The Role of Place Attachment on Appalachian Trail Conservancy Volunteer Involvement

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Abstract

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is a non-profit organization established to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail (AT). The ATC relies heavily on thousands of volunteers to maintain and care for the 2,180 miles of trail. In each of the 14 states that the AT runs through, trail crew volunteers are the primary caretakers. These volunteers do challenging, physical labor for eight to ten hour days, rain or shine. This study of ATC trail crew volunteers used the framework of Omoto and Snyder's (2002) Volunteer Process Model (VPM) to explore the relationships between (1) volunteer motivations and level of involvement (2) volunteer satisfactions and level of involvement and (3) place attachment and level of involvement. Data were collected from active trail crew volunteers (N = 115) from 2010-2012. Results showed that several motivation and satisfaction functions were related to volunteers' levels of involvement. Additionally, place attachment was directly related to continued service. These findings support management efforts aimed at improving overall volunteer programs and opportunities with the ATC, and imply that trail crew volunteers are generally motivated and satisfied by social reasons.

Key Words: volunteer, retention, motivation, place attachment

"The mountains are calling, and I must go." - John Muir

Place attachment is like a calling, a continuous feeling that calls an individual back to a place that holds special meaning. From the works of John Muir, we know of his attachment to the mountains, and to much of the American wilderness. For many people, similar attachments lead them to the same meaningful places, time and time again. Place attachment is most frequently seen with regards to leisure, as these places are freely chosen by the individuals who frequent them. However, often overlooked in place attachment research, volunteering is an important component of the leisure time of many people.

In 2015, in the United States alone, 62.6 million people volunteered in some form (Volunteering in America, 2015). Volunteering is characterized by unpaid, freely chosen work which occurs in one's leisure time and often results in satisfying experiences (Stebbins, 1996). A common way in which individuals donate their time is through volunteering with environmental recreation organizations, such as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) which utilizes over 6,000 volunteers each year.

The ATC is a non-profit organization that was established in 1925 with a mission to ensure that the Appalachian Trail's natural beauty and cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed for centuries to come (Appalachian Trail Conservancy, 2011). The ATC has volunteer clubs in each of the 14 states which contain a portion of the trail. The ATC utilizes volunteers in a variety of capacities including community engagement, conservation, and youth education; however, trail management volunteers have the most direct impact and connection with the trail itself. Trail crew volunteers that work on the Appalachian Trail (AT) are a diverse group of individuals in terms of place of origin, age, and skill sets. Trail crew volunteers from this study

were well educated (71% had a college degree or higher, and 22% were currently attending college), represented the employed, unemployed, and retired workers, and came from a variety of economic backgrounds. Trail crew volunteers are a dedicated workforce who perform hard, physical labor for eight to ten hours each day. Often times, they hike into their work sites with loaded packs containing food and equipment which can weigh as much as 100 pounds. But what motivates these volunteers to engage in these challenging experiences, and furthermore, why do some trail crew volunteers return year after year?

In order to understand why volunteers donate their time to the ATC, research must examine the volunteers' initial motivations as well as their satisfaction with their experience. Not only can this information increase understanding of volunteer motivations in general, but it could also be applied to assist the ATC with their recruitment and retention efforts. For example, if trail crew volunteers are motivated by learning new skills, the ATC can create training programs to best target motivational interests. This study used the Volunteer Process Model (VPM) to investigate the antecedents and experiences which lead to continued volunteer service with the ATC.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the involvement of ATC volunteers within the broad framework of the Volunteer Process Model. This study examined how volunteer antecedents (motivation and place attachment) and experiences (satisfaction) related to volunteer consequences including years of service and time spent volunteering.

Research Questions

1. Within the Volunteer Process Model framework, what are the strongest volunteer antecedents and experiences for ATC trail crew volunteers?

a. How does volunteer motivation relate to trail crew volunteer consequences (i.e., years of service, time spent volunteering)?

b. How does volunteer place attachment to the AT relate to trail crew volunteer consequences (i.e., years of service, time spent volunteering)?

c. How does volunteer satisfaction relate to trail crew volunteer consequences (i.e., years of service, time spent volunteering)?

Literature Review

Introduction to Volunteering

Volunteering differs greatly from paid work because volunteering is a form of leisure (Stebbins, 1996). Motivations are the driving force behind volunteer's actions, while satisfactions are the pleasures received from volunteering opportunities (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Studies have shown that recreationists develop attachments to specific places and that these attachments influence their participation; for example, hikers along the AT have been shown to develop attachments to the trail (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2004; Pitas et al, 2018). Those hikers who are highly attached return time and time again (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2004). This concept may extend to trail crew volunteers as well. If such an attachment exists, then it can be assumed that it will play a role in these volunteers' levels of involvement with the ATC, suggesting that volunteers who display strong levels of place attachment to the AT may also commit to volunteer for longer periods of time.

Volunteer Process Model

The purpose of this study was to better understand the factors that contribute to continued service and involvement of ATC trail crew volunteers through the framework of the Volunteer Process Model. Within the VPM, there are three stages of the volunteering process (Omoto &

Snyder, 2002). The first stage, antecedents, represents the characteristics or motivations that drive a person to volunteer. The second stage, experience, represents the volunteer experience itself and the volunteer's satisfaction with the experience. The third and final stage, consequences, focuses on the outcomes of the volunteer experience such as the impact on the organization being served (Snyder & Omoto, 1992; Omoto & Snyder, 2002). For the purposes of this study, consequences were measured through the variable of continued service.
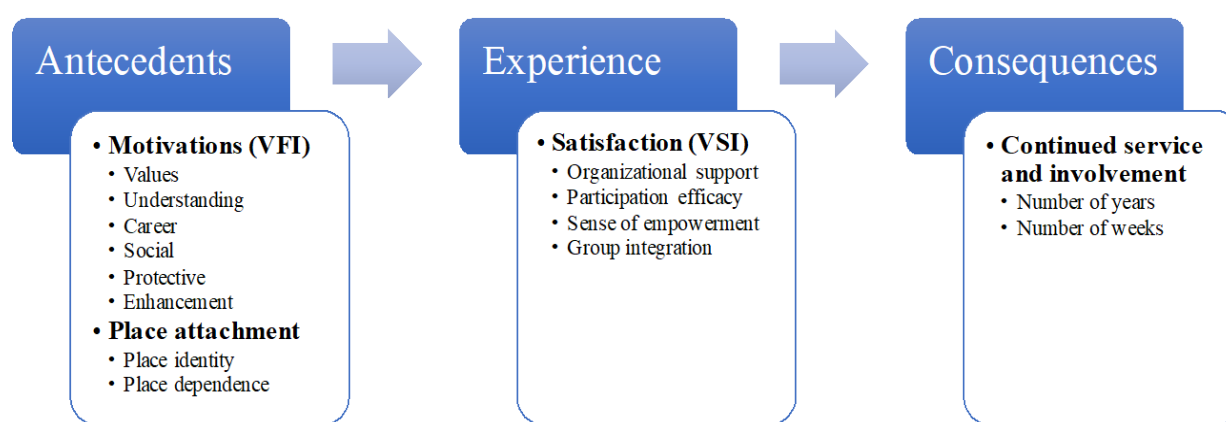
Antecedents

- **Motivations (VFI)**
  - Values
  - Understanding
  - Career
  - Social
  - Protective
  - Enhancement
- **Place attachment**
  - Place identity
  - Place dependence

Experience

- **Satisfaction (VSI)**
  - Organizational support
  - Participation efficacy
  - Sense of empowerment
  - Group integration

Consequences

- **Continued service and involvement**
  - Number of years
  - Number of weeks

Figure 1. The Volunteer Process Model

Antecedents

Antecedents represent the first stage of the VPM and are established prior to the individual's volunteer experience. Volunteer motivations are a key component of the antecedent stage and were an important focus of this study. Place attachment was also examined.

Volunteer Motivation.

Volunteer motivations are most frequently examined using a functional approach which addresses the reasons and purposes that generate beliefs as to why people volunteer. Clary and Snyder (1996) developed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to assess typical motivations or functions of volunteers. The motivational categories which they identified are as follows: values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement (Clary & Snyder, 1996).

By learning which functions motivate trail crew volunteers, the ATC can improve their recruiting and retention efforts as well as set up programs to ensure that volunteer's motivations are being met. Previous research has shown that if volunteers' motivations are met, they are more likely to remain with the organization, thus demonstrating a higher level of long-term involvement (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Clary et al., 1998). The researchers will be able to evaluate how volunteer functions relate to the place attachment and volunteer statisfaction, thus expanding the body of knowledge around place attachment and volunteer functions.

