeastern University  
3301 College Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314-7796

**Subject:** Site Approval Letter

To whom it may concern:

This letter acknowledges that I have received and reviewed a request by *Joanne Quinones* to conduct a research project entitled "*Exploring motivation and engagement among millennial volunteers in nonprofit organizations*" at [REDACTED] and I approve of this research to be conducted at our facilities.

When the researcher receives approval for his research project from the Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board/NSU IRB, I agree to provide access for the approved research project. If we have any concerns or need additional information, we will contact the Nova Southeastern University's IRB at (954) 262-5369 or [irb@nova.edu](mailto:irb@nova.edu).

Sincerely,



Appendix B  
Gatekeeper Email

## Gatekeeper Email

Hi \*name removed,

First, let me extend my thanks and appreciation for your help in serving as a resource in my research study. Your role as a gatekeeper has been invaluable, many thank-you's!

The purpose serves to *“explore motivation and engagement of Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization.”*

Through your support in identifying potential participants, this serves to share with you that 15 individuals are needed for the research study. The flyer below addresses the criteria required to identify potential participants born between 1981 to 1996, and having been volunteering for 2 to 5 years. If you could help to introduce to me to potential participants who might be interested.

Another component of the research study will be to arrange interviews onsite at your location. In this matter, I would need to gain your perspective and welcome any ideas.

Thank you for your time,  
Joanne Quinones

Appendix C  
Flyer to Recruit Volunteers

## Flyer to Recruit Volunteers

**Seeking Volunteers for a Research Study**

*The purpose of this research study is to explore motivation and engagement of Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization.*

- *Are you a Millennial, born between the years of 1981 through 1996?*
- *Have you been volunteering for 2 to 5 years?*
- *Would you like to provide information about the Millennial generation?*

*If you answered YES to these questions, you may be eligible to participate in this study. You will be asked to participate in 1 interview session lasting 60 minutes.*

*The interviews will be held at either site location: "name removed" or "name removed."*

*Information sessions will be provided to offer additional details about the study.*

*To learn more about this research, please call Joanne Quinones at (305) 796-5085 for more information or through email at [gjoanne@nova.edu](mailto:gjoanne@nova.edu)*

**\*\*Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time\*\***



Appendix D

Email Confirmation or Denial of Potential Participant

### Email Confirmation or Denial of Potential Participant

Dear Participant:

This serves to inform you that you have successfully satisfied the requirements needed to participate in the research study. From this email, you will receive documents which will require your signature in advance of our scheduled 60-minute interview. The documents include a non-disclosure agreement and a consent form. For your added convenience, you will receive an interview protocol listing the research questions.

The non-disclosure forms serve to protect your identity and ensure confidentiality. You will be provided a pseudonym/reference number to protect your identity throughout the research process. From the consent form, a request is included for gain your permission to record our interview sessions, this serves to ensure that your thoughts and ideas are fully captured.

It is vital for you to be know that your participation is voluntary, and at any time, you can decide to withdraw from the study by contacting the researcher by phone or through email.

Let's schedule a convenient time, I can be reached at 305-796-5085 or through email at [qjoanne@nova.edu](mailto:qjoanne@nova.edu).

Again, thank you.

Joanne Quinones

\*\*\*\*\*

### Email Denial of Potential Participant

Dear Potential Participant:

This serves to inform you that you were not selected as a participant for the research study. Thank you for your interest, and should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 305-796-5085 or through email at [qjoanne@nova.edu](mailto:qjoanne@nova.edu).

Again, thank you.

Joanne Quinones

Appendix E

Non-Disclosure Agreement Form

## Non-Disclosure Agreement Form

Reference No: \_ MV\_NPO\_0 \_ \_

Dear Participant:

Prior to beginning the Study, please read and acknowledge your adherence to the following confidentiality agreement due to the sensitive nature of the various concepts or ideas presented in this Study.

By signing below and the offered incentive payment of \$0.00, I hereby agree to keep all information about the interview, including all concepts and ideas being presented and discussed, completely confidential and further agree not to disclose such information to any other party. As to members of my household, I agree that they are also under this same obligation of confidentiality.

