Volunteerism and Motivation: The Case of Volunteer Workers in Community Service Organisations

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Abstract: **The undertaking to motivate workers at any task is exigent and at the same time challenging. Exigent because no amount of work can be performed efficiently and effectively without any amount of drive, but challenging because human beings are at any given point in time motivated by a wide range factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic. It is innately assumed that when one volunteers him/herself to do a task, they will undertake the work with devotion because of the element of self-drive since they volunteered to carry out that task. Faith-based community service organisations such as the church depend largely on volunteers. It is incorrect to assume that once people have volunteered themselves to a task, they are immune to demotivation. This paper stems from a study done that interrogated the motivation of volunteer workers at the Adventist Community Services (ACS) centre in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States of America. The choice to research ACS was driven by the fact that the organisation is one that is mainly serviced by volunteer workers who do not receive a salary to do their work. It is a volunteer community service organisation owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America whose duty it is to assist the needy through donations of clothes, food and supply of other necessities. It was interesting to understand generally what motivates volunteerism especially in community service work that focuses on helping the vulnerable and less advantaged in society. By collecting data through in-depth interviews, it was found that volunteer workers are mostly driven by a desire to be of service to other people, especially the less privileged as this brought peace within themselves and that being of service like that ultimately infuses blessings into their lives from God. Other workers at ACS indicated that doing community work gave them a sense of usefulness; a factor they stated was more gratifying and motivating than a salaried job.**

Keywords: **Motivation, volunteer, volunteerism, faith- based not-for-profit community service organisations.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Different scholars from different disciplines such as psychology, management and organisational behaviour have projected a diversity of definitions of the concept motivation. For instance, organisational behaviour scholars, Johns and Saks (2001, p.120), define motivation as the extent to which persistent effort is directed towards a particular goal. Management researchers, Daft and Marcic (19998, p.450), define motivation as the arousal, direction and persistence of any behaviour. Psychologists Steers and Porter (1995, p. 5) define motivation as the set of forces that lead people to behave in particular ways. Furthermore, Moorhead and Griffin (1998, p.118) illustrate the motivation concept as a student staying up late in the dead of night, a doctor making a follow up phone call to check on his patient, a salesperson working over the weekend to get his work done. All the above are excellent examples of motivated people.

According to Tidwell (1985, p.211), motivation is not a desperate attempt at getting workers to fulfil the wishes of the organization by employing any possible means. Rather, it is the act of letting out that factor of an individual that stimulates action or reaction.

An analysing of the outlined definitions shows the following four attributes of motivation that are common to all: [1] effort [2] persistence [3] quality [4] goals. The dictionary definitions of the four attributes are: Effort is the extent of an individual's personal input into a particular task or job - Each job or task requires a certain amount of effort to be devoted for the job to be done. Persistence is the resilience an individual exhibits in applying personal energy into specific tasks. Quality of work is the value of the output emanating from the effort one puts in into a task. A goal is the desired future state that the organization attempts to realize. When persistent effort is set in the right direction and there quality work inputted, both organizational and individual workers' personal goals are achieved. Goals for the organization may include profitability, high productivity, low rates of worker turnover, while personal goals for the worker may include self-worthiness as a result of exceptional performance, increments in remuneration, recognition, promotion, a sense of self-worth, a sense of belonging and a sense of achievement.

When a person joins an organization, they possess needs they desire to fulfil. They are driven by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors. Extrinsic factors may include the need to survive, to feel secure and to belong. Intrinsic factors on the other hand tend to be a relatively more complex as they deal with the inner feelings and inclinations of people. Intrinsic motivation may be driven by the desire for success as conceptualised by the person, a sense of personal fulfilment, a sense of usefulness, ability to make meaningful contribution to a task, as well as the inner desire for fulfilment as a result of recognition.

From face value, it would appear that organisations that recruit salaried workers have a competitive advantage in terms of worker motivation and retention than those entirely dependent on unsalaried volunteer workers because the motivation factor in the case of the former is the payday at the end of the work month as opposed to none in the case of the latter. Conversely, it can also be argued that volunteer organisations may be fortunate to employ motivated workers because they join out of their own volition and, therefore, are much more aware of what drives them. After all, studies in worker motivation show that a salary is not in itself a motivator. A salary satisfies an employee's financial needs, motivation scholars have argued.

