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What Motivates College Students to Volunteer?

Using the Volunteer Functions Inventory.

by  
Jennifer Giorgio

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
May 6, 2003

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. John Klanderman/ Dr. Dihoff

Date Approved 5/6/03

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## ABSTRACT

Jennifer Giorgio

What Motivates College Students to Volunteer? Using the Volunteer Functions Inventory  
2002-2003

Advisors: Dr. Klanderman and Dr. Dihoff  
School Psychology Master of the Arts Degree

This study intended to look at what motivates college students to participate in volunteer work. The Volunteer Functions Inventory was used to have students rate their beliefs about what would influence them to volunteer. A sample of 184 subjects (67 male & 115 female, two participants did not disclose their gender) were obtained from Rowan University's student body and each were given the Volunteer Functions Inventory. One hypothesis was tested using an Analysis of Variance. Results found that the value motivation was the dominant motivation to volunteer among students who volunteer and non-volunteers. It was determined that the volunteer variable had a significant effect on students ratings of each motivation. This study was consistent with previous data finding that the value motivation was the dominant for majority of the subjects who have answered the survey.

## Acknowledgments

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## Chapter 1: The Problem

### Need

Volunteerism is a unique aspect of many people's lives. Every year millions of people devote substantial amounts of their time and energy to helping others (Clary et al, 1998). In many instances, people will make significant personal sacrifices for another person, usually a complete stranger. The idea that people will go out on a limb effortlessly for a stranger raises many questions about the type of people volunteers are. It is important to distinguish what makes volunteers unique compared to other's who do not share their time helping others. Clary et al, designed an applied functionalists theory to question the motivations underlying volunteerism called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (1998). There are six functions to this inventory: values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement.

This study was designed to find out what would motivate college students to volunteer. There is a need to find this information out because college students have not shown as much involvement in volunteer work compared to other age groups. It is the feeling of the researcher that if there are certain motivations that have stronger influence over the others than it would be possible to harness those motivations in the future to allow more college students to participate in volunteer work.

## Purpose

There are millions who volunteer and millions who do not volunteer. It is important to understand what characteristics or traits motivate people to volunteer. By using the Volunteer Functions Inventory, subjects will answer survey questions within the six function domains about volunteering. The purpose of this study is to determine if there are characteristics that are significant among volunteers.

## Hypothesis

The hypothesis is there will be a different dominant motivation among volunteers versus those who do not volunteer.

## Theory

“And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down the road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed mercy on him.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do like wise.” (Luke 10:29-37, RSV) as cited in Clary & Snyder (1987).

Alexis de Tocqueville said, “In no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used, or more unsparingly applied to a multitude of different objects than in America,” as cited in Dreyden & Serow (1990). In 1840, he



observed the pervasiveness of volunteer activities in the United States. This behavior falls into the third sector of unpaid individuals working with and for other people (Bradley, 2000). Tocqueville also noticed that Americans of all ages, all stations of life, and all types of dispositions are forever forming associations (Halstead & Lind, 2002). In his book, *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville defines the compassionate and helping ways of Americans as the intellectual and moral associations of America (Halstead & Lind, 2002). Snyder (1993) suggests, volunteerism is a tradition and enduring fixture in American society. It is also a pillar of this country's ethos of citizenship and civic participation (Snyder, 1993).

In 1995, 93 million American adults engaged in some kind of volunteer activity, for a combined total of 2.3 billion hours of work (Tillmar 1999). This statistic suggests that many people volunteer willingly. According to Clary & Snyder (1995), if everyone volunteered and gave some of their time to help others it creates a "win-win" situation for all involved. The question is what motivates an individual to sacrifice and devote so much time in aiding strangers who are in need of help. It is obvious that it takes a special kind of person to volunteer, so what makes them so different from the individuals who do not volunteer?

The bible passage is used to illustrate how some person thousands of years ago demonstrated these helping qualities that "Good Samaritans" and Volunteers possess. What makes this story so intriguing is that today theorists are still questioning why people will help strangers expecting nothing in return. Is it possible that there are certain personality characteristics an individual possesses or are there other reasons for

individual gain in helping others? It is hard to believe that so many people in the United States dedicate a lot of their time, energy, and passion towards the well-being of other people.

Throughout this paper the research will describe the ongoing battle to define what motivates a person to become a volunteer. Certain theorists are responsible for studying the core values and motives of these special individuals. Although there is some controversy among theorists whether or not a specific helping personality exists there is agreement upon the idea that certain traits and motives need to exist in an individual for them to engage in volunteer work. The struggle to define if there is a certain personality type lies within the difficulty to unveil individuals helping others in a natural environment, not one in which the individual is involved with an organization. Because it is unethical to base all research on observation in the natural environment results found in a controlled situation are somewhat questionable.

All criticisms aside, theorists have identified certain personality traits that might hold ground when discussing volunteerism. This is commonly referred to as the helping personality. Snyder (1994) describes three traits that define the helping personality. These are; social responsibility, nurturance, and empathy. He also believes that this personality does not exist because of one trait but because of a constellation of traits (Snyder, 1994). There is also focus placed upon the concepts of altruistic, prosocial, and egoistic personality traits.

## Definitions

The following are based on Brown, 2000, p. 17-30

Volunteer: an individual engaging in behavior that is not bio-socially determined, nor economically necessitated, nor socio-politically compelled, but rather that is essentially motivated by the expectation of psychic benefits of some kind as a result of activities that have a market value greater than any remuneration received for such activities.

The following are based on Clary et al, 1998, p. 1516-1530

Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI): Clary et al's applied functional theory used to measure the motivations underlying volunteerism within six domains.

Values: altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others.

Understanding: opportunity to new learning experiences and the chance to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities that might otherwise go unpracticed.

Social: motivation concerning relationships, opportunities to be with one's friends or engage in an activity viewed favorably by important others.

Career: career-related benefits that may be obtained from participation in volunteer work.

Protective: a motivation to protect one's ego from the negative features of the self, in order to reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address one's own personal problems.

Enhancement: process of using helping as a means of maintaining or enhancing positive effect.

