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Psychologists' Volunteering: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors Toward Psychotherapy Research

James Perry Howell
Old Dominion University

PSYCHOLOGISTS' VOLUNTEERING: ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND BEHAVIORS TOWARD PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH

by
James Perry Howell
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Approved by:

Deborah Foss-Goodman, Ph.D.
College of William and Mary
Director

Valerian J. Derlega, Ph.D.
Old Dominion University

Molly Brunk Tribble, Ph.D.
College of William and Mary

Janis Sanchez-Hucles, Ph.D.
Old Dominion University

Barbara A. Winstead, Ph.D.
Old Dominion University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

PSYCHOLOGISTS' VOLUNTEERING: ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND BEHAVIORS TOWARD PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH

James Perry Howell
Virginia Consortium for Professional Psychology, 1987
Director: Deborah Foss-Goodman, Ph.D.
College of William and Mary

Psychologists' volunteering behavior and attitudes toward psychotherapy research were studied using a mail survey. A random sample of 248 male and 248 female doctoral-level members of Division 29 (Psychotherapy) of the American Psychological Association served as subjects. The cover letter requesting their participation in this study contained the systematic manipulation of variables believed to affect volunteering behavior: recruiter gender, normative nature of volunteering for the study, and perceived social importance of the study. The therapist variables of gender, age, and years of experience were also studied in order to determine if volunteerism might result in biased sampling across these variables. Three mailings were sent resulting in an overall response rate of 73.14%, supporting the utility of the mail survey methodology detailed by Dillman (1978). Results did not support a relationship between recruitment variables and volunteerism. Very weak inverse relationships were

observed between volunteerism and therapists' experience and self-reported busyness. The magnitude of the difference in experience between volunteering and nonvolunteering psychologists was felt to be clinically insignificant. No relationship was observed between self-reported therapeutic orientation and expressed opinions about psychotherapy research. Volunteerism among psychologists may be largely determined by a few important factors such as how busy the individual sees him or herself with other activities, time commitment required for participation, intrusiveness of the study into the process of therapy, and perceived importance of potential results. Although the representativeness of a sample can be affected by many other factors, volunteerism per se results in a sample of psychologists in psychotherapy research that appears to accurately represent the population on many important variables.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

> It is one of the conspicuous features of modern science that major advances in substantive knowledge depend upon major advances in the self-awareness of the scientist (Wallace, 1961; quoted in Ward, 1964, p. 597).

> If psychotherapy wishes to be regarded as a science, rather than an art, it must be willing to subject itself to examination in a way which it has denied as possible before (Birdwhistell, 1963; quoted in Ward, 1964, p. 597).

Historically, efforts to investigate psychotherapy in an objective manner have encountered a host of difficulties (Ward, 1964). A large proportion of these difficulties have been ascribed to the reluctance of the practitioners themselves to subject their work to scrutiny (Bednar & Shapiro, 1970; Shakow, 1949; Ward, 1964). In 1932 the New York Psychoanalytic Institute forbade the attempts of one of its candidates to study analytic sessions by means of sound recordings (Dollard & Auld, 1959, cited in Ward, 1964). In the late 1940s psychiatrists at Yale were forced to recognize that their patients accepted recording of sessions very easily while they themselves "turned the machine off instead of on, misplaced wire or tape, plugged an AC machine into a DC outlet, and by these and other less obvious slips demonstrated our real feelings about the

procedure" (Gill, Newman, & Redlich, 1954, quoted in Ward, 1964, p. 597). Psychotherapists' ambivalance toward participation in psychotherapy research has not been limited to a particular discipline or a time long-past, however. Bednar and Shapiro (1970), while attempting to recruit psychologists for a large-scale investigation of psychotherapy, sent over 16,000 invitations to psychiatrists and psychologists and obtained only 85 volunteers.

Still, empirical studies of psychotherapy process and outcome do get produced and virtually every study of psychotherapy outcome employs therapists who volunteer to participate (Kazdin, 1978). The difficulties encountered in recruiting therapists willing to expose their work to such scrutiny are universally recognized by researchers (e.g., Bednar & Shapiro, 1970; Ward, 1964; Ward & Richards, 1968). Recently, however, some researchers have begun to question whether these therapists who do volunteer differ in significant ways from their more reluctant colleagues. If the therapists who participate in outcome research differ consistently in ways that affect treatment results, the findings of the psychotherapy outcome research literature may not be generalizable across therapists as a whole (MacDonald, 1979). At the very least the outcome literature is apt to include some unknown and unexplored interactions between therapists and treatments that may

limit the external validity of its findings (MacDonald, 1979). It is the purpose of the current project to determine if clinical psychologists who volunteer differ in important ways from those who do not.

Characterizing subjects who do volunteer is a straightforward task; characterizing and comparing the nonvolunteer may seem to pose an insoluable dilemma: if you cannot get the therapists to agree to participate, how can you know anything about them? At least two methods are available to help overcome this problem. One is to use a subject pool that is in some sense a "captive audience" (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). Here the researcher has some data on all the subjects before they are asked to volunteer. Subjects are then asked to volunteer and distribute themselves into volunteering and nonvolunteering groups by their response. Publicly available information published in professional directories can serve the purpose of the "pre-experimental" data pool, such as that to be found on psychologists in the directory of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Another method of characterizing the nonvolunteer is by an "increasing the incentives" experimental design (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). This design assumes that volunteers who show greater reluctance in volunteering, such as by taking longer to volunteer or requiring a greater number of requests before volunteering, come to more closely represent the nonvolunteer. Thus, a subject

who agreed to participate in a project after two months of pleading from the researcher would be thought to more closely resemble the nonvolunteer on the variables of interest than a subject who volunteers immediately. By looking for systematic differences in how the data of interest varies as your subjects show more reluctance, the researcher can estimate the values of these variables in the nonvolunteering population.

This project will employ both of these methods for characterizing the nonvolunteer. A random sample of psychologists, all of whom can be described using publicly available information, currently engaged in the practice of psychotherapy will be selected. Each will be presented with a request to participate in a research project in an increasing-the-incentives design. Psychologists who volunteer to participate in response to the initial or follow up requests will provide information about themselves through which important characteristics of the nonvolunteer will be estimated.

Due to limitations of research methodology, the behavior of psychologists volunteering for psychotherapy outcome research cannot be assessed directly. A representative sample of psychologists' volunteering behavior is, however, available in their responses to mailed surveys. A request to participate in survey research requires of the recipient a commitment of time and

effort analogous to at least the initial commitment required of a therapist in outcome research, albeit at a much reduced level. When the survey addresses issues of particular sensitivity, such as the psychologists' own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward participation in outcome research, the interpersonal "costs" of revealing such information are similarly analogous to the threats encountered in subjecting one's own therapeutic work to scrutiny from outcome researchers. Thus, it is felt that a request to participate in a survey of psychologists' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward psychotherapy outcome research will elicit volunteering behavior. These data can then can be analyzed to contribute insights into the volunteering behavior of psychologists when faced with a request for outcome research participation. If psychologists who volunteer for mail surveys can be shown to differ in ways important to psychotherapy outcome from their nonvolunteering peers, it is likely that these differences will also be present in the response to requests for participation in outcome research. If just the fact of employing only volunteer therapists results in a systematically biased sample of therapists, this could present great difficulties to those who wish to design externally valid outcome research, as well as limiting the usefulness of conclusions already offered in this literature (e.g., Bergin & Lambert, 1978; Beutler, Crago, & Arizmendi, 1986; Lambert, Shapiro, & Bergin, 1986; Parloff,

Waskow, & Wolfe, 1978).

In order to illustrate the potential differences between volunteering and nonvolunteering psychologists, the extensive literature on volunteering behavior will be briefly reviewed. This literature will emphasize that volunteers do differ in predictable and significant ways from nonvolunteers in many instances and also that characteristics of the volunteering request itself differentially affect volunteering. That is, it is not only who you ask but also how you ask for volunteers that affects who agrees to participate in a given study. This being so, the way in which volunteer therapists are recruited may also affect who ultimately participates in a given outcome study.

The variables which may be important in differentiating volunteering from nonvolunteering therapists will be determined by a review of therapist variables shown or suspected to effect psychotherapy outcome by the therapy outcome literature (e.g., Beutler et al., 1986). It will be the points of convergence of these two diverse areas of research, that on volunteering and that concerned with therapist variables effecting psychotherapy outcome, that will most clearly point to the potential sampling biases that may be incurred from using only volunteer therapists.

Apropos to the current project, the literature

specifically concerned with response to mailed surveys will be reviewed. It will be seen that few conclusions have been reached as to the determinants of the volunteering response in mail surveys, although those that are available will be seen to be compatible with findings from the literature on volunteering behavior in other contexts. It is another purpose of this project to show that conclusions from the volunteering literature can lead to predictions of response to mail surveys and, further, that psychologists (and, by extension, psychotherapists in general) volunteer for psychotherapy outcome reseach in ways that can be predicted by what is known about human volunteering behavior in general.

Once these diverse areas of the literature have been reviewed, a model of the determinants of volunteering behavior will be presented. Based largely on Dillman (1978), this model was designed to explain subjects' responses to surveys, especially their refusal or agreement to participate. It will be shown, however, that this model is applicable to volunteering behavior more broadly defined and that it provides a perspective from which both the survey response literature and the volunteering response literature can usefully be viewed.

Chapter Two

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research on Volunteering Behavior

The definitive summary of the literature on volunteering behavior was conducted by Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975). These authors surveyed almost 400 publications dating back as far as 1929 addressing issues or reporting results of volunteerism. In the preface to this work, the authors discuss the problem of volunteer bias, the extent to which volunteers differ from nonvolunteers and thereby produce research results which are unrepresentative of the population as a whole (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). Volunteer bias can arise from characteristics of the subjects which are associated with differences in volunteering behavior ("volunteer characteristics") or from characteristics of the experiment or request for volunteers that affects the volunteering response ("situational determinants") (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). They point out that these effects can be "disasterous" (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975, p.ix) in survey research, where estimation of population parameters is the principal goal. No less important but more easily overlooked are the effects of volunteer bias on the outcomes of experimental research. Here the important consideration is not so much the

absolute effect of volunteering on the dependent variable but the possible interactive effects of volunteering status with the experimental variables (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). These authors conclude that the overwhelming weight of evidence suggests not only main effects for the volunteering variable in many instances, but also important interactive effects with other dependent variables even when main effects of volunteering are absent.

Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) cover 22 characteristics of the volunteer subject and 11 situational determinants of volunteering that have been addressed in the literature as possibly contributing to volunteer bias. Several of these variables are seen as similar to those therapist variables addressed in the research on psychotherapy outcome (Beutler et al., 1986). As such, these variables represent potentially important sampling biases that could affect the generalizability of psychotherapy outcome research that relies exculsively on volunteer therapists [ie., almost all of it (Kazdin, 1978)].

Volunteer Characteristics

Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) found that some subject characteristics could be associated with volunteering behavior with much greater confidence than others, despite examples in the literature of posititve effects of all 22 characteristics addressed. They ranked these characteristics in order of the confidence with which they could be associated with volunteering. They then further

divided this ordering into four broad degrees of confidence: "maximum," "considerable," "some," and "minimum." Greater confidence was felt to be warranted when (1) it was based on a larger number of studies, (2) a larger percentage of the total number of relevant studies significantly favored the conclusion, and (3) a larger percentage of just those studies showing a significant relationship favored the conclusion drawn (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). For example, to be described as related to volunteering with "maximum confidence" a conclusion had to be based on at least 19 studies, be supported by at least 54% of the total relevant studies, and be supported by at least 86% of the relevant studies in which a significant effect was found. The weakest category of "minimum confidence" contained characteristics that were not so clearly favored in volunteers over nonvolunteers and that had not been demonstrated in a sufficient number of studies to permit a stable conclusion (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). Volunteer characteristics grouped by degree of confidence of their relationship to volunteering behavior can be seen in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Psychologists represent a restricted sample in terms of many of the characteristics noted by Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) as increasing the likelihood of volunteering.

Rosenthal and Rosnow's (1975) findings are based on studies from a broader sample of the population. We would expect, then, that many of these variables, such as education, social class, and intelligence, in which the range is (presumably) much narrower among psychologists than in the general population, would not have the same consistency of effect within the population of psychologists as noted in Table 1. Unfortunately for the attempt to characterize the volunteering psychologist, many of the variables most powerfully associated with volunteering (in terms of the confidence with which they may be said to increase volunteering) are of this type. "Educated," the most powerful variable noted in Table 1, is a case in point. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) discuss 26 studies investigating the relationship between education and volunteering and find statistically significant relationships between more education and increased likelihood of volunteering in 24 of these. As these authors point out, however, research within populations having very little variance on this variable are unlikely to find any marked correlation between it and volunteering; most of these studies specifically targeted populations in which considerable variation in educational level can be expected (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). Education, then, like many of the volunteer characteristics noted in Table 1, is unlikely to be a variable of significant strength in

differentiating the volunteering from the nonvolunteering psychologist.

Our inquiry was further restricted by limitations in the research methodology that was employed in this study. Some of the variables noted in Table 1 that might have sufficient variability to allow for meaningful investigation among psychologists are difficult to measure or, more importantly, represent variables not associated with differences in psychotherapy outcome. "From smaller town," for example (variable #12 in Table 1), is unlikely to be very useful in determining psychotherapy outcome while "maladjusted" (variable #16) would required testing of each psychologist that is beyond the scope of a survey investigation.

Two of the subject variables listed in Table 1 were investigated in this study, gender (listed as #8, "Female") and age (variable #17, "Young"). While each of these variables is likely to be distributed differently among psychologists than in the population as a whole, enough variation was expected in the surveyed sample to identify what effects each would have on volunteering behavior. Rosenthal and Rosnow's (1975) conclusions as presented in Table 1 provided the basis for two of the hypotheses that were tested in this study, that psychologists who are (1) younger and/or (2) female will tend to volunteer in greater numbers than their older or male counterparts. These variables were chosen because they have been suspected to

effect both volunteering behavior (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) and psychotherapy outcome (Beutler et al., 1986) and information on them was available with minimal intrusion to the subjects.