II. MOTIVATION

Motivation as a concept is an extensive subject with many theories. The focus of this study, however, was the need theories of work motivation as propounded by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Alderfer's ERG theory (Johns & Saks, 2001, pp.137-142). According to Johns and Saks, motivation is the extent to which persistent effort is directed towards a goal. The desire to have the need fulfilled can drive the individual to search sometimes at all costs for a way to have the need satisfied. Johns and Saks suggest that needs are physiological and psychological desires or wants that individuals can satisfy by acquiring certain incentive or achieving certain goals.

According to Plunkett and Atnner (1997, p. 394), unsatisfied needs stimulate wants and behaviors. People, therefore, have to make several considerations as they choose a particular course of action to have their needs satisfied. Several factors can be evaluated in deciding on a course of action. These include past experience, environmental influences and perceptions.

Past experiences refer to all the occurrences that the individual may have gone through that are related to a particular situation. The individual reflects on the satisfaction derived from taking a certain course of action, any frustrations felt, the energy demanded for the action, and the correlation between the effort and the reward are all summoned by the individual attempting to use past experience in deciding on the course of action.

The environment plays a part in the decision making process when an individual wishes to satisfy his needs. Environmental influences include the values, policies within an organization as well as the actions and expectations of management. Personal perceptions influence the decision an individual makes to fulfill his needs. The individual is predisposed by perceptions by the perceptions of the expected effort needed to achieve operation and the value of the reward both absolutely and in relation to what peers have received from the same effort.

A. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow, a psychologist developed and refined a general theory of human motivation, concluding that humans have five hierarchical sets of needs that they desire to be satisfied (Lewis, 1996, p.199).

Schein states that according to Maslow, if an individual is in a survival mode, economic motives dominates their action and way of thinking, but when the survival needs are met, social needs surface (Schein, 1992, p. 125). When social needs are satisfied, however, esteem and self-actualization needs tend to take over.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has five levels, namely; [1] physiological, [2] safety and security, [3] belongingness, [4] esteem and [5] self-actualization needs. Physiological needs must be satisfied for the individual to survive. Human beings are constantly seeking to satisfy these needs.

B. Alderfer's ERG Theory

Alderfer (1969, pp. 142-175) developed the second needs-based theory, referred to as the ERG theory. This is a three-level hierarchical need theory of motivation allowing for movement up and down the hierarchy. The ERG theory is a streamlined version of Maslow's need hierarchy, making a different assumption about the relationship between needs and motivation.

The acronym ERG represents the terms 'existence', 'relatedness' and 'growth'. These needs can be summed up in the following manner: Existence needs are satisfied through tangible materials. These are the basic needs necessary for survival. They can be related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs of physiological and safety needs. Existence needs include food, water, shelter, a job that pays minimum wages for survival and safe work conditions (Johns & Saks, 2001, p. 139).

Relatedness needs deal with the desire for loving relationships with others, as well as esteem needs that require feedback from others. According to Alderfer, relatedness needs are satisfied through open communication with others and the exchange of thoughts and feelings with Abraham Maslow's belongingness and esteem needs.

Growth needs can be compared with Maslow's self-actualization needs. These are corresponding with the of Maslow's esteem needs that concern achievement and responsibility. Growth needs involve the full utilization of one's skills and abilities and room for creative development and the cultivation of new skills and abilities. Human beings are always seeking to fulfill needs in their social interaction, work and life in general.

III. VOLUNTEERISM

Penner (2002, p. 447) posits that sustained volunteerism is more likely than other pro-social actions to be influenced by dispositional and organizational variables. The goal of investigating volunteerism is to recognize the variables that impact it in order to plot its sustainability. Firstly, an investigation into volunteerism identifies the role of motives in the decision to volunteer. People decide to volunteer because they have inner motivations. Clary and others (1998, p. 1516-1530) states that service organizations interested in recruiting new volunteers might benefit by identifying the things that would motivate a certain target group to volunteer and then highlight these motives in their recruiting appeals directed at this target group.