Place Attachment.

Place attachment is a positive bond between a person and a place. The main characteristic is that the person wants to maintain closeness to such a place (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Past research has indicated that place attachment cannot be determined solely by its functional properties. It is a two-dimensional construct consisting of place identity and place dependence. Place dependence is a functional attachment; it means an individual is drawn to a place because of its functions or the specific characteristics it has to offer, such as hiking trails or rock-climbing routes. (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989).

Unlike place dependence, place identity is the emotional attachment the user develops with a setting over time, possibly increasing the user's dedication and desire to preserve the setting. The development of place identity is closely tied to memories and relationships that one has formed within a certain place (Kyle, Mowen, & Tarrant, 2004). Williams and Roggenbuck (1989) found that place dependence is the precursor to place identity; once an individual has developed a functional attachment they will almost always develop an emotional attachment. While current research has shown that place attachment is particularly relevant for AT hikers and influences their level of participation (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2004), it's not clear how it

might influence trail crew volunteers. Once a volunteer develops a place attachment to the AT, this could influence their level of involvement. Understanding how place attachment influences the antecedents of trail crew volunteers will allow the ATC to assign volunteers to their optimal locations. This information is also useful for the ATC in identifying potential volunteers who will commit for longer periods and express an increased level of involvement.

Experience

The second stage of the VPM, experience, represents an individual's time spent volunteering with the ATC. This stage is the experience itself and is generally represented through an analysis of volunteer satisfaction.

Volunteer Satisfaction.

Volunteer satisfaction is not only an important part of the volunteer experience, but it is also directly linked to retention. Galindo-Kuhn and Guzzly (2001) developed the Volunteer Satisfaction Index (VSI) which identifies the following four dimensions of volunteer satisfaction: organizational support, participation efficacy, sense of empowerment, and group integration. The authors developed the VSI out of paid job satisfaction scales; this is particularly pertinent for trail crew volunteers because they are treated much like paid employees. While trail crew volunteers have paid supervisors, they are allowed a certain amount of autonomy and self-regulation while working, partially due the remote locations they where they often work.

Organizational support addresses performance feedback, clear goals, and objectives. Participation efficacy looks at the satisfaction a trail crew volunteer receives from using their own skills and abilities to make a difference. Sense of empowerment and group integration are the bonds that volunteers develop with other trail crew volunteers or with paid staff such as the

trail crew. Satisfaction with the volunteer experience provides the greatest influence for the next stage, consequences (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzzley, 2001).

Consequences

Consequences, the third and final stage of the VPM, are the results of the volunteer's experience. For ATC volunteers, a frequent and important consequence is continued service or involvement in the organization. Some ATC trail volunteers return to the AT year after year. Because of the distance of the AT from many of volunteers homes, those volunteers who do not return year after year, often strive to return when they are able. Continued service with the ATC was measured in this study as both number of years and number of weeks served.

Methods

This study used a quantitative design which included the distribution of a web-based survey to all 261 ATC trail crew volunteers. The participants in this study were trail crew volunteers who donated their time to maintain and repair hiking sections along the AT during the time frame of 2010-2012. Along the 2,000-mile trail which spans from Georgia to Maine, there are six crews of trail maintenance volunteers, all of which were included in this study. Volunteers were permitted to work on any of the crews for as little as a weekend or as long as six months at a time. The trail crew volunteers in this study came from various locations within the United States and around the world and were adults 18 years or older.

The survey was administered by the ATC Conservation Coordinator in the spring of 2012. A total of 115 surveys were completed. Using a modified Dillman method, volunteers were contacted three times via email (Dillman, 2009). The initial email to participants resulted in 33.7% of the responses, and the two reminder emails at one week intervals produced 9% and 7% of the responses for a total response rate of 44%.

Instrumentation

A modified volunteer functions inventory (VFI) was used to measure the following six volunteer functions described by Clary and Snyder: volunteer behaviors, place attachment, volunteer motivations, barriers to volunteering, volunteer satisfactions, and demographics. The VFI has been used to understand the motivations of a various types of volunteers, including, but not limited to older adults, episodic skilled volunteers, hospital based volunteers, and faith based volunteers (Brayley, Obst, White, Lewis, et al., 2013; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998; Erasmus & Morey, 2016; Greenslade & White, 2005). This web-based survey took participants approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

The first section of the survey looked at the trail crew volunteers' behaviors and levels of involvement. Level of involvement was measured using the following dimensions: years spent volunteering for the ATC, weeks spent at the ATC in the most recent year, as well as future intentions to return to ATC. Next, measures of place attachment were adapted from Williams and Roggenbuck (1989) and divided into two subdomains to represent both place dependence and place identity. These Likert scale questions (scale of 1 to 5, strongly disagree to strongly agree, respectively) sought to investigate volunteers' connections with the AT through concepts of both emotional and functional attachment.

The survey additionally included items from the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to measure volunteers' motivations in the following six categories: values, understanding, social, career, protective and enhancement (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Each function represented a sub-domain consisting of three Likert scale questions ranging from 1 to 5, extremely unimportant to extremely important, respectively. The survey instrument also included measures of volunteer satisfaction based upon four dimensions of volunteer job satisfaction: organizational support,

participation efficacy, sense of empowerment, and group integration. These were adapted using the Volunteer Satisfaction Index (VSI) developed by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2001). All questions are asked to determine participant's satisfaction with the ATC. Finally, the survey concluded with volunteer's demographics and characteristics including items such as gender, age, education, income levels, and employment status. All data were analyzed in SPSS version 24. Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regressions were used to answer the research questions.

VPM Categories

Antecedents: volunteer motivation (values, career, enhancement, protective, social, and understanding), place attachment (place identity and place dependence)

Experience: volunteer satisfaction (organizational support, participation efficacy, sense of empowerment, and group integration)

Consequences: continued service and involvement with ATC (operationalized through volunteer longevity, time spent at ATC each year, and future intentions to return to ATC)

Results

Demographics

Of the 108 respondents, 65 (60.7%) were male and 42 (39.3%) were female. The average age for respondents was 44 years old. The respondents were fairly homogenous in terms of race (96.3% identified as white) and a majority of people were employed either part time or full time (more than 64%). Furthermore, the respondent population was highly educated, with at least 71% having a Bachelor's degree or higher. Respondents had spent an average of nearly four years volunteering with the ATC and averaged approximately three weeks per year.

Table 1

Demographics of ATC Trail Crew Volunteers

Variable	N	% or M (SD)
Age	**108**	*M* **44 years (18.3)**
Gender		
Male	65	60.7%
Female	42	39.3%
Race		
White	103	96.3%
Non-white	4	3.7%
Income		
$0-$39,999	30	34.5%
$40,000-$59,999	17	19.5%
$60,000-$99,999	23	26.4%
$100,000 or more	17	19.4%
Employment Status		
Employed full-time	52	50%
Employed part-time (less than 32 hours)	15	14.4%
Unemployed	13	12.5%
Retired	24	23.1%
Education		
High school	18	16.4%
Technical school or associates degree	14	12.7%
College degree	42	38.2%
Master's degree	29	26.4%
Doctorate or beyond	7	6.4%
Currently attending college		
Yes	25	22.9%
No	84	77.1%
Country of Origin		
USA	103	96.3%
Outside of USA	4	3.7%

Table 2
Characteristics of ATC Trail Crew Volunteers

Variable	N	% or M (SD)
Regions where volunteers worked		
Southern Region	80	75.5%
Mid-Atlantic Region	10	15.1%
New England Region	16	9.4%
Number of years with ATC		
1-5 years	85	73.9%
6-10 years	18	15.7%
11-15 years	9	7.8%
16-20 years	3	2.6%
Time spent volunteering		
1 week or less	67	58.3%
2 weeks	20	18.9%
3 weeks or more	19	17.9%
Thru-hiker status		
Thru-hiked	27	23.5%
Never thru-hiked	67	58.3%
Still section thru-hiking	16	13.9%

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3
Modified Volunteer Functions (Motivations) Inventory Factor Analysis and Descriptive Results