Situational Determinants

Situational determinants of volunteering are characteristics of the experiment or study which are believed to differentially affect the rate at which people agree to participate. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) describe the research evidence in this area as generally not "as plentiful or as direct" as the evidence for the relationship between the fairly stable characteristics of the subject and volunteering behavior noted above. They do feel, however, that enough progress has been made in the field to draw some conclusions. Similar to their classification schema for subject characteristics, the authors rank ordered the conclusion offered from the literature in order of decreasing confidence in the findings (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). They also established criteria for describing the confidence with which the situational determinants could be concluded to be affecting volunteering, using the same "maximum," "considerable," "some," and "minimum" labels employed with the subject variable findings. Findings described as qualifying for "maximum confidence" had to be based on at least twenty studies and be supported by at least six out of seven

studies. "Minimum confidence" findings were based on less than three studies or were not supported by at least nine studies in which most supported the proposed relationship and none showed findings in support of a reversal of the relationship. The authors' classifications of the situational determinants of volunteering can be seen in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

The findings from research on the situational determinants of volunteering are more universally applicable across different experimental situations than those of volunteer characteristics. The situational determinant findings address characteristics of experiments rather than of subjects. While the range of certain subject variables can be restricted when special populations, such as psychologists, are targeted, most of the situational determinants noted in Table 2 are relevant to some degree in any experimental situation. This being the case, many of the variables listed in Table 2 are potentially important in identifying sources of volunteer bias in psychotherapy outcome research.

This project investigated several of the situational determinants of volunteering included in Table 2. Three of these were manipulated directly as independent variables in order to measure their effects on

volunteering among psychologists: task importance as perceived by the subject (variable #3), recruiter characteristics (#6), and normative expectations (#8). One other was measured by the questionnaires completed by the psychologist-subjects: subject interest (#1, the variable most strongly associated with increased volunteering). Subjects were also asked to rate the importance of prior acquaintanceship with the researcher (#9) in their own volunteering behavior. In addition, an independent measure of perceived task importance was also included in the questionnaire.

This "task importance" variable is defined by Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) as "when the task for which volunteering is requested is seen as important" (1975, p. 106). From their review it appears that experimenters' attempts to get subjects to see their tasks as important fall into two general categories: (1) those that emphasize the importance of the subjects' individual participation to the success of the study (referred to hereafter as "personal importance") and (2) those that portray the importance to society of the findings which will be obtained through the subjects' participation ("social importance").

Examples of the investigation of the personal importance variable can be found in Rosenbaum (1956) and in Schopler and Bateson (1965). Rosenbaum (1956) found that

volunteering was increased when the experimenter informed subjects that a doctoral dissertation was dependent on their participation than when a less intense request was made. Schopler and Bateson (1965) investigated the relationship between volunteering and the urgency of the recruiter's need for volunteers. These investigators found that recruiters more in need of volunteers did obtain more volunteering, but only from female subjects (Schopler & Bateson, 1965). Investigation of the social importance variable has been more speculative, in that most researchers have attributed the effects of manipulation of certain variables post hoc to the effects of the manipulation on the subjects' perceptions of the study's social import. It appears that this is a variable that is rarely manipulated directly. For example, Levitt, Lubin, and Zuckerman (1962) found a significant increase in volunteering as a result of a generous material incentive ($35). Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) then concluded that this increase may have been caused by the effects of the incentive in increasing the subjects' perceptions of the importance of the study, rather than simply as a result of the size of the incentive.

Several researchers (e.g., Dillman, 1972; Phillips, 1951; Sirken, Pifer, & Brown, 1960) have found that the use of special mailings such as certified mail or special delivery increases the response to mail surveys compared to the use of regular first-class mail. Dillman (1978)

attributes this effect to the power of these special mail classes to convince the recipient both of the seriousness of the researcher's purpose and of the importance of the study.

The confounding of the personal and social importance variables may be due to the fact that both are commonly and naturally used in most appeals for volunteers. In fact, applying Festinger's (1957) principle of reduction of coginitive dissonance to the volunteering situation, the more that volunteers become behaviorally committed to participating in an experiment, the less likely they would be to question either the personal or the social importance of the experiment. If subjects see their participation as personally important, it would reduce cognitive dissonance to see their participation as also contributing to social utility. Similarly, if subjects were convinced of a study's social importance, cognitive dissonance would be reduced by their also seeing their participation as personally important. In keeping with Festinger's (1957) theory, we would expect these two cognitions (that of personal and social importance) to "travel together" most strongly for the subject who has already committed behaviorally to the study. Whether or not this cognitive dissonance effect holds at the point where the subject is considering such commitment is an open question.

This study attempted to measure the effects of social

importance on voluteering indirectly. Subjects rated by questionnaire their perceptions of the importance of this study's results. We investigated whether more reluctant subjects (those that respond later) saw this study's results as less important than their earlier-responding peers. If subjects who show greater reluctance to volunteer also perceive the study as less important, this would support a hypothesis that a subject's perception of a study's social importance is important in his/her decision to volunteer. An alternative hypothesis consistent with Festinger's (1957) principle of reduction of cognative dissonance is that subjects who respond later rate the study as less socially important in order to justify their own hesitancy in responding.

This study also investigated the effects of perceived social importance directly by manipulating statements in the cover letter designed to enhance this perception. Some subjects received letters containing explicit statements of the potential importance of the study's findings, while others did not. The effectiveness of this manipulation in actually modifying the subjects' perceptions of the study's social importance was determined by pretesting. If subjects volunteer in greater numbers to requests containing explicit statements of the study's social usefulness, this would strongly support the hypothesis that perceptions of social importance are significant in determining volunteering behavior.

Any study, including this one, which wishes to investigate the effects of perceived social importance on volunteering must protect against confounding this variable with the effects of what we have termed the "personal importance" variable. The current study relied on pretesting of the research instruments to demonstrate that we were manipulating the perceptions of the social importance of the study independent of the subjects' perceptions of how important their individual participation was to the success of the study. Findings in the research on mail survey responses support the view that subjects base perceptions of the personal importance of their participation on their impressions of the mail packet as a whole or gestalt, to which many facets of the mailing contribute (Dillman, 1978). The personal importance variable as we have described it here appears to be a multiply-determined one and, therefore, difficult to manipulate consistently. As will be discussed below, the social importance variable also turned out to be difficult to manipulate by cover letter.

The effects on volunteering of the gender of the recruiter is the recruiter characteristic (variable #6 in Table 2) that was included in this study. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) point out that there is little systematic study of the effects of recruiter characteristics on volunteering; most findings come from analysis of results

that reveal unintended experimenter effects. The effect of recruiter gender is one of the few exceptions to this (Rosenthal & Rosow, 1975). Female recruiters have been shown to be more successful than male recruiters in gaining volunteers, though this effect may be lessened somewhat if the potential subjects are female or for certain types of experimental tasks (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). In this study, the gender of the recruiter was manipulated in the cover letters requesting volunteerism. The saliency of this manipulation was also be checked in the pretesting.

Normative expectations (variable #8 in Table 2) for volunteering are created by portraying volunteering as "the normative, expected, proper thing to do" (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975, p. 101). This can be accomplished by creating a climate in which volunteering is encouraged by unspoken rules or peer pressure (e.g., Esecover, Malitz, & Wilkens, 1961; Ross, Trumbull, Rubenstein, & Rasmussen, 1966), by exposing the potential volunteer to other people seen as likely to volunteer (e.g., Bennet, 1955; Rosenbaum, 1956), or by telling the subject that a large number of others have volunteered before under similar circumstances (Schofield, 1972, cited in Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). The diversity of strategies by which "normative expectations" have been manipulated and the diversity of effects which have been taken as support for its connection to volunteerism raise questions about whether a single, unitary concept is being investigated. Many of the studies

said to provide evidence for the positive effects of normative expectations on volunteerism are actually investigating the extent of subject compliance with group norms after subjects have volunteered (e.g., Ross, Trumbull, Rubinstein, & Rasmussen, 1966; Schofield, 1972). As such, they are looking at the effects of normative pressures on voluntary behaviors rather than on volunteering (agreeing to participate) per se.

As will be discussed in relation to the model of volunteering behavior presented here, the establishment of the "normative expectation" of volunteering can play a role in the rewards and costs the potential subject associates with volunteerism. This relationship is not a simple one as Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) presented, where increased normative expectations lead to increased volunteerism. For the psychologist faced with the relatively private decision of whether or not to commit time and effort to someone else's research, overt statements of the "normative"-ness of volunteering may have the unintended effect of reducing how rewarding the subject finds participation. This study hypothesized that portraying volunteering as the non-normative behavior would, in the case of our target population, actually increase volunteerism by increasing the reward value associated with participation in the study.

Therapist Variables in Psychotherapy Outcome Research

The role of therapist variables in psychotherapy outcome has changed over the years; researchers now tend to investigate therapist characteristics such as gender, experience level, age, and race in terms of how they interact with characteristics of the clients to produce outcome, rather than seeing them as variables producing a main effect in and of themselves (Beutler et al., 1986). These factors have a long history in the literature and continue to generate research in such areas as psychotherapy process (Parloff, Waskow, & Wolfe, 1978; Orlinsky & Howard, 1986) and negative effects in psychotherapy (Brodsky & Holdroyd, 1975), as well as the more general literature on psychotherapy outcome (Beutler et al., 1986). Findings from these areas of research suggest that therapist variables can produce significant main or interactive effects. This implies that these variables are likely to remain important as dimensions on which the therapists used in psychotherapy research should be characterized. If the therapists employed in psychotherapy research represent a restricted range of these variables compared to the population of therapists, not only will it be more difficult for researchers to identify the effects of these variables (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) but the generalizability of the findings to therapists as a whole could be called into question

(MacDonald, 1979). One of this study's purposes was to determine if the fact that most psychotherapy research employs volunteer therapists (Kazdin, 1978) provides a condition that limits ranges of these important therapist variables in research.

The therapist variables investigated in this study were limited by research methodology to those which were either (1) available in public records or (2) testable with reasonable assurance of accuracy by questionnaire. In addition, the study investigated psychologists only, which eliminated investigation of the effects of client-therapist matches across certain variables and the effects of the therapists' different training backgrounds on volunteering. Even with these restrictions, however, many therapist variables identified as important in the psychotherapy outcome literature remained (Beutler et al., 1986). Variables investigated in this study included age, gender, experience level, and theoretical and technical orientation.

Therapist Age

Therapist age appears to exert only a weak main effect on treatment outcome, although age similarity between client and therapist may make a stronger contribution to positive outcome (Beutler et al., 1986). Beutler et al. (1986) note that a rigorous investigation of the effects of therapist age or therapist-client age matching should

include a wide range of ages of both clients and therapists, a criterion that is rarely achieved. These authors attribute this difficulty to limitations in the research settings though, as has been argued, the hidden effects of volunteering on determining which therapists participate in these studies may also be a contributing factor. Beutler et al. (1986) also point out that age is often confounded with therapist experience level or theoretical orientation, making it difficult to tease out the individual contributions of each of these variables. Therapist age can often produce an interactive effect with the client's own age. Even this "age differential" variable can be dependent on the actual ages of the therapist and client, as well as which of the two actors is older. Beutler et al. (1986) observed that "creative research endeavors are called for that partial out the effects of skill, experience, and type of problem" in relation to the multiple interactions often confounded with age (1986, p. 263). Effects of therapist age in specific client populations have been noted, such as an improved (reduced) dropout rate among younger clients with adjustment problems when younger therapists were employed (Getz & Miles, 1978; Lasky & Salomone, 1977). Beutler et al. (1986) included 11 studies completed since the mid-1970s in their admittedly "selective" review as investigating the therapist age variable and called for continued research in this area, indicating that it is

likely to continue as a variable of importance in the outcome literature.

The present study gathered age data on all subjects from publicly available records. Steps were taken to reduce the confounding of this variable with level of experience or theoretical orientation. Two measures of experience level distinct from age were employed, one from public records (years since doctoral degree was received) and one from self-report on the questionnaire (self-reported years employed at least part-time as a psychotherapist).

Therapist Professional Background

The effects of the therapist's professional background (level of experience, theoretical and technical orientation) on treatment outcome is, to judge from the number of studies investigating these variables located by Beutler et al. (1986), among the best studied areas of psychotherapy outcome research. These authors included 40 recent studies of experience or training and 43 studies of theoretical orientation or technical procedures in their review. Therapist's experience was noted to have a complex effect on psychotherapy not easily observable in terms of treatment outcome; effects are more clear on psychotherapy process, early treatment gains, and dropout rates (Stein & Lambert, 1984). Reviewers in this area are sensitive to the difficulties in interpreting these findings due to

unrepresentative therapists sampling. They tend to attribute this unrepresentativeness to professional attrition or self-selection of caseloads (Beutler et al., 1986) rather than the effects of experience on volunteering behavior. Therapist theoretical orientation and technical procedures were also shown to effect therapy outcome (Beutler et al., 1986); the frequency with which these variables are found to interact with patient characteristics suggests that their specification is vital for findings in this area to be meaningfully interpreted.

Theoretical orientation was measured independently of age by self-report in the questionnaire. The questionnaire provided multiple dimensions along which subjects could describe their theoretical and technical orientations, rather than forcing them into broad descriptive categories such as "psychoanalytic" or "eclectic".

Therapist gender

Nineteen studies since 1976 which investigated the effects of therapist gender on therapy outcome and met their requirements of methodological rigor were identified in the review by Beutler et al. (1986). The reviewers see this as an important therapist variable due to the robustness of the findings associated with it:

> ...the best controlled research investigations available consistently suggest that therapists' gender exerts a modest effect on the selection of patients, the nature of the therapeutic process, and therapeutic change (Beutler et al., 1986, p. 263).