The following are based on Baston, 1987, p.65-122.

Egoistic: when the ultimate goal in an action is to increase one's own welfare.

Altruism: means self-sacrifice performed for the benefit of others.

#### Assumptions

There are three main assumptions for this study. One is that the two groups being studied, volunteers and non volunteers, are representative of those in the general population. The second main assumption is that all surveys were distributed, explained, and filled out in a uniform way that was consistent with each classroom that participated in the study. The last assumption is that the sample is random and representative of Rowan University's population.

#### Limitations

There is one limitation for this study. It deals with the sample size and how well it represents Rowan University's population. Although the sample size is not too small, it must be understood that it does not accurately represent the whole of Rowan University's population. Because the sample size is small, generalizability is limited when being compared to the general population.

#### Overview

In Chapter 2, the researcher will cover the literature review. These are the following areas which will be covered: motivations to volunteer, the functional approach to volunteerism, the six categories of motivation, altruism & prosocial behavior, and what motivates & influences college students to volunteer. In Chapter 3, the research design will be discussed. There will be a description of the type and size of sample, the

measurement device used, the testable hypotheses, the overall design, the analysis of data, and the conclusion section. In Chapter 4, the researcher will display the analysis of the results from the data.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The articles chosen for this review incorporate ideas of volunteers. The areas covered are: Motivations to volunteer, Functional Approach to volunteerism, Volunteers Functions Inventory, and College student volunteers. Every section has a topic name in which the research will be discussed. All subject areas are very important to the basis of the researcher's current study.

### Motivations To Volunteer

According to Gidron (as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) the motives that initially influence people to volunteer may differ from those that influence their decision to continue to volunteer, it is important to understand the initial motivation of those who remain as volunteers for a long period of time. In order to assess what drives an individual to continue volunteering throughout their life span, it is important to understand what attracts them to the ideals surrounding volunteerism (Gidron, 1984, as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Anderson & Moore (1976), state that volunteers initially approach the organization to confirm their self image of being a good person or to contribute to a worthy cause and help people. Self-esteem, altruism, and a generalized need for participation are additional factors related to motivation to volunteer and to remain a volunteer (Anderson & Moore, 1976). In many of the studies conducted that attempted to isolate certain motivations, there have not been any that could uniformly define the concept of motivation (Horton-Smith, 1981, as cited in Cnaan

& Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Motivation is a difficult concept in general because a lot of it is subconsciously constructed. Gillespie and King (as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) feel it is important to ask an individual what motivates them to volunteer in order to find the answer.

Many researchers agree upon the idea that people volunteer for a variety of reasons. Berghuis, Omoto, & Snyder (1993) suggest, "Volunteer motivation is multifaceted and complex, with diverse sets of reasons compelling people toward and repelling them away from volunteer involvement." There are three separate models of this theory that share a lot of support from researchers. The first model is a three-category model which is supported by Morrow-Howell and Mui (1989) Gillespie and King (1985) (as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) and Fitch (1987). Morrow-Howell and Mui (as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) broke down a volunteer's decision to volunteer into three categories: altruistic, social, and material. Altruism is defined by the concern for the other person. The term social defines the idea of access to social contacts. Some people participate to remain intact in certain social circles more so than their concern for others, although Fitch (1987) uses the term to mean fulfilling a social obligation to society. All of the studies lack clarity in the area of defining what material is supposed to represent. It is thought to closely relate towards social gains (i.e. prestige and social contacts). The major drawback among these studies is that there is a lack of agreement on the definitions of these terms (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991).

Next there is the two-category model, in which Gidron used Herzberg's (as cited in Cnaan & Goldeberg-Glen, 1991) classifications of intrinsic and extrinsic factors to

define motivation. On the other hand, Horton-Smith's (as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) two-category model used egoistic and altruistic motives. Egoistic is related to tangible rewards and altruistic is related to intangible rewards that result from feeling that one is helping others. Clary and Miller (1986), found that the use of egoistic and altruistic motives in a factor analysis had a significant positive correlation (as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991).

The third type involves a multidimensional complex model. In recent studies, Clary and Snyder (1990) have used and supported a six-category model of psychological functions for volunteering. Whereas, Jansen and Chandler (1990) have used a five-category model of career functions. These studies have yielded more supportive data for the complex models of the motivations to volunteer. The complex models allow for more motivations to be represented allowing a bigger window for individuals to have their motives classified and understood (Clary & Snyder, 1990, Jansen & Chandler, 1990, as cited in Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991).

In a study conducted by Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991), they tried to assess the factors defining the motivations to volunteer using 28 motives that would be grouped together according to certain factors using a unidimensional scale. Their research did lack empirical data, suggesting that this study would show a positive significance. Their sample included 258 volunteers and 104 non volunteers. They did extensive research on 27 studies that had previously been done assessing volunteer motives. Close attention was placed on the type of instrument, type of sample, and the researchers who performed these studies. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) identified the 28 most common reasons



mentioned in these 27 studies of why people volunteered. After compiling these 28 criteria, they administered a questionnaire to the entire sample group.

The most highly rated motive was “the opportunity to do something worthwhile” (altruistic), followed by “volunteering for others makes me feel better about myself” (egoistic). The lowest rated motive was “I was lonely” (social). In comparing the two-category model (altruistic and egoistic) and the three-category model (altruistic, social, and material), motives ranked at both the top and bottom of the list. Egoistic, altruistic, and social all ranked between 3.8 and a 4.0. Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen (1991) were unable to link an understanding between the importance of each motive and the motivations to volunteer.

There has been a great deal of research done in this area after Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen (1991) completed this study. It is still hard to identify what motivates a specific individual, but through the design of the functional approach to motivations Clary et. al (1998) found there is not as much uncertainty.

