

Literature review of studies into volunteerism



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The objective of this literature is to attempt some discussions of “ Motivation in Volunteers”, a complex difficulty, facing the NGOs’ and Humanitarian Aid Agencies of today. Studies specifically relating to this area started in the early years to the present day. The actual dissertation will go through a much more comprehensive literature scan.

In the concerned world economy and wide blow stricken regions of the world today, Volunteerism seems more relevant today than the more frequently employed tools relating to Typical Employment methodologies of the past and present. In the last century preceded by the great Industrial Revolution and followed by the great Information Age, much has been said and done regarding employee motivation and the ways to augment or harness it to achieve superior organization goals. It started with the Hawthorne Studies of the 1920s (McCarney R, Warner J, Iliffe S, van Haselen R, Griffin M, Fisher P (2007) which in detail were initially carried out to determine the effects of Light on employee output, however by the way reflected the importance of working as a group, having a concerned supervisor and work credit were indeed the real drivers of efficiency. Thus started the long research in Human Motivation, culminating in such great works as Maslow’s Hierarchy Theory (A. H. Maslow, A Theory of Human Motivation, Psychological Review 1943) and Herzberg’s (1959) motivational hygiene theory to name a few. However it wasn’t until the 1970’s that work on Motivation in Volunteers began. while having much in common with motivation in employees if compared particularly to Herzberg’s motivational hygiene theory, there are indeed some unique factors such as reciprocity, self esteem, personal growth, recognition and social understanding (Developing the Volunteer

Motivation Inventory to Assess the Underlying Motivational Drives of Volunteers in Western Australia, a research project carried out by Dr Judy Esmond et-al; 2004). Notable work (other than those cited in the quoted study) on this was Motivation of volunteers (Wiehe, Vernon R.; Isenhour, Lenor Journal of Social Welfare. Win 1977, 73-79. Of 490 persons contacting a volunteer recruitment and referral center requesting to be referred to a group of people agency for post as volunteers, 249 questionnaires were returned asking them to spot their motivation for seeking to be volunteers. Four categories of motivation were ordered by partakers in the research on the basis of most to least important: personal satisfaction, self-improvement, altruism, and demands from outside. Implications for the assignment and recruitment of volunteers are noted.

Motivation is the fundamental element of the theme of this research. The investigation of motivational factors in a group, individual in public sector surroundings is central to developing ways to better performances in an organization. The motive why motivation should be investigate in generic organizational behavior terms as well as public service and volunteer terms for this research is that there are some aspects of motivational theories that are related irrespective of the sector and industry. An understanding of motivation in broad terms, public service terms and volunteer terms in the literature review will go a long way in making sure that there can be a constructive influence on the public sector volunteer workers' performance levels.

Terpstra's model of motivation (1979) drew its inspiration from the motivational model presented as the hierarchy of need laid down by Maslow

(1954). Maslow talked about five need levels in a motivational framework known as the physiological need, the safety need, the social need, the ego need and the need for self actualization. According to this model, the most essential needs had to be fulfilled before the next need of the human being comes into the play. Terpstra looked into this theory of Maslow from the angle of the industrialized age.

Maslow assumed that the most vital need was the physiological need. It is only after the accomplishment of this particular need that the role of other factors comes to the equation. In the case of our research of the volunteer fire fighters, the want for safety as laid behind in the need hierarchy holds significance. The individual mind and senses are more motivated to do better in an environment where the safety measures are good. This is why the primary research of the fire fighter volunteers and their motivation will also consider the element of safety in their work environment and job design.