The effects of this variable are not simple ones to detect. As these reviewers (Beutler et al., 1986) note, their own conclusions contrast with the findings of several other comprehensive reviews which found few observable effects of either therapist gender or patient-therapist gender matching on treatment outcome (e.g., Cavenar & Werman, 1983; Mogul, 1982; Parloff et al., 1978; Zeldow, 1978). Past reviewers are believed to have missed the significance of the therapist gender variable due to (1) inclusion of studies with outcome measures other than treatment outcome and (2) the subtlety of the effects of this variable, which may be modified by the phase of therapy being observed or the socially prevailing sex roles (Beutler et al., 1986). Beutler et al. (1986) state that female therapists, first, and therapists of the patient's own gender, second, are associated with better treatment outcome. This study collected data on subjects' gender through publicly available records.

Mail Survey Research

Mail questionnaires are employed quite frequently in sociological research; one review of major journals in sociology suggested that it was employed about twice as frequently as face-to-face interviews during the period studied (Dillman, 1978). This research has led to several hundred studies of methodological procedures to improve response rates (Dillman, 1978). Despite this high level of

research activity, very few definitive conclusions have been reached concerning which techniques actually serve to improve response rate (Dillman, 1978; Kanuk & Berenson, 1975).

Dillman (1978) ascribes the ambiguous and often conflicting findings in this area to two main factors: (1) methodological inconsistencies across studies, including inconsistencies in the level of precision with which procedures are described which make analyses of the effects of these discrepancies difficult, and (2) a failure to understand the overall process by which recipients of mail surveys come to respond, which leads each study to focus on only one or two aspects of the process of responding. These two problems are interrelated, as studies without a theoretical rationale for their results, i.e., those that do not see how the particular aspects on which they focus fit into the larger process of volunteering, may neglect to describe other aspects of their studies largely because they are seen as irrelevant to their results.

Dillman (1978) criticizes past research for focusing on how techniques affect response to mail surveys rather than on the survey-respondent interaction. This study will address Dillman's concerns by (1) studying the response to a mail survey within the context of a theory of what produces the response, a theory which takes into account not only results from the mail survey literature but which also incorporates findings from literature on volunteerism

more generally, (2) carefully describing all facets of the study, including those which are not being manipulated, and keeping these constant aspects of the study as consistent with Dillman's (1978) own recommendations as our methodology will allow, and (3) strictly defining the population to which we wish to generalize our results. As will be seen in the response theory to be presented (Dillman, 1978), apparently conflicting results in the mail survey literature may be in part the result of predictable differences in how a particular population views a mail survey effort in terms of its costs to them, the rewards participation provides for them, and/or the trust the researcher engenders.

National Surveys of Clinical Psychologists

Clinical psychologists have been the frequent target of national surveys at least since the 1960s (e.g., Garfield & Kurtz, 1974; Goldschmid, Stein, Weissman, & Sorrells, 1969; Kelly, 1961; Norcross & Prochaska, 1982b; Norcross & Prochaska, 1983; Norcross & Wogan, 1983; Wildman & Wildman, 1967). Most of these surveys have investigated the therapists' professional characteristics and personal opinions on matters of professional importance, though more recent surveys have begun to collect data on treatment practices, types of clients, and theoretical orientations (Norcross & Wogan, 1983). Although most of these surveys provide only minimal information on the methods used to

encourage subjects to respond, it appears that even the more methodologically rigorous among them limit themselves to a single mailing with little or no follow-up (e.g., Norcross & Prochaska, 1983; Norcross & Wogan, 1983). These surveys generally obtain a response rate of aproximately 40%, although this figure appears to include some respondents whose data is unusable for one reason or another (Norcross & Wogan, 1983). This 40% response rate is fairly typical for mail surveys employing only one mailing and is also representative of the initial response to a survey in which multiple reminders are planned (Dillman, 1978). The fact that survey researchers who modify their survey techniques in some very simple ways designed to increase their response rate have commonly achieved a rate of return almost twice (Dillman, 1978) that of the "typical" survey of psychologists raises questions about the accepted research methodology among psychologists in this area.

Most of the authors within the survey research literature appear to be sensitive to the issue of whether their sample is truly representative of the population they are surveying. The most common way to test this representativeness is to compare their sample to publicly available data on the entire organization being surveyed. Some recent authors have bemoaned the limitations of this method, noting the scarcity of such publicly available data (usually limited to a breakdown of members based on gender,

state of residence, and, on occasion, professional degree) (Norcross & Wogan, 1983). No survey research of psychologists that attempted to analyze its findings using response time as a variable could be located. Even though this is an accepted methodology in the research on volunteering behavior used to help to characterize the nonvolunteer (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975), it does not appear that this method has been applied to psychologists before in the published survey literature.

A Model of Volunteering Response

Dillman (1978) describes the process of sending a questionnaire to a prospective respondent, getting them to complete the questionnaire in an honest manner and return it as a special case of "social exchange." Homans (1974) describes social exchange as a situation in which each of two persons acts "under the stimulus of the other" (1974, p. 53), each can and does communicate with the other, and the results are rewarding to both. Blau (1964) distinguishes social exchange from economic exchanges, where exact obligations involved in a transaction are specified and calculations of advantage can be made rationally and unambiguously. Social exchange involves unspecified obligations and the mutual trust that these obligations will be fulfilled (Blau, 1964.) Obviously, the range of rewards and behaviors which can be included in these "unspecified obligations" is quite large when it

comes to human interactions. Social exchange theory assumes that all people engage in any activity because of the rewards they hope to gain, that all activities they perform produce certain costs to them, and that everyone attempts to keep their costs below their expected level of rewards (Dillman, 1978). Thus, a social activity like volunteering can be made more probable by the researcher's minimizing the costs to the volunteer of participating, maximizing the rewards for doing so, and establishing in the volunteer the trust that those rewards will be delivered (Dillman, 1978). As each type of social exchange involves its own unique costs, potential rewards, and ways in which trust can be established, the remainder of this analysis will focus on volunteering to participate in survey research. This model can, however, be used to analyze any situation in which volunteering is being requested in order to maximize the probability of a positive volunteering response.

Minimizing the costs to the volunteer. It is important to recognize that costs, rewards, and trust establishment in mail surveys all exist as they are perceived by the potential respondents. Major potential costs to respondents such as time required to complete the questionnaire, physical or mental effort, revelation of personal or sensitive information, feelings of subordination to the researcher, and direct monetary costs (Dillman, 1978) all exist to the extent they are felt by

the respondent, not on some absolute scale. The researcher must not only design the study in a way that minimizes the costs but also actively convince the respondent that these costs are "reasonable" (i.e., worth the rewards.)

Dillman (1978) recommends specific strategies for reducing the potential costs as they are perceived by mail survey respondents. The time and effort elements are addressed not only by making the questionnaire as clear and concise as possible but also by designing it so that it appears attractive, interesting, and less formidable. Individual questions and the questionnaire as a whole go through multiple screenings. Questions that are too complex or confusing are re-worked or eliminated.

Questions of a very personal nature are thought to increase the response cost to the survey recipient as well. Efforts are made to re-word questions into a less threatening form or to move such questions to the end of the questionnaire. A position toward the end of the questionnaire allows more time for the respondent to establish trust in the researcher.

It may be difficult at first to understand Dillman's contention that responding to a survey could induce feelings of subordination in the respondent. Dillman explains that such feelings arise when respondents feel that what they have to offer (the completed questionnaires) are of less value to the researcher than that which the

respondent will receive in return. A strange idea indeed for the researcher whose results depend on an adequate response rate! The researcher may, however, unwittingly set up this subordinate perception in an attempt to convince the respondent of the importance of the survey. Grossly overstated results should not be portrayed as hanging in the balance depending on the respondent's actions, such as "we must have your responses so that we may prevent the child abuse you fear!" As Blau (1964) points out, one of the possible response alternatives available to the individual faced with such a "power-dependent" relationship is for them to avoid the implied dependence altogether by deciding to do without the offered service. For the potential survey respondent, this alternative is as close as the nearest trash can. The researcher can avoid this connotation on the relationship by stating explicitly that the respondent's help is needed by the researcher, elevating the respondent to a powerful, consultative position.

Direct monetary costs are perhaps the most straightforward ones the researcher can eliminate. As Dillman (1978) notes, obtaining a return envelope and postage may seem a trivial expense to expect of a respondent, but the typical survey response is a situation of such low reward that any such tangible costs may tip the social exchange balance in favor of not responding. The researcher's act of assuming such costs may also have

implications for establishing trust between the researcher and the respondent, as well as for positively affecting the respondent's perceptions of the importance of his responses to the researcher.

Maximizing the rewards for participating. While the rewards available to most researchers to repay survey respondents may appear to be few, Dillman (1978) points out that many of the rewards identified by theorists in the social exchange literature can be employed to good effects. Positive regard (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959), verbal appreciation and the chance to support one's own values (Blau, 1964), and respect as a consultant (Homans, 1974) can all be offered explicitly or implied by the manner in which the researcher communicates to the potential respondent. Careful wording of the cover letter to make it known that these rewards are available is essential in convincing the individual that responding to the survey is worth the effort involved (Dillman, 1978).

Associating oneself with a project of high importance would seem to offer rewards in terms of increased self-esteem to the respondent. Such importance could be in terms of the benefits to the researcher personally (e.g., "I need your help to finish my dissertation") or the social importance of the issues the study addresses (e.g., "Lack of well-designed research studies creates uncertainty as to which treatments are the safest and most effective.") As

noted in the review of the volunteer literature, this importance can be stated by the researcher explicitly but can also be communicated to the volunteer indirectly by the intensity of the request for volunteering or the high status or prestige of the recruiter. Keeping in mind the warning from Dillman noted above, the researcher must travel a narrow path to convince the respondent of the importance of completing the survey while not overstating the case in a way that is unbelievable (thereby decreasing trust) or overwhelming (and threatening subordination.)

Some people enjoy answering questionnaires regardless of content (Dillman, 1978), making completion of the questionnaire itself a potential reward. This effect can be maximized by making the questionnaire as interesting as possible.

Establishing trust between researcher and respondent. For any of the rewards available to the researcher to have any legitamacy for the potential respondent, the respondent must trust that the researcher will deliver them. Dillman (1978) identifies token payments for participating as a method for establishing trust, hypothesizing that they represent the "good faith" nature of the researcher's intentions to the respondents. As noted previously, stamped return envelopes may serve a similar function. Another method identified by Dillman is for the researcher to associate the survey with an established organization already known to and trusted by the respondent.

Cover letter and questionnaire construction may

represent the most effective ways in which trust can be established. By addressing the respondent personally, stating honestly how the results are to be used, noting positive outcomes which can be reasonably expected from the findings, and making himself available for questions by including an address and phone number through which contact can be made, the researcher establishes an air of openness which maximizes the potential for trust.

Many of the situational determinants of the volunteering response identified in the general volunteering literature can be seen in terms of rewards or trust establishment in the social exchange relationship with the researcher. Describing the task for which the individual is volunteering, in this case the completion of the questionnaire, as important, both in terms of its usefulness to the researcher and in terms of its social importance, communicates that a high reward value is to be placed on the behavior. If volunteering is a clearly established group norm, this could communicate that others have placed value in the exchange relationship with the researcher in the past. Volunteering could, in this case, also hold additional value as a reward in affirming the subject's group membership; failure to volunteer could be especially costly in terms of overt or covert group exclusion.

As is noted elsewhere, participation in surveys of the

profession is not normative behavior among psychologists; a response rate of 40% is considered typical or even commendable for research of this type (Norcross & Wogan, 1983). In such a case, portraying volunteering as normative may cause the potential subject to doubt the honesty of the researcher. Such a portrayal may also have the unintended effect of devaluing the subject's individual importance to the study (e.g., "All these others have cooperated, so they don't really need me"), which is one of the most important determinants of volunteerism in survey research (Dillman, 1978). In this study, then, portraying volunteering as rare (which it is) is more likely to improve the rate of volunteerism by creating a climate of honesty and trust between researcher and subject and by further impressing the subject with just how important (rewarding) his or her individual participation is if the study is to succeed.

Trust, Costs, and Rewards: The Cover Letter

The cover letter as constructed by Dillman (1978) serves to introduce the survey, to motivate the respondent to participate in the project, and to anticipate and answer any questions the recipient may have that would serve to lessen the questionnaire's appeal. It is an essential ingredient in the survey process as it carries a major portion of the burden of establishing trust between the recipient and the researcher while also convincing the recipient that the rewards for participating are worth the

costs (Dillman, 1978). Dillman (1978) divides the messages to be communicated to the recipient by the cover letter into four main types: (1) this is a useful study, (2) you are important to the success of this study, (3) your questionnaire will be treated confidentially, and (4) other important messages specific to the particular survey project. The reader may recognize that message (1) above is basically a statement of the "social importance" variable identified in the volunteer research literature as important in determining volunteering behavior, while message (2) is a description of the "personal importance" variable in volunteering research (see above for a discussion of situational determinants of the volunteering response). As has been noted, Dillman (1978) believes that recipients are convinced of their importance to the study by a variety of facets of the survey mailing. These include many physical means by which the survey request is distinguished from commercial mass mailings and an explicit statement to the effect that they were especially chosen to participate in the survey (Dillman, 1978). It is left to the cover letter alone, however, to communicate the survey's social importance to the recipient. By manipulating a statement of social importance in the cover letter, we hoped to establish the strength of this reward in the survey volunteering decision of psychologists.