Secondly, but equally as important, is what service organizations can do to retain volunteers. That is, it can be argued that if service organizations face a personnel problem, it is not a shortage of who want to volunteer, according to Penner (p. 447). It can be said instead that the shortage is erosion among people in the early stages of their tenure with the organization.

Volunteer nonprofit service organizations, therefore, may seek the aid of industrial and organizational psychologists, who study pro-social behaviors among paid and unpaid employees. People behave on their job depending on the way they are treated by their organizations. It should be said, thus, that the better they are treated by the service organization, the greater their initial levels of volunteerism will be. Skarlicki and Latham (1996, pp. 161-169) state one should not assume that just because a person is motivated by altruistic concerns that his or her initial level of volunteer service would be unaffected by attitudes toward the service organization.

In engaging volunteers, Penner (p. 447) states that service organizations should not just recruit volunteers, but must find ways of ensuring they are part and parcel of the operations of the organization. Lee and others (1999, pp. 276-290) suggest that service organizations need to maintain the initial level volunteer workers, because they have developed role identity, the volunteers remain a long-term and active contributor.

IV. OVERVIEW AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study's focus was gaining an understanding of volunteerism and what drives it. The question that begged an answer, therefore, was: What motivates people to volunteer their services to a community services organisation without seeking for remuneration at the end of the work month? The overarching aim of the study, therefore, was to investigate factors that motivate volunteer workers to offer their expertise and time to serve in a community services organisation such as ACS, where they do not draw a salary for their work.

V. DESIGN AND METHODS

The study adopted a non-experimental exploratory research design. According to Herzog (1993, p. 103) and Zikmund (1994, p.33), a non-experimental exploratory design allows for observation and/or collecting of information without manipulating the conditions, and further allows for probing into the existence or non-existence of a supposed problem. Exploratory design is used when a research aims to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to acquire new insight into it in order to formulate a more precise problem or to develop a hypothesis (Shields & Rangarjan, 2013).

The target respondents were volunteer workers of the ACS at the Berrien Springs centre. In the whole of the State of Michigan, ACS had a total of 68 volunteers at the time of conducting the study. The Center at Berrien Springs had 20 reliable volunteers workers. The researchers concluded that the number was too small to consider sampling, and therefore targeted all the volunteer workers as part of the study sample. The 20 workers were engaged in in-depth interviews, each lasting between 30 to 40 minutes. The epistemological basis for the choice of in-depth interviews was supported by Zikmund's perspective who suggests that in-depth interviews are necessary for motivational researchers who are seeking to ask the question 'why' in organizational behaviour.

This research used thematic analysis as the method for analysing and interpreting the qualitative data that was captured from the from the in-depth interviews. Collier and Bornman (1999, p. 133-166) state that thematic analysis, as a type of qualitative data analysis method, focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour. Spradley (1979, p.3) states that thematic analysis has the following steps: [1] collecting data via audiotaping, video taping or writing down notes in a notebook [2] Creating and listing patterns of experiences. [3] Identifying and categorising all data that relate to the already created patterns. [4] Combining and cataloguing related patterns into sub-themes. Themes are defined as units derived from patterns such as conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs.

VI. FINDINGS

The following were the identified themes in the categorisation of the responses:

A. Theme 1: Need to Be of Service to Others

It was discovered in the interviews that although jobs that pay well and help one to amass material possession that lead to a secure and comfortable future are in themselves good and necessary, all the 20 respondents indicated that they get a deep sense of service towards other human beings by working in a community service organisation such as ACS. Some respondents explained that as Christians, the knowledge that one spends nearly all their adult life trying to get rich while being oblivious to the suffering of the less privileged was in itself sad. They said God did not intend man to be that way.

Some respondents explained that they grew up in less advantaged neighbourhoods where they experiences hard times to survive. It was, therefore, important that they considered giving back to society by helping ease the pain and suffering that others were going through as way to express gratitude for the turn around of their fortunes in life. Table 1 categorises in matrix form some of the statements produced in the interviews by the respondents and key words they used as a way of achieving the sense of service to other people.