Gidron (1978) carried out a wide research in an understanding of volunteering motivation. For this reason he based his research on the studies and theories of Herzberg two factor theories. This two factor theory, as reviewed above, focused on both the intrinsic as well as extrinsic motives behind a working person. Gidron was one of the first researchers who believed that extrinsic factors might be found in the general drive to work in volunteers. He believed that volunteers were working for either the intrinsic motives which focused on self accomplishment and working towards the growth of a positive relationship with the society or towards things that are extrinsic, in an indirect way. This might comprise the need to gain some work experience that may come in handy in the future. For this reason he

carried out a study which involved 317 volunteers across four different institutions. The call for was to be able to spot the co relationship that might exist between different motivation factors and the age of the individual. He rounded it up that volunteers who were grown-up were actually more interested in volunteer work for intrinsic factors and it was the younger volunteers where work experience and indirect extrinsic factors also played some part on the whole motivation .

To better know how to attract and retain volunteers, it is imperative to identify key motives of individual volunteers and their effect on pro-social attitudes toward helping behavior (Bussell and Forbes 2002).

(Reed, Aquino, and Levy 2007), theories of altruism and helping behavior suggest that intrinsic rewards and satisfaction from helping others are primary motives for volunteering

The theory laid down by Vroom with respect to the performance of employees, efforts made and returns seen is also highly relevant (Vroom, 1964). Vroom believed that the prize that is seen at the end of an effort is the root of motivation in a human being in the work setting. This compensation may come in different forms. A positive compensation will reinforce the behavior of better efforts in the work setting. This compensation may or may not be financial. A compensation can also be something intangible such a recognition of services or a public acknowledgement of the efforts made by an individual.

Brewer et al. (2000) built up their research on the grounds of the 40 articles listed down by Perry and verified motivational attributes. They came up with <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-of-studies-into-volunteerism/>

four categories of motivation in the public services two of which are highly relevant in our study as well i. e. humanitarians and communitarians.

The subject that often revolves around Public service motivation is whether it can be actually used for the good of positively influencing the motivation level of employees in public service. This work now more looks into the way the human resource management and higher performance could be ensured through better thoughtful of motivational factors in public service. Basics such as recruitment, selection, screening, retention, job performance and satisfaction are important to understand in public service context as per the research scope of this paper. In the case of nonprofit organization, more than 60 percent employees in a research carried out by Paul (2002) said that they worked in the organization with the motive to make a difference in the community. The lesser the economic incentive for working in an organization, the more probability there is that the intrinsic factors constitute the motivational force for the workers. His research concluded that workers in such environments emphasize on making a difference as well as a shared vision of the work place (Paul, 2002). Compared to workers in the private sector, these employees and workers were more responsive to factors such as being of help to the public, being able to make a difference to the community and doing a job which has meaning. As all these entail commitment to serve the community.

The role of fire fighter entails a commitment to doing a job: fighting fires and taking care of communities. Jules Naudet (2002), a filmmaker who filmed the fire command activity in the World Trade Centre, said, “ They’re fire fighters, they’ll put the fire out, that is what they do.” Fire fighters did their job on

September 11 because it was their job. They identified with the job and with the role the job of fire fighter imposed on them; they were committed to that identity, and it predicted their behavior. Commitment is a multidimensional construct that links individuals in varying ways to a superior, to a work group, to an organization, and finally, to a served community. We will test this four-dimensional measure of commitment on a small sample of firemen. This study suggests a direction for research into the connection between commitment and behavior.

In the CBS documentary 9/11, a probationary fire fighter comments on his very small payroll check, saying that if he wanted money, he would have been a lawyer, but “ I wanted something that I could live with for the rest of my life. I can live with this.” In the same documentary, a fire chief says that when he gets up in the morning he wants to feel good and “ to look in the mirror and know that I am doing something with my life.”

Dennis Smith (2002) reports a story about a retired fire marshal who bemoaned the death of a fellow fire fighter who was repelling when a rope broke. Another fire fighter responded by saying, “ Remember this, it’s part of the job” (50). Fire fighters commit to an identity that requires heroic behavior. Identity theory dictates that they act altruistically because that is what is expected. Fire fighters do their job in order to maintain internal congruence and because others expect them to act as their job requires. 1 In these cases, we see commitment

directed toward the role-most notably, a job that entails responsibility to safeguard the welfare of others. Fire fighters are not the only professionals in

this category. We include other public-sector careers, such as police officers, teachers, and military personnel, and private-sector occupations, such as flight attendants and doctors. These jobs require the person to uphold a higher standard, and they are expected to do what is required to maintain the safety of their charges. They do well because it is their job to serve the community.