Why Psychologists Volunteer:
A Preliminary Survey

During the brainstorming for this project, six doctoral-level clinical psychologists, all of whom were engaged in performing psychotherapy at least part-time, were questionned informally concerning the factors they considered in deciding whether or not to volunteer for a psychotherapy research project. No attempt was made to select a random or representative sample, as the sole purpose of this "survey" was to locate some general factors that could then be more rigorously tested. The responses from these psychologists did provide clues to the types of costs and rewards clinicans consider before committing any of their highly-valued time to psychotherapy research. These responses formed the basis for many of the items included in the questionnaire to be used in this project to assess the attitudes of psychologists. The results of the informal survey of clinical psychologists concerning the factors they considered in determining their volunteering decision can be seen in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

In developing hypotheses for this study, it was assumed that all of the factors to be tested by questionnaire were important in determining psychologists'

volunteering behavior. It was expected that factors having direct relevance to the current study would show the greatest change as the subjects' response time increased (ie., as they become more reluctant subjects). For example, no financial renumeration was offered for participation in this study. We questioned subjects as to how important the offer of financial renumeration is to their decision whether or not to volunteer for psychotherapy outcome research. We would expect, then, that the later-responding (more reluctant to participate) subjects would rate financial renumeration as a more important factor in their decision whether to participate than subjects who respond earlier. They would be demonstrating this by their reluctance to participate in a study in which financial renumeration is not offered.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study fell into three broad categories: (1) those predicting the effects on volunteering behavior that would be observed as a result of the manipulations of the situational determinants of volunteering in the cover letter, (2) those predicting the effects of the subject variables on volunteering, and (3) the characterization of the nonvolunteer to be obtained from trends in the questionnaire data across time. The literature provided a much firmer basis for hypotheses in some of these areas than it did in others.

Situational determinants of volunteering

The situational determinants of volunteering manipulated in this study were recruiter gender, normative nature of positive response, and task importance (the social importance of the study). Research in this area supported hypotheses predicting increased volunteering with a female recruiter and when a statement of the social importance of the study was included (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). It has been argued that Rosenthal and Rosnow's (1975) conclusions concerning the positive effects of "normative expectations" on volunteerism confuse compliance and volunteerism; it was felt that, given the statistical rarity of volunteering for research of this type, a statement of the normative expectation of volunteering would actually retard volunteering though its negative effects on subject-researcher trust and on the subject's perceptions of the reward value of participation. Research also indicated that these variables may not be equivalent in their strengths in influencing volunteering (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975), although there is little data on which to base estimates of the exact magnitude of their relative strengths. Our first set of hypotheses, those concerned with the effects of the situational determinants of volunteering on psychologists, are presented below.

H-1. Cover letters signed by a female recruiter will produce a greater response from psychologists than those signed by a male recruiter.

H-2. Cover letters including an explicit statement of the non-normative nature of responding will produce a greater response from psychologists than those that characterize responding as normative.

H-3. Cover letters including an explicit statement of the social importance of the study will produce a greater response from psychologists than those that do not include such a statement.

Volunteer Characteristics

The volunteer literature provided support for hypotheses predicting relatively greater volunteering from female subjects and younger subjects (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). It did not directly address the effects to be expected as a result of the experience levels of the psychologists under study. MacDonald (1979) also found that therapists who volunteered to participate in a research project were significantly younger on average than nonvolunteering therapists. It was hoped that the size of the sample to be employed in this study would provide enough variation to untangle the age and experience variables. In terms of response costs, however, participating in any kind of research is likely to be less rewarding to more experienced therapists. They have little to gain from findings which support their modus operandi and much to lose if their techniques are found less effective than someone else's. Participation is also likely to "cost" them more because of their greater earning

power relative to younger therapists [they spend more hours per week in fee-for service activities (Norcross & Prochaska, 1983)].

H-4. Female psychologists will volunteer to participate in the survey in relatively greater numbers than male psychologists.

H-5. Volunteering psychologists will, as a group, be younger than the psychologists who do not volunteer.

H-6. Volunteering psychologists will, as a group, be less experienced in psychotherapy than the psychologists who do not volunteer.

Attitudes of the Nonvolunteer

Hypotheses as to which factors the nonvolunteer considers in determining not to volunteer for a particular study could only be confirmed indirectly with the methodology employed in this study. Only clear trends in the average responses on the questionnaire items across time were considered interpretable and a conservative approach to interpreting any findings was taken as the most valid one. The increasing the incentives design (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) relies on subjects who do respond in order to characterize those who do not. As this methodology does not appear to have been applied to surveys of clinical psychologist previously, a conservative approach to data analysis seemed most warrented. Findings from research on volunteering behavior supported a hypothesis that the study

could show a positive relationship between interest in the topic of this research and volunteering (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). The preliminary survey discussed above certainly suggested that psychologists who are busier with other things would be less likely to volunteer to participate in this study. Other than these two hypotheses, previous research provided very little evidence with which to characterize the nonvolunteering psychologists. It is consistent with the model of volunteering response offered here (Dillman, 1978) to propose that nonvolunteering psychologists fail to volunteer due to their perceptions of lesser reward for volunteering, perceptions of greater costs for volunteering, and/or a lack of trust in the researcher. Greater costs for volunteering could be reflected in seeing a larger number of factors as extremely important in deciding to volunteer compared to the number of factors considered by the psychologist who is more enthusiastic about volunteering; if an given study must "pass" more conditions to obtain the reluctant psychologists' approval, they would agree to participate in fewer studies in the long run than psychologists who do not see volunteering as so costly. This situation could be reflected in the more reluctant psychologists rating more factors overall as "extremely important" to their volunteering decision.

H-7. Later-responding psychologists will report themselves busier on the average than psychologists who respond

earlier.

H-8. Later-responding psychologists will report themselves less interested in the topic of this research project than psychologists who respond earlier.

H-9. Later-responding psychologists will tend to rank every attitudinal factor considered in the questionnaire as more important to their decision whether or not to volunteer than psychologist who respond earlier.

Chapter Three

METHOD

Subjects

Participants (248 male and 248 female psychologists, most of whom were engaged at least part-time im clinical activities) were selected at random from the membership of the APA's Division 29 (Psychotherapy). Equal numbers of male and female psychologists were selected so that any gender-specific variations in volunteering behavior could be more readily analyzed with a moderate sample size. This sample represented approximately 8% of the male and 17% of the female membership of Division 29 as of 1985 (American Psychological Association, 1985).

Age, gender, and experience data were obtained on all subjects from their listings in the Directory of the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 1985). Subjects for whom these data were incomplete were eliminated from the subject pool and replaced.

From the beginning pool of 496 subjects 50 could not be contacted because no current or forwarding address was available, one was deceased, one out of the country, and one eliminated due to a personal crisis that made him unable to participate. This left 443 available subjects. This final subject pool was evenly divided between males

and females (222 males and 221 females). This overrepresents women compared to the population of Division 29 as a whole where women make up about 30% of the membership. The typical subject was aproximately 48 years old and had received his or her doctoral degree 16 years ago. These figures closely resembled those from recent similar surveys of doctoral-level and Division 29 psychologists (e.g., Norcross & Prochaska, 1983; Norcross & Wogan, 1983). Even though this study's subject population overrepresented women, the mean age and experience levels of our subjects appeared to approximate that of Division 29 as a whole.

Forty-five states, the District of Columbia, and Canada were represented by subjects in this study. Aproximately 15% of the subjects were from New York and 12% from California. No other single state represented more than 7% of the total sample. While comparable figures for Division 29 are not available, these figures compare favorably with the geographic distribution of the APA as a whole (American Psychological Association, 1985).

All materials and procedures employed in this study were approved by the review committees on the use of human subjects in research of both the College of William and Mary and the College's department of Psychology.

Materials

Cover Letters

Eight versions of a cover letter requesting the psychologists' participation in a mail survey served as the instruments upon which situational determinants of volunteering were tested. These eight versions represented the systematic manipulation of three dichotomous variables under study: task importance, normative nature of positive response, and recruiter gender. The basic letter was adapted from Dillman (1978). Table 4 contains a listing of the variable conditions present in each instrument.

Insert Table 4 about here

The effectiveness of these manipulations were checked in two seperate pretests. The first of these employed students in an introductory psychology class as subjects, the second used practicum site supervisors for the author's graduate program. Both pretests involved exposing subjects to one version of the cover letters being developed and requesting their perceptions of the variables under manipulation via questionnaire. In addition, the practicum site supervisors also received a version of the Psychotherapy Research Attitudes Project Questionnaire that was to be sent to experimental subjects.

The results of these pretests indicated that subjects were quite accurate in their perceptions of the gender of

the signer of the letter, so the recruiter gender manipulation was concluded to be successful. The social importance manipulation proved to have a significant effect in the desired direction on the perceived social importance of the study among college students but not among the clinicians. On the basis of this finding the social importance variable was strengthened by stating that benefits might be expected by both consumers and producers of psychotherapy (only the benefits to therapists had been mentioned previously). The normative nature of response variable did not have a statistically significant effect on the perceptions of either the students or the clinicians. Based on this the variable was moved to a more visible position within the letter (it was made one of the last statements rather than being embedded in middle of the letter as was previously the case) and the variable was operationalized differently to increase the differential between the normative and nonnormative conditions. The nonnormative condition became an explicit statement of the low response rate usually obtained in survey research rather than simply the absence of the normative statement as had been the case previously. The letters with these modifications became the experimental instruments which were employed with subjects in this study.

As has been discussed, the recipients of mail surveys are believed to base their decision whether or not to respond in large measure on their overall impression of the

entire mail packet (Dillman, 1978). In keeping with this project's goal of testing the effects of explicit statements of the variables under study, other materials in the project followed many of the suggestions by Dillman (1978) to maximize the subject's interest and involvement in the survey as far as our research methodology allowed. These suggestions included several steps to differentiate this mailing from commercial or other impersonal mass mailings, such as individually-typed addresses on the envelopes, use of first class postage, letterhead stationery, and individually-applied pressed blue ball point signatures (Dillman, 1978). Samples of each of the eight versions of the cover letter appear in Appendix A. Letters appearing in the appendices have been modified to conform to dissertation format requirements. Cover letters received by subjects appeared on a single page and were typed on letterhead stationery.

Manipulation of the perceived social importance of the study was constrained by the necessity of having both conditions (higher and lower social importance) still result in a believable letter. Within this restriction it was felt that an explicit statement of this study's lack of social importance, as might be included to maximize the differences between these two conditions, would cause most subjects to question the credibility of the entire project. Subjects' perceptions of the social importance of the study

was, then, manipulated by the inclusion (higher social importance condition) or exclusion (lower social importance condition) of several statements within the cover letter. These consisted of the underlined statements below. These statements were not, of course, underlined in the text of the letters sent to subjects. Paragraph one of the cover letter under the higher social importance condition read:

> Psychologists are often berated for their lack of participation in psychotherapy outcome research. Conflicting claims as to which methods are safe or unsafe, effective or ineffective, confuse both practitioners and the public we serve. However, no one really knows what factors psychologists like yourself consider in deciding whether to participate in research.

The same paragraph under the lower social importance condition was:

> Psychologists are often berated for their lack of participation in psychotherapy outcome research. However, no one really knows what factors psychologists like yourself consider in deciding whether to participate in research.

Paragraph four under the higher social importance condition read:

> We hope that the results of this research will help future investigators of psychotherapy outcome to design studies which take the concerns of practicing psychologists into account. More practical, "do-able" research could, we feel, benefit everyone, practitioners and consumers alike. We plan to publish our findings, but we will be sending a summary of our results to everyone who participates as a token of our thanks for your efforts.

The same paragraph under the lower social importance condition appeared as:

> We plan to publish our findings, but we will be sending a summary of our results to everyone who participates as a token of our thanks for your efforts.

The higher social importance conditions are represented in letters 1, 3, 5, and 7 in Appendix A. These identification numbers, which appear just above the inside address on the letters, are included here but were not present in the letters sent to subjects.

Subjects' perceptions of the normative nature of their agreement to participate in the study were manipulated by the following statements as the final paragraph in the cover letter.

(More normative condition:)

> Most psychologists contacted in pilot studies for this research have agreed to participate-- your participation in our project is very important to its success!

(Less normative condition:)

> Surveys of clinical psychologists typically elicit responses from less than 40% of those who receive them-- your participation in our project is very important to its success!

The more normative condition is represented by letters 1, 2, 5, and 6 in Appendix A.

Subjects' perceptions of the gender of the recruiter were manipulated by varying who signed the cover letter. The male recruiter condition was represented by the signature and typed name of this author (letters 1-4 in Appendix A) while the female recruiter condition was represented by the typed name and signature of the

chairperson of this dissertation committee (letters 5-8 in Appendix A). Both authors were identified, without professional title or degree, solely by their affiliation with the Virginia Consortium for Professional Psychology. This was done in order to minimize uncontrolled differences in how the signators were perceived by subjects, such as status differences which might have been associated with a doctoral degree being ascribed to only one of the signators.

Second and third follow-up letters were constructed following suggestions by Dillman (1978). These letters contained the same variables as the original cover letter, though the variables were operationalized slightly differently so that the subjects would not feel they were receiving the same "form letter" repeatedly. The actual wording of the manipulations was very similar in each version of the letter. Sample copies of these letters can be found in Appendix B (second follow-up letter) and Appendix C (third follow-up letter).

The higher social importance condition was represented in both the second and third follow-up letters by the underlined portions below. The second paragraph of the letters representing the higher social importance condition read:

> We have undertaken this research project because we believe that conflicting claims concerning psychotherapy effectiveness confuse both practitioners and the general public. We feel that everyone could benefit from knowing what practicing psychologists

> consider important in outcome research. In my last letter I mentioned that no one really knows how psychologists like yourself feel about participating in this kind of research or what factors influence your decision whether or not to participate.

The same paragraph under the lower social importance condition became:

> In my last letter I mentioned that no one really knows how psychologists like yourself feel about participating in this kind of research or what factors influence your decision whether or not to participate.

The fourth paragraph under the higher social importance condition read:

> The results of this research will help future investigators of psychotherapy outcome to design studies which take the concerns of practicing psychologists into account. In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

The same paragraph under the lower social importance condition became:

> In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

The normative nature of the volunteering response was portrayed in the letters by the underlined portion below, appearing as the sixth paragraph in the letters (underlining added):

> In closing, let me mention again that most psychologists contacted in the preliminary surveys have agreed to participate-- your contribution is important!

Similarly, the less normative condition was represented by:

> In closing, let me mention again that surveys surveys of our profession typically elicit responses from less than 40% of those who received them--

your contribution is important!

The recruiter gender variable was operationalized in the same manner as in the original cover letters.

