

FACTORS AND MOTIVATIONS BEHIND VOLUNTEERING AT DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE EMERGENCY SHELTERS

by

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ABSTRACT

Volunteerism is a commonly researched topic however, much scarcer is research into the factors or motivations behind volunteering at domestic violence emergency shelters. Knowing the motivating factors that lead people to dedicate their time to different organizations is important because it gives us an understanding of what can be done in order to get other people involved in pro-social activities that benefit society as a whole. Just as there are different types of individuals who volunteer their time, there are different factors and motivators that compel those individuals to do so. Research to date has identified some common motivators. One of these is altruism. Altruism is essentially a motivation or drive to help another solely for that person's benefit or for the benefit of society as a whole. Other motivators that have been identified include: to gain understanding about a particular social issue, to strengthen social relationships and satisfy normative expectations; to aid in career advancement or to develop job prospects; to reduce negative feelings about oneself or address personal problems; and, to grow and develop psychologically and increase self-esteem.

My research specifically examines the motivations among volunteers of local domestic violence emergency shelters. In my review of literature to date, I have been unable to find any research involving volunteers of domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, victim advocacy organizations, or anything along these lines. Only one study was found that has examined motivations among the volunteers for these organizations. This study was a very small (n=8), qualitative investigation with volunteers who occupied a specific position within an organization. This study examines motivations quantitatively of a larger sample of volunteers from two area domestic violence emergency shelters. To acquire this sample, all volunteers in the agency

databases were emailed a link to the survey and asked to participate. The survey questionnaire included questions about the factors influencing their decision to volunteer and also why they chose to volunteer specifically at a domestic violence shelter. Demographic differences in motivations among the sample are also statistically determined.

This study is important as it is the first to quantitatively assess the motivations of volunteers at a domestic violence agency. Motivations for volunteering at such an agency can differ significantly from motivations for volunteering at other types of organizations (like soup kitchens, day care centers, hospices and the like). The role of personal experience as well as knowing someone who has been personally impacted by domestic violence is measured as a unique motivation for this population.

These findings are useful in providing domestic violence agencies with information that can assist in identifying potential volunteers from the larger community as well as a better understanding of their current volunteers. In addition, it contributes to the larger literature by examining a volunteer group that has largely been absent from the literature to date.

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INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism is essentially the donation of one's time, efforts, and other resources. There is a large number of Americans in the U.S. annually who donate their time to different organizations. In 2011, according to the Corporation for National & Community Service, 64.3 million Americans volunteered through an organization, for a total of almost 8 billion hours (Corporation for National & Community Service 2012). The total number of hours volunteered annually in the U.S. according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. Department of Labor, reflects a median of 50 hours of volunteer activities from September 2011 to September 2012 (United States Department of Labor 2012). The median "annual hours spent on volunteer activities ranged from a low of 32 hours for those 25 to 34 years old to a high of 90 hours for volunteers age 65 and over" (United States Department of Labor 2012).

The main objective of this research is to understand the factors and motivations behind volunteering at domestic violence emergency shelters for the purpose of bridging the gap in literature to date, which does not delve into this particular type of volunteering. The lack of information we have on domestic violence shelter volunteers is problematic in that there has been no attempt to understand why individuals involve themselves in what would seem to be an emotionally trying pastime.

There is much need for volunteers when it comes to domestic violence victims as there are "between 600,000 and 6 million women" who "are victims of domestic violence each year, and between 100,000 and 6 million men" (Domestic Violence Resource Center 2013). Additionally, "nearly 2.2 million people called a domestic violence crisis or hot line in 2004 to escape crisis situations, seek advice, or assist someone they thought might be victim's" (Domestic Violence Reso

urce Center 2013). These data illustrate that there is much need for volunteers, whether it be for domestic violence emergency shelters or domestic violence hotlines.

Not only is there a need for volunteers for the purpose of helping domestic violence victims, but to lessen the financial burden on such aiding organizations by providing free help. "The estimated value of volunteer time for 2012 is \$22.14 per hour", in Florida it is estimated at "\$18.85" (Independent Sector 2013). Having unpaid help is not only helpful financially, but it can have a huge financial impact. "According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, about 64.3 million Americans, or 26.8 percent of the adult population, gave 7.9 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$171 billion in 2011" (Independent Sector 2013).

The results of this study may produce information that can help organizations such as these to better understand the people who volunteer for them. Furthermore, new information could help lead these organizations into bringing new volunteers in to help those seeking shelter or other aid.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VOLUNTEERS

First, what type of person volunteers? According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2012 "women continued to volunteer at a higher rate than did men across all age groups, educational levels, and other major demographic characteristics" (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>). Additionally, Bussell and Forbes (2002) who were interested in the motivations of volunteers for the purpose of enlisting and retaining volunteers, upon their review of the literature, deduced that females were more inclined to volunteer than their male counterparts. Furthermore, it was found that of the women who volunteered their time, it was the individuals over the age of fifty who were more inclined to give their time. In 2005, Carlo, de Guzman, Knight, and Okun also found that females were more likely than males to volunteer. In their study with a sample of 849 college students, each student was given one of three questionnaires (Carlo et al. 2005). The results showed once more, females are shown to be more likely to volunteer; they also showed to have more pro-social values than males.