Table 1: Need to Be of Service to Others

Sample Quotes from interviews	Word Codes
"I thought I would offer a listening ear to the suffering…"	• Listening
"Many poor people do not have warm clothing in winter. I wanted to help them by being part of the team distributing clothing…"	• Providing
"People are suffering. They go without food, clean water or warm clothes. I wanted to help in these areas…"	• Providing
"Sometimes the suffering do not have a friend they can talk to. Providing necessities is good, but they also need a friend…"	• Listening • Empathy
"More than sympathizing for them, the less privileged want someone they can trust and share their secrets with…I wanted to be that person…"	• Availability
"I believe God has preserved my life this far. I therefore should pay back by blessing others through their needs…"	• Providing

B. Theme 2: Need to Experience Inner Peace by Serving Others

A total of 19 out of the 20 respondents interviewed stated that their volunteer work of helping other people at the ACS gave them a deep sense of inner peace. They believed that being part of work to fulfil the needs of the less privileged in society was a direct fulfilment of the commands of God's word that those with means should extend a helping hand to those who did not have any means at all. Respondents stated that having means in life does not always imply material wealth or possessions. The respondents explained that physical strength, kind words, a listening ear or even simply being there for another person when they are going through a difficult time helps ease the pain and suffering.

In the interviews, it was established that inner peace comes from God. However, a Christian had to invite God into his or her life so as to experience this peace. One respondent stated that there was no better way of pleasing God than to live in harmony with other people and to show kindness one to another. Another respondent gave the example of Jesus from Matthew 25:35 and 36 where Jesus narrates the parable of the sheep and the goats at the judgment of God. Jesus stated that the sheep represented those who did their best to help alleviate the suffering of others by providing food, shelter, visiting the sick in hospitals and those in jail. The goats, on the other hand, are those people who did not care about the experience of others. These are the people that God would declare unworthy and deserving of hell fire because they lived their lives as though they owned them. Respondents stated that a selfish disposition was an abomination in the eyes of God. Table 2 displays some of the statements produced by respondents and the sense of the inner peace they seek to fulfil in their work.

Table 2: Need to Experience Inner Peace by Serving Others

Sample Quotes from the Interview Transcripts	Word Codes
"Jesus commanded us to be of service to others. That is the only sure way of attaining God's Kingdom…"	• Assurance of Salvation.
"Helping others just brings joy, gladness and peace in my life…"	• Inner peace, joy and gladness
"Fulfilling the mission of every Christian, which is taking care of poor, makes me joyful. It is my duty…"	• Joy from Service
"The Bible says peacemakers will be called sons and daughters of God. What is more comforting than that…"	• Inner Comfort
"Mercy begets mercy. My goal is to show mercy and kindness to others, and I know God will be merciful to me. This brings peace and joy in my heart…"	• Peace and joy
"Seeing all the joy in the faces of others when I do something good for them brings pure joy and peace in my heart…"	• Peace and Joy
'I experience deep sorrow at the sight of the suffering people in my community. When I help others, my sorrow simply goes away…"	• Inner Joy

C. Theme 3: Need to Attain Blessings by Doing God's Will

Another need that was identified from the interviews was the need to do God's will by being of service to others. Subsequently, by doing the will of God, 18 of the 20 responded suggested that they believed that God would in turn prosper them in material wealth, health, physical strength, wisdom and that he would protect their families. The respondents suggested that the Bible is a comprehensive inventory of direct instructions for all men to do the will of God. Further, if men did the will of God, God would in turn bless them in the entire spectrum of their lives. One interviewee quoted the book of Deuteronomy, 28:1-15, where God specifies the kinds of blessings that come with obeying Him. God challenged the nation of Israel to obey His commands as a test of His faithfulness to unleash his promised blessings to those who obey. It was the general belief of these respondents that it is God's will that all people should join in to help others. By doing this, therefore, God would bless them with good health, good yields, favour, peace and honour.

Some respondents, however, stated that while they seek blessings from God, material blessings in terms of personal possessions were not on their considered list of blessings they hoped to receive from God. They indicated that it was their belief that God provided according to need, but was not their duty to entice God by offering an exchange deal. They believed that being of service to others as a way of expecting God's blessings was not right. One respondent equated this situation to an individual who returns tithe because the Bible emphasizes a blessing of material wealth.