Volunteerism also plays a critical role in the functioning of marketing systems, and therefore investigating volunteer activities on an individual level has important micromarketing implications (Laverie and McDonald 2007).

During the year ended September 2006, 61. 2 million Americans volunteered for an organization at least once, representing 26. 7 percent of the population (U. S. Department of Labor 2006). In Australia, 5. 2 million people (or 34 percent of the Australian population) participated in voluntary work in 2006 by contributing 713 million hours to the community

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007). These volunteers now recognize they have the freedom, capabilities, and confidence to address chronic social problems in their societies, such as inadequate health systems, entrenched poverty, environmental threats, and high-crime rates among other social ills (Bornstein 2004). For example, volunteer numbers at the Olympic Games have gone from almost zero in the 1980s to 40, 917 accredited volunteers used in conducting the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney (Green and Chalip 2004). In retrospect, researchers have concluded that without these

volunteers, the Sydney Olympic Games could not have been produced. An additional dimension for societies that host special

events such as the Olympics is that such events are now used in the economic and social development strategies of cities, regions, and countries to win positioning as a favourable

destination for business, investment, and tourism. It is well understood that volunteering can also have a positive impact on the volunteer themselves, as well as on society as a whole. Volunteers live longer, have better mental health, have higher occupational prestige, and have greater employment opportunities than those who do not volunteer (Wilson and Musick 1999).

Brooks (2008, 183) notes that charity brings happiness for psychological reasons because it gives individuals a sense of control, while volunteering time can provide an important way to mentally "reboot" and redirect energy away from personal problems. These benefits translate into reduced health care costs, greater productivity, and higher QOL, directly benefiting society as a whole.

DECLINING VOLUNTEERS

The National Association of state foresters [1993] affirmed that since the early 1970s, state and local governments have been concerned with the decline in volunteer firefighters. A 1993 study published by the National Association of State Foresters reported a national drop in active volunteer firefighters from 884, 600 in 1983 to 815, 500 in 1993, an 8 percent decline in 10 years. Explanations for declines in volunteer firefighters have been

attributed to national social changes, difficulties in finding new volunteers, and problems with retaining existing volunteers.

According to a 1998 National Volunteer Fire Council and United States Fire Administration report, *Retention and Recruitment: Problems and Solutions*, 11 factors have contributed to reductions in the number of men and women joining and remaining in the volunteer fire service. These 11 factors included time demands, training requirements, increasing call volume, changes in the 'nature of the business' of firefighting, changes in urban and suburban populations, changes in sociological conditions (two-income families and time demands), leadership problems, federal legislation and regulations, increasing use of combination departments, higher cost of housing (in affluent communities), and aging communities.

The Pennsylvania fireman [2004] asserted that the impact of these and other factors has made it more difficult for VFCs to recruit and retain members. A 1992 survey by the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs (now the department of Community and Economic Development) found that 79 percent of the responding VFCs reported problems with recruiting, 51 percent reported active membership declines in the prior decade, and 37 percent reported no growth in membership over the prior decade. One implication of this decline was that 61 percent reported problems with insufficient volunteers responding to Monday-to-Friday daytime emergencies. The study concluded: "... requirements on volunteer time has increased. If there are no more or even fewer volunteers, then there are fewer people bearing a larger share of the workload. Prolonged situations like this lead to disenchantment and burn-out."