Factor	Scale Mean/ Item Mean	Factor Load	α if Item Deleted	Std Dev	α
Values Sub Domain *M* = 4.28				**.599**	.886
I volunteer on the AT because I feel it is important to maintain the trail for other users.	4.36	.848	.85	.68	
I volunteer on the AT because I can do something for a cause that is important to me.	4.34	.881	.86	.61	
I am genuinely concerned about maintaining the AT	4.13	.867	.81	.69	
Understanding Sub Domain *M* = 3.89				**.701**	.723
Volunteering on the AT lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.	4.11	.827	.52	.87	
Volunteering on the AT allows me to gain a new perspective on things.	4.00	.770	.58	.75	
I volunteer on the AT because I can learn more about the AT.	3.57	.690	.80	.98	
Enhancement Sub Domain *M* = 3.38				**.817**	.854
Volunteering on the AT makes me feel better about myself.	3.71	.829	.79	.91	
Volunteering on the AT makes me feel needed.	3.25	.744	.81	.94	
Volunteering on the AT makes me feel important.	3.17	.874	.79	.94	
Protective Sub Domain *M* = 3.15				**.958**	.881
No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering on the AT helps me forget about it.	3.30	.850	.85	1.00	
Volunteering on the AT is a good escape from my own troubles.	3.12	.811	.85	1.11	
Volunteering on the AT helps me work through some of my own problems.	3.02	.834	.79	1.05	
Career Sub Domain *M* = 2.40				**1.01**	.906
The Volunteer experience I gain on the AT will look good on my resume.	2.5	.838	.91	1.09	
Volunteering on the AT may help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.	2.36	.883	.87	1.14	
Volunteering on the AT allows me to explore different career options.	2.35	.926	.81	1.09	
Social Sub Domain *M* = 2.38				**.965**	.819
I volunteer on the AT because people I know share an interest in the AT.	2.91	.858	.82	1.23	
I volunteer on the AT because my friends volunteer on the AT.	2.23	.866	.65	1.14	
I volunteer on the AT because people I'm close to want me to volunteer on the AT.	2.00	.734	.78	1.01	

*Respondents where asked to scale each items importance in regards to their motivation for patrolling for the NSP 1 – not at all important 2 – very unimportant, 3 – Neutral, 4 – somewhat important, 5- very important

Antecedents.

Survey respondents identified several antecedents which led them to volunteer with the ATC. The values function was the most important antecedent, while the social function was the least important for volunteer motivation ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .599$; $M = 2.38$; $SD = .965$, respectively).

Table 4

Modified Volunteer Satisfaction Inventory Factor Analysis and Descriptive Results

Factor	Scale Mean/ Item Mean	Factor Loading	α if Item Deleted	Std Dev/	α
Satisfaction Social	**Sub Domain *M* = 4.261**			.657	.878
The amount of interactions I have with other volunteers in the ATC	4.19	.883	.83	.80	
The amount of time I spend with other volunteers in the ATC	4.08	.862	.84	.75	
My relationship with other volunteers in the ATC	4.36	.826	.83	.68	
The friendships I have made while volunteering with the ATC	4.28	.773	.85	.75	
My relationship with paid staff	4.40	.490	.90	.72	
Satisfaction Efficacy	**Sub Domain *M* = 4.175**			.51	.851
How worthwhile my contribution is	4.25	.709	.81	.59	
The difference my volunteer work is making	4.25	.701	.82	.62	
The opportunities I have to learn new skills	4.23	.726	.84	.64	
The chance I have to utilize my knowledge and skills in my volunteer work	4.09	.598	.82	.71	
The fit of the volunteer work to my skills	4.06	.819	.82	.67	
Satisfaction ATP	**Sub Domain *M* = 3.97**			.58	.882
The support I receive from people in the ATC	4.16	.774	.86	.74	
The access I have to information concerning the ATC	4.04	.607	.87	.64	
The freedom I have in deciding how to carry out my volunteer assignment	4.03	.539	.87	.73	
The amount of communication coming to me from paid staff and/or board members	4.00	.618	.87	.74	
The amount of information I receive about what the ATC is doing	4.00	.788	.87	.83	
How often the ATC acknowledges the work I do	3.83	.781	.86	.80	
The way in which the ATC provides me with performance feedback	3.71	.579	.87	.89	
The amount of permission I need before I can do the things I do on this job	3.65	.490	.87	.76	

*Respondents where asked to report how satisfied they were from 1 – extremely unsatisfied 2 – unsatisfied, 3 – Neutral, 4 – satisfied, 5- extremely satisfied

Experiences.

Survey respondents were most satisfied with the social opportunities which they gained from volunteering on the AT ($M = 4.261$, $SD = .657$). Satisfaction with efficacy, their ability to feel as if they are making a notable contribution to the ATC, was also very important for volunteers ($M = 4.175$, $SD = .51$).

To analyze the results of this study, two multilinear regression models were used, both of which adhere to the framework of the VPM. The first model examined the consequence of number of weeks spent volunteering with the ATC and the later examined that of number of years spend volunteering with the ATC.
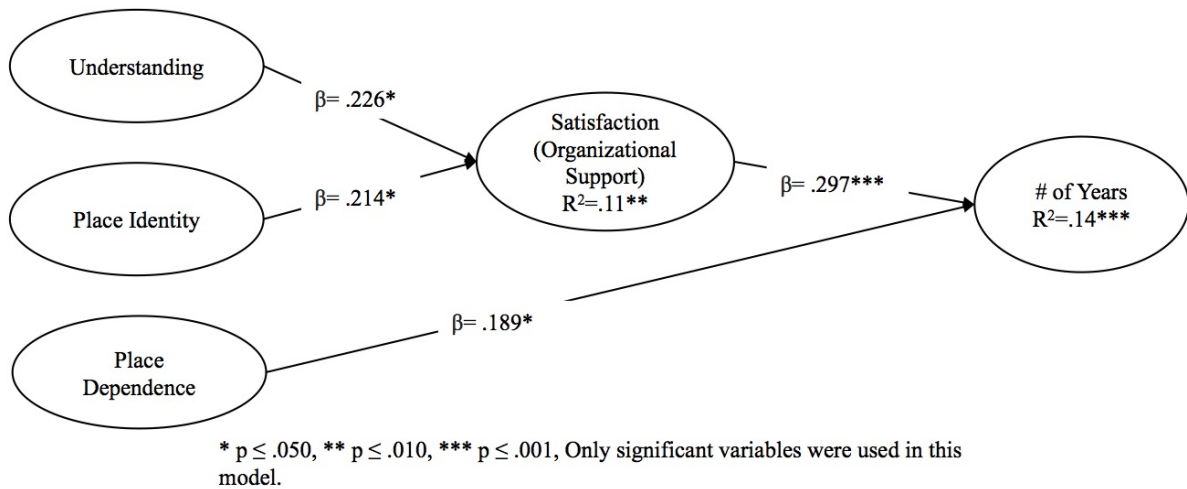
Multiple Linear Regression of Number of Weeks Spent Volunteering with the ATC
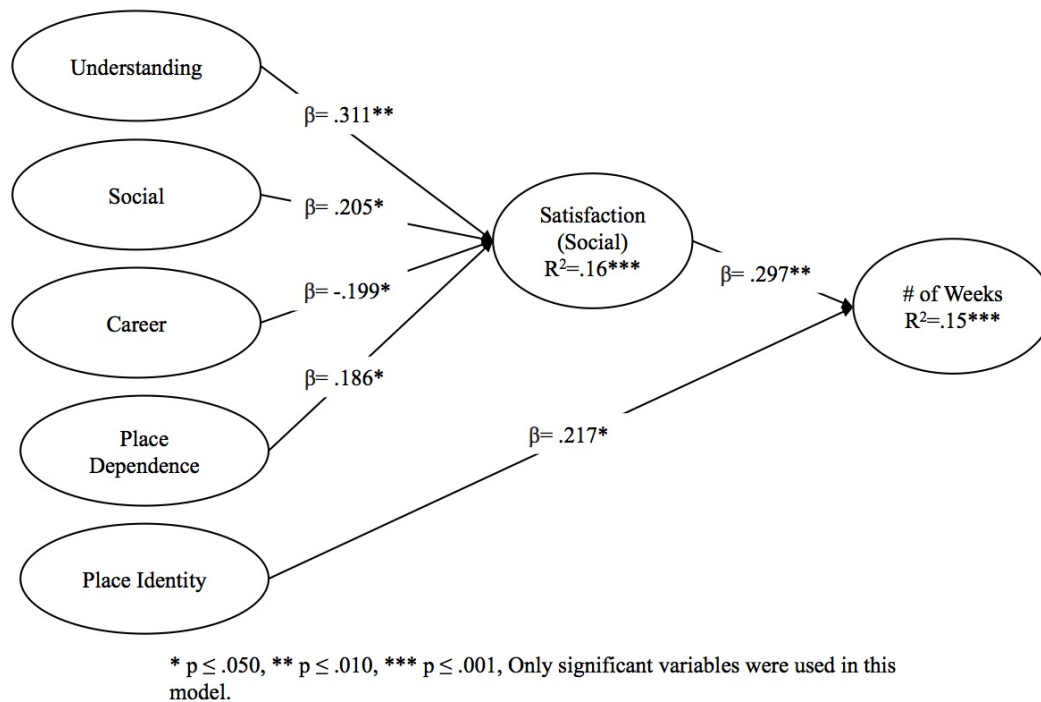
Figure 2. Final Model for Number of Weeks Served: Volunteer Process Model with understanding, social, career, place dependence, and place identity as antecedents, satisfaction with social opportunities as the experience, and number of weeks served as the consequence.