#### Volunteerism: A Functional Approach

As mentioned previously, the functional approach means that people engage in volunteer work in order to satisfy important social and psychological goals; and different individuals may be involved in similar volunteer activities but do so in order to achieve different goals (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1996). Cantor & Snyder (1998) expanded upon the definition saying; “The reasons and purposes, needs, goals, the plans, motives that underlie and generate psychological phenomena, that is concerned with motivational foundations of people’s actions and how they act in pursuit of their goals.” The basis for

this approach originated by Smith, Bruner, and White (1956) and by Katz (1960) (as cited in Clary et al., 1996). Their approach proposed that the same attitudes could serve different functions for different people and that attempts to change attitudes would succeed to the extent that they addressed the functions served by those attitudes (Clary et al., 1996). Previous research on volunteer motivations suggest that the functional approach has a strong emphasis on multiple motivations.

Clary, Ridge, & Snyder (1992) developed three recommendations for volunteer administrators who seek to increase the number of people who volunteer and to improve their human resource management using the functional approach. The first step is to consider the audience toward which the recruitment will be aimed. It is important to understand and know the motivational influences of the people that are needed to fill the role. If a supervisor can understand what will draw people in to volunteer they will be more successful in obtaining individuals to help out. The second step is measurement of the audience using the Volunteer Functions Inventory, a tool that was designed for recruitment purposes. It enables the administrator to gain insight into the motivational concerns of the potential volunteer. The third step is tailoring persuasive messages to the relevant motivations of potential volunteers. After the motivational profile has been determined for a targeted group, advertisements can be designed to the specific motivational concerns of the volunteers (Clary, Ridge, & Snyder, 1992).

As a result of many years of theorizing, Clary and Snyder defined six categories that describe motivations to volunteer. This model is based on the idea of an individual's needs being met through actions and beliefs.

## Six Categories of Motivation

These motives are important to personality because the basis of these six functions relies on the foundations of personality traits and types. Each motive could very easily relate to every individual because they describe aspects of everyone's life. Currently these six functions of motivation for volunteerism have become the part of the most reliable and valid theory in existence today.

Values are the first function to be described by Clary et al. (1998). Individuals are believed to participate in volunteer work in order to express their values related to altruism and humanitarian concerns for others. This definition is very similar to that of Katz's and Smith et al.'s (as cited in Clary et al., 1996 & 1998) quality of expressiveness functions, concern for others is often characteristic of those who volunteer.

It seems that people who score highly in this section are the "Good Samaritans." These people reflect who they through their actions and behavior towards others. Fortunately, the positive traits of these people help those in need. This function is important because most people are always striving to better themselves, but here people are bettering themselves; however, that is not why they perform the good deeds that they do. The values function is most intriguing because the word "me" does not exist as a part of its definition.

Understanding is the second function in this approach. This involves volunteer work as an opportunity to permit and increase new learning experiences, increase knowledge of the world, to develop skills and abilities that might otherwise go unpracticed (Clary et al., 1996). There is a foundation in the objective appraisal

functions in theories of attitudes and persuasion. This understanding function is covered immensely in Gidron's (as cited in Clary et al., 1998) volunteers in health and mental health institutions who expected to receive benefits in regards to self-development, learning, and variety in life through their volunteer service.

Many college students tend to gain a lot of beneficial experience through volunteer activities. A lot of times this allows many to develop interests in certain career choices. Without this thirst for knowledge many individuals would not really understand how other people live from day to day. This allows people to expand their horizons and to eliminate any type of misconceptions they may hold true for certain aspects of many cultures and groups of people.

A social aspect serves as the third approach. This motivation reflects people's concerns dealing with relationships with others. Volunteering may allow someone the opportunity to fit in, maintain social relationships with friends, or to engage in an activity that is viewed favorably among others (Clary et al., 1998). This function is very similar to that of Smith et al.'s (1956) social adjustive function and has figured prominently in several accounts of helpfulness (as cited in Clary et al., 1998).

Many volunteers tend to fall within this domain because they become involved in certain volunteer organizations and activities due to social constraints. According to Clary and Snyder (1987), some people may perceive volunteering as providing a way of expanding their social circles. It is viewed as a way to make new social contacts or for new social opportunities. In a sense, this function can be viewed more as a selfish behavior rather than for the common good of all people.

The career section is the fourth function of the motivational approach. This relates to the individuals who volunteer in order to gain career-related experience and benefits (Clary et al., 1998). This function is closely related to that of Katz's (1960) utilitarian function, which is exemplified by the Junior League volunteers studied by Jenner (1982) (as cited in Clary et al., 1998). A proportion of those individuals perceived volunteering as a means of gaining new skills towards a new career.

This is very similar to the understanding function as people are engaging in volunteer work for personal gains that will better them as individual. Volunteer work can serve as a very important means for determining one's career. If an individual wants to work with children, he or she could volunteer with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, in order to gain personal experience interacting one on one with an individual child. There is a lot to be said about the career benefits involving volunteer work.

The fifth function is the protective aspect. This describes people who volunteer to cope with inner anxieties and conflicts, to protect their ego (Clary et al., 1996). Individuals will protect their ego from negative features of the self, and may serve to reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address one's own personal problems, (Katz, 1960 & Smith et al., 1956 as cited in Clary et al., 1998).

This function is based on the premise of egoistic personality traits. Basically people will participate in volunteer work if they know something good will come out of it for them. Zuckerman's (as cited in Clary & Snyder, 1987) hypothesis that those with a strong belief in a just world would, in a time of personal need, help another in order to make themselves deserving of desirable outcomes. This function is deeply rooted in the

psychoanalytic approach of helping behavior.

The last and sixth function of motivation is enhancement. This involves a process that centers on the ego's growth and development and involves positive strivings of the ego (Clary et al., 1998). This means the individual engages in psychological development to enhance their esteem (Clary et al., 1996).

The people who fall into this category tend to have self-esteem issues. Their esteem is lower than the average volunteer. While engaging in helpful activities, people with low self esteem can measure their worth and importance through the activities they participate in. Volunteering can give them a boost of confidence knowing that someone else relies heavily upon their support. In a sense, people with low self esteem can use volunteering in a therapeutic way to help themselves.

The six functions of motivation seem to cover all of the bases involving volunteer involvement. Clary et al. (1996 & 1998) devised a way of categorizing people's motivations in a very efficient way. They went on to develop the Volunteer Functions Inventory. This measure is designed to evaluate what area an individual falls into regarding their motivations to volunteer. Now that this measure has been designed, it might be possible to learn how to encourage volunteerism among individuals who do not volunteer.