The 1998 National Volunteer Fire Council and U. S. Fire Administration report, mentioned previously, also found that volunteer fire service is a tradition in many generations of firefighting families, but that, “unfortunately, it is also a tradition in danger of weakening and possibly even dying out.” The report also says: “ Fire departments can no longer count on the children of current members following in their parents’ footsteps. Nor can they count on a continuous stream of local people eager to donate their time and energy to their volunteer fire department. Departments cannot even rely on members staying active in the volunteer fire service for long periods of time.” Recognizing that many VFCs are facing a recruitment problem, the council noted that recruitment solutions must begin with an assessment of VFCs staffing needs and the volunteer skills and abilities most needed to maintain VFC performance. The report found that person-to-person recruiting by active volunteer firefighters was the most successful recruiting method and that many retention problems could be traced to the following sources: demands on volunteer time and the need for increasing firefighter training requirements, additional call volume, changes in economic and social conditions in suburban and rural areas, and VFC leadership problems and internal conflicts within the fire company. Participants targeted leadership issues as the most important problem for retention across the country. This sentiment was echoed in numerous other studies that pointed to poor leadership and management practices as one of the main reasons volunteers left the fire service.

An unpublished State University of New York at Buffalo Ph. D. Dissertation (Sargent, 1992) on satisfaction and retention of volunteer firefighters found that altruism ranked first as the most satisfying reason for volunteering.

The eight top reasons for active firefighters to stay on the job were altruism, skills, thrills, work environment, management, social relations, material issues, and recognition. Retention policies identified as important by the active volunteers were management quality and skill development, quality of the work environment, and altruism. The researcher also noted that the lack of VFC leadership and management skills might be retention issues worthy of further investigation.

Fire service reports written over the past 30 years indicate Pennsylvania VFCs were experiencing increased difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient active fire company members. Furthermore, there is a distinct risk that some rural VFCs lack sufficient active firefighters to adequately respond to all emergency service calls. The Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute's 2001 report, *Funding for Pennsylvania Emergency Services ... Beyond 2001*, stated a concern that VFCs were experiencing " a steep and steady decline in the number of volunteers attracted to these vital services in Pennsylvania."

The continuing decline in the number of active rural volunteer firefighters may eventually force Pennsylvanians to pay directly for fire protection. In July 1999, DCED reported that the average wage and benefit compensation for a paid firefighter was \$55, 000. The Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency

Services Institute (2001) calculated that staffing 2, 000 fire companies would cost municipalities about \$2. 2 billion.

Fire service studies [1994] suggested the most serious fire company problems involve recruitment, retention and volunteer availability to respond to calls, followed by a lack of funding sources, absence of community support, issues involving insurance costs, training requirements, and government regulations. Rural VFCs vary greatly in their ability to recruit and retain volunteer staff.

To encourage recruitment and retention, most published reports suggested financial benefits be used to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. While volunteer fire chiefs and firefighters encourage public and private financial incentives to support their firefighting mission, financial benefits represent only one part of a complex story.

According to the volunteer fire service [1998] although money may assist and encourage volunteer firefighters to join and remain active members in their VFC, financial benefits are not the primary reasons why individuals choose to become and remain volunteer firefighters.

While many fire service reports reviewed provided policy suggestions, these reports did not prioritize their suggestions. Furthermore, no field tests were conducted to discover which recruitment and retention policies were most effective in influencing individuals to become volunteers and remain active. Therefore, little empirical data concerning volunteer firefighter motivation exists.

Today's Volunteer Fire Companies

According to the U. S. Fire Administration [2005], in 2005, there were 17, 438 all-volunteer fire companies in the U. S., or 72 percent of the nation's 24, 294 fire companies.

The states with the most VFC's were Pennsylvania, New York, and Texas, each with more than 950 VFCs. On a per capital basis, however, the states with the most VFCs were North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont, each with more than 25 VFCs per 100, 000 residents. Nationally, Pennsylvania ranked 17th in the number of VFCs per capital.

United States Fire Administration [2001] data showed there were nearly 431, 500 volunteer firefighters nationwide. Forty percent of these volunteers were found in Pennsylvania and the six surrounding states of Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. On a per capita basis, the most volunteers were in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont, each with more than 450 volunteers for every 100, 000 residents. Nationally, Pennsylvania ranked 8th in the number of active volunteer firefighters per capital.