I understand that the proceedings may be audio and videotaped. I also understand that these audio and videotapes will be used for research purposes only and will not be used publicly.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form for Participant

## Informed Consent Form for Participant

Title of Study: *Exploring motivation and engagement of Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization.*

Principal investigator: Name, degree Complete mailing address 33016 Contact phone number	Joanne Quinones Fischler College of Education 7887 NW 165 Street, Miami Lakes FL 305-796-5085
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Institutional Review Board Nova Southeastern University Office of Grants and Contracts (954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790 <a href="mailto:IRB@nsu.nova.edu">IRB@nsu.nova.edu</a>	Site Locations:
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**Description of Study:** Joanne Q. is a doctoral student at Nova Southeastern University and is working on research for the sole purpose of satisfying a requirement for a Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of this study is to explore motivation and engagement among Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization. If you agree to participate, you will meet with the researcher through a series of interviews on this project.

**Risks/Benefits to the Participant:** There may be minimal risk involved in participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to for agreeing to be in this study. If you have any concerns about the risks/benefits of participating in this study, you can contact investigators and/or the university's human research oversight board (the Institutional Review Board or IRB) numbers listed above.

**Cost and Payments to the Participant:** There is no cost for participation in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and no payment will be provided.

**Confidentiality:** Information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Your name will not be used in the reporting of information in publications or conference presentations.

**Recording:** Each interview session will use a recording device. The sole purpose of a recording is to be used to create transcripts of the interviews. Any identifying information will be redacted in the final transcripts. Upon complete satisfaction by the participant in the transcription of held interview sessions, the recordings will be destroyed or digitally altered to make identity impossible.

**Participant's Right to Withdraw from the Study:** You have the right to refuse to participate in this study and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I have read this letter and I fully understand the contents of this document and voluntarily consent to participate. All my questions concerning this research have been answered. If I have any questions in the future about this study, they will be answered by the investigator listed above or his/her staff. I understand that the completion of this interview implies my consent to participate in this study.

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Signature

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Date

Reference No: \_ MV\_NPO\_0 \_ \_

## Appendix G

### In-Depth Interview Protocol



Interviewee Reference No: MV\_NPO\_0 \_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### In-Depth Interview Protocol

*Script:*

Welcome, and let me extend my thanks and appreciation today. My name is Joanne Quinones, and I am a doctoral candidate at Nova Southeastern University, and this research study contributes towards my completion in the program. My research serves to “explore motivation and engagement of Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization.” Let me provide a synopsis of what we will be covering in this interview session. The welcoming guides, obtaining all written consent, and information related to the interview sessions.

We will begin by discussing the welcoming guide sent to you, items where your signature is required. The non-disclosure agreement serves to protect your identity and references that our time together is confidential. You will receive an identification number, such as MV\_NPO\_0 \_\_ followed by 3 digits. The consent form authorizes you and I to conduct these interviews, where you will be asked a series of questions. The length of the interview session will be 60 minutes. Lastly, while it is noted on the consent form, I would like to ask your verbal permission to record this interview in order to ensure that I have an accurate depiction of the information shared.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary, if at any time, you need to stop or take a break, please let me know.

Reminder Checklist of Documents to retrieve:

Non-disclosure agreement \_\_\_\_\_; Consent Form \_\_\_\_\_; Demographic Profile \_\_\_\_

Central question: How do Millennials describe their experience in volunteering?

Sub question 1: What motivates Millennials to volunteer?

Sub question 2: What circumstances influence your decision to remain committed to volunteer in a nonprofit organization?

## Volunteer Functions Inventory

Through the means of elaborating on the six functions found within the Volunteer Function Inventory, Clary & Snyder (1999) provide conceptual definitions to help which help to emphasize the motivations in which individuals volunteer.

Career – The volunteer has the goal of gaining career-related experience through volunteering.

- How would you describe your roles and responsibilities within the nonprofit organization?
- Has volunteering helped you to expand career opportunities?

Social – Volunteering allows an individual to strengthen his or her social relationships.