Questionnaire. A 15-item questionnaire was used to collect data on subject variables associated with volunteering behavior. This questionnaire was developed especially for this project. Items were selected based in part on the results of the informal survey of clinical psychologists discussed earlier. This survey elicted their opinions concerning factors they considered important in deciding whether to participate in a psychotherapy outcome research project. Other items were developed to assess subject interest, a variable identified as important in the literature on subject variables in volunteering (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975), and therapist's theoretical orientation, a variable historically deemed important to psychotherapy outcome (e.g., Eysenck, 1952). Most items employed a seven-point Likert-type scale so that subjects could indicate various degrees of effect of the variables listed. Question order was determined following suggestions by Dillman (1978); more personal questions were presented toward the end of the questionnaire in order to minimize initial resistance to the task. This questionnaire is presented in Appendix D.

Procedure

Each potential subject received a legal-sized envelope containing one version of the cover letter, the

questionnaire, and a business mail reply envelope with which the questionnaire could be returned. Each version of the letter was sent to 31 male and 31 female subjects selected at random from the subject pool.

Sixteen days after the initial mailing, each subject who had not responded was sent a reminder letter very similar in form and content to their original cover letter, another copy of the questionnaire, and a business mail reply envelope. This was repeated 36 days after the initial mailing to all subjects from whom questionnaires still had not been received. These reminder letters, also adapted from Dillman (1978), were manipulated along the same variables as the original cover letter. Each potential subject received reminder letters containing the same constellation of variables as was present in his/her original cover letter.

A record was kept of all subjects initiating phone or mail inquiries about any aspects of the study. As completed questionnaires were received, subjects' names were checked off the master list according to their assigned code number, which were present on the questionnaire. When the study was completed all subjects were sent an explanation of the procedures employed and a brief summary of the results. The master list identifying the subjects with their respective code numbers will be destroyed as soon as all issues concerning data collection

are resolved. All knowledge of the specific code numbers associated with each subject was limited to the author in order to insure subject confidentiality.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

Overview of Results

Each of the eight versions of the cover letter reached between 53 and 58 individuals from the target of 61 subjects per letter with which the study began. These eight letters represented the systematic manipulation of three dichotomous variables (social importance, normativeness of volunteerism, and recruiter gender). Completed questionnaires were received from 324 of the 443 possible subjects by the 53rd day after the initial mailing for an overall response rate of 73.14%. Response rates for the individual letters varied between 64.91% (letter 7) and 84.91% (letter 2). A 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 (subject gender x recruter gender x social importance x normativeness) chi-square test on these results indicates that there is not a statistically significant difference between the return rates produced by the different letters (χ^2 (1) = 1.18, $p > .10$). The overall response results are reproduced in Table 5.

Insert table 5 about here

Of the three seperate mailings used, the response was heavily weighted toward the initial mailing. Over 80% of

the subjects who eventually responded completed the questionnaire included with the first mailing. The average response time was 18.88 days (SD = 11.60) from the initial mailing. Many of the subjects who eventually sent in the questionnaire included in the first mailing did so after the second and third mailings had already been sent. Questionnaires from the first mailing continued to appear more than 50 days from when they were sent. The low utilization rate of questionnaires included with the second and third mailings made the count of days past the initial mailing a more usable measure of response time than the mailing number of the questionnaire used.

Overall, the results from this experiment did not support any of the study's hypotheses. Volunteering behavior among psychologists appears to be a robust phenomenon largely unaffected by the variables included in this study. Except for a clinically insignificant difference between the experience levels of clinicians who did and did not complete the survey, all of the statistical tests of the hypotheses presented below were nonsignificant. Likewise, the attitudes expressed by subjects who participated in the survey were largely unrelated to their self-reported therapeutic orientations.

Hypothesis 1: Cover letters signed by a female recruiter will produce a greater response from psychologists than those signed by a male recruiter.

Letters signed by the female recruiter were received

by 225 subjects while letters signed by the male recruiter reached 218 subjects. Letters with a female signer produced an overall response rate of 77%, while male-signed letters produced a 70% response. A 2 x 2 (response x recruiter gender) chi-square test of these differences revealed them to be nonsignificant ($\chi^2(1) = 2.29$, $p > .10$). Volunteerism was not differentially affected by the gender of the recruiter.

Hypothesis 2: Cover letters including an explicit statement of the nonnormative nature of responding will produce a greater response from psychologists than those that characterize responding as normative.

Letters portraying volunteering as normative were received by 220 subjects, letters with a nonnormative statement were received by 223. The letters including a normative statement produced a 76% rate of response compared to a 70% response rate for the letters portraying volunteerism as more unusual. A 2 x 2 (response x normativeness of volunteerism) chi-square test of this difference showed it to be nonsignificant ($\chi^2(1) = 1.44$, $p > .10$). Volunteerism was not differentially affected by portraying it as normal and expected versus relatively unusual behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Cover letters including an explicit statement of the social importance of the study will produce a greater response from psychologists than those

that do not include such a statement.

Letters containing as explicit statement of the study's social importance were received by 223 subjects; letters without these statements reached 220 subjects. Letters emphasizing the social importance produced a 72% response rate while those without such an emphasis garnered a 74% response. A 2 x 2 (response x social importance) chi-square test of this difference revealed it to be nonsignificant ($\chi^2(1) = 0.12$, $p > .10$). An explicit statement of the social importance of the study did not increase volunteerism under these conditions.

Hypothesis 4: Female psychologists will volunteer to participate in the survey in relatively greater numbers than male psychologists.

Female subjects responded to the survey at a rate of 72%, while 74% of male subjects returned the questionnaire. This was not a significant difference, as tested by a 2 x 2 (response x subject gender) chi-square ($\chi^2(1) = 0.16$, $p > .10$). There was no difference in volunteerism for this task based on gender of the subject.

Hypothesis 5: Volunteering psychologists will, as a group, be younger than psychologists who do not volunteer.

The average age of subjects who completed our survey was 47.99 years ($SD = 9.68$). Nonvolunteering subjects averaged 49.35 years of age ($SD = 11.81$). A t-test of these two group averages showed the difference to be nonsignificant ($t(441) = -1.23$, $p > .10$).

Hypothesis 6: Volunteering psychologists will, as a group, be less experienced in psychotherapy than the psychologists who do not volunteer.

Volunteering psychologists averaged 15.48 years since receiving their doctoral degrees (SD = 8.37). The nonvolunteers as a group received their doctorates 17.70 years ago (SD = 10.98). This difference was statistically significant ($t(441) = -2.26$, $p < .05$). Although statistically significant, this difference (volunteers versus nonvolunteers) accounted for only 1.15% of the variance in years of experience.

Hypotheses 7 Through 9

Hypotheses 7, 8, and 9 have to do with the changing character of the respondents as they demonstrated increasing reluctance to respond (i.e., as their response time increased). These hypotheses predicted an increase in self-reported "busyness," a decreasing interest in the research topic, and a trend toward endorsing every attitudinal item in the questionnaire as more important in their volunteerism decision, respectively, as response time increased. Trends of this sort in the data could, through the theory behind the "increasing the incentives" experimental design (Dillman, 1978), allow estimates of these data values for the nonresponding subjects. As noted above, subjects tended to return the questionnaire they received with the first mailing regardless of when they

actually responded. This meant that the subject groups composed of those who returned the questionnaire from the same mailing were not homogeneous in their "enthusiasm" of response (as measured roughly by response time) as is required for data analysis in the increasing the incentives design. Therefore, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) that was proposed for analysis of these results was supplemented by two additional analytical approaches. An additional one-way ANOVA was performed in which three groups were defined not by the mailing to which subjects nominally responded but by using the dates of the mailings as cut-off points for inclusion in the groups. That is, everyone responding on or before the second mailing became part of group 1, those responding by the day of the third mailing became group 2, and everyone else who responded became group 3. In addition to this one-way ANOVA, the subjects' data were correlated with their response time in days, providing a third test for significant relationships between responses and "enthusiasm".

When using the actual mailings to determine group membership, each ANOVA produced nonsignificant results (H-7: $F(2, 319) = 1.76$, $p > .10$; H-8: $F(2, 319) = 0.68$, $p > .10$; H-9: $F(2, 318) = 0.53$, $p > .10$).

Hypothesis 7: Later-responding psychologists will report themselves busier on the average than psychologists who respond earlier.

The one-way ANOVA testing this hypothesis in which

groups were defined by the response time cut-offs described above showed self-reported "busyness" to be the strongest self-reported variable related to volunteerism. The magnitude of this effect, however, failed to reach conventional levels of significance ($F(2, 319) = 2.78$, $p < .10$).

There was a weak but statistically significant correlation between self-reported "busyness" and response time measured in days ($r(322) = 0.12$, $p < .05$). The likelihood of discovering a relationship of a practically-significant magnitude may have been reduced by the ceiling effect encountered in responses to this question by all subjects. The mean level of busyness reported by subjects was 6.15 ($SD = .899$) on a 7-point scale. Almost all subjects saw themselves at or near the point of being "as busy as I possibly can be" (point "7" on the scale).

Hypothesis 8: Later-responding psychologists will report themselves less interested in the topic of this research project than psychologists who respond earlier.

The results of the one-way ANOVA using groups defined by response time did not support this hypothesis ($F(2, 319) = 0.52$, $p > .10$). There was a statistically insignificant negative relationship between self-reported level of interest in the research topic and response time ($r(322) = -0.02$, $p > .10$). Interest in this area of research, at least as self-reported on this scale, did not appear to be

associated meaningfully with "enthusiasm" for volunteering as measured by speed of response.

Hypothesis 9: Later-responding psychologists will tend to rank every attitudinal factor considered in the questionnaire as more important to their decision whether or not to volunteer than psychologists who respond earlier.

A mean score of the first 11 attitudinal items on the questionnaire was computed for each subject. This mean score was correlated with the subject's response time. No significant relationship was found between more strongly expressed attitudes toward factors affecting the volunteering decision and enthusiasm for volunteering as measured by response time ($r(324) = 0.03$, $p > .10$. The results of the one-way ANOVA using groups defined by response time also showed the changes in this measure with response time to be nonsignificant ($F(2, 319) = 0.24$, $p > .10$).

Additional Analyses

Additional Tests of the Hypotheses

In order to determine if the long period (53 days) of data collection created a ceiling effect which obscured meaningful trends in the data, Hypotheses 1-6 were retested defining as volunteers only the most enthusiastic subjects, those who responded by the date of the second mailing (16 days past the initial mailing). All other subjects, even those who eventually responded, were classified as nonvolunteers for these analyses. If these early

responders could be shown not to differ significantly from the nonresponders, a powerful argument could be advanced: the most enthusiastic volunteers are representative of the entire population of psychologists, at least on the variables addressed here.

None of the hypotheses on psychologists' volunteering behavior were supported even when volunteering was limited to these most enthusiastic respondents. All three of the letter variables produced non-significant effects on volunteerism (recruiter gender (H-1): $\chi^2(1) = 0.01$, $p > .10$; normative nature of volunteerism (H-2): $\chi^2(1) = 0.06$, $p > .10$; social importance of the study (H-3): $\chi^2(1) = 2.74$, $p > .05$). Subject gender (H-4) likewise showed a nonsignificant effect ($\chi^2(1) = 0.11$, $p > .10$). The early responders could not be significantly differentiated from other subjects by age (H-5) or years post-degree (H-6) (age: $t(441) = -1.27$, $p > .10$; years post-degree: $t(441) = -0.96$, $p > .10$).

Interaction Effects

Although not addressed specifically in the hypotheses, interactions between combination of subject and letter variables included in this study could have produced effects that obscured the results of the variables individually. The overall eight-cell chi-square already reported as nonsignificant represents the lack of a significant effect for the social importance x normative

response x recruiter gender interaction. Other possible interactions were tested by computing chi-squares for the appropriately collapsed four-cell tables. All interactions were non-significant (recruiter gender x social importance: $\chi^2(1) = 0.32$, $p > .10$; recruiter gender x normativeness of response: $\chi^2(1) = 0.67$, $p > .10$; social importance x normativeness of response: $\chi^2(1) = 0.52$, $p > .10$).

Survey Results

Responding psychologists were asked to rate the importance of 11 different factors to their volunteerism. The results of these self-ratings can be seen in Table 6. Five factors received a mean rating above "5" on the 7-point Likert-type scale (point "4" was labeled "moderately important, this is a factor I may sometimes consider;" point "7" was labeled "extremely important, this is definitely a factor I would consider"). As a group, psychologists rated their other time commitments at the moment as their number one consideration in their decision whether or not to volunteer for research. Other factors receiving a mean rating of "5" or above included the intrusiveness of the study into their therapy, the apparent importance of the information to be gained from the study, their own interest in the research topic, and the apparent design quality of the study. Psychologists ranked as least important whether or not financial compensation was offered for their participation. The final rankings of the factors surveyed can be seen in Table 6.

Insert table 6 about here

The survey also asked psychologists to rate their own interest in the area of research covered by this project (factors affecting whether psychologists volunteer for research) and their perceptions of the importance of the findings that might come from the survey. A similar 7-point scale was used. Despite the fact that psychologists as a whole ranked both of these factors as important in their decisions to participate and did participate in this survey at a rate almost twice that of the typical survey of clinical psychologists, as a group psychologists expressed only low to moderate interest in this area of reseach ($\bar{X}$ = 3.54, SD = 1.56) or belief that results from the survey would be of much importance ($\bar{X}$ = 3.85, SD = 1.38). Responses to these measures were not significantly related to response time (interest: $r(322) = -0.02$, $p > .10$; importance: $r(321) = 0.00$, $p > .10$). No trends could be determined which linked these attitudes to the subjects' enthusiasm of volunteerism. Subjects' ratings of the importance of this study's findings were not influenced significantly by the social importance manipulation in the cover letters ($t(319) = 0.56$, $p > .10$).