Allison, Okun, & Dutridge (2002) performed a study measuring volunteers motives using the Volunteer Functions Inventory and an Open-ended Probe to discover the dominant influences to volunteering. The Open-ended Probe revealed three additional motives for volunteering: enjoyment, religiosity, and team building. Their

findings showed that the value motivation was rated the highest among participants. This is consistent with other research using the Volunteer Functions Inventory. In this study, 84% of the participants had a value score that equaled or exceeded their other five VFI scores (Allison et al., 2002).

### Altruism and Prosocial Behavior

Volunteerism is a form of prosocial action in which people seek out opportunities to help others in need (Omoto & Snyder, 2001). Omoto & Snyder (2001) suggest that people make considerable and continuing commitments to offer assistance, and may do so in stressful situations without any bonds of prior obligation to the recipient of their good deeds. Horton-Smith (1994) explains that volunteer participation was higher for individuals with more efficacy, empathy, morality, emotional stability, and self-esteem. The traits that will be discussed are actually the basis for many of the six functions that are mentioned by Clary et al. (1998). Throughout much of the literature on this topic many psychologists mention personality types/traits such as altruistic, egoistic, and prosocial. These are all used to describe helping personalities. Research in social psychology and economics generally minimizes altruism as motivation for volunteering (Unger, 1991).

In an article by Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer (1991), they define altruism to mean people “who assist primarily for other-oriented or moral reasons without regard to external rewards or punishment.” This definition is the base of the value function in Clary et al.’s (1998) functional approach to motivations. In a study conducted by Omoto & Snyder (1995) involving AIDS volunteers they found two

different types of helping behaviors. The first type is that of the spontaneous helper who through an unexpected or impromptu situation acts out of concern or desire to help rectify a situation. The individual that falls into this category is a truly altruistic person (De Chant, 2001).

Baston (1987) has been able to differentiate situationally produced sympathy from situational personal distress. He found that sympathetic responses are likely to lead to altruistically motivated helping responses. Baston also discovered that these responses were positively related when it was difficult for the individual to escape. This suggests that few people are purely altruistic and that there is sometimes another reason for that person helping another (Baston, 1987 & Carlo et al., 1991).

Clary and Snyder (1987) define egoistic as “helping others in order to receive personal gains because of the concern for the self.” This tends to be more of the selfish side of volunteering or helping behavior. In AIDS research performed by Omoto & Snyder (1995), they found it was egoistic motives and self-centered motives rather than altruistic or other oriented motives that were positively associated with length of service. In the same study the second type of helper is that of a provider. This person feels obligated, conditioned, or desires to assist in the care of another with whom they are related or directly involved with and thus assist in their well-being or care. This shows that although the individual may not have the purest of reasons for volunteering, good still comes from their actions and support (De Chant, 2001).

According to Baston (1987), personal distress may or may not lead to an egoistically motivated helping response. In their study, they discovered that some people



who volunteer only help because of how badly their own distress is. It is a means to personal growth and healing more so than that of the one in need. But in this study, they found if the situation was easy to escape, the individuals that help because of their distress tended to escape the situation rather than helping (Carlo et al., 1991).

Throughout most of the research based on these two traits, there is a lot of ambiguity among them. The Prosocial Personality Battery (PSB) was designed in order to better differentiate between the reasons why people do actually volunteer (Penner et al., 1993). Because the distinction between altruistic and egoistic motives is difficult to see, this measure looks at two types of helping, Other-Oriented Empathy & Helpfulness. Other-Oriented Empathy is related to altruistic motives. It shows the prosocial concern for the well-being of others. Helpfulness does not display as much concern towards others in need; therefore, it relates more to the ideals of egoistic traits (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998).

There will always be difficulty in assessing someone's true reasons for volunteering. Clary & Snyder (1987) mention a "purity idea", meaning a function may not be either altruistic or egoistic but may actually consist of a mixture of the two. Even though these two traits tend to intertwine with one another, they are both a strong basis and foundation for the six functions to motivation for volunteering.

### College Students and Volunteerism

When studies are done to find out what motivates college students to volunteer there is not just one answer. There are a variety of reasons why students choose either to volunteer or not to volunteer. These are some of the reasons: desire to help others,

interest in the activity, enjoyment of the work (Krehbiel & MacKay, 1988). According to Serow (1990), many individual students have substantial personal histories of service that reflect the influence of parents, church groups, and other youth organizations.

Other researchers have found that religion influences students to volunteer (Beckman & Trozzolo, 2002). They also found that of the students who participated in a summer service learning experience, 75.4% attended church or other religious facility once a week (Beckman & Trozzolo, 2002). Serow (1990) suggests that students' values will underlie what is, in some instances, a major commitment to voluntary action. He went on to further explain that those students who rated spirituality and value of community service were more likely to be highly involved (Serow, 1990). Dreyden & Serow (1990) found a positive correlation between students' religious and spiritual values and community service.

Wilson (2000) found that teenagers are more likely to volunteer if their parental role models tended to be actively involved in volunteering. This suggests that parents have taught their children positive ways to think about volunteer work. Beckman & Trozzolo (2002) also found students felt a greater obligation to volunteer because of the role models their parents provided. In addition, it was found that family service experience is predicative of student service-learning participation in college (Beckman & Trozzolo, 2002). Fitch (1987) found that 78% of students surveyed that volunteered at a university had parents who were volunteers. Students considered parents and friends as the most significant influences on their becoming volunteers (Fitch, 1987).

Level of education is the most consistent predictor of volunteering among college

students (Wilson, 2000). Education boosts volunteering because it heightens awareness of problems, increases empathy, and builds self-confidence. Also individuals who volunteered when they attended high school were able to develop more prosocial attitudes and were more likely to volunteer in college and later in life (Wilson, 2000). Beckman & Trozzolo (2002) agreed that there is a strong correlation between students who volunteer in high school and their involvement in college. Serow (1990) stated, "That regular participation in community service is not something that just happens, but it is the result of prosocial development forces in one's own experience and within the educational environment."