Hewitt and Thoits (2001) researched whether or not people with good physical and mental health and who are involved in other religious and/or secular organizations seek out volunteer opportunities. They conducted a two-wave panel study on a national sample and the results of the study showed that people who are of good physical and/or mental health and who are involved in other organizations are in fact, more likely to dedicate more hours to volunteering. They also mention that middle-aged females volunteer more than men, regardless of age (Hewitt and Thoits 2001).

So, it has been assessed that women are, more so than men, likely to volunteer their time

to organizations in which they take an interest. Furthermore, it has been found that middle-aged women and/or women over the age of fifty are also more likely to volunteer than their younger female counterparts. Additionally, people who are already involved in other secular or religious organizations, pro-social or otherwise, and who are in good physical and mental health are likely to dedicate their time.

MOTIVATIONS

What are the motives behind volunteering? There are different motivations for different people, some of the literature reviewed attempts to bring some of those motivations to light. What factors drive individuals to be so involved? In Bussell and Forbes' research (2002) they found that altruism was the primary motivator in volunteerism. Altruism is essentially a motivation or drive to help another solely for that person's benefit or for the benefit of society as a whole. Carlo, de Guzman, Knight, and Okun (2005) also found that having pro-social values played a strong role in people's decisions to volunteer. They also found that having an extroverted personality played a role as well.

Chacon Fuertes and Vecina Jiminez (2002) sought out to identify the motives in volunteerism as well as the reasons for and statistics of, burnout among volunteers. The authors propose several reasons for volunteerism including things like values, seeking personal development and/or knowledge, and humanitarian concerns. A questionnaire was given to a sample of 130 volunteers from eight different organizations. The result showed that the primary factor in the volunteers' motivations were their values, concern for their community, personal growth and knowledge, as well as the social bonds it provides. Which lends to the results that Hewitt and Thoits (2001) found in their research, that volunteering improves a person's overall

well-being (Hewitt and Thoits 2001).

Lodi-Smith and Roberts (2007) searched for a connection between personality traits and work, family, religion, and volunteerism. The method used was a meta-analysis of studies previously conducted by other researchers. The results showed a connection between volunteering and conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability which was something the researchers expected (Lodi-Smith and Roberts 2007). This research suggests that people who have such characteristics as conscientiousness, agreeableness, and who are emotionally stable, are more likely to volunteer their time.

In the first of three studies conducted by Mowen and Sujan (2005), surveys were sent to 600 members of a consumer panel. The researchers wanted to assess trait predictors for volunteerism. Altruism, need for learning, and need for activity were the predominant motives for volunteerism according to the results. In the second study, they wanted to examine potential correlations between six previously discovered functional motives for volunteering and their sample. An in-class exercise involving 138 consumer students determined that altruism and a need for activity were the two main predictors for volunteerism. In a third study, 630 members of an organization received survey packets to complete and also to distribute them to colleagues. The third study yielded the same results (Mowen and Sujan 2005).

In addition to motivational factors such as altruism and a need for activity, there has been research into other types of motivations. In Okun and Schultz' (2003) study, the primary objective was to decipher whether or not aging had any effect on a person's motivation to volunteer. The sample consisted of 2,000 individuals who were affiliated with certain chosen organizations (n=2,000). A self-administered questionnaire was mailed, and the results showed

that the most frequent factors influencing a volunteers motivations amongst the older individuals in the sample, were understanding and making friends (Okun and Schultz 2003). This study suggests a possible social aspect within the motivations to volunteer.

To further illustrate the notion of social influences on volunteerism, Proteau and Wolff (2008) sought out to test previous notions that people involve themselves in volunteer activity based on reasons of altruism or some sort of personal investment. The reasons or motivations behind volunteering is very important information to those involved with non-profit organizations to have, because it can give an organization the ability to make volunteering more appealing to a volunteer based on their motivations. This, in turn will hopefully give the organization an advantage in enlisting more volunteers. The researchers used two samples, 1578 volunteers and 2631 participants who were otherwise associated with the organizations. The two most common responses from the volunteers in the samples were that they had a friend who volunteered, or that they were there to make friends. Based on these statements made, the researchers assessed that people volunteer to make friends. The researchers performed a secondary analysis on data previously collected by the researchers themselves, in the form of a series of questionnaires (Proteau and Wolff 2008).

In 2008, Rath conducted face-to-face individual in-depth interviews with 8 women (n=8), in addition to group sessions, with the purpose of obtaining qualitative data on women's experiences in volunteering as rape crisis counselors. One woman said she sought out volunteerism specifically dealing with sexual violence, half of the women sought out volunteering and ended up in the sexual violence sector, the rest also happened into it by other means. Many of them stated that realizing what a difference they made was a strong motivator to

continue their volunteerism (Rath 2008).