The final stepwise regression model for the number of weeks volunteered revealed that two dimensions of the VPM explained a modest amount (R^2 = .154, p = .000) of the variance in the number of weeks that respondents spent volunteering with the ATC. Satisfaction with social opportunities, part of the experience stage of the VPM, had the strongest positive relationship with number of weeks spent volunteering (β = .297, p = .002). Place identity, an antecedent in the VPM, also had a significant positive relationship with number of weeks spent volunteering (β = .217, p = .019). A second linear regression explored the significant antecedents which corresponded to satisfaction with social opportunities; four constructs of the antecedent stage

explained a modest portion of the variance ($R^2 = .163$, $p = .001$). The understanding function had

the strongest relationship with satisfaction with social opportunities ($\beta = .311$, $p = .002$).

Additionally, the social and place dependence functions had significant positive relationships

with social satisfaction ($\beta = .205$, $p = .035$; $\beta = .186$, $p = .040$, respectively). It is also interesting

to note that the career construct had a significant negative relationship with social satisfaction (β

$= -.199$, $p = .051$).

Table 5
Final Regression Model for the Number of Weeks Volunteers Have Volunteer on the AT

Model	R^2	VPM Domain	β	Sig
Number of Weeks	.154***	Satisfaction (Social Support)	.297	.002
		Place Identity	.217	.019
Satisfaction (Social Support)	.163***	Understanding	.311	.002
		Social	.205	.035
		Career	-.199	.051
		Place Dependence	.186	.040

* $p \le .050$, ** $p \le .010$, *** $p \le .001$, Only significant variables were used in this model.

Multiple Linear Regression of Number of Years Spent Volunteering with the ATC

* p ≤ .050, ** p ≤ .010, *** p ≤ .001, Only significant variables were used in this model.

Figure 3. Final Model for Number of Years Served: Volunteer Process Model with understanding, place identity, and place dependence as antecedents, satisfaction with organizational support as the experience, and number of years served as the consequence.

The final stepwise linear regression model for the number of years volunteered revealed that two dimensions of the VPM explained a modest amount of the variance in the number of years that respondents spent volunteering with the ATC (R^2 = .138, p = .000). The strongest relationship was explained by satisfaction with organizational support, followed by place dependence, an antecedent in the VPM (β = .297, p = .001; β = .189, p =.039 ,respectively). A second linear regression investigated the dimensions of the VPM which explained the variance in satisfaction with organization support; two functions, place identity and understanding, explained a small portion of the variance in satisfaction with organizational support (R^2 = .110, p = .002). Understanding had the strongest significant relationship, followed closely by place identity (β = .226, p = .015; β = .214, p = .021, respectively).

Table 6

Final Regression Model for the Number of Years Volunteers Have Volunteered on the AT

Model	R^2	VPM Domain	β	Sig
Number of Years	.138***	Satisfaction (Organizational Support)	.297	.001
		Place Dependence	.189	.039
Satisfaction (Organizational Support)	.11**	Understanding	.226	.015
		Place Identity	.214	.021

*$p \le .050$, ** $p \le .010$, *** $p \le .001$, Only significant variables were used in this model.

Discussion

Though data for this study was collected in 2012, the findings are relevant for many volunteer organizations today. Across the United States, non-profit and public organizations find themselves in competing for a shrinking number of volunteers (Volunteering and Civic Life in America, 2018). In fact, given the increased competition for recruiting reliable volunteers early in this decade, the finding of this study have only gained relevance for the ATC, and organizations similar to the ATC.

While this study investigated only one volunteer organization, the results can be applied in a more general sense to explain volunteer experiences as a whole. A number of recommendations emerge from these findings relating to potential management actions, specifically with recruitment and retention. As Terry, et al. (2013) suggests, volunteer retention shares quite a few similarities with consumer retention. For instance, satisfaction with a volunteer experience often leads a person to volunteer with that organization again, just as satisfaction with a product leads to purchasing it again. Volunteers perceptions of their experiences are crucial to understanding whether or not they will return to the organization such

that those who are satisfied will return, and those who are not satisfied will seek other opportunities (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

The results of this study support those of Clary and Snyder (1999) and suggest that there are strong relationships between satisfaction with the volunteer experience and continued service with the organization. Satisfaction with social opportunities was the strongest and most significant predictor of the number of weeks spent volunteering, while satisfaction with organization support was the strongest and most significant predictor of the number of years spent volunteering. These domains suggest a need for managerial attention to focus on providing a positive social experience as well as a strong support network for volunteers. In the case of ATC volunteers, they from geographically diverse areas, ranging from Europe to California. Managers should consider utilizing popular social media platforms to engage volunteers outside of the times they volunteer with the organization (Briones et al., 2011; Reuter, Heger, & Pipek, 2013). Connecting volunteers via social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can maintain and develop relationships within the volunteers workers, between the volunteers and the organization, and when there is a place of special importance, it can strengthen the attachment to that place.

Satisfaction is not the only important facet of the volunteer experience. Organizations must also consider volunteer antecedents in both recruitment and retention. A desire to understand the work of the organization appears to be important for retention, both in terms of number of weeks and number of years spent with the organization. From a management perspective, organizations must provide volunteer experiences which support volunteer learning and understanding; this is also a key dimension of organizational support, which, as previously mentioned, is an important predictor of continued service. Furthermore, a desire for social

opportunities is important to the duration of the volunteer experience (See table 5). If volunteers are motivated because their friends volunteer, or because people they know share an interest in the organization or cause, the organization can extend invitations to the friends and family of their current volunteers. Within the experience itself, volunteer coordinators should monitor and manage social interactions so as to provide a welcoming and friendly environment for all. It could be detrimental if coordinators do not provide a supportive environment for their volunteer crew. Volunteers start volunteering to meet their values motivation, and continue to volunteer because of the opportunities they have for social interactions they experience.

The results of this study suggest that place attachment to the AT does in fact transcend to volunteers and corresponds to increased participation within the organization; furthermore, place attachment was significantly related with continued service. Most volunteers in this study expressed high levels of place attachment, and both place identity and place dependence were significant in each of the final regression models, suggesting their importance in regard to number of weeks and number of years spent with the volunteer organization. Organizations that maintain and protect areas that elicit a strong sense of place attachment should not only seek to satisfy their volunteer's basic needs, but when possible, should provide opportunities for volunteers to connect to the surrounding environment and setting. In the case of the ATC, this may be providing time before, during, and after the volunteer experience to hike on the trail. In the case of a museum or performance venue, volunteers could be given unique opportunities to view exhibits or performance outside of their volunteer work.

While the VPM treats place attachment as an antecedent, it is also possible that place attachment could be considered a consequence of the volunteer experience, especially given the number of respondents who expressed high levels of place attachment to the AT. In this sense,

the VPM may be more of cyclical model, with the consequence of place attachment leading a person to volunteer again (hence acting once again as the antecedent). It would be interesting for future research to examine the possibility of a more cyclical model of the volunteer experience. Furthermore, it is recommended that this study be replicated in other volunteer organizations, specifically those whose sites may elicit a strong sense of place attachment for recreational visitors.

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Political Skill of Volunteer Board Members in the Nonprofit Milieu:

A Resource Dependency Perspective

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Abstract

This paper proposes a theoretical model for the impact of political behavior and political skill on the development of social capital in the nonprofit setting, using a resource dependency lens. A systemic view of the effects of political skill analyzes the antecedents of political behavior, the resulting social capital development, and thus the expected advancement of organizational and self-resources. The public purpose and outcomes of nonprofits are incorporated to justify an additional antecedent to political will, extrinsic motivation. A moderating effect of political skill on political behavior and social capital expenditures is proposed. Finally, a feedback model employing a loop between outputs of social capital expenditures and political will antecedents is offered in the context of the nonprofit milieu. Potential practical implications are discussed, and a future research agenda is proposed.