- How vital is it to you to have a sense of belongingness or connection to others?
- Has the act of volunteering broadened your relationships with others?

Protective – The individual uses volunteering to reduce negative feelings, such as guilt or to address personal problems.

- What do you find gratifying about volunteering?
- What has been the benefits you have experienced surrounding volunteering?

Values – The individual volunteers in order to express or act on important values like humanitarianism.

- What influenced your decision to volunteer in nonprofit organizations?
- What are ways in which you can contribute and help individuals in need?

Understanding – The volunteer is seeking to learn more about the world or exercise skills that are often unused.

- Why do you volunteer with this organization?
- What were your first impressions surrounding volunteering?

Enhancement – One can grow and develop psychologically through volunteer activities.

- Tell me as to how volunteering makes you feel?
- How has volunteering impacted your life? Or the life of others?

From your perspective, what additional information would you like to share about volunteering?

Thank you for participating in the research study.

Appendix H

Volunteer Functions Inventory

**Volunteer Functions Inventory**  
Version Attached: Full Test

**PsycTESTS Citation:**

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A. A., Haugen, J., & Miene, P. (1998). Volunteer Functions Inventory [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t04582-000>

**Instrument Type:**

Inventory/Questionnaire

**Test Format:**

Items are rated on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (not at all important/accurate) to 7 (extremely important/accurate).

**Source:**

Clary, E. Gil, Snyder, Mark, Ridge, Robert D., Copeland, John, Stukas, Arthur A., Haugen, Julie, & Miene, Peter (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 74(6), 1516-1530. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1516

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Test content may be reproduced and used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission. Distribution must be controlled, meaning only to the participants engaged in the research or enrolled in the educational activity. Any other type of reproduction or distribution of test content is not authorized without written permission from the author and publisher. Always include a credit line that contains the source citation and copyright owner when writing about or using any test.

### Volunteer Functions Inventory

#### VFI

#### Items

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#### Protective

- 7. No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.
- 9. By volunteering I feel less lonely.
- 11. Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.
- 20. Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.
- 24. Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.

#### Values

- 3. I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.
- 8. I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.
- 16. I feel compassion toward people in need.
- 19. I feel it is important to help others.
- 22. I can do something for a cause that is important to me.

#### Career

- 1. Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.
- 10. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.
- 15. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.
- 21. Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession.
- 28. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.

#### Social

- 2. My friends volunteer.
- 4. People I'm close to want me to volunteer.
- 6. People I know share an interest in community service.
- 17. Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.
- 23. Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.

#### Understanding

- 12. I can learn more about the cause for which I am working.
- 14. Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.
- 18. Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.
- 25. I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.
- 30. I can explore my own strengths.

#### Enhancement

- 5. Volunteering makes me feel important.
- 13. Volunteering increases my self-esteem.
- 26. Volunteering makes me feel needed.
- 27. Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.
- 29. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.

Appendix I

Demographic and Group Profile

## Demographic and Group Profile

Date &amp; Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Study: *Exploring motivation and engagement of Millennial volunteers in a nonprofit organization*

Reference #: MV\_NPO\_0 \_ \_

## Demographic Profile

Gender:	Education:	Age/Year:	Service Years
Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 years college <input type="checkbox"/>		2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Associates <input type="checkbox"/>		4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	B.S./B.A. <input type="checkbox"/>		
	M.S./MBA <input type="checkbox"/>		

## Group Demographic Profile

Participant	Gender	Education	Age/Year	Service Years	Vol. Grps Involved
MVNPO_001					
MVNPO_002					
MVNPO_003					
MVNPO_004					
MVNPO_005					
MVNPO_006					
MVNPO_007					
MVNPO_008					
MVNPO_009					
MVNPO_010					

Appendix J

Observation and Field Notes Protocol



### Observation and Field Notes Protocol

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation  Field Notes:

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Location: 1  2

Observer Role:

participant observer  nonparticipant observer  changing observational role

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
Time	Insights, hunches, quotes
Touch	
Sight	
Sound	
Smell	

(Source: Adaptation of Beasley, 2017; Creswell, 2013).