Survey responses were correlated with subjects' self-ratings of their therapeutic orientation. Subjects were provided with ten theoretical categories in which to rate

themselves in order to obtain a more precise picture of how they see themselves thinking and practicing rather than limiting them to broad categorizations such as "eclectic". Several subjects questioned the precision of employing category labels without further descriptions and the same label may have meant different things to different people. For example, the category labeled "systems theory", which was intended to capture much of the interpersonal systemic thinking currently being employed in many forms of family therapy, was found to correlate significantly and positively with seven of the nine other therapeutic orientations (psychoanalytic and psychodynamic were the only exceptions).

The large number of subjects in these analyses made it relatively easy to achieve statistical significance with correlations representing only a minimal portion of the variance between the two variables. Significance levels approaching .00 could be achieved with correlations accounting for less than 4% of the variance between the theoretical orientations and the expressed attitudes. For this reason, only relationships significant at or below the .01 level will be discussed here.

One significant lack of relationship which will be mentioned briefly concerns the relationship between theoretical orientation and expressions of interest in and importance of this area of research. No single theoretical

orientation was significantly correlated (positively or negatively at the .01 level) with either expressed interest in this area of research or expressions of how important results from this survey might be. It does not appear that allegiance to any particular therapeutic school of thought brings with it automatic judgments (either positive or negative) toward looking at why therapist volunteer for psychotherapy outcome research.

Five weak but significant relationships between theoretical orientation and expressed attitudes toward volunteerism emerged from the survey results. Stronger identification with an ego psychology orientation was associated with greater concern for the design quality of the study ($r(302) = 0.19$, $p < .05$). Identification with gestalt psychology was associated with the expression of less concern with financial compensation for volunteerism ($r(299) = -0.20$, $p < .01$). Use of theories or techniques from phenomenology was related to a greater concern for the design quality of the study as a determinant of volunteerism ($r(283) = 0.14$, $p = .01$). More client-centered therapists tended to be less concerned with their own interest in the research topic in deciding whether to volunteer ($r(309) = -0.14$, $p < .01$; perhaps this is because they are also researcher-centered!) while more humanistically-oriented psychologists placed less importance on their personal acquaintance with the researcher either in person or by reputation

($r(293) = -.13$, $p = .01$).

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

This study tested hypotheses concerning the effects of three situational and three subject variables on volunteerism among a sample of doctoral-level clinical psychologists. In addition, the task for which psychologists were asked to volunteer, the completion of a mail survey, provided information concerning subjects' therapeutic orientations and factors they saw as important in determining whether they personally would participate as therapists in psychotherapy outcome research. Possible relationships between expressed attitudes toward research (both this study and psychotherapy outcome research in general) and volunteerism were explored by analyzing how this information changed as response time increased.

Three situational determinants of volunteering hypothesized to increase volunteerism were the presence of a female recruiter (H-1), the portrayal of volunteerism as relatively rare behavior (H-2), and the portrayal of the study as socially important (H-3). This study found no relationship between these situational determinants of volunteerism as portrayed in a cover letter and volunteerism in a mail survey.

The three subject characteristics hypothesized to be

associated with greater volunteerism were female gender (H-4), younger age (H-5), and lesser experience (H-6). No significant relationship was found between volunteerism and subject gender or age. A statistically significant but very weak relationship was found between greater volunteerism and lesser experience as measured by years since receipt of the doctoral degree.

It was hypothesized that later-responding psychologists would tend to report themselves busier (H-7) and less interested in the research topic covered in the questionnaire (H-8) compared to psychologists who responded more quickly. It was further proposed that later-responding psychologists would tend to rank the attitudinal items as more important in their decision whether or not to participate in outcome research (H-9). No support was found for a relationship between response time and interest in the topic of this study or how attitudinal measures were rated. A weak but statistically significant relationship was found between how busy psychologists saw themselves and their response time.

There are at least three different (but not mutually exclusive) explanations for the lack of relationship between the variables studied here and volunteerism among psychologists. In order from most to least pernicious, these include the following: (1) The task for which subjects were recruited, the completion of the

Psychotherapy Research Attitudes Project Questionnaire, may have required so little effort from subjects that its completion did not represent volunteerism in any real sense. At best the findings may apply to whether psychologists will consent to some minimal, innocuous task by mail but they have little or no relationship to what would happen if subjects were faced with a more strenuous commitment. Therefore, these results may have nothing to say about research employing more complex, time consuming mail surveys, still less to those attempting psychotherapy outcome research.

(2) The variables as operationalized in the cover letter may not have manipulated subjects' perceptions as intended. Any conclusions concerning the effects of perceptions of social importance, normativeness of volunteerism, and recruiter gender on volunteerism based on this study would, therefore, be specious. Under this argument, Hypotheses 1-3 would not have been adequately tested. This would not necessarily invalidate the findings related to Hypotheses 4-9.

(3) The findings of this study are accurate. That is, there is no significant relationship between the subject or recruitment characteristics included here and volunteerism among a clinical psychologist population. This option could include limits on the generalizability of these findings to mail surveys rather than other types of psychotherapy research, or only to relatively short mail

surveys, or only to mail surveys incorporating the specific methods employed in this study to increase survey response. Within the context of these limitations it must be noted that, in general, these findings do not support the application of findings from the general literature on volunteerism to the specific case of this study.

The potential confounds to clear interpretation of this study's findings will be discussed at length below. Cautions and limitations in drawing conclusions concerning volunteerism for psychotherapy outcome research from an analog study using a mail survey will also be addressed. What this study's results say about volunteering and nonvolunteering psychologists, as well as what psychologists who did respond see as important in determining their own research participation, will be detailed. Finally, some observations on the use of mail surveys to study the profession of clinical psychology and a summary of the conclusions from this study are presented.

Does This Study's Task Constitute Volunteerism?

There is little question that subjects' completion of the survey employed in this study represented only a small time commitment. Indeed, limiting the questionnaire to the shortest length possible while still collecting the necessary information was one of the design criteria incorporated into this study. It is part and parcel of two of the three factors noted in the model of volunteerism

presented here. It represents an effort on the part of the researcher to increase the trust between researcher and subject (by communicating to the subject that his or her time is considered important and will not be wasted by unnecessary questions); it also plays a large role in minimizing the cost to the subject of participating (Dillman, 1978). It could even be argued that well thought out questionnaires (but not necessarily merely brief questionnaires) increase the subjects' rewards for participation by stimulating thought and providing a sense of participation in an important endeavor.

Anecdotal evidence provided by the comments written by subjects on returned questionnaires suggests that the questionnaire's design did influence response rate positively. By far the most common comment included by subjects had to do with thanking the researchers for making the questionnaire short, followed by complements that it was clear and easy to fill out. Several subjects included very lengthy written comments on the need for or possibilities of conducting valid and relevant psychotherapy outcome research. Many subjects also commented disparagingly on the possibilities that such valid and relevant research was even possible, but these subjects still took the time to fill out the questionnaire and to communicate their doubts. Such comments indicated that the questionnaire did inspire thought in subjects and so would not be accurately characterized as a "minimal" or

"inconsequential" task.

If a brief questionnaire were such an easy task that volunteerism (and, therefore, factors affecting volunteerism) were not even an issue, there should be evidence that brief questionnaires usually achieve a high response rate if other factors are roughly equivalent to those in this study. In fact, evidence suggests just the opposite. One recent survey that employed a 17-item questionnaire obtained a 38.8% response from psychologists within Division 29 and declared these results "consistent with previous national surveys of clinical psychologists" (Norcross & Wogan, 1983). The Psychotherapy Research Attitudes Project Questionnaire required 27 seperate responses, yet a response rate of 73.14% was achieved. Taken together, these facts suggest that the questionnaire used in this study was not unrepresentative of questionnaires generally found in this type of research in terms of effort required from subjects. It also suggests that some factors other than length of questionnaire could be influencing psychologists' volunteerism.

Might not task difficulty prove to be an interactive variable that biases the subjects obtained in some way that could not be predicted from this study's results? No absolutely definitive answer to this question can be provided as it was not tested in this research design. The findings from this study most pertinent to this question

may be the seperate analyses performed on the earlier responders. Similar to the results with all subjects, none of the variables investigated among these presumably more motivated subjects proved to be significantly related to volunteerism. This included subjects' gender, age, and experience level, as well as all the recruitment variables manipulated in the cover letters. Unless quick response time is unrelated to enthusiasm of volunteerism, these results suggest that even if the size of the subject pool is restricted by requiring more enthusiasm of the volunteering response (as would be the case if greater effort were required to participate), the subjects obtained would still be representative of the population of psychologists on these important variables.

Did This Study Succeed in Manipulating the Recruitment Variables?

Hypotheses 1-3 concern the effects of specific, explicit statements within the cover letter on volunteerism. Within the model of volunteerism presented it was hypothesized that the statements of the social importance of the study and the rarity of responding among psychologists would both serve to increase the reward value of participating, thereby increasing volunteerism. Use of a female recruiter was hypothesized, in keeping with findings on volunteerism in other areas (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975), to produce a higher degree of trust between subject and researcher, also resulting in an increased rate

of response. This study's findings that no significant relationships existed between these variables and volunteerism could mean either (a) subjects simply did not perceive the variables as operationalized, (b) subjects perceived the variables, but this perception did not lead to a corresponding manipulation of the subjects' judgments (i.e., subjects did not judge volunteerism as more or less normative based on the normativeness manipulation, see the study as more or less socially important as a result of the social importance variable, or trust the recruiter more because she was female), so the variables as operationalized did not provide the rewards or trust enhancements anticipated, or (c) subjects perceived the variables accurately, judged them in keeping with the intent of the manipulations, but these perceptions were irrelevant to the subjects' volunteerism decision under the condition of this experiment (i.e., the trust enhancements or rewards hypothesized really do not affect volunteerism).

Pretest results and antecdotal evidence from comments taken from subjects' responses to the survey both suggest that subjects read the cover letters and perceived them accurately. The clearest example of this is the pretest questioning concerning whether the subject's letter was signed by a male or female. This was the only pretest question that directly addressed whether subjects were reading the letters accurately, as opposed to how the

letters were affecting their judgments of the study's social import or the the normativeness of their volunteerism. Undergraduate students perceived the gender of the recruiter correctly 86.2% of the time, while clinicians perceived recruiter gender correctly fully 95.7% of the time (thus proving conclusively the value of a graduate education!) This evidence of accurate perception is supplemented by the numerous comments subjects of the actual survey made specifically praising the cover letter and mentioning it as one of the reasons they chose to respond to the survey. Taken together, it seems reasonable to conclude that subjects perceived the letters accurately.

Results of the pretests of the cover letters with college undergraduates and supervising clinicians provide some support for questioning whether the statements included in the letters succeeded in manipulating the judgments intended by the variables. Clinicians did not rate the different operationalizations of the variables significantly differently when directly asked, "To what extent does the letter make a response from the recipient seem important to society?" or "To what extent does this letter make responding to it seem the normal, expected thing to do?" As noted in the Methods section, both variables were modified after this pretest in an effort to strengthen their effects.

Modifications were probably most successful in increasing the effect of the normativeness-of-volunteerism

variable. Because it could be stated without deception both that surveys of this type typically produce response rates less than 40% and that most the the psychologists who were contacted in the preliminary survey did participate, this variable could be clearly dichotomized. That is, both the normative and the nonnormative conditions could be explicitly stated in the letter. Assuming that subjects believed the contents of the cover letter, the process of subjects' perceptions of the normativeness of their volunteerism became more similar to how they perceived the recruiter gender variable: did they read the relevant paragraph in the cover letter? Some judgment and inference on the subject's part was still required. The letter did not state directly that volunteering was the normal, expected thing to do, only that most psychologists contacted had participated in the preliminary survey. From this statement the subject had to infer that his or her own volunteerism was normal and expected by the researchers and the subject's peer group. The effects of this new dichotomization on subjects' judgments of their volunteerism were not, however, pretested, so it cannot be concluded with absolute certainty that the variable as operationalized had its planned impact.

Concerns over deceptiveness and the necessity to have all versions of the cover letter be credible limited the possible modifications of the social importance variable.

The social importance variable as operationalized in the letters still relied on the presence or absence of statements of social importance to achieve its differential effects. In other words, while the subjects' perceptions of the normativeness variable became more a question of whether or not they actually read the relevant paragraph in the letter, perceptions of the social importance variable remained more a matter of direct influence (i.e., did the inclusion of the "social importance" statements make it more likely that the subject would judge his/her participation to be socially important?) Did the higher social importance condition succeeded in influencing subjects to judge the study more socially important than making no statement about this at all?. Results from the pretests suggested that, at least among clinicians, the statements employed in the pretest versions of the cover letters did not succeed in this respect. In modifying how the variable was operationalized in the final versions of the cover letter, the benefits that might accrue to the consumers of psychological services was stated explicitly. Earlier versions had mentioned only the benefits clinicians might gain from the findings. While the final version undoubtably portrays broader social benefits, it cannot be demonstrated conclusively that this portrayal actually influenced subjects to judge the study more socially important, especially compared to the same cover letter with the three "social importance" sentences removed.

Some of the difficulties encountered in operationalizing the social importance variable lie no doubt in the process by which subjects come to make their decision as to the study's social importance. The cover letters without the social importance statements had the unenviable task of convincing subjects to participate in the survey without raising their judgments as to the survey's possible social importance. Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) applied to these circumstances would predict that subjects favorably disposed to volunteer would be more likely to judge their participation to be fulfilling a socially important function rather than a socially unimportant one. The effects of any few sentences in a letter on this judgment by a subject may be minimal. This would not be because the sentences did not say the right things but because many more powerful factors could be entering into the subject's decision concerning the study's social importance. Subjects may also be less open to direct influence in this decision, as opposed to one concerning the normative nature of their volunteerism, especially from the researcher, who is likely not to be seen as a disinterested, impartial observer in presenting the study's social importance.

The answer to the question which began this section, "Did this study succeed in manipulating the recruitment variables?", must be a qualified one. It can be concluded

with high confidence that the recruiter gender manipulation succeeded; subjects were responding as they would to a mailed request from a male or female recruiter. Somewhat less confidence can be accorded to the conclusion that the normativeness variable succeeded in inducing subjects to perceive their volunteerism as normal and expected or as relatively rare behavior. Still less confidence can be placed in the assertion that the social importance variable manipulated subjects' perceptions of the social importance of the study.