In illustrating further the need for blessings from God, some of the responses are listed in Table 3 as the respondents were producing them.

Table 3: Need to Attain Blessings by Doing God's Will

Sample of Quotes from the Data Transcripts	Word Codes
"Blessed are the merciful for they will obtain mercy. I believe God will bless me for doing this work…"	• Mercy and blessings from God.
"I desire the blessing of salvation by doing this work of kindness…"	• Blessings of salvation and health
"I pray to God everyday for His blessings of strength and good health so I can continue doing this work as long as I live. Since I am doing works of kindness, God will bless me…"	• Blessings of strength and health
"Doing God's will allows for spiritual blessings as well as material or financial blessings…"	• Spiritual and material blessings.
"I believe the work I am doing God's will. God wanted me to do it. I therefore believe God will bless me, my family and all those I work with in helping the poor…"	• Blessings of a good life.
" Luke 4:18 sums it up. The Spirit of God compels us to do this work. If we are doing God's will, then God Himself will bless our lives and our work…"	• God's blessings materially and in work.

D. Theme 4: Need to Feel Usefulness

From the interviews conducted, respondents indicated that by working for a volunteer community service organization like ACS, they enjoy a deep sense of usefulness. They pointed out that work at ACS provided them with an opportunity to satisfy their esteem needs. Johns and Saks (2001, p.138) state that esteem needs are those that involve the need for feelings of adequacy, competence, independence, strength as well a confidence. Furthermore, an individual desires that these qualities be recognized and appreciated by others for him or he to have the esteem needs fulfilled. The interviewees who expressed the need to feel useful indicated that working at ACS makes them feel adequate and useful. Since the work is salaried, they feel that what they do contributes to the betterment of other people's lives. Some respondents stated that idleness was a source of evil. King Solomon promulgated the view that idleness led to poverty and misfortune. Since majority of the volunteers are in their retirement years, they believe that sitting at home and being inactive would lead to temptation and a life of non-productiveness. Therefore, some suggested that the best way could remain productive and useful was to so work that involved people. Some respondents indicated that by getting involved with ACS, they desired to escape idleness and be useful in society. As they see people's lives changing, the need to feel useful gets more and more fulfilled. Table 4 provides a sample of statements produced

Table 4: Need to Feel Useful

Sample of quotes from Data Transcripts	Word Codes
"I just wanted to do something and be useful…?	• Sense of usefulness
"Since is retired, I did not really have anything to do. When ii looked around, I figured working to alleviate poverty and help the poor would make me useful…."	• Usefulness
"Ann idle mind is the devil's workshop. I wanted to be active and helpful. Whatever way be useful other than to help the needy…."	• Active and useful
"God calls us to a life of service. Christians are supposed to be active and useful. I wanted to feel useful and fulfil the command to be active. Therefore, I joined ACS…"	• Usefulness
"When people tell me they appreciated what I do, it makes me feel useful and needed. I wanted to experience that feeling when I joined ACS…."	• Feeling of usefulness.
"I looked forward to working with other Christians in helping the poor. I wanted to be helpful to the needy…"	• Helpful and useful

E. Theme 5: Need to Belong

The desire to belong and to enjoy affiliation was another need that was identified in the study that volunteer workers wish to fulfil. A total of 17 out of the 20 respondents spoken to expressed their affection for their work particularly that it accords them the environment to enjoy fellowship comparable to that of family with other volunteers. The aspect of choice to carry out volunteer work drives the workers to come to work with a buoyant disposition, a complete contrast to the non-volunteer workers who report to work with a sense of compulsion. Johns and Saks (2001, p.141) refer to Maslow

and Alderfer's works regarding belongingness, affiliation and relatedness respectively, as identified desires people wish fulfilled. Respondents who expressed the desire to fulfil the need for affiliation indicated that they always enjoy establishing and maintaining friendly, interpersonal relationships in the work place. Further, these respondents demonstrated that special ability to establish social networks quickly, and have an interest to communicate with people frequently and face-to-face. The respondents said that they specifically love to relate with people they interact with as family. They regard family ties and relationships very important. While achievement and other driving factors on the job are crucial, these individuals stated that they are motivated to perform when they know their work enhances good relationships and creates harmony.