Clary, Copeland, Haugen, Miene, Ridge, Snyder, and Stukas (1998) carried out six investigations involving volunteers. The volunteers were given surveys and researchers deduced that there are six motives for volunteering: values (related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others); understanding (for the learning experience); social (to strengthen social relationships and satisfy normative expectations); career (to gain experience and increase job prospects); protective (to reduce negative feelings about oneself or address personal problems); and enhancement (to grow and develop psychologically and increase self-esteem) (Clary et al. 1998).

Research suggests that the main motivators include altruism (which essentially encompasses humanitarian concerns, values, and conscientiousness), personal development (knowledge, self-esteem, personal growth, well-being, and understanding), and socialization (social bonds, making friends, networking, and extraversion). My research focuses on the factors and motivations of volunteers in domestic violence emergency shelters. Knowing some of the primary motivators in volunteerism in general helps me to gain an understanding into the behavior.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The Theory of Altruism argues that a person feels they have a moral obligation to help or benefit others with no regard to potential personal gain, but solely for the sake of the person(s) benefitting. The idea that people would volunteer their time for the sole purpose of helping others is understandable, but why do people volunteer at certain specific organizations? What motivates them to choose to help the people they do?

Sympathy-Induced Altruism: A volunteer may offer up their time and efforts with altruistic motives, but may do so at domestic violence emergency shelters for more in-depth reasons. Sympathy is recognizing pain in others through understanding. A person may volunteer with sympathy-induced altruistic motives. A volunteer may know someone who has been victimized and may want to contribute their time because they have seen what victims go through and understand their need for support. In addition to feeling sympathetic to a person in need, there are those who understand one's need for help for different reasons.

The Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (Mikulincer and Shaver 2010:16) states that because of your empathy for others, you want to help them regardless of any potential personal gain. Empathy is recognizing pain through shared emotional state. A person may feel compelled to help victims of domestic violence based on their own experiences. If a person has been through a similar situation they will have a very real understanding of what the other person is going through.

Even further than a person's understanding of the need for helping is, the Reciprocity Theory (Bar-Tal 1976:114), that a person feels compelled or obligated to help those who have helped them. It is essentially responding to kindness with kindness, or paying it forward. If a

person had been victimized and was helped by an organization (or person affiliated with that organization), they may now feel indebted and want to offer help as a means of reciprocating.

With all of these theories taken into account, it is easy to see that there may potentially be various reasons why a person may have for giving so much of their time to those in need. So, this lends to the bigger question of what it is that motivates people volunteer.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

What are the factors and motivations leading people to volunteer at domestic violence emergency shelters?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

METHOD/SAMPLE

The data from this study were gathered from an online anonymous survey examining the demographic characteristics, as well as the motivations of, volunteers at local domestic violence emergency shelters. The survey was distributed using Qualtrics. The sample included volunteers from three major area organizations: Harbor House of Central Florida, SafeHouse of Seminole, and Help Now in Osceola. The volunteers have been selected based on their involvement with the organizations chosen. The volunteer coordinators for these organizations were emailed a link to the Qualtrics survey. The link was then forwarded to all of the volunteers in the organization's database. The amount of responses to the online survey were minimal. The online survey only drew a collective 25 responses. Therefore, there were also 100 paper copies of the Qualtrics survey handed over to each of the volunteer coordinators at Harbor House of Central Florida and SafeHouse of Seminole. Of the 100 copies delivered to Harbor House, 14 were completed and returned. Of the 100 copies delivered to SafeHouse, 8 were completed and returned. Finally, of the 100 copies delivered to Help Now, 3 were completed and returned. The sample included a total of 50 volunteers. The data from the surveys were then entered into SPSS and statistically analyzed.

The survey consisted of 30 questions measuring different dependent variables such as, motivations for volunteerism and importance of certain aspects involved in volunteering. The survey also measured independent variables such as religiosity, domestic violence victims as volunteers vs. non-victim volunteers, and volunteer's personal experiences with domestic violence. Variables such as age, sex, and race are also statistically determined.

MEASUREMENTS

Dependent Variables:

The first question on the survey asked the respondents what organization they had received the survey from. This question was asked for the purpose of differentiating volunteers by organization. The respondents were asked how long they had been volunteering at that particular organization. This question was asked to measure longevity of volunteerism amongst the sample. The question of length of time volunteering was answered by the respondent by inputting the length of time in months and years in a text box. The survey also asked the respondent if they volunteered for any other organizations and if so, what types. They respondents are given a 9 options (hospital, church, food bank/meal service, hospice, elderly services, domestic violence shelter, homeless shelter, animal shelter, and child welfare agency) to choose from. This question was meant to examine the whether or not there are any similarities amongst the sample in other volunteering behavior. The respondents were asked if they volunteered alone or with a group, and if so, what group(s). This was meant to examine what other types of agencies if any, the respondents volunteered for. There was then a 4-point Likert Scale question asking the respondent to indicate their level of happiness. The scale ranged from 'very unhappy' to 'very happy'. The question was to measure the subjective level of happiness of the respondent for the purpose of determining if happiness could be an indicator of a person's likelihood to volunteer.