Key Words: volunteers, board of directors, political skill, social capital, resource dependency theory

Nonprofit organizations are comprised of individuals working towards a common goal that is typically charitable in nature. These organizations play a critical role in the social, economic and political fields. The devolution of government increased its reliance on collaborative partnerships with nonprofit organizations to provide critical human services for communities. The increased responsibility in the nonprofit sector expanded the scope and size of nonprofit organizations (Gibelman, 1998). Nonprofit organizations are social entities afflicted with the same political behaviors ever-present in most organizations. The enactment of political behavior in organizations is a documented and effective method to secure desired outcomes (Ferris et al., 2002; Ferris et al., 1994; Gandz & Murray, 1980; Hochwarter, 2003a). Political behavior is especially important within the public sector (Vigoda, 2002). Yet, there is no research that assesses the use of political behaviors in nonprofit organizations.

Nonprofit organizations are uniquely led by voluntary boards of directors, who "…are the fiduciaries (that) steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound governance and financial management policies, and ensuring adequate resources" (National Council of Nonprofits, 2014, "Board Roles and Responsibilities," para. 1). There are many studies about boards of directors' fostering of social capital to raise philanthropic support, develop strategic partnerships, recruit new board members, participate in friendraising, engage in advocacy, contribute to collective action initiatives, and enhance community relations (King, 2004). In parallel, there are many studies on leaders' use of political skill to "effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal or organizational objectives" (Ahearn et al., 2004, p. 311). Yet, these streams of literature have yet to be married together to assess the use of political behavior and skill among nonprofit boards of directors. This paper provides an in-depth literature review of

these two streams of literature and proposes a theoretical model to integrate the use of political skill by nonprofit boards of directors.

First, I extend Mintzberg's (1985) framework of political will as an antecedent of political behavior, by applying the model to the nonprofit sector. Thus, extrinsic motivation is argued to be an additional antecedent. Second, in accordance with Mintzberg's (1983) model I evaluate the use of political skill in the nonprofit sector as a moderator to the enactment of political behavior. Third, I assess the development of social capital from the enactment of political behavior when moderated by political skill. Fourth, I evaluate the development of social capital to rescale the imbalance of power that occurs during exchanges, in accordance with resource dependency theory, and thus the resulting organizational and self-resources that transpires. Finally, the feedback channels that are expected to ensue, due to external rewards feeding the extrinsic motivation of voluntary board members, are added as a critical systemic view to the nonprofit milieu.

The primary purpose of this paper is to put forth a theoretical model that extends the political skill construct as an important tool in the development of social capitol within the nonprofit sector. The enactment of political behavior in the nonprofit sector may have significant, and important distinctions that are proposed here. This paper contributes to a gap in the literature in three ways. First, this paper is the first to address positive aspects of participation in political behaviors and the social capital accrued in the process within the context of the nonprofit environment. Second, it extends the idea of social capital as a function of resource dependency to voluntary boards of directors of nonprofit organizations within a systemic context. Third, building upon the existing literature, a theoretical model is developed through rational analysis. A theoretical model that intertwines these aspects is an important step for

scholars to move the topic forward for further research. But perhaps more importantly, a theoretical model may be useful to help practitioners understand volunteer boards of directors' motivations.

Literature Review

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource dependency theory looks to explain interorganizational relationships through the exchange of resources and power imbalances that occur throughout the exchange process (Johnson, 1998). Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) argue that organizations are not able to produce all their needed resources, thus they will interact with other organizations that control such resources. The extension of resource dependency theory by these authors highlights the asymmetrical nature of exchange relationships and the resulting power imbalance that occurs within these relationships.

In the nonprofit sector, the constrained resource environment creates a niche need for voluntary board members that can exploit specific skill sets to garner resources for their organization. Board members enter voluntary exchange relationships to gain resources necessary to achieve the organizations' goals. The continuous cycle of exchange relationships creates a pattern of reciprocity among the participants that develops into a form of social currency, termed social capital (Putnam 1993). Nonprofit board members seek to develop high levels of social capital to balance the power in the exchange process (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). The process is fluid and dynamic; as relationships evolve, social capital is developed, and new feedback channels are created. As the process evolves the resource dependency-interdependency affiliation changes based on the individual participant's needs (Forrester, 1961). The exchange is an on-going interaction-driven process and thus the

distribution of power fluctuates. For board members to be successful in the long-term, they must

accumulate social capital through the enactment of certain behaviors.

To date, the resource dependency literature has yet to consider the cyclical interaction

system that occurs among nonprofit boards of directors and the external environment.

Collaborations and exchanges between board members result in the acquisition of critical

resources. Each participant has certain organizational and self-needs that must be met (Austin,

2000). The motivation to engage in these collaborations and exchanges is fueled by the

individual participants' political will and antecedent motivations to meet those needs. While

resource dependency theory accounts for feedback loops within the exchange of goods

relationships, it fails to describe the variables and the relationships that drive these feedback

mechanisms. Therefore, it doesn't fully account for the ever-changing dynamic behavior of the

relationship between board members and the external environment. In this paper, I argue that the

feedback loops are integral to the behavior of the system within the social and political context.

Therefore, an emphasis on the dynamics of resource exchange in the nonprofit environment is a

potentially useful theory.

Discussion

Determinants of Political Behavior in the Nonprofit Setting

Political behavior serves mediates the relationship between political will and the resulting

organizational process or outcome. This behavior is defined as "the management of influence to

obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-

sanctioned means" (Mayes and Allen, 1977). Political behavior is motivated by the desire to

gain control over needed resources (Mintzberg, 1983).

Researchers conceptualized several models that depict the antecedents of political behavior within the organizational setting. Ferris, Fedor and King (1994) demonstrated the ability to navigate the political arena within organizations determines managerial effectiveness. The locus of control, Machiavellianism, and the ability to self-monitor were central to the authors' model of political behavior. Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, Blass, and Kolodinsky (2002) demonstrated that previous research failed to take into consideration the motivational components of political behavior in organizations. Finally, Treadway, Hochwarter, KAcmar, and Ferris (2005) determined that intrinsic motivation and need for achievement were strong antecedents to political behavior within organizations. In this model, the authors argue that willingness and motivation to exert influence is critical to the decision to engage in political behavior. Yet, research fails to address the difference in political behavior outcomes, initial influences, and the resulting feedback loop, when considered in the context of the nonprofit sector.

Figure 1: Proposed model of the antecedents to political behavior in the nonprofit sector
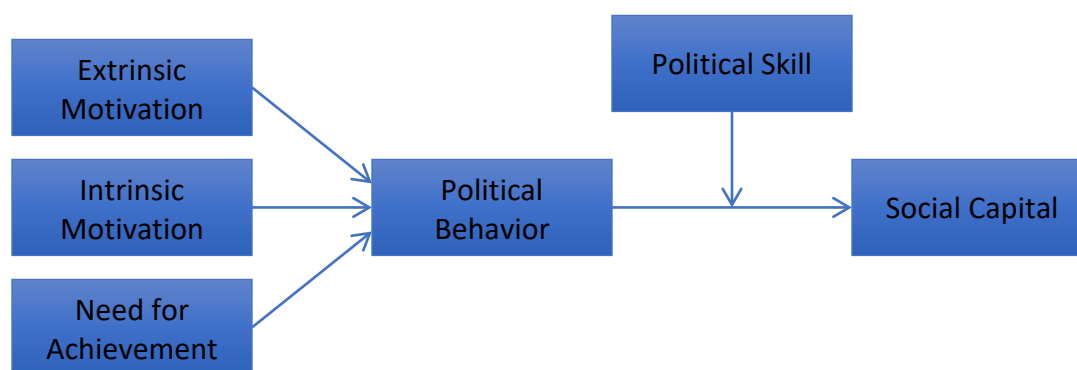
Political will. Political will represents a willingness to engage in political behavior in pursuit of an ultimate outcome or goal. Political will is a necessary catalyst for engaging in political behavior (Mintzberg, 1983). An individual's political will is an input to their political

behavior. The enacted political behavior, when mixed with political skill, creates a process or an outcome for the organization (Treadway et al., 2005). Yet it is not enough to be willing to engage in political behavior, the actor must also expend resources and be willing to engage in such behavior when the outcome desired is of value or meets a need in the organization. However, to date most research surrounding political behavior and will focus on the negative aspects of politicking and negative outcomes (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989; Pfeffer, 1981). More recently a few research studies look at the use of pro-political behaviors (Graham & Van Dyne, 2006; Hochwarter, 2003b). Recent studies demonstrate how individuals can use their resources to benefit the organization (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Thus, it is important to understand the motivational inputs to political behavior and how the variedness of those inputs changes the intended behavior and resulting outcome.