Throughout the U. S., the average VFC had 25 active members. The states with the most active firefighters per VFC were Delaware, New York and Maryland, each with more than 50 active members per VFC. Among the 50 states, Pennsylvania had 33 active members per VFC, or the 8th highest number in the nation.

Benefits Provided to Volunteer Firefighters

According to National volunteer fire council [1998] among the 50 states, volunteer firefighters received a variety of benefits. Benefits were grouped into five categories: workers' compensation, death benefits, retirement pension, property or income tax rebates, and health care benefits.

According to data from several sources, 44 states, including Pennsylvania, provide workers' compensation benefits for volunteer firefighters injured or killed while on duty. Twenty-seven states provide death benefits, and 20 states provide retirement pensions.

Seven states provide income tax or property tax rebates and only one state, Louisiana, provides volunteers with health care benefits.

It is important to note that not all benefits were mandated and some VFCs do not participate.

According to national fire protection association [2001] survey of State Fire Officials through the interviews with 41 state fire officials in 32 states, the researcher found general agreement about the increasing problem of finding volunteers who would respond to Monday-to-Friday daytime emergencies. For example, an official from Illinois estimated that 25 percent of VFCs sometimes were unable to respond to daytime emergency calls, while officials in Delaware, Nevada, and Texas said up to 50 percent of VFCs were sometimes unable to respond during weekdays. To solve this problem, an Ohio official said that his state is looking into paying part-time firefighters to cover trouble areas during weekdays, but funding may be a problem. When asked why there were not enough firefighters available during the weekday,

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the officials said that in rural areas more volunteer firefighters must commute long distances to their jobs and thus are unavailable for daytime fire emergencies.

Current critical issues

Willing [1994] asserted that state officials' suggested that volunteerism, in general, was decreasing, and thereby negatively effecting recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Other critical issues included funding, firefighter deaths by heart attack, increased firefighter training and qualification requirements, and new responsibilities for homeland security. State officials also mentioned the need for additional technical training for new hazards, such as biological and chemical spills. Many state officials suggested that communication with local community and municipal leaders needs to be improved.

Firefighter Training According to the interviews, most states required little or no formal training or qualifications to serve as a volunteer firefighter.

Officials explained that since most states do not fund firefighting training, they have no power to enforce any training requirements. VFCs are community-based and do not pay much attention to state training requirements unless there are financial incentives. Most states had a formal state fire academy that provided free or discounted training and certification for volunteer firefighters. State fire academy courses were offered free in 18 states, including Pennsylvania. Other states offered training at low or reduced costs. One of the more innovative education programs was in Kentucky, where a fleet of trucks delivers free comprehensive firefighter training to local VFCs. This mobile fire academy provides local training

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without the expenses of travel, food, and lodging. Pennsylvania has an “Academy on the Road” program that has proved quite popular with rural VFCs.

Volunteer Firefighter Incentive Benefits

Officials said they believe nonfinancial incentives are more effective at motivating and retaining volunteer firefighters than financial benefits. A common opinion was that financial benefits do not motivate volunteers; however, constant fire service related expenses made it difficult for volunteers, especially those with lower incomes, to continue their volunteer service.

One of the most essential research methodologies and survey was done by McEwin and Jacobsen-D`Arcy in 1992. The research methodology and principle will also aid in the research work in assessing motivation of fire fighters as volunteers. The research carried out by McEwin and Jacobsen consisted of around 280 volunteers who came from a wide array of organization. The research was based on three separate stages. The first stage was focused on 40 volunteers who came from two organizations. They were given checklists, asked open ended questions and given the liberty to explain why they volunteers as well. On the basis of the participants and a literature review, there was the development and formulation of the final questionnaire with 15 categories. In the next stage, this survey was distributed to over 200 volunteers based on which the volunteer motivation inventory was developed consisting of forty statements. They came up with 8 motivational factors on a 5 point Likert scale which the research have decided to use in this research work. The eight motivational factors that