Independent Variables:

The independent variables for this study are domestic violence victims as volunteers vs.

non-victim volunteers, and their personal experience with domestic violence as a motivator. The survey also included contingency questions that asked respondents if they had ever been the victim of domestic violence, or if they had known a victim of domestic violence prior to volunteering. If they answered yes, they were then asked if they, or the person they knew had sought help from a domestic violence emergency shelter. Again, if they answered yes, they were asked if the organization they volunteer for was the same organization they sought help from in the past. These questions were intended to assess whether or not sympathy-induced altruism or empathy-induced altruism could be considered possible motivations for volunteering. They were also asked if they or anyone they knew had benefitted from the services of the shelter they volunteer for to measure the likelihood of reciprocity being motivation for volunteering.

Control Variables:

The survey asked questions to measure demographic variables. The ages of the respondents were measured by the respondent indicating the year they were born. The respondents were then asked to indicate their sex by choosing either 'male' or 'female'. The two questions were to determine the average age and gender of domestic violence emergency shelter volunteers. The survey also asked the respondent to indicate their highest level of educational attainment. The options ranged from 'some high school' to 'doctoral degree'. Race was also statistically determined. Age, race, and sex were the control variables for this study.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: Volunteers of domestic violence emergency shelters will be predominantly middle-aged or older women.

Hypothesis 2: Female volunteers will report more hours volunteered weekly than male volunteers.

Hypothesis 3: Volunteers who knew a domestic violence victim before making the decision to volunteer will cite their experience with domestic violence as a primary motive in their decision to volunteer.

Hypothesis 4: People who have been victimized will cite their experience with domestic violence as a primary motivator for volunteering.

Hypothesis 5: Domestic violence emergency shelter volunteers will not consider religion a primary motivator in their decision to volunteer.

DATA ANALYSIS

Univariate Analysis:

For the first hypothesis, frequencies were run on age and sex. For the second hypothesis, a frequency was run on number of hours volunteered. For the fifth hypothesis, a frequency was run on those who cited religion as a primary motivation for volunteering.

Bivariate Analysis:

For the third hypothesis, a cross-tabulation was run on volunteers who had known domestic violence victims before deciding to volunteer and those who cited their experience with domestic violence as their primary motivation. For the fourth hypothesis, a cross-tabulation was run on volunteers who had personally been the victim of domestic violence and those who cited their experience with domestic violence as their primary motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The sample for this study totaled 50 respondents (N=50). Table 1 shows the variables age, sex, race, religion, and level of education which were statistically determined using SPSS.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution for Variables Measuring Demographic Characteristics (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 2 | 4% | 5% |
| Female | 41 | 82% | 95% |
| Missing | 7 | 14% | |
| Age | | | |
| 50-67 years | 7 | 14% | 19% |
| 41-49 years | 5 | 10% | 12% |
| 31-39 years | 9 | 18% | 22% |
| 19-29 years | 20 | 40% | 49% |
| Race | | | |
| White/Caucasian | 22 | 44% | 51% |
| African American | 16 | 32% | 37% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Other | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Don't Know/Prefer | 2 | 4% | 5% |
| Not to Answer | | | |
| Missing | 7 | 14% | |
| Religion | | | |
| Christian | 25 | 50% | 58% |
| Catholic | 8 | 16% | 19% |
| Jewish | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Agnostic | 4 | 8% | 9% |
| Atheist | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Other | 4 | 8% | 9% |
| Missing | 7 | 14% | |
| Level of Education | | | |
| High School/G.E.D. | 5 | 10% | 12% |
| Some College | 12 | 24% | 28% |
| Bachelor's Degree | 21 | 42% | 49% |
| Master's Degree | 5 | 10% | 12% |
| Doctoral Degree | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Missing | 7 | 14% | |

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding errors.