Especially with respect to the subjects' perceptions of social importance, this study's conclusions may be valid as to the power (or lack thereof) of explicit statements in the cover letter in influencing how subjects judge various factors thought to be relevant to volunteerism (e.g., whether how socially important a subject sees a study is affected by statements in the cover letter). This would be a finding relevant to option (b) above. The larger issue at hand, whether or not these judgments do in fact increase volunteerism (option (c) above), may be largely unaddressed by this study, at least in respect to the social importance variable. For option (c) in this influence process to be adequately tested, the researcher would have to have direct evidence that the subjects' judgments were being correctly described (e.g., "I see this study as socially important" or "I do not see this study as socially important"). These judgments would then have to be related to the subjects'

volunteerism behaviors.

As part of their response to the survey subjects were asked how important (but not specifically how "socially important") they felt results from this study might be. As noted in the results, the higher social importance condition included in the cover letters was not associated with subjects' seeing the study's results as more important ($t(319) = 0.56$, $p > .10$). While a subject's final judgment on this question could obviously be influenced by many factors, this finding is evidence that the researcher's portrayl of the study's social importance is not a primary determiner of this judgment.

Mail Surveys and Psychotherapy Outcome Research

This study sought to use responsivity to a mail survey as an analogue for volunteerism in the area of psychotherapy outcome research. These two targets, mail survey and outcome research, present many differences that make them strange bedfellows in an analog design. The completion of an anonymous mail survey, compared to participation in outcome research, involves only a brief commitment of time, intrudes into the therapeutic process minimally or not at all, requires little or no cooperation from clients, and involves little threat to the participant's sense of self-esteem or competence. Both do, however, typically require some sort of volunteerism decision and both do require some thought and effort from

participants. This study sought to make the analogy as close as possible without including elements of deception. Studying responsivity to a request to participate in a (bogus) psychotherapy outcome study was considered and rejected before deciding on a survey of attitudes toward outcome research as the stimulus for volunteerism. It was hoped that by asking for opinions in this area much of the same resistance and enthusiasm might be tapped as would be encountered in a request for outcome research participation. It remains an open question, however, whether the volunteerism decision involved in outcome research includes factors that are of a different sort, rather than just an intensification of, those studied here in response to a mail survey. To the extent that these different factors enter into the volunteerism decision, the analogic nature of this study breaks down.

Volunteerism Among Psychologists

This study sought to investigate the possible sampling biases that occurred as a result of variables in how subjects were asked to participate, as well as biases that occurred simply as a result of volunteerism. The biases investigated were across factors shown to have a relationship to psychotherapy outcome.

To the extent that this study does provide an accurate analogy to the process psychologists undergo in deciding whether to volunteer for outcome research, results suggest that factors other than those targeted here (recruiter

gender, and the recruiter's presentation of the normativeness of volunteering and the social importance of the study) are the primary determinants of volunteerism. For the researcher seeking a representative sample of psychologists by a process requiring voluntary response, this study indicates that the volunteerism factor does not distort the sample obtained in any way examined here. The sole significant difference between volunteers and nonvolunteers seen in these results, a slightly higher (just over two years) experience level of the nonvolunteering psychologists, is unlikely to be of clinical significance in psychotherapy outcome research. While research in this area generally supports the role of greater experience in enhancing outcome (Beutler, Crago,& Arizmendi, 1986), the experience differential employed in defining comparison groups is usually much greater than the two-year differential found here between volunteering and nonvolunteering psychologists (e.g., 11 years in Baum, Felzer, D'Zmura, & Shumaker [1966]). Outcome research, then, is unlikely to underestimate psychotherapy outcome significantly by being unwittingly restricted to less experienced psychologists as subjects by the requirement that subjects volunteer to participate. The pool of psychologists who do volunteer provides a broad range of experience levels, so researchers wishing to explore the effects of experience level need not be deterred by being

restricted to voluntary subjects.

To the extent that volunteerism for tasks more arduous than the questionnaire employed here restricts the sample to those with greater interest in or enthusiasm for the subject of the study, these results suggest that the sample obtained will still accurately represent the psychologist population. Response time, interest in the study topic, or belief in its potential importance were not found to be significantly related to any demographic or attitudinal variables tested among these psychologists.

The Nonvolunteering Psychologist

Another goal of this study was to construct some picture of the demographic or attitudinal characteristics of the nonvolunteering psychologist. Demographic differences between volunteers and nonvolunteers could be described directly through the use of data collected on the entire subject population (the "captive audience" approach [Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975]). Attitudes of the nonvolunteer were to be estimated through changes in the responses to questionnaire items as response time increased (the "increasing the incentives" design [Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975]). Results obtained here suggest that there may, in fact, be no "typical" nonvolunteer among clinicians. Extrapolating the only significant findings would lead to the nonvolunteering psychologists being described as seeing themselves as busier than their peers and, as a group, tending toward more years of experience since earning their

doctorates. The weakness of these trends in the data, however, make these conclusions tenuous at best.

No unitary set of attitudes to describe the psychologist who declines to participate in research could be determined using analytical techniques based on the increasing the incentives experimental design (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). Those that decline do not appear to do so because they have more factors they consider as extremely important to their volunteerism decision (H-9). That is, those who do not volunteer do not appear to have a more complex "volunteerism filter" that leads them to reject participation. These results are not inconsistent with speculation that a few very important factors determine an individual's nonparticipation. Based on comments received in the survey and the tabulation of survey results, the interaction between how busy the psychologist sees himself or herself to be with other things, how much time commitment is required in order to participate, how intrusive the study is into the process of therapy, and, to a lesser extent, how important the psychologist sees the potential results, may determine most volunteerism decisions. The failure to support the hypotheses proposed in this study may be an illustration of just how little impact specific aspects of the cover letter appeal, as opposed to the overall mail packet or other larger considerations of research design, have on these important

factors.

The rate of "nonvolunteerism" encountered in this study was extremely low compared to either previous mail surveys of clinical psychologists (e.g., Norcross & Prochaska, 1983; Norcross & Wogan, 1983) or other studies of volunteerism for psychotherapy research (e.g., Bednar & Shapiro, 1970; MacDonald, 1979). Because of this difference it may be difficult to apply these negative findings to past research. This portrayal of the nonvolunteering psychologist may, despite the additional analyses (e.g., of early responders) performed to explore this possibility, neglect important characteristics that would be evidenced under conditions of poorer volunteerism.

The findings from this study support the conclusions of Bednar and Shapiro (1970) that age and orientation of clinical practice are not useful variables for discriminating between therapists who do and do not volunteer to participate in psychotherapy outcome research. These findings contradict those of MacDonald (1979) that nonvolunteering therapists were significantly older than those who participated in outcome research. The single setting and small sample (N = 14) employed in this latter research, however, must raise the possibility that the sample obtained was unrepresentative of the population of therapists as a whole.

Bednar and Shapiro (1970) found "no time" as the most frequent reason given for declining to participate in their

psychotherapy research. These authors suggested that few clinicians critically examined their research proposal but, rather, rejected participation in psychotherapy research generally. They speculated that either genuine disinterest, fear of evaluation, or failure to see such participation as part of their professional role was the cause of the nonvolunteerism they observed (Bednar & Shapiro, 1970). The high importance psychologists in this study gave to "intrusiveness into therapy" as influencing their participation in outcome research is not inconsistent with these authors speculation that fear of evaluation plays a large role in reducing volunteerism.

While the findings from this study cannot disprove Bednar and Shapiro's (1970) speculations, a few comments do appear in order. As has been argued above, it appears that by following procedures detailed by Dillman (1978) to balance the costs, rewards, and trust in the researcher experienced by subjects a large percentage of clinical psychologists can be induced not only to critically examine a research participation request but also to put time and effort into participation. This suggests that it may be less some "failing" on the part of the therapist-subject that produces low rates of participation than it is a lack of attention on the part of researchers concerning what is important to induce and maintain volunteerism. It also suggests that researchers whose designs involve

considerations that are extremely important among clinical psychologists, such as extensive commitment of time or intrusiveness into the therapy process, had better have some important results that they can clearly argue will come as a result of the sacrifices they are requiring of therapists.

Volunteerism Research

Results of this study failed to confirm the applicability of findings from the general literature on volunteerism to the special case of mail surveys of the psychology profession. Specifically, a volunteer characteristic associated with volunteerism with "considerable confidence" (gender) and one associated with "some confidence" (age) (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) were not shown to affect volunteerism in a mail survey. Similarly, subject interest (associated with volunteerism with "maximum confidence") and the gender of the recruiter ("some confidence") (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) were not significantly related to volunteerism behavior. The importance of prior acquaintanceship with the researcher ("minimum confidence") was discounted by psychologists as important to their volunteerism decisions. However, psychologists did rate their interest in the topic as one of the more important determinants of their volunteerism, even though this rating was not reflected in their behavior toward this study.

While Dillman's (1978) costs-rewards-trust model of

volunteerism can provide a useful framework for conceptualizing the volunteerism process, at present it remains more metaphor than theory. The cost and reward values of volunteerism variables have no definitions independent of their effects on decreasing or increasing, respectively, volunteerism. Trust, which is defined as the belief that the researcher will deliver anticipated rewards (Dillman, 1978), does appear to be testable independently of observed volunteerism behavior.

The costs and rewards metaphor may be most useful in helping researchers to view the effects of various "determinants" of volunteerism as processes of interactions between overt stimuli, contexts, and subjects. It emphasizes the importance of the subject's individual (probably cognitive) interpretations of the stimuli, rather than the stimuli themselves, in affecting volunteerism. From this perspective it would not be surprising that some stimulus shown to increase volunteerism with one population (e.g., a female recruiter with college students) may have no effect with another (e.g., psychologists). Situational variables, such as the difference in stimulus value between a live female recruiter and a female signature on a cover letter, would also have to be taken into consideration. These differences in populations and contexts probably account for the discrepancies between the findings of this study and those of the general literature on volunteerism.

This interactive perspective on volunterism simply cautions against rountinely generalizing an observed connection (or lack thereof) between a variable and volunteerism to volunteerism under all circumstances. It also suggests that analog studies of volunteerism should be very cautious in generalizing their findings across contexts.

Important Factors in Outcome Research Design: Psychologists' Perspectives

This study does not support the view that any particular therapeutic orientation can be associated with a particular set of stereotypical beliefs about psychotherapy outcome research. Researchers seeking volunteers will find it equally easy or difficult to recruit the followers of Freud as the followers of Rogers. The therapeutic make-up of randomly selected therapists is likely to become less an issue in outcome research as the interventions being studied are specified in ever greater detail (i.e., as the outcomes of specific therapies, as opposed to samples of therapists, become the target of study). It is encouraging that, at least as they report in this survey, the types of interventions a therapist feels comfortable with do not automatically dictate a negative attitude toward research. On the other hand, it must be added that no particular therapeutic school has done a notable job in inspiring enthusiasm for research participation in its followers.

Psychologists as a group were clear in what they

considered important in their own volunteerism decisions. Researchers in this area neglect consideration of these factors in their research designs at their own peril. Conflicting time commitments were given most often as the major consideration in psychologists' volunteerism decision. This points to the absolute necessity in research designs involving professional psychologists of minimizing the costs (i.e., time involvement) to subjects of their participation. This time limitation does not appear to be simply a matter of being involved in too many profit-making hours to take time out for research. Psychologists ranked whether financial compensation was offered as the least important factor in their consideration whether or not to volunteer. While it could be argued that this was a ranking based largely on the low social desirability of admitting to financial motives for research participation, the anonymous nature of this survey may have made this less likely. Psychologists, it seems, look to motivations other than money in deciding their research participation.

Two other factors clustered close to the top ranking in terms of how often or strongly they were considered in a volunteerism decision. One of these, intrusiveness of the research into the process of therapy, is directly relevant to research design. The frequency with which this was named indicates it is likely to be an important aspect of

psychotherapy outcome research that makes therapists decide against participation. Closely ranked in strength of effect is the importance of the information that would be obtained from the study. This is a factor which may be open to direct influence by how the researcher presents the study to the potential subject. The researcher must strive to convince the psychologist-subject that the information to be obtained is worth whatever costs in terms of intrusiveness the subject is likely to experience. If the researcher cannot produce such a convincing argument, he or she is likely to be better off modifying the research design or canceling the research project, as little cooperation can be expected from practicing psychologists.

Mail Surveys of the Psychology Profession

This study was also an examination of a survey methodology derived from a three-factor (costs, rewards, trust) model of volunteerism (Dillman, 1978). Results provided strong support for the applicability of Dillman's (1978) mail survey methodology to surveys of psychologists. They suggest that the response rates of 30%-40% accepted as adequate in this area of research could be vastly improved with improved procedures. The effects of this methodology toward improving volunteerism appear to be very robust. The single factor tested in this experiment identified by Dillman (1978) as important to his procedure, the inclusion of statements of the study's social importance, was not shown to be necessary to achieve this overall positive effect.

Other factors identified as affecting volunteerism under other conditions, recruiter gender and normativeness of response, are, at least insofar as they are portrayed by cover letter, similarly unnecessary for this method to obtain a high rate of response. This bodes well for those who wish to analyze the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of psychologists by mail. If the logical overall method employed here is followed, response is largely unaffected by one or two particular aspects of the appeal. These results support Dillman's (1978) contention that individuals respond to mail surveys based largely on their overall impressions of the mail packet they receive.

While the failure to support the roles of overt expressions of recruiter gender, normativeness of response, and social importance in affecting volunteerism does not invalidate Dillman's (1978) three-factor model of volunteerism, neither do these results lend the model much specific support. This study's results were inconclusive in this respect because no measures of the cost, reward, or trust values of the manipulations attempted were obtained independent of their effects on volunteerism. Insofar as this study's methodology was derived from analyzing the task presented to subjects using this model (e.g., if participation offers little reward, costs must be minimized and trust enhanced), the high response rate obtained provides support for this model's practical

utility if not its objective validity as a scientific theory.