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were utilized include values, career, personal growth, recognition, hedonistic, social, reactive and reciprocity. Let us look into each one of this factor for a better understanding of the inventory

Values: The individual might have strong personal or family values which have a relationship with volunteering. Every human being has a set of values and volunteering might be a constituent of this set

Career: The individual might be taking part in volunteer services for the purposes of acquiring experience and field. These volunteering services might in the end help them in their professional career or help them in finding jobs

Personal Growth: The individual's personal growth needs are often met by the volunteering services

Recognition: The individual might be motivated by the ultimate recognition that might be received for the volunteering services that are given. This means a satisfaction of the recognition of contributions that are made to the society

Hedonistic: This is associated with the happiness that might come with the act of being of assistance to the community

Social: This a way of finding a pleasant feelings in the social construct of volunteering where they interact amongst each other and build their personal relationship network

Reactive: The individual might be taking part in volunteer services as a reaction to a past incident. Therefore, this act might in fact be a need to address a personal past issue

Reciprocity: The individual might see it as an equal exchange and views it as an act of higher good

Pennsylvania Volunteer Fire Companies

According to a 2005 report by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, there are 2, 354 VFCs in Pennsylvania; 40 percent are located in rural counties.

Fire Chief Interviews

The researcher interviewed 35 fire chiefs from across rural Pennsylvania. The chiefs were asked to comment on volunteer firefighter retention, recruitment, training, certification, leadership, female firefighters, financial support, and municipal relationships, and to offer recommendations for fire company best practices.

The chiefs identified career requirements as the main factor affecting the retention of volunteers. Firefighters who move away for job pursuits or who must commute long distances for work affect volunteer turnover the most. Adding to the turnover rate is the realization of how much time is required to obtain training and assist with fundraising. These requirements put too many time constraints on firefighters and keep them away from their families. Several chiefs offered that both good and poor leadership would affect retention of volunteers. Successful recruitment often stems from a new volunteer having a family member or friend already involved in the fire

company. The chiefs offered that active firefighters must make a concerted effort to recruit new community residents and not simply rely on existing residents. Some also noted their success in recruiting college students. The chiefs expressed some skepticism about recruitment programs that rely too heavily on newspaper ads, open houses, or apparatus demonstrations. A personal one-on-one approach was cited as the best recruitment method. A wide variety of perspectives were offered with regard to female firefighters. Some chiefs expressed concerns about the physical demands of the job, while others were confident of a woman's ability, citing active and successful recruitment of women. Many volunteer fire companies recruit members in the 14-to-18- year-old age bracket as a result of visiting local schools and youth groups, such as the Scouts. Some chiefs also mentioned that a number of volunteers referenced presentations made while they were in elementary school as having a lasting impact. For many VFCs, part of the recruitment screening effort involves an interview, a criminal background check and, for some VFCs, a drug test. The degree of screening varies among fire companies from a written process to a personal interview. Oftentimes, members vote to accept or reject new recruits. Chiefs said that during the selection process, it is imperative to present a realistic description of the demands of volunteer fire service, including the need to complete the 88-hour training requirement. All chiefs cited the need for physical conditioning and many did not view age as an issue.

The cost of maintaining a fire company is of great concern to the chiefs participating in the interview.

They said volunteers understand that active service costs money, since many must purchase their own safety gear. This prompted statements about the need for financial support to cover the cost of firefighter training. Chiefs said that while most volunteers do not want to be paid for their services, they would like to have funding for new apparatus and equipment. Some chiefs suggested state income tax credits, educational tuition assistance, a pension program, and free license plates as legitimate incentives and rewards for people to serve as volunteer firefighters. It was evident from the interviews that some rural VFCs have mixed relationships with municipal officials. Some chiefs enjoyed strong working relationships that included significant financial support. Others stated that municipalities within the VFC service area do not accept any responsibility for funding.

The chiefs discussed conflicts over how