Applying the Treadway et al. (2005) model to the nonprofit sector, the antecedents for political will, intrinsic motivation and need for achievement, are altered by the public purpose of the organization, as well as the board members' voluntary stakeholder claim to the organization. As such, when political will is enacted through political behavior by volunteer board members, it may occur in a quid pro quo context. For example, board members spend their personal political currency to garner a resource or opportunity for their organization. The nonprofit relies on the board members' political behaviors to aid in fundraising efforts and act as gatekeepers.

Antecedents of political will. Political will is the motivation to expend energy in pursuit of political goals and is an important precursor to political behavior (Mintzberg, 1983). It directly influences an individual's political behavior (Treadway et al., 2005). There are several studies on the antecedents of political will, including the individuals' need for power (Porter, Allen & Angle, 1981); self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and locus of control (Ferris, Fedor & King,

1994); and intrinsic motivation and need for achievement (Treadway, et al., 2005). Treadway et

al (2005) found that intrinsic motivation is a necessary aspect of political will, which is

positively related to political behavior. However, there are currently no studies that relate

extrinsic motivation to political will.

In the nonprofit sector, political will may garner additional resources for the organization,

since nonprofits typically operate within a constrained resource environment. However, while a

few studies evaluate extrinsic motivation among nonprofit employees (Park & Word, 2012),

studies have yet to evaluate extrinsic motivation among volunteer board of directors. When

extrinsic motivation is coupled with Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), extrinsic

motivation leads to doing something because of a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

When applied to a constrained resource environment by volunteer board members, extrinsic

motivation may be a factor that could explain nonprofit board members' political will.

Nonprofit boards of directors exert political behavior to garner a resource for the

organization. Thus, board members' political will, which catalyzes their political behavior, may

be directly affected by their intrinsic need to positively affect the organization and extrinsic

motivation of seeing new resources acquired to further the organization's mission. It is

anticipated that when the Treadway et al., (2005) model is applied to the nonprofit sector, the

intrinsic motivation and need for achievement antecedents are joined by a positive extrinsic

motivation construct. Furthermore, the resulting extrinsic motivation is expected to alter the

resulting political behavior to positively benefit the organization.

Proposition I: Extrinsic motivation will be positively related to political behavior.

Political skill in the nonprofit setting. Organizations are inherently political arenas

(Mintzberg, 1985). Political skill is a need to be successful (Pfeffer,1981) and was further

defined as the ability to "combine social astuteness with the capacity to adjust their behavior to different and changing situational demands in a manner that appears to be sincere, inspire support and trust, and effectively influences and controls the responses of others" (Ferris et al., 2005). In nonprofit organizations, an important function of both the executive leadership team, including the volunteer Boards of Directors, is the ability to adjust to social situations in a manner that disguises potential ulterior motive. A reduction in government funding, devolution of federal social programs, and shift in mentality from grant programs to service contracts changed the financial landscape of the nonprofit sector (Gronjberg & Salamon, 2002). Under resource dependency theory, there is increased need for political and strategic dimensions of board performance; leading to increased organizational resources and performance (Guo & Acar, 2005). A constrained resource environment heightens the need for politically skilled board members that can secure funding revenues through the development of social capital.

Politics is a neutral phenomenon determined by the actor's underlying intention (Ahearn et al., 2004). The political skill of the actor determines the effectiveness of the social interaction to create interpersonal influence within the enacted political behavior and the resulting process. Furthermore, individuals who possess high levels of political skill are more aptly aware of their social settings and more adept at interpreting others behavioral and motivational factors. The resulting self-confidence and personal security creates a sense of control over, and understanding of, individuals, events and behaviors. Heightened portrayals of political skill allow individuals to execute, influence and proactively navigate strategic situations (Ferris et al, 2002; Perrewe, Ferris, Frink & Anthony, 2000). Ahearn et al (2004) argue that through political skill, "The accumulation of friendships, connections, and alliances allows leaders to leverage this social capital to help facilitate change efforts for increased effectiveness." Thus, I propose that

politically skilled leaders are more effective at enacting political behaviors. These skills should

contribute to increased efforts to influence, which should be associated with greater network

influence and facilitate greater change efforts.

> *Proposition II: Political skill moderates the relationship between political behavior and*
>
> *social capital development. For individuals high in political skill, political behavior*
>
> *results in greater network influence and social capital development.*

Social Capital Theory

Figure II: Proposed model of social capital development in the nonprofit sector
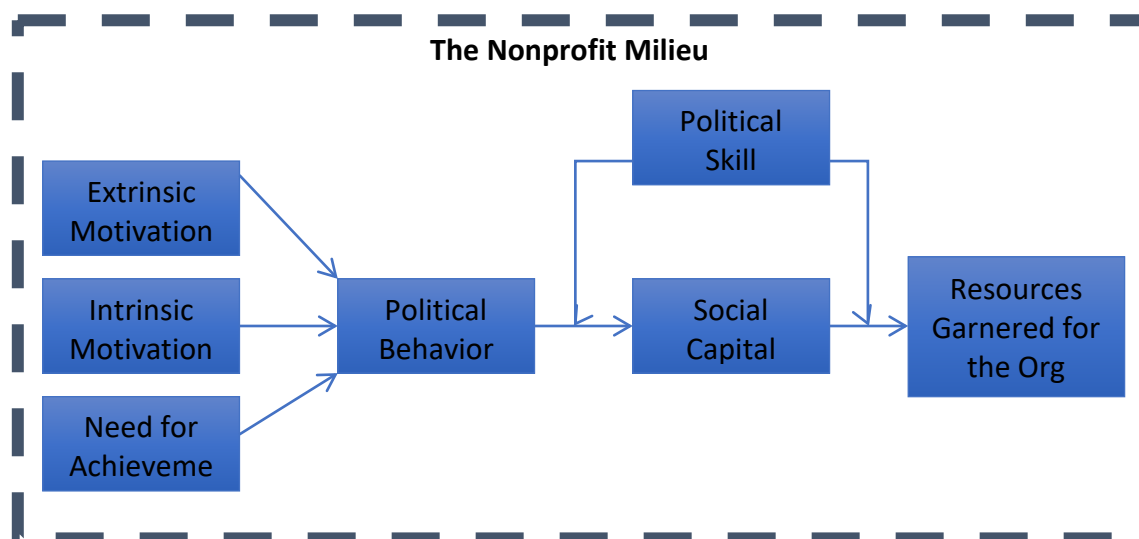
Social capital theory as originally defined by Putnam (1993) "refers to features of social

organizations such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and

cooperation for mutual benefit." Social capital is a collection of social resources and values

shared among organizational stakeholders (Coleman, 1988). Social capital is constructed of three

components: structural, relational and cognitive (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Structural refers to

the components of a social network. Density, connectivity and hierarchy are structural

components of networks that are extensively researched. Relational components refer to trust

within the networked relationships. "Actors in the network obtain the characteristic of trustworthiness by association with trusted others and by their behavior over time" (King, 2004). From these relationships, the norms of reciprocity develop (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Finally, the cognitive component refers to norms developed among actors that evolve into commonly shared values and meanings over time (Putnam, 1993). Collective goals and a shared vision become deeply rooted within the established social relationships and thus a continuous feedback loop develops between all three components of social capital.

In the nonprofit sector, social capital theory has been used to explain the extent of nonprofit foundlings (Saxton & Benson, 2005), community capacity (Goodman et al, 1998) community development (Gittell & Vidal, 1998), executive leadership and management (King, 2004), team performance (Ahearn et al., 2004), among many other areas. Specifically, King (2004) argues that functions of nonprofit leaders, such as strategic planning, advocacy, fundraising, and community support building, requires the building of social capital. Yet, there are no empirical studies that evaluate social capital within the context of nonprofits boards of directors. Instead, most research on social capital is focused on the organizations paid executives. This presents a gap in the literature because in the nonprofit sector the volunteer boards of directors make up a critical component of organizational leadership. Yet, their voluntary status makes them substantially different than the organizations paid executives.

Voluntary board members have a significant impact on overall organizational performance (Bradshaw, Murray & Wolpin, 1992). Therefore, their ability to generate social capital should be positively and significantly related organizational performance. A few very initial studies look at some of the prescribed outcomes of social capital development. For example, board members utilize networking to acquire new revenue streams and increase

outcome measures (Alexander, 2000). Another study found that boards using recommended

board practices, which include several outcomes of social capital such as fund-raising, public

relations, and new board member recruitment, are positively and significantly related to more

effective nonprofit organizations (Herman & Renz, 2000). Thus, while some of the literature

evaluates board members' ability to generate outputs associated with social capital, researchers

have yet to identify the prescriptive link between social capital theory and political behaviors.