According to Ilustre, McFarland, Mercer, Miron, and Moely (2002), students participate in service-learning or volunteerism for three reasons. One is that service-learning increases Self-Enhancement. This can be described as self-esteem, personal efficacy, and confidence. The second reason is Understanding of Self and World. This category stands for personal growth, moral reasoning, empathetic understanding, and attitudes toward diverse groups in society. The third reason is Value-Expression. This stands for expression of humanitarian and prosocial values through action and plans for future involvement in community service (Ilustre et al., 2002).

Clary et al. (1998) did a cross validation study using the Volunteer Functions Inventory to measure college students motivations to volunteer. There were a total of 534 male and female students at the undergraduate level. When measuring the six functions of volunteerism the values, motivation came out on top among all six categories. The mean score was 5.37 with a standard deviation of 1.17. The other

functions followed in this order: understanding  $M=5.13$ ,  $SD=1.20$ , enhancement  $M=4.64$ ,  $SD=1.36$ , career  $M=4.54$ ,  $SD=1.5$ , protective  $M=3.25$ ,  $SD=1.36$ , and social  $M=2.95$ ,  $SD=1.28$  (Clary et al., 1998). This suggests that these findings show how an individual's value system and moral characteristics influence their thoughts about volunteerism and why they would participate.

A study done by Kandell, O'Brien, Sedlacek, (1992) attempted to measure college students' willingness to volunteer by looking at gender and the Holland Personality Type. Their main theory was that volunteer participation allows students to gain a wealth of career development and growth. For the design of the study, compensation was offered to students who participated in volunteer work. The results suggested that compensation did not sway college students' opinions about volunteer work. Kandell et al. (1992) placed students in volunteer activities that were consistent with their ratings on the Holland Personality Type. They had 932 students that were pretty evenly split between male and female participants. The results yielded data suggesting that intrinsic interest in volunteering may be the main motivator for students. It also showed that women indicated greater interest in volunteer services than men (Kandell et al., 1992).

Some Universities have decided that volunteerism should be mandatory for college students in order to graduate, receive credits, or for moral enrichment. There has been some research in which students were studied to see how the mandatory volunteer work altered their perception regarding volunteer participation. They also discovered whether mandatory volunteerism would be a catalyst for future volunteer participation.

The first study by Boss (1994), looked at making volunteer participation mandatory for a group of students within two Ethics classes that were based on the moral ethics of Kohlberg. It was the belief that, if a student participated in volunteer work their moral reasoning would become more highly developed. A pre-test, post-test design was used with the measurement called Rest's Defining Issues Test. The findings suggested a few things. The first is that individuals who did participate in volunteer work did have increased scores on their post-test of moral reasoning. The second finding showed that students who volunteered previously were more likely to participate in the future. The last finding suggested the reasons a college student does volunteer. They would like to increase their self-confidence. Community service allows them an opportunity to work out a troubling moral issue. Students tend to pick volunteer work that is consistent with their career aspirations and goals (Boss, 1994).

The second study by Eyler and Giles (1994) set up a community service laboratory where students could receive one credit for community service participation. They found that students who volunteered showed a significant increase in their belief that people can make a difference and that they should be involved in community service. Students also mentioned their involvement in leadership roles and political issues. In addition, they stated that their experience had convinced them to volunteer the following semester. Eyler and Giles' (1994) results gave them optimism to believe that these programs would have significant impact on an individuals decision to volunteer in the future.

The last study done by Clary, Snyder, and Stukas (1999) investigated the

consequences of mandatory volunteerism programs for college students that were needed in order to graduate. They found that students who indicated a lack of interest to volunteer previous to the experience were less likely to volunteer after their requirement was fulfilled. Many of these programs felt that by making volunteerism mandatory, the student will develop personal, social, and civic growth as an individual. However, requirements to volunteer actually may reduce interest because it is taking away from the perceptions of why an individual helps others. The results of this analysis demonstrated that past experience had a main effect on students' intentions. Those who volunteered previously were more likely to volunteer in the future.

#### Summary

The literature review shows how much progress has made regarding volunteers' motivation to participate, but it also shows how hard it is to define motivations for all people. In the Motivations to Volunteer area, research has shown how hard it is to still identify what motivates a specific individual. But the Design of the functional approach (Clary et al., 1998) allows there to be less uncertainty.

The next area that was covered was the functional approach. This means that people engage in volunteer work in order to satisfy important social and psychological goals and that different individuals may be involved in similar volunteer activities but do so in order to achieve different goals. Previous research on volunteer motivations has suggested that the functional approach has a strong emphasis on multiple motivations.

The third area is the Six Categories of Motivation. The six motivations are values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. The six functions of

motivation seem to cover all of the bases involving volunteer involvement. Clary et al. (1996 & 1998), devised a way of categorizing people's motivations in a very efficient way. They went on to develop the Volunteer Functions Inventory.

The fourth area of the literature review is Altruism and Prosocial Behavior.

Volunteerism is a form of prosocial action in which people seek out opportunities to help others in need (Omoto & Snyder, 2001). Horton-Smith (1994) explained that volunteer participation was higher for individuals with more efficacy, empathy, morality, emotional stability, and self-esteem. Throughout much of the literature on this topic many psychologists mention personality types/traits such as: altruistic, egoistic, and prosocial. These are all used to describe helping personalities.

The last area covers information regarding college students and volunteering.

There are a variety of reasons why students choose either to volunteer or not to volunteer. Some of the reasons include: desire to help others, interest in the activity, enjoyment of the work (Krehbiel & MacKay, 1988). According to Serow (1990), many individual students have substantial personal histories of service that reflect the influence of parents, church groups, and other youth organizations.

The research and studies show that every individual is unique, although there may be ways to understand people's motivations in a generalized way. Everyone has their own personal make up of who they are and what drives them to behave and act in certain ways.