The relatively low enthusiasm for the study's topic and perception of its potential importance indicate that, overall, participation offered subjects little inherent reward associated with the overt content of the study. The high rate of response indicates that such situations of low reward need not be an impediment to volunteerism, so long as costs are minimized and steps are taken to enhanse trust in the researcher.

The failure of this study to demonstrate any correlation between response time (measured several different ways) and more direct measures of the subject's "enthusiasm" of response (i.e., the questionnaire items concerning interest in the area of research and perceived potential importance of results) must raise questions as to the validity of response time as a measure of response enthusiasm. This may be especially true as the results of this study are applied to volunteerism in psychotherapy outcome research. Participation in such research is likely to involve a long-term commitment of time and energy relative to response to a mail survey. Whatever factors that make up the "enthusiasm" that prompts psychologists to engage in such a long-term commitment may be of a different sort than those involved in deciding when to return another mail survey.

In defense of the measure, however, it should be noted

that the other measures of "enthusiasm" discussed here (responses to the questionnaire items concerning subject interest in the topic or perceived importance of the potential results) were as unrelated to any of the attitudinal or demographic measures tested in this study as was response time. In other words, the conclusions found here appear to hold up no matter how one defines "enthusiasm". If extrapolating from declining enthusiasm to nonvolunteers is legitimate under any circumstances, then, these conclusions appear quite robust.

Summary and Conclusions

1. Volunteerism among clinical psychologists to a mail survey was found to be unaffected by the gender of the recruiter, normativeness of volunteerism, or social importance of the study portrayed in the cover letter. These findings supported Dillman's (1978) belief that subjects respond to their overall impression of the mail packet they receive rather than to any particular aspect of it. Not supported was the applicability of the variables from the general literature on volunteerism (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975) to the specific case of this study. Questions were raised, however, concerning the extent to which the social importance variable in particular employed here actually succeeded in manipulating the subjects' perceptions of the study's social importance. The possibility that this is a generic problem given the

limitations of communication by cover letter was discussed.

2. Mail survey volunteerism among clinical psychologists was found to be unrelated to the age or gender of the psychologist.

3. Increasing volunteerism was found to be very weakly related to less post-doctoral experience and to a lower level of self-perceived "busyness" in work and nonwork activities.

4. Volunteerism was found to be unrelated to expressed level of interest in the research, perceived importance of the results, or theoretical orientation of the psychologist.

5. Self-described theoretical orientation was generally found to be insufficient to predict what factors an individual clinical psychologist found important in determining his or her participation in psychotherapy outcome research.

6. Clinical psychologists rated their other time commitments, the intrusiveness of the research into their therapy process, the importance of the information to be gained by the study, and their interest in the topic of research as most important in determining their participation in psychotherapy outcome research. Personal acquaintance with the researcher, direct contact from the researcher, and financial compensation were rated the least important factors.

7. A model of clinical psychologists' volunteering for

psychotherapy outcome research was proposed in which volunteerism was largely determined by how busy the clinician felt him/herself to be with other activities, the time commitment required for participation, how intrusive the study was into the clinician's practice, and how important the clinician perceived the study's potential findings.

8. Based on the analogue between a mail survey of attitudes toward psychotherapy outcome research and the research itself, it appears that the fact that most participation in outcome research is determined by volunteerism is unlikely, in and of itself, to result in a sample that is unrepresentative of the population of clinical psychologists as a whole. Specifically, there does not appear to be a relationship between volunteerism and several demographic variables of therapists thought to affect therapy outcome. Therapy research relying on volunteer therapists as participants is unlikely, therefore, to over or underestimate the outcome of psychotherapy from the general population of psychologists because of unintended sampling biases across the demographic variables included here (age, gender, and experience).

9. Mail survey methodology detailed by Dillman (1978) was shown to significantly improve rate of return among clinical psychologists over methodology typically employed

in this area.

10. In mail surveys of clinical psychologists, minor variations in the survey methodology detailed by Dillman (1978) such as those tested here were not shown, in and of themselves, to result in samples unrepresentative of the population of clinical psychologists as a whole or even to reduce the rate of return significantly. While failure to remind nonresponders probably results in a smaller return, the sample obtained is still generally representative of the population from which it is drawn on many demographic variables, such as age, gender, and experience. The robustness of volunteerism across these variables suggests that past surveys of clinical psychologists obtained samples largely representative of the profession (on the demographic variables tested here, at least) despite methodological inconsistencies that reduced the overall rate of return.

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Table 1

Volunteer Characteristics Associated With Increased Volunteering Grouped by Degree of Confidence of Conclusion

Maximum Confidence
1. Educated
2. Higher social class
3. Intelligent
4. Approval-motivated
5. Sociable
Considerable Confidence
6. Arousal-seeking
7. Unconventional
8. Female
9. Nonauthoritarian
10. Jewish>Protestant or Protestant>Catholic
11. Nonconforming
Some Confidence
12. From smaller town
13. Interested in religion
14. Altruistic
15. Self-disclosing
16. Maladjusted
17. Young
Minimum Confidence
18. Achievement-motivated
19. Married
20. Firstborn
21. Anxious
22. Extraverted

Note. Adapted from The Volunteer Subject (p. 86) by R. Rosental and R. L. Rosnow, 1975, New York: John Wiley and Sons. Copyright 1975 by John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Table 2

Situational Determinants of Volunteering Grouped by Degree of Confidence of Conclusion

Maximum Confidence
1. Subject interest in topic
2. Expectation of favorable evaluation from researcher
Considerable Confidence
3. Task importance as perceived by subject
4. Guilt, happiness, and competence
5. Material incentive
Some Confidence
6. Recruiter characteristics
7. Aversiveness of tasks
8. Normative expectations
Minimum Confidence
9. Prior acquaintanceship with researcher
10. Public versus private commitment

Note. Adapted from The Volunteer Subject (p.118) by R. Rosenthal and R. L. Rosnow, 1975, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Table 3

Factors Influencing the Volunteering Decision

Ranked by Frequency of Occurrance

Factor	Number of Psychologists Mentioning this Factor
1. Other commitments at the time the request was received (busyness)	6
2. Time commitment required by the study	5
3(tie). Interest in the research topic	2
Apparent contribution to the field which could be made by the study	2
5(tie). Possible threats to therapy process	1
Concerns about confidentiality	1
Personal threat involved in exposing own work to the scrutiny of others	1
Empathy with researcher's position because of own recent experiences trying to conduct research	1
Self-identification, see research participation as part of role	1

Note. Each of six psychologists gave between two and five responses.

Table 4

Letters Described by Included Variables

Instrument No.	Variables Included
1	M Norm Import
2	M Norm No Import
3	M No Norm Import
4	M No Norm No Import
5	F Norm Import
6	F Norm No Import
7	F No Norm Import
8	F No Norm No Import

Key to Table:

M/F: Male recruiter/Female recruiter

Norm/No Norm: Normative nature of response statement included/Non-normative response statement included

Import/No Import: Social importance statement included/ Not included

Table 5

Survey Return Results Grouped by Cover Letter

Letter No.	Total S / Responded S / Return Rate
1	53 / 40 / 75.47%
2	53 / 45 / 84.91%
3	57 / 43 / 75.44%
4	55 / 39 / 70.91%
5	56 / 41 / 73.21%
6	58 / 41 / 70.69%
7	57 / 37 / 64.91%
8	54 / 38 / 70.37%
Total	443 / 324 / 73.14%

Table 6

Factors Affecting Volunteerism Ranked by Strength of Effect

Rank	Factor	Mean Rating	(S.D.)
1	Other time commitments	5.94	(1.44)
2	Intrusiveness into therapy	5.67	(1.83)
3	Importance of information	5.65	(1.39)
4	Interest in topic	5.12	(1.61)
5	Design quality of study	5.03	(1.71)
6	Given sufficient information	4.92	(1.64)
7	Ethical concerns (general)	4.44	(2.13)
8	Empathy for other researchers	4.37	(1.87)
9	Personal acquaintance	4.03	(1.92)
10	Direct contact by researcher	3.74	(1.93)
11	Financial compensation	2.35	(1.66)

Appendix A

Sample copies of the initial cover letters

(Modified for dissertation format)

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY
March 9, 1987

1
Dr. NAME
Talk Radio Bldg.
Serenity, AK. 01350

Dear Dr. NAME:

Psychologists are often berated for their lack of participation in psychotherapy outcome research. Conflicting claims as to which methods are safe or unsafe, effective or ineffective, confuse both practitioners and the public we serve. However, no one really knows what factors psychologists like yourself consider in deciding whether to participate in research.

You are one of a small number of psychologists from Division 29 of the American Psychological Association who are being asked to give their opinions on this matter. In order that the results will truly represent the thinking of psychologists within the APA, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned by the individual to whom it was addressed. We are acutely aware that busy psychologists cannot be expected to spend too much time on surveys, so we have carefully designed our questionnaire to gain maximum information in a brief time. This is dissertation research being conducted by a doctoral student at the Virginia Consortium for Professional Psychology.

You may be assured that your responses will be held in complete confidence. The questionnaire has an identification number only for purposes of data analysis and so that we may remove your name from the reminder list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be placed on your questionnaire and only group results will ever be reported.

We hope that the results of this research will help future investigators of psychotherapy outcome to design studies which take the concerns of practicing psychologists into account. More practical, "do-able" research could, we feel, benefit everyone, practitioners and consumers alike. We plan to publish our findings, but we will be sending a summary of our results to everyone who participates as a token of our thanks for your efforts.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. I can be reached at (804) 627-9197 or (804) 253-4231. So that we may determine our results in a timely fashion, we ask that you return your completed questionnaire to us within one week. We will send a reminder to those from whom we have not heard in 10 days.

Most psychologists contacted in pilot studies for this research have agreed to participate-- your participation in our project is very important to its success!

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

James Perry Howell
Virginia Consortium for Professional Psychology

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY
March 9, 1987

2
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March 9, 1987

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COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY
March 9, 1987

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Appendix B

Sample copies of the second cover letters

(Modified for dissertation format)

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Appendix C

Sample copies of the third cover letters

(Modified for dissertation format)

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April 10, 1987

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I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. I can be reached at (804) 627-9197 or (804) 253-4231.

In closing, let me mention again that most psychologists contacted in preliminary surveys have agreed to participate-- your contribution is important!

Your efforts on our behalf are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Deborah Foss-Goodman
Virginia Consortium for Professional Psychology

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY
April 10, 1987

6
Dr. NAME
Talk Radio Bldg.
Serenity, AK. 01350

Dear Dr. NAME:

A little over three weeks ago I first wrote to you requesting your opinions on factors which affect your decision to participate in psychotherapy outcome research. As of today we have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

In my last letter I mentioned that no one really knows how psychologists like yourself feel about participating in this kind of research or what factors influence your decision whether or not to participate.

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We have undertaken this research project because we believe that conflicting claims concerning psychotherapy effectiveness confuse both practitioners and the general public. We feel that everyone could benefit from the more practical research that would result from knowing what practicing psychologists consider important in outcome research. In my last letter I mentioned that no one really knows how psychologists like yourself feel about participating in this kind of research or what factors influence your decision whether or not to participate.

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Appendix D

Psychotherapy Research Attitudes Project: Questionnaire

(Modified for dissertation format)

PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH ATTITUDES PROJECT: QUESTIONNAIRE

If you were to receive a request for your participation as a therapist in a research project on psychotherapy outcome, how important would the following factors be in your decision to participate? (please use the scale as described below to respond to each item)

not important, this is definitely not a factor I would consider in deciding whether to participate	moderately important, this is a factor I may sometimes consider	extremely important, this is definitely a factor I would consider

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. my interest in the particular research topic
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. my other time commitments at that moment
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. if financial compensation is offered
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. my acquaintance with the researcher either in person or by reputation
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. the apparent design quality of study
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. the apparent importance of information which might be gained from the study
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I had/have to do research myself, so I would like to help someone else out, too
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. intrusiveness of the study into the process of my therapy
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. ethical concerns about psychotherapy research in general
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. whether I am given sufficient information about the study

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. whether the researcher contacts me directly

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In order that we may more accurately characterize our respondents and better understand our results, the following information on you is requested. Please leave any questions blank that you do not wish to answer.

12. Including both work and non-work time commitments, how busy do you see yourself now?(please circle below)

not at all busy — as busy as I possibly could be

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Please rate below your own interest in the research area we are investigating, ie., factors affecting whether therapists themselves choose to volunteer for psychotherapy research.

I am not at all interested in this area of research — I am extremely interested in this area of research

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. How important do you feel results from this study will be?

I doubt that results from this study will be important at all — I feel results from this study could be very important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. Which of the statements below most accurately characterizes your experience as a psychotherapist? (please circle one)

(a) I have never performed psychotherapy as one of my professional duties. >>>>>>If you have never conducted psychotherapy professionally,

please skip #16 - #18.

(b) I have conducted psychotherapy professionally in the past but am not currently doing so.

(c) I am currently performing psychotherapy as one of my professional duties.

>>>>>>>> If you have ever conducted psychotherapy professionally, please complete #16 - #18.

16. Therapists can feel "at home" with a wide variety of theories and techniques. How likely are you to use theories and techniques from the following "schools" of psychotherapy in your everyday therapy work? (include as many as apply)

	always use theories and/or techniques from this "school"						never use these theories or techniques
psychoanalytic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
psychodynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
behavior therapy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
cognitive therapy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
client-centered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
systems theory	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ego psychology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
gestalt psychology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
phenomenology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
humanistic psychology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
other (please list): _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. Please estimate the number of years you have conducted psychotherapy at least part-time:_____

18. Are the majority of your clinical hours spent conducting (please check one):
____ (a) individual psychotherapy

____ (b) group psychotherapy
____ (c) family and/or marital therapy

Thank you very much for your assistance! Feel free to include any additional comments on the reverse of this sheet.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Perry Howell was born in Norfolk, Virginia on December 1, 1956. He received his B.A. in Philosophy from Swarthmore College in 1979 and his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Virginia Consortium for Professional Psychology in 1987.