Thus, I propose that political behaviors, when moderated with high levels of political skill, will

result in additional social capital. When nonprofit boards of directors accumulate social capital,

they may exploit it through their political skill to garner additional resources for their nonprofit.

Proposition III: Political skill moderates the relationship between social capital and

additional resources garnered for self and organization. For individuals high in political

skill, greater social capital will be developed.

Proposition IV: There is a positive relationship between the amount of social capital a

nonprofit board of director has and the amount of resource they can garner for

themselves and the organization.

The Feedback Loop

Figure III: Proposed model of feedback loop in the nonprofit sector
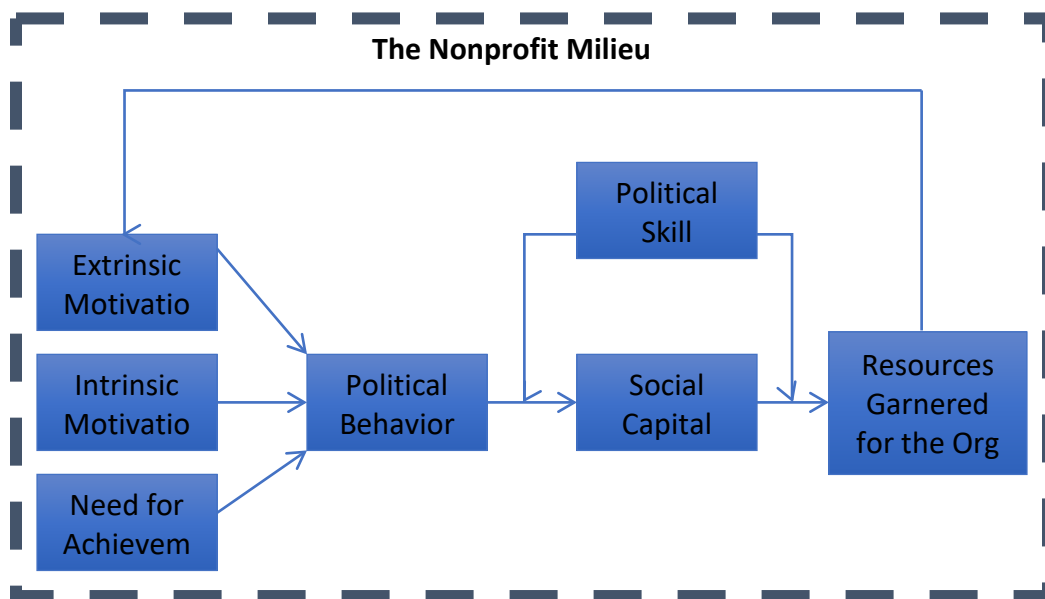
In many ways, the nonprofit environment varies drastically from the for-profit setting. Comparatively, there is an additional level of transparency and accountability required among nonprofit organizations. Where for-profit organizations rely primarily on earned income sources, it is one of several sources of revenue for nonprofit organizations. Yet, perhaps the largest difference between the two sectors is the difference in the claims that stakeholders, such as voluntary board members, have to these organizations.

Nonprofit board members have unique roles. Even though they are voluntary stakeholders, they are responsible for the overall fiscal health of an organization. Yet, the motivation to engage is critically altered by the lack of payment for their services. Their individual motivation includes some of the same intrinsic components and need for achievement that are found in the for-profit sector (Treadway, 2005). Perhaps though, they are also driven by the extrinsic motivation of seeing their hard work culminate in resources for an organization that

they are personally and emotionally invested in. For example, the Ronald McDonald House of Tampa Bay, a home away from home for parents with chronically ill children in the hospital, as well as a top-rated charity on CharityNavigator.com, increased its income as a percentage of fundraising annually since its inception. In 2013 (most current data available), more than half of their $2.8 million-dollar annual budget comes from the fundraising efforts of their voluntary board of directors (CharityNavigator.com, 2013). As a result, the organization grew to serve over 1,800 families annually, with the expansion of four additional homes in the Tampa Bay area to aid families during a time of crisis (Ronald McDonald House, 2014). Board members were able to directly correlate their efforts to services provided for the community.

This example, along with countless others indicate that volunteer board members may be motivated by the success of seeing their organizations flourish. Nonprofit organizations are unique in that their mission-oriented purposes provides a necessary community good that collectively serves a public purpose. Individuals that are skilled leaders engage in these organizations because of an intrinsic motivation and a need for achievement. But, they stay involved because of the long-term successes they see in the organizations, the purpose that the organization serves in the community, and the additional self-resources that are generated from being associated with a successful charitable organization. Thus, it is proposed that there is a feedback loop from organization and self-resources garnered to extrinsic motivation, which serves as a feedback mechanism that re-engages volunteer board members.

Proposition V: The organizational and self-resources generated through the development of social capital creates a feedback channel that positively affects extrinsic motivation.

Conclusion

Nonprofit organizations face many of the same challenges that their for-profit counterparts face but have additional tribulations related to transparency, accountability, revenue sources, and voluntary fiscal agents. Due to the devolution of government and current economy, these organizations face increased demands to provide services, becoming increasingly important to their communities. The voluntary board of directors' knowledge, skills and abilities are highly sought after to govern successful organizations.

This paper provides the first systemic view on the importance of political skill in the nonprofit milieu using a resource dependency lens. The asymmetrical nature of the exchange relationship found in resource dependency theory is an important foundational component when discussing political behavior and political skill of nonprofit board members. The need for an individual that can utilize political skill to moderate political behaviors o develop enough social capital that the imbalance of power is rescaled is crucial to a nonprofit's ultimate success. Using the Treadway et al (2005) model, the political will that serves as an antecedent of political behavior is critical to understanding the motivation to engage in political behavior, but must be adapted to the nonprofit sector. The public purpose of the organization and the voluntary stakeholder claim of board members to the organization alter the motivational components of an individual's political will. Further, the external reward of seeing an organization help a community prosper provides additional motivators for voluntary board members to foster and then spend their social and political currency. As a result, additional resources that are outputs of social capital such as funding, access, and awareness are garnered for the organization and additional credibility for the individual as a community leader is sowed. The resulting individual

and organizational successes creates a feedback channel to then re-employ political behaviors, starting the cycle anew.

The potential practical implications of this model are abounding. To date, there are no studies on the use of political skill among voluntary nonprofit board of directors. Yet, such a study could provide a significant contribution about a critical skill set board members need to help the progress of their nonprofits' missions. Nonprofit organizations struggle to identify board members that can make a significant impact in both the governance and maturation of their organization. Better theory can drive the development of research, which could help to identify key indicators of potentially successful volunteer board members in the future.

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Impacts of "Voluntourism" and Future Fair Trade Practices

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Abstract

"Voluntourism" is the relatively new phenomena characterized by the act of volunteers traveling

abroad, often times to a more developing nation, in order to participate in a volunteer program

aimed at enacting positive socio-economic or environmental change while also engaging in more

traditional tourist activities. A rising occurrence in the literature centered on voluntourism,

especially within the United States, is concern with examining the benefits experienced by both

the program participants and the indigenous populations in which they serve. However, there are

often negative effects regarding typical voluntourism programs that have also been well

documented. This article seeks to highlight the controversial nature of voluntourism, and hopes

to provide practical suggestions for future Fair Trade Learning practices to help international

volunteer administrators become more successful at maximizing the benefits of these worthwhile

programs, while also minimizing the potential disadvantages.

Key Words: Voluntourism, Volunteer Tourism, Vacation Volunteerism

Introduction

One topic among the realm of international volunteer management and administration that has received a considerable amount of scrutiny in recent years is the rising trend of volunteer tourism. Initially a tradition held by faith-based organizations in the form of early missionaries, and solidified in the turbulent times of rebuilding following The First World War and yet further by John F. Kennedy with the founding of the Peace Corps, volunteer tourism is growing to be a more and more common occurrence, especially in the past 20 to 30 years (Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Brown, 2005; Sherraden, Lough, & McBride, 2008; Devereux, 2008). A phenomenon now known by many experts as simply "voluntourism", various accepted definitions of voluntourism have circulated since the early 2000s among many disciplines and professions which now utilize volunteer tourists (Brown, 2004; Ong, Lockstone-Binney, & King, 2014; Seymour, Benzian, & Kalenderian, 2012). Some reputable researchers have employed a more specific connotation of voluntourism as the phenomenon has evolved over the years, including Kate Simpson (2004) explaining it as often times "the emergence of third world volunteer-tourism programmes, which seek to combine the hedonism of tourism with the altruism of development work". However, it is generally defined, and for the purposes of this article will be understood as simply the act of an individual traveling abroad while combining their recreational and leisure interests with their motivation to help others through volunteering, sometimes synonymously known as "alternative tourism" or "volunteer vacationing" (Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King, 2014; Brown, 2005; McCall & Iltis, 2014).