## Chapter 3: Design of the Study

### Sample

The sample selected were undergraduate students who were currently enrolled in Introduction to Psychology courses. There were six classes total. Out of these classes 184 students were administered the Volunteer Functions Inventory. One-hundred seven of these students volunteer and seventy-seven of these students do not volunteer. Sixty-seven of the participants were male, one-hundred fifteen were female, and two individuals chose not to disclose their gender. They ranged in age from 18-41. About 74% falling between the 18-20 year old category. Forty percent of the students surveyed were currently sophomores. All of the students were selected from Rowan University, which is located in Southern Jersey.

### Measure

The measure that was used in this study is the Volunteer Functions Inventory. It was developed by Clary et al (1990) to understand the motivations that exist among those who volunteer. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) represents the most comprehensive set of Likert rating scales for assessing motives for volunteering.(Clary et al.,1998, as cited in Allison et al., 2002). This VFI consists of 30 survey questions designed to assess the six categories of motivations to volunteer. The six motivations are as follows: protective, values, career, social, understanding, & enhancement. There are five items designed specifically to correlate to each of the six functions. The individual



rates each statement using a response scale ranging from 1 (not at all important/ accurate) to 7 (extremely important/ accurate) (Clary et al., 1998). Scores are then averaged per individual, the higher the score the greater the importance of the motivation.

According to Clary et al. (1996), the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) possesses desirable psychometric qualities. Research with several samples has revealed that each of the six scales is internally consistent and temporally stable. Factor analyses of the responses of a sample of adult volunteers and a sample of university students (some with and some without volunteer experience) produced the expected six factor solutions. The predictive validity of the scales of the VFI were examined in a persuasion context. The last area is the scales of the VFI are generally unrelated to a set of scales that might potentially constructs similar to the VFI, Clary et al. (1995, as cited in Clary et al., 1996).

In the study, Development of an Inventory of Volunteers' Motivations (Clary et al., 1998), there were 321 female and 144 male volunteers from five organizations in the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan areas that used volunteers to provide a wide range of services to children, families of cancer patients, social service and public health clients, and the physically handicapped, as well as blood services and disaster relief. This group covered a vast amount of people who are involved in volunteer work.

#### Design

This was a repeated measure design because the scores for each student were measured for each of the six types of motivation. The researcher compared the two

groups of subjects, volunteer or non-volunteer. The mean was calculated from the 5 scored statements for each function from every individual. From establishing the mean in each category it was possible to assess the dominant category among volunteers and those who do not volunteer.

#### Testable Hypotheses

- H0: There are no differences between a volunteer's motivation to volunteer verses a non volunteer's motivation to begin volunteering.
- H1: There are differences between a volunteer's motivation to volunteer verses a non volunteer's motivation to begin volunteering.

#### Analysis

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. The data was entered into the SPSS statistical package located at Rowan University. The subjects were identified as a volunteer or a non volunteer. This study looked at the dominant motivations among these two groups in order to see if there is a dominant group.

#### Summary

This study used 184 of Rowan University's college students in order to see if there is a dominant functional motivation among those that volunteer compared to those who do not volunteer. The measure used was the Volunteer Functions Inventory, which contains 30 statements that are rated using 7 point Likert scale. The six classifications are: career, enhancement, values, social, understanding, and protective. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will test the hypotheses.

## Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

### Introduction

The following statistical analysis of the current study of college students' motivation to volunteer and whether or not they do volunteer has been completed. The following variables were measured; the six types of motivation, gender, and volunteer participation. These variables were analyzed to see if there was a relation between them and volunteer participation. One testable hypothesis was used for this study.

### Analysis of Results

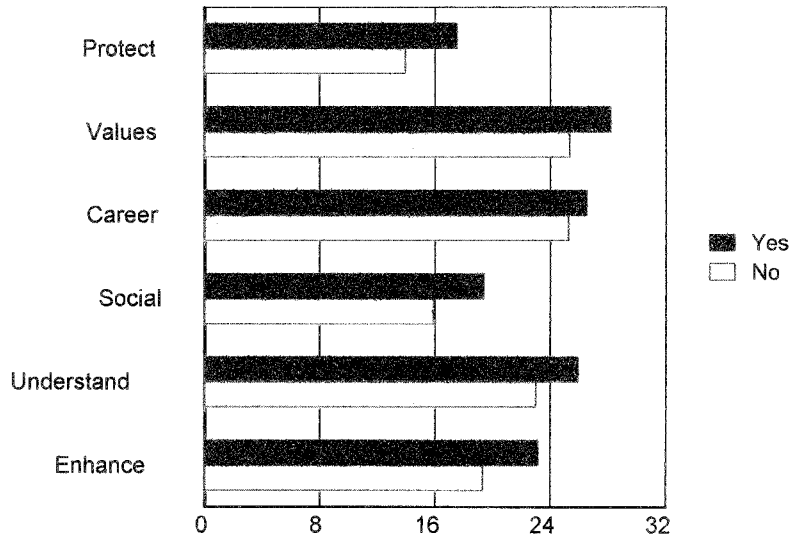
The Hypothesis stated that there would be a difference in a dominant motivation between volunteers and non-volunteers. After analyzing the mean of each of the six motivations for volunteers and non-volunteers, the values category was the highest, (M=28.18, SD=4.58, for volunteer, and M=25.34, SD=5.45 for non-volunteers.) The means were tabulated by the total score each individual had per motivation. These scores ranged from five to thirty-five. To see the means and standard deviations for all of the motivations see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Table of Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Motivations

Volunteer	Protective	Values	Career	Social	Understanding	Enhancement
Yes Mean	17.54	28.18	26.51	19.38	25.90	23.15
Number	107	107	107	107	107	107
Std. Dev.	7.13	4.58	5.91	6.83	4.89	6.70
No Mean	13.95	25.34	25.26	15.91	22.99	19.31
Number	77	77	77	77	77	77
Std. Dev.	5.70	5.45	6.36	6.76	6.51	6.62
Total M	16.04	26.98	25.98	17.93	24.68	21.54
Number	184	184	184	184	184	184
Std. Dev.	6.79	5.14	6.11	6.99	5.80	6.91