Of the 50 respondents in the sample, the majority were from Safehouse of Seminole, followed by Harbor House of Central Florida, and then finally by Help Now in Osceola. The percentages below in Table 2 represent the percentage of the sample each organization represented.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution for Sample by Organization (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Harbor House of Central Florida | 18 | 36% | 43% |
| SafeHouse of Seminole | 21 | 42% | 50% |
| Help Now in Osceola | 3 | 6% | 7% |
| Missing | 8 | 16% | |

HYPOTHESES

The first hypothesis was developed based on literature from 2005, in which Carlo, de Guzman, Knight, and Okun found that females were more likely than males to volunteer. Furthermore, Hewitt and Thoits found that middle-aged females volunteer more than men, regardless of age (2001). To test the first hypothesis: volunteers of domestic violence emergency shelters will be predominantly middle-aged women or older, no statistical tests could be run due to the male population of the sample being comparably small. However, the results in Table 1 show that 95% of the respondents were female. Only 5% were male. These results indicate that females are more likely than men to volunteer at domestic violence emergency shelters. A frequency was also run on age, listed in Table 1, and the mean of the sample was 34 years of age. Table 1 also shows that the range was from 19 years of age to 67 years. According to the results

from the frequencies run, only 19% of the respondents constituted as middle-aged, which is considered to be 50 years of age or older. The range for this percentage was from 50-67 year of age. In this case of the first hypothesis, because the sample was so skewed, it could not be tested.

The second hypothesis was developed under the same pretexts as the first hypothesis. To test the second hypothesis: female volunteers will report more hours volunteered weekly than male volunteers, the same issue of sample distribution arose again for sex. No statistical tests could be run. A frequency was however, run on hours volunteered per week, shown in Table 3 below. The range was 0 to 40 hours per week. Table 3 below also shows that the majority of the sample (58%) volunteered on average, 0-9 hours per week. The table also showed that 36% of the sample volunteered between 10 and 20 hours a week, and a small percentage (5%) volunteered 31-40 hours per week. Once again, this hypothesis could not be tested, because the sample population was skewed in regards to sex.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution for Hours Volunteered Per Week (N=50)

| Score | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 0-9 | 21 | 42% | 58% |
| 10-20 | 13 | 26% | 36% |
| 21-30 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| 31-40 | 2 | 4% | 5% |
| Missing | 14 | 28% | |

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding errors.

The third hypothesis was created in an effort to test if sympathy-induced altruism played a role in a person's decision to volunteer at a domestic violence shelter. To test the third hypothesis: volunteers who knew a domestic violence victim before making the decision to volunteer will cite their experience with domestic violence as a primary motive in their decision to volunteer; a cross tabulation was conducted. The results in Table 4 show that 70% of the

people responded yes to having known a domestic violence victim. Of that 70%, only 26% cited their experience as their primary motivation for volunteering. The result of this crosstabulation is $p > .05$. $P = 0.321$, and based on these results, shown in Table 4, this finding is not significant and we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4: Crosstabulation Between the Independent Variable Measuring a Volunteer Having Known a Domestic Violence Victim and the Dependent Variable Measuring Their Primary Motivation for Volunteering (N=50)

| What would you say is the primary motivator in your decision to volunteer? | Did you know anyone who had been the victim of any type of domestic violence before volunteering? | | Total | Total Valid Percent |
|--|---|-----|-------|---------------------|
| | Yes | No | | |
| Personal Experience with DV | 8 | 2 | 10 | 23% |
| Knowledge & Understanding | 7 | 3 | 10 | 23% |
| Community | 11 | 8 | 19 | 9% |
| Career Development | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0% |
| Religion | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Missing | | | 7 | |
| Column Total | 30 | 13 | 50 | |
| Total Valid % | 70% | 30% | | |

Note: Percentages may not total 100% based on rounding errors.

$\chi^2 = 3.500$, $p > .05$

The fourth hypothesis was created in an effort to test if empathy-induces altruism played a role in the respondent's decision to volunteer at domestic violence shelters. To test the fourth hypothesis: people who have been a victim of domestic violence will cite their experience with domestic violence as a primary motivation for volunteering, a crosstabulation was run. The results in Table 5 show that 37% of the sample responded yes to having been a victim of domestic violence. Of the people who responded yes to having been a domestic violence, 44% of

them respondents cited their experience as their primary motivation for volunteering. The results of the crosstabulation shown in Table 5, indicate that $p < 0.05$. Based on these findings $p = 0.012$, shown in table 5, we reject the null hypothesis.

Table 5: Crosstabulation Between the Independent Variable Measuring Domestic Violence Victims as Volunteers and the Dependent Variable Measuring Their Primary Motivations for Volunteering (N=50)

| What would you say is the primary motivator in your decision to volunteer? | Have you ever been the victim of any type of domestic violence? | | Total | Total Valid Percent |
|--|---|-----|-------|---------------------|
| | Yes | No | | |
| Personal Experience with DV | 7 | 3 | 10 | 23% |
| Knowledge & Understanding | 3 | 7 | 10 | 23% |
| Community | 3 | 16 | 19 | 44% |
| Career Development | 3 | 1 | 4 | 9% |
| Religion | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Missing | | | 7 | |
| Column Total | 16 | 27 | 50 | |
| Total Valid % | 37% | 63% | | |

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding errors.

$\chi^2 = 11.001$, $p < .05$

To test the fifth hypothesis: domestic violence volunteers will not consider religion as a primary motivator in their decision to volunteer, a frequency was run on the entire sample. The question asked was “what would you say is the primary motivator in your decision to volunteer?” The answer options were: socialization, personal experience with domestic violence, knowledge and understanding, community, religion, and career development. Table 6 shows that of the 50 respondents, not one of them selected religion as their primary motive for volunteering.