The respondents, however, stated that they did not enjoy conflict situations. Instead they enjoyed happy, cheerful and harmonious situations where everyone was working hard at making others joyful.

Theme 5: Need to Belong

Sample Quotes from Data Transcripts	Word Codes
"ACS is like my second home. Working here gives me that sense of family. I feel secure and thus my performance at work gets better…"	• Sense of family
" I connect with the people I am assigned to assist in a special way. They are my family. This helps me work better…"	• Sense of family
"Taking care of needy people gives me a great sense of achievement. However, the sense of achievement does not compare to be family bonding that occurs as a result of the interaction…."	• Family bonding
"The people we assist become family literally. Knowing that these people regard us as family is a very satisfying sense. It makes us want to work more…"	• Sense of family

VII.   INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The question that drove the investigation was: What motivates people to volunteer their services to a community services organisation without seeking for remuneration at the end of the work month? From the data collected in the in-depth interviews, the responses though stated differently in terms of words, were similar in ideas and themes in that they all wanted to be of service to other people. They indicated that they felt the need to contribute to the welfare of the needy and suffering in society by helping in providing for their basic as well as higher needs. Furthermore, some respondents desired to experience and enjoy inner peace by being of service to others. They believed this was one formidable way of doing God's will.

Others indicated that they engaged in community service as a way of receiving and enjoying God's blessings. These ranged from personal health, blessings of Wisdom, social prosperity and even spiritual blessings. Yet some suggested that by doing work at ACS, they wanted to enjoy that satisfying feeling of being useful and helpful to others. They indicated that they were retired and desired to feel strong and active.

Volunteers indicated that when they joined ACS, they wanted to experience the sense of usefulness. Interestingly, all the respondents who identified these needs in this category stated that they had experienced they had thus far enjoyed the realisation of that need. In other words, they said they were enjoying what they looked forward to. Other respondents suggested that the sense of achievement was satisfied when the people they helping express gratitude, or when the manager demonstrates pride and satisfaction in the work done. Additionally, they stressed that the appreciative faces they encountered among the needy people are priceless and go a long way to demonstrate thankfulness and appreciation for the services rendered. This in itself is a motivator because it indicates that the work the volunteers do goes a long way to assist alleviate suffering.

About 94.4 per cent of the respondents said that in order for them to do better on their jobs, they needed to feel that their work was meaningful to someone. They explained that satisfying the sense of usefulness was an important motivator for them because it demonstrated that what they are doing meant something to someone. According to Moorhead and Griffin (1998, p.129), the need for achievement comes from an individual's need to accomplish something, or realize a goal.

Plunket and Attner (1997, p. 403) suggest that a person with high need for affiliation wants to be liked and wants to like others. The need for affiliation is responsible for those strong desires to establish and maintain friendly, compatible

interpersonal relationships. The individuals who indicated a need for affiliation suggested that the relationships they have built at work with their co-workers and with the needy people have given them that sense of family. This particular sense gives them a critical sense of security, trust for others and even works as a motivator in their work.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study was about volunteerism and motivation within community service organizations. The Adventist Community Services in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA, was the study case. The goal of the study was to investigate in order to gain an understanding into factors that motivate volunteerism. In carrying out the study, motivation and volunteerism as concepts were disambiguated. Moorhead and Griffin (1998, p. 137) suggest that the reality of life is that people have to earn an income to meet their needs and wants. Volunteer workers offer their skills and time for no pay at all. It was interesting to investigate the factors that motivate them to offer of their services. The findings of the study are projected in section VI. By collecting data through in-depth interviews, it was found that volunteer workers at the ACS are driven by a desire to be of service to other people, especially the less privileged as this brought peace within desire inner peace and ultimately blessings from God. Other workers at ACS indicated that doing community work gave them a sense of usefulness; a factor they stated was more gratifying and motivating than a salaried job.

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