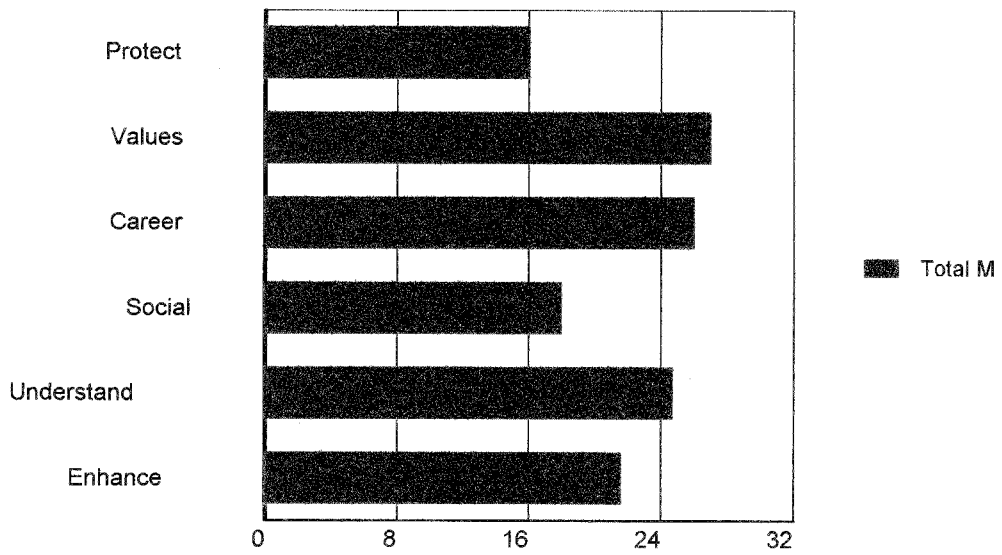
The scores from the Volunteer Functions Inventory reflected that all students, whether they volunteer or not, were all consistent in what areas received higher scores by each individual. By looking at the table, it is obvious to see that individuals that volunteer tended to score the survey with higher scores. Because the scores between volunteers and non-volunteers were consistent, the alternate hypothesis was rejected. There was no difference between volunteers' motivation and non-volunteers' motivation to begin therefore, in the null hypothesis, that stated there would be no difference between the two groups, was accepted. Figure 4.1 shows how closely some of these motivations were rated among college students. Figure 4.2 shows the total means for each of the motivations.

Figure 4.1: Means of Motivations



\*Note: Yes stands for volunteer, No stands for non-volunteer.

Figure 4.2: Total Means for Motivation



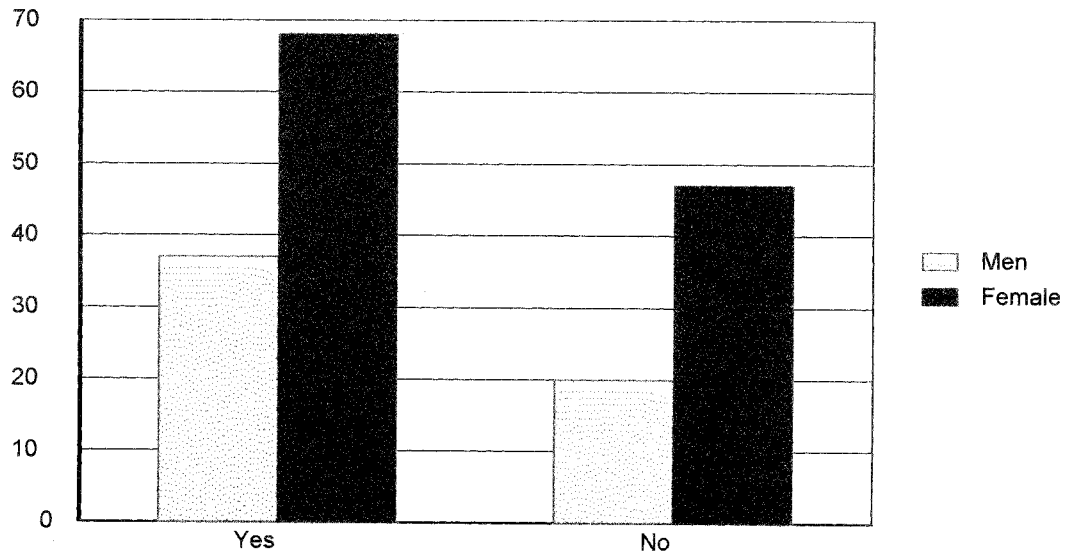
An Analysis of Variance was used to understand the data. Volunteer was used as the independent variable, with each individual motivation to measure the level of significance. Gender and the interaction of volunteer and gender were used as well. The volunteer variable displayed the greatest degree of significance with all of the motivations, except for the career motivation. However, there was no level of significance for the variables of gender, and for the intercept of volunteer and gender. Even though gender did not show significance for the motivations, percentages were calculated to see how many males and females chose to participate. The researcher found that more women than men participate in volunteer work, but there were also more women involved in this study. See Table 4.2 for the percentages, and Figure 4.2 for the number of subjects in each category.

Table 4.2: Percentages of Male and Female Participants

	Male	Female
Volunteer	20%	38%
Non-Volunteer	16%	26%

\*Note: These percentages are based on 182 subjects, two people chose not to put gender.

Figure 4.3: Number of Male and Female Participants



\* Note: These values are based on 182 subjects.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, an Analysis of Variance was used to measure the data from this study. For the motivation protection with volunteer there was an  $F_{(1,178)} = 11.438$  at a significance level of  $p < .001$ . There was extremely high significance for the motivation of protection at .001. The other two variables of gender, and the intercept of gender & volunteer had no significance. Gender had an  $F_{(1,178)} = .625$  at a significance level of  $p < .001$ . The significance gender had on students ratings of this motivation was at .430. The next motivation is values, for volunteer the  $F_{(1,178)} = 14.732$  at a significance level of  $p < .001$ . Gender had an  $F_{(1,178)} = 3.761$  at  $p < .001$ , the significance number was .054. The third motivation, career, was the only one that did not show significance with volunteer. Career had an  $F_{(1,178)} = 1.604$  at  $p < .001$ , the

significance found was .207. Gender had an  $F_{(1,178)} = .589$ , and significance of .452. The fourth motivation is social. For the variable of volunteer the  $F_{(1,178)} = 9.640$  at  $p < .001$ . The level of significance was .002. Gender had an  $F_{(1,178)} = .541$  at  $p < .001$ , the significance was .463. This shows no significance for gender. The fifth motivation is understanding. The variable volunteer had an  $F_{(1,178)} = 12.387$  at  $p < .001$ , and a significance of .001. Gender had an  $F_{(1,178)} = 1.804$  at  $p < .001$ , and a significance level of .181. This shows that gender does not have significance. The last motivation enhancement, with the variable volunteer had an  $F_{(1,178)} = 13.816$  at  $p < .001$ , and a significance level of .000. Gender had an  $F_{(1,178)} = .643$ , at  $p < .001$ , and a significance level of .424. This shows gender did not have any significant effect of rating of the motivator.