OTHER FINDINGS

Going back to Table 1, The frequency of demographic characteristics shows that the mean age of the sample was 34 years old. The majority of the sample 49% were between the ages of 19 and 29 years old. Also, in regards to race it shows that the majority of the sample was Caucasian at 51%, followed by 37% African American. Religion was also statistically determined, and the results showed that 58% of the respondents identify as Christian, 19% as Catholic, and each of the other options listed were chosen by less than 10% of the time. A frequency was also run on education levels. The majority of the sample, at 49% held a Bachelor's degree and 28% indicated they had attended 'some college'. The remaining options of 'High School/GED' and 'Master's degree' each accounted for 12% of the sample.

Table 6 below, shows a frequency distribution for primary motivations for volunteering. The respondents were asked to indicate their primary motivation in volunteering. It shows that the majority of the sample 44% cited community as their primary motivation. A large percentage (23%) of the sample cited their personal experience with domestic violence as their primary motivation. Another 23% cited a desire for knowledge and understanding, and a much smaller 10% cited career development as their primary motivation.

Table 6: Frequency Distribution for Primary Motivation for Volunteering (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Personal Experience | 10 | 20 | 23 |
| Knowledge & Understanding | 10 | 20 | 23 |
| Community | 19 | 38 | 44 |
| Career Development | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Religion | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Missing | 7 | 14 | |

In Table 7, a frequency was run on the length of time the volunteers had been involved with the organization they received the survey from. The results showed that for 35% of the respondents, it was their first day volunteering. A good percent, 37% had been volunteering for one or more years and the remaining 17% had volunteered for anywhere between 2 months and 9 months.

Table 7: Frequency Distribution for Length of Volunteerism (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 1 day/first day | 15 | 30% | 35% |
| 2 months | 4 | 8% | 9% |
| 4 months | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| 6 months | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| 7 months | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| 8 months | 4 | 8% | 9% |
| 9 months | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| 1 year | 11 | 22% | 26% |
| 2 years | 4 | 8% | 9% |
| 3 years | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Missing | 7 | 14% | 16% |

Note: For the category *1 year*, one of the respondents indicated that they had been volunteering for "1 year and 1 month".

The respondents were then asked if they volunteered alone or with a group. Table 8 shows that 58% of the respondents volunteered alone and the remaining 42% volunteered with a group.

Table 8: Frequency Distribution for Volunteering Alone or With a Group (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Alone | 26 | 52% | 58% |
| Group | 19 | 38% | 42% |
| Missing | 5 | 10% | |

The respondents were asked to indicate the name of the group they volunteered with. Table 9 shows the responses given and the frequencies at which they were indicated. Majority of the sample (67%) indicated that they were involved with Georgia State University and an

organization within the University called Panther Break Away. 11% of the sample were involved directly with Harbor House. The remaining 22% volunteered with other various organizations that are listed.

Table 9: Frequency Distribution for Other Organizations Volunteers are Involved With (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Georgia State University/Panther Break Away | 12 | 24% | 67% |
| Harbor House | 2 | 4% | 11% |
| Orlando Young Professionals | 1 | 2% | 5% |
| Hands on Orlando | 1 | 2% | 5% |
| Christian Help | 1 | 2% | 5% |
| Special Events | 1 | 2% | 5% |
| Missing | 32 | 64% | |

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding errors.

The respondents were also asked if they volunteered for any other organizations. Table 10 below, shows that 80% of the respondents indicated that they did volunteer for other organizations.

Table 10: Frequency Distribution of Respondents Who Volunteer for Other Organizations (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Volunteers for Other Organizations | | | |
| Yes | 36 | 72% | 80% |
| No | 9 | 18% | 20% |
| Missing | 5 | 10% | |

They were then asked to indicate the type of organization they volunteered for by choosing one or more of the options listed in Table 11. The majority, 54% of the sample indicated that they volunteered for a domestic violence shelter. Many respondents (28%) answered that they volunteered for a food bank or meal service. 24% of the sample volunteered for a church, and 22% of the sample volunteered for a child welfare agency. Many of the

respondents indicated that they volunteered for other agencies such as hospitals, Hospice, elderly services, homeless shelters, and animal shelters.

Table 11: Frequency Distribution for Other Types of Organizations Volunteered for (N=50)

| Type of Organization | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Hospital | 4 | 8% |
| Church | 12 | 24% |
| Food Bank/Meal Service | 14 | 28% |
| Hospice | 2 | 4% |
| Elderly Services | 3 | 6% |
| Domestic Violence Shelters | 27 | 54% |
| Homeless Shelter | 7 | 14% |
| Animal Shelter | 6 | 12% |
| Child Welfare Agency | 11 | 22% |

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding errors.