### Summary

The hypothesis that was tested yielded some significant findings. Regarding the Hypothesis, it was discovered that both students who volunteer and those that do not had the same dominant motivation, values, to volunteer. Therefore, the  $H_0$  hypothesis that stated both groups will have the same dominant motivation was accepted. The  $H_1$  hypothesis was rejected, because it stated that both groups would have different motivations to volunteer.

The Analysis of Variance showed that the volunteer variable when measured individually with each motivation had a very significant effect, except for the motivation of career. Gender did not show any significance with any of the motivations. All values were measured at significance level of  $p < .001$ . Table 4.3 on the next page will include



data that summarizes the results found in this chapter.

Table 4.3: Summary of Data

	Protect	Values	Career	Social	Understanding	Enhancement
Sign. Vol.	16.04	.000	.207	.002	.001	.000
Total M.	.001	26.99	25.99	17.93	24.68	21.54

\*Note: Sign. Vol. Stands for significance of volunteer variable, and Total M stands for total mean for each motivation. The significance level is at  $p < .001$ .

## Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

This study intended to look at what motivated college students to participate in volunteer work. The Volunteer Functions Inventory was used to have students rate their beliefs about what would influence them to volunteer. A sample of 184 subjects (67 male & 115 female, two participants did not disclose their gender) were obtained from Rowan University's student body and each were given the Volunteer Functions Inventory. One hypothesis was tested using an Analysis of Variance. Results found that the value motivation was the dominant motivation to volunteer among students who volunteer and non-volunteers. It was determined that the volunteer variable had a significant effect on students ratings of each motivation. This study was consistent with previous data finding that the value motivation was the dominant for majority of the subjects who have answered the survey.

### Discussion

After looking over the results found in the current study, there was one main trend throughout the results. Volunteering had a significant effect on how an individual rated the motivations on their surveys. The only motivation that was not affected by whether an individual participated in volunteer work or not was the career motivation. Surprisingly, gender had no significant effect at all when students rated the motivations of the Volunteer Functions Inventory. This was surprising because previous research suggested that there would be a difference due to gender. Women tend to be more

willing to volunteer than men.

The null hypothesis was accepted stating that there would be no difference among volunteers' and non-volunteers' dominant motivation to volunteer. The values motivation came out on top for both groups. It is interesting that the other motivations shared the same pattern; for example, the next motivation was career. It had the second highest means for both volunteers and non-volunteers. These findings for the value motivation were consistent with previous research using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998).

Something that was not included in Chapter 4 but was brought to the researchers attention during the study, was students' motivation to volunteer after mandatory community service. It is interesting that students reported that they felt guilty doing community service because they had to and did not want to. When they were finished with their mandatory time, they reported that they would like to volunteer in the future not because they were not being forced do it, but because they wanted to do it. This ties into the section in Chapter 2 that discusses how making volunteer work mandatory for college students could have a negative stigma, because the choice is taken away. In this instance, for these few students the opposite was true; it inspired them to want to do things for the enrichment of all.

There was two main assumptions for this study. One was that the two groups being studied, volunteers and non volunteers are representative of those in the general population. The second main assumption was that all surveys were distributed, explained, and filled out in a uniform way. The two groups were accurate in the sense

that more women volunteered than men. There was also a bit of a difference in the amount of male and female students registered in the six classes that were used for the study. This would allow the results about gender not to be completely accurate due to the nature of the difference in numbers. The researcher presented all surveys in the same manner, with a detailed explanation of what to do. There was time made available for students to ask questions before and after filling out the surveys.

There was one limitation of the study. Because the sample size was small, generalizability is limited when being compared to the general population. This was a very accurate limitation because majority of the participants were Caucasian and Catholic. There were other races and religions identified in this study but there was not enough subjects to fully represent each group of individuals.

The researcher was pleased with the findings in this study because they were consistent with the results of previous research. Values are important part of who an individual is and what they do. This is not only a motivation for volunteering, but it is also the foundation of everyone's life. It is not surprising that this motivation received the highest ratings amongst all subjects.

### Conclusion

This study was proposed to investigate what motivates college students to volunteer, using the Volunteer Functions Inventory. It was the opinion of the researcher that there could be distinct differences between volunteers' dominant motivation and non volunteers dominant motivation. The alternate hypothesis was rejected, that there would be different motivations for volunteers versus non volunteers. The null hypothesis was

accepted, that there would be the same dominant motivation for volunteers and non-volunteers. The findings support the cross validation study done by Clary et al. (1998), that measured college students motivations. Their data showed that values was the dominant motivation for majority of the participants. This suggests that maybe some other areas need to be researched in order to identify more ways to motivate college students to volunteer.

#### Implications for Future Research

This study addressed many types of research that had been done previously on Rowan University students to see if there would be similar findings. Some things that might have brought more to this study would to have been asking more open-ended questions of the participants, such as how often does one volunteer, whether or not they volunteer and why, and for how long. It would also be interesting to find out the majors of the participants to see if there is a relationship between major and frequency of volunteer involvement. The Volunteer Functions Inventory is excellent for monitoring one's own motivation but leaves many questions unanswered. Another interesting approach would be to see how students react to mandatory volunteer work. It is the belief of the researcher that if those things were done in a follow-up study many interesting and helpful results would come of it.

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