Also shown below in Table 12, is a frequency distribution for personal experience with domestic violence. The table indicates that 36% of the respondents indicated that they had been victims of domestic violence, of that 36%, none of the respondents sought help from a domestic violence emergency shelter. The table also shows that 71% of the sample knew a domestic violence victim prior to getting involved with a shelter. Of that 71%, only 17% indicated that the person they knew sought help.

Table 12: Frequency Distribution for Personal Experience with Domestic Violence (N=50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence before? | | | |
| Yes | 16 | 32% | 36% |
| No | 28 | 56% | 64% |
| Missing | 6 | 12% | |
| If yes, did you seek help from a domestic violence shelter? | | | |
| Yes | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| No | 16 | 32% | 100% |
| Missing | 34 | 68% | |
| Did you know anyone who had been victimized before you got involved in volunteering? | | | |
| Yes | 32 | 64% | 71% |
| No | 13 | 26% | 29% |
| Missing | 5 | 10% | |
| If yes, did they seek help from a domestic violence shelter? | | | |
| Yes | 5 | 10% | 17% |
| No | 24 | 48% | 83% |
| Missing | 21 | 42% | |

Table 13 below, is a frequency distribution for level of happiness. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of happiness. Using a 4-point Likert Scale, the respondents were to indicate their level of happiness. The scale ranged from 'very unhappy' to 'very happy'. The question was to measure the subjective level of happiness of the respondent for the purpose of determining if happiness could be an indicator of a person's likelihood to volunteer.

Table 13: Frequency Distribution for Level of Happiness (N50)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Very Unhappy | 1 | 2% | 2% |
| Kind of Happy | 2 | 4% | 5% |
| Happy | 23 | 46% | 53% |
| Very Happy | 17 | 34% | 40% |
| Missing | 7 | 18% | |

LIMITATIONS

As with most research, there are limitations to this study. The biggest limitation encountered with this research process was sample size. Due to time contingencies and issues with gathering an adequate responses from one major shelter included in the sample, only a small sample was collected (N=50). Furthermore, the sample was not evenly distributed between the different agencies surveyed. Two of the agencies, Harbor House (43%) and SafeHouse (50%) provided more responses than the third, Help Now (7%). One of the biggest issues with the survey is that it was not the questions asked were not specific to domestic violence shelter volunteers. The surveys were distributed to organizations that had brought volunteers in from other organizations. Also, there were some issues with the survey itself. Some (22) of the surveys had to be distributed on paper so, some of the contingency questions were misunderstood or answered incorrectly. One example of this would be the question of primary motivation for volunteering. The online survey will only allow one selection, but on the paper version more than one answer was selected on a few of the surveys. The respondents were then asked to give a brief explanation of why they volunteer, so correlations were made between their short responses and the previous question. Also, some questions were phrased in ways that could be confusing. An example of this would be the questions of which organization the survey was received from. Many people did not answer, and some responded with the name of the program from which the

survey was constructed (Qualtrics). Fortunately, the surveys physically collected from these organizations were separated by folder and which organizations they were from was easy to assess. Moreover, there were issues with coding some of the variables. The question asking the number of hours volunteered per week, instead of being given categories to choose from, the respondents were given a text box to fill in their answer. This resulted in responses such as "a few" or "once a semester" instead of the actual number of hours, or "10+" or "10-20" hours per week. This issue led to having to use averages as opposed to exact numbers, or having to count responses as missing. Lastly, there were unanswered questions on several of the surveys, leaving missing data.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To date, there is a staggering lack of information on the volunteers of domestic violence emergency shelters. More research needs to be done, and on a much larger scale. It seems that to date, all of the research on volunteering has been done involving volunteers from different types of organizations that are very different in nature from domestic violence emergency shelters. It would be interesting to see if and how the results would vary if there were a larger regional, or even national sample surveyed. Research into the factors and motivations of people who volunteer for these types of agencies is very important. Why people would get involved with organizations that deal with such important issues is no mystery, but how can these organizations get more volunteers can be. If we are able to gain a better understanding of these volunteers and the reasons they have for donating their time, it would offer these agencies a variety of ways to enlist new volunteers and get the help they so desperately need. For example, the results showed that of the 37% volunteers surveyed said that they had personally been the victim of domestic

violence. Of that 37%, 44% of them cited their experience as their primary motivation for volunteering. Of the 70% of the sample that answered yes to having known a domestic violence victim, 26% of them cited their experience as their primary motivation for their involvement. This indicates that people who have some experience with domestic violence are likely to volunteer. This gives organizations the opportunity to express their need for volunteers to those they have already helped. Furthermore, the research shows that the majority of the sample (80%) was involved with other organizations. This gives domestic violence emergency shelter volunteers coordinators an opportunity to reach out to other organizations for help. A large portion of the sample (70%) claimed to be religious; volunteer coordinators can reach out to local churches to enlist volunteers. As far as age goes, the majority of the sample was aged at 19-29, this includes college aged individuals. Coordinators can also reach out to college campuses; some students have volunteer hours required for their degrees. Lastly, community was the primary motivation for 44% of the respondents in this study. Community outreach can play a vital role in bringing in volunteers. Domestic violence shelters can use many platforms to make their community aware of the need for volunteers. Flyers with phone numbers can be placed around local college campuses (if any), banks, churches, grocery stores, shopping plazas, etc. There is many ways in which organizations can reach out to others who care about their cause.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined a small group (N=50) of volunteers from three areas domestic violence emergency shelters in an effort to decipher what the factors and motivations are behind a person's decision to volunteer. It appears that, according to this study, women volunteer more frequently than men. It was proposed that middle aged women in particular volunteer more than men, however the majority for this study were between 19 and 29 years of age. This study also indicated that, while some people with experience in domestic violence volunteer because of their experience, the majority volunteer because of their ties to the community. Lastly, the results of this study has hopefully opened up the possibility of further research being conducted into this topic in an effort to bridge the gap in the literature to date.

APPENDIX A: APPROVAL LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Amy M. Donley and Co-PI: Amy M. Fowler**

Date: **January 15, 2013**

Dear Researcher:

On 1/15/2013, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: Factors and Motivations Behind Volunteering at Domestic
Violence Emergency Shelters
Investigator: Amy M. Donley
IRB Number: SBE-12-09008
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Patria Davis on 01/15/2013 02:32:07 PM EST

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patria Davis', written over a horizontal line.

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B: SURVEY TEMPLATE

SURVEY

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this survey. This survey is anonymous; please do not disclose your personal identity. Your participation is purely voluntary and you may exit the survey at any time.

1. Which organization did you receive this survey from? _____
2. How long (in years and months) have you volunteered at this organization?
3. Do you volunteer at any other type of organization? Yes/No
4. Which types of agencies do you volunteer for?
 - Hospital
 - Church
 - Food bank/Meal Service
 - Hospice
 - Elderly Services
 - Domestic Violence Shelter
 - Homeless Shelter
 - Animal Shelter
 - Child Welfare Agency
5. Do you volunteer alone or with a group?
 - Alone
 - With a Group
6. What group do you volunteer with? _____
7. How many hours per week do you volunteer? _____
8. How important would you say socialization, making friends, and/or social networking was to you when you made your INITIAL decision to volunteer?
 - Not important
 - Kind of important
 - Important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important
9. How important would you say socialization, making friends, and/or social networking is to you now in your decision to CONTINUE volunteering?
 - Not important
 - Kind of important

- Important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important
10. Have you ever been a victim of any type of domestic abuse? Yes/No
11. If yes, did you seek help from a domestic violence shelter? Yes/No
12. If yes, was it the organization you currently volunteer for? Yes/No
13. If yes, why did you choose to volunteer for the same organization? Yes/No
14. Did you know anyone who had been victimized before you got involved in volunteering?
15. If yes, did they seek help from a domestic violence emergency shelter? Yes/No
16. How important was your experience with domestic violence in your INITIAL decision to volunteer?
- Not important
 - Kind of important
 - Important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important
17. How important was your experience with domestic violence on your decision to CONTINUE volunteering?
- Not important
 - Kind of important
 - Important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important
18. How important would you say the desire for knowledge and/or understanding is in your decision to volunteer?
- Not important
 - Kind of important
 - Important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important

19. How important is career development (work/job experience, training, increasing job prospects, etc.) in your decision to volunteer?

- Not important
- Kind of important
- Important
- Very important
- Extremely important

20. How important would you say your ties to your community are on your decision to volunteer?

- Not important
- Kind of important
- Important
- Very important
- Extremely important

21. How important would you say your religious affiliations (church groups, religious organizations, etc.) are on your INITIAL decision to volunteer?

- Not important
- Kind of important
- Important
- Very important
- Extremely important

22. How important would you say your religious affiliations (church groups, religious organizations, etc.) are on your decision to CONTINUE volunteering?

- Not important
- Kind of important
- Important
- Very important
- Extremely important

23. What is your religion?

- Christian
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Agnostic

- Atheist
 - Other
24. What would you say is the primary motivator in your decisions to volunteer?
- Socialization
 - Personal experience with domestic violence
 - Knowledge and understanding
 - Community
 - Religion
 - Career development
25. In your own words, please give a brief description of why it is that you volunteer?
26. How happy would you consider yourself in general?
- Very unhappy
 - Unhappy
 - Kind of happy
 - Very happy
27. What year were you born? _____
28. What is your sex? Male/Female
29. How would you identify yourself? (check all that apply)
- White/Caucasian
 - African American or Black
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Native American
 - Other
 - Don't know/prefer not to answer
30. What is your highest level of educational attainment?
- Some high school
 - High school diploma/GED
 - Some college
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Doctoral degree

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