Initially the term "voluntourism" itself was regarded with disdain by many volunteer sending organizations (VSOs) as they believed tourism had little to do with their missions (McGehee, 2014). As time progressed, the volunteer tourism industry experienced substantial

growth, leading to the relative acceptance of this terminology. It is estimated that as of 2014, nearly 10 million people had participated in some form of volunteer tourism project worldwide (Voluntourism.org, 2014). Typical forms of voluntourism ventures include community welfare initiatives, such as the construction of a new school, environmental regeneration trips, including various "eco-tourism" activities, and other social/environmental research projects (Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King, & Smith, 2014). In total, sometimes described as "alternative tourism", voluntourism now contributes an annual estimated $2 billion to the global economy with over 1.6 million annual volunteers (Weaver, 2006; TRAM, 2008; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). This highlights the sheer impact of the still growing voluntourism industry and its potential for change in the global arena.

Though there has been some debate regarding the diminishing need for foreign voluntourists, as many developing nations now educate many of their own citizens to provide the services in the health, education, and social science fields which were traditionally provided by voluntourists, there is still the potential for great positive impact with such an immense, growing industry (Plewes & Stuart, 2007; MeGehee, 2014) However, with as much potential as exists for benefits among volunteer tourism initiatives, there also exists the very real possibility for disadvantageous implications as well. As such, many current researchers, concerned with the mixed and often misunderstood effects of voluntourism and the neglect of VSOs, include a call to action for the development of Fair Trade Learning practices to guide the development of voluntourism programs (Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Hartman, 2013; Hartman, Paris, & Blanche-Cohen, 2014).

Positive Impacts

The benefits of international volunteerism, or "voluntourism", were among the first facets of this rising trend to be analyzed and reported by both academic scholars and international journalists alike. Most initial studies did much in the way of reflecting on benefits experienced by program participants themselves. While studying the changes in personality traits of voluntourists, Alexander (2012) provides statistical evidence in positive changes in personality including decreases in anxiety, depression, and vulnerability while also cultivating increases in trust, artistic interests, and activity level. These voluntourists participated in paid programs through a company called Aviva in South Africa, engaged in a variety of projects ranging from wildlife and environmental conservation to children and community welfare projects. It has also been well argued that volunteering abroad, especially for university students, promotes the incorporation of "soft skills" into the tourists' repertoire (Stehlik, 2010). This can include the development of social values and environmental adaptability making the tourist more suitable for university life and future employers.

The focus on the development of the tourist in these studies reflects the personal development aspect of voluntourism, which motivates many individuals to participate in international volunteer programs. Personal development and altruistic motivations are two of the primary reasons individuals decide to commit their time to international volunteer opportunities, in addition to desires for a challenging and meaningful experience (Lough, Xiang, Kang, 2014; Brown, 2004). These researchers also provide evidence that these intrinsic motivations change little when compared across differentiated age groups.

Positive effects experienced by participants engaged in international volunteerism programs include increased levels of cross-cultural understanding, more intimate communication

and understanding of local communities, a positive sense of pride gained from giving back to underserved communities, and more developed professional skills in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world (Brown, 2004; Rieffel & Zalud, 2006; Simpson, 2004). Many studies proclaimed this to be an overwhelmingly beneficial experience for program participants and local communities alike. It seemed rightfully so, considering much of the initial impact evaluations of such programs focused only on the successes of the programs and participants. Unfortunately, these studies would be proven biased in many cases, neglecting to consider perceptions of indigenous populations or other side effects of common volunteer tourist programs. Many of the impact studies simply surveyed program participants tp provide evidence of positive impact, who were often times inexperienced, young adults who were, at best, questionable in their ability to assess the effective impact of their program (McCall & Iltis, 2014). For many of these participants, it was their first and only experience volunteering abroad. Once the perspectives of local populations were included in formal research and studies, a slightly different picture of voluntourism began to emerge.

Negative Impacts

Images of starving minorities living in destitute conditions accompanied by idealistic messages of "Save the World" and "Making a Difference" have been slathered across recruitment materials flooding universities and corporate offices in the United States since the 1990s, inviting potential volunteers to enjoy the "other" (McGloin & Georgeou, 2015). People sought out these new, exciting opportunities to genuinely contribute to positive social change while experiencing something exotic in the process. Yet, many of these volunteer tourism programs actually contribute to negative effects experienced by both indigenous populations as well as to the voluntourists themselves. This can include the proliferation of intercultural

misunderstanding, often when participants are left to generalize that their experiences among developing communities represents the whole population (Hall, 2008). Some argue that messages to action included in many voluntourism marketing campaigns, like those mentioned above, can promote the false belief or negative impression, among both participants and local communities in which thy serve, that poor countries' development is dependent on the help of outside, Western powers (McGloin & Georgeou, 2015; Devereux, 2008). Even still other disadvantages reported concerning voluntourism programs include the occurrence of false stereotypes of indigenous populations among program participants, lack of consideration of local community needs, disruption or strain of local economies, as well as concerns regarding unequal access to volunteer tourism programs among different demographic subpopulations (McGehee & Andereck, 2009; McBride & Lough, 2010; Guttentag, 2009). While the research on these potential disadvantages are well documented, that does not imply that there is nothing that can be done to minimize or completely avoid these unfortunate scenarios during the development of voluntourism programs.

Suggestions for the Future

In order to explore how best to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential disadvantages associated with voluntourism programs, there are a number of strategies a program can utilize which have been well researched. Offering reasonable suggestions for changes in voluntourism sending programs, many techniques are proven to facilitate cross cultural understanding, and prevent the conceptualization of developing communities as "other" by potential voluntourists (Mdee & Emmott, 2008; Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014). These notable researchers advise that international volunteer tourism sending agencies should adopt the primary program goals of social impact and cross cultural understanding in order to

start on the right footing when developing a socially responsible, yet fiscally efficient, voluntourism program. Through well-coordinated sending programs, and a focus on longer term relationships with host communities over short-term isolated excursions, more positive impacts are often realized (Mdee & Emmott, 2008). Requisite volunteer cross-cultural, pre-departure training is another highly favored technique which can be disseminated in either short format, or in a more long-term class depending on program needs, in order to provide a basis of cultural knowledge and awareness as well as to instill the focus of cross-cultural understanding as the programs mission (McCall & Iltis, 2014). Partnerships are forged with these local communities, and funding begins to become increasingly transferred into the hands of local institutions, rather than back to the host nations' industries which is often the case (Mdee & Emmott, 2008; Guttentag, 2009).

Fair Trade Standards

Some have extended practices known as Fair Trade Practices into the realm of tourism. Known as a set of ethical standard or guidelines for conducting business and programs, Fair Trade Practices have their roots in agricultural industry ensuring socially responsible production of food goods, but have not been considered for reinvention into consideration during the development of voluntourism programs (Mdee & Emmott, 2008; Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014). Developed over the course of two years with collaborative input from various sources of volunteer sending organizations (VSOs) such as international education practitioners, researchers, nongovernmental organizations, and also community members, eight Core Principles have been developed by the Building a Better World Forum for Global Service-Learning in 2013 to guide voluntourism programs from their inception to program completion:

1. Dual Purposes. Programs are organized with community and student outcomes in mind. Incorporating community development with student learning requires that local communities' outcomes are just as valued as student or participant learning.

2. Community Voice and Direction. Drawing on best practices in community development, service-learning, and public health, community-based efforts must be community driven. Each and every step of program design and implementation should include significant community direction, feedback, and opportunities for formative improvements. Actively seeking out the needs and perspectives of the often-marginalized local communities should be a systematic process to gather the views of multiple stakeholders regarding direction and goals.

3. Commitment and Sustainability. International education programming should only be undertaken within a robust understanding of how the programming relates to the continuous learning of the student and community-defined goals of the host community. Voluntourism programming should encourage the personal development of participants as well as support continuous communication with the local community partner. For local community partners, this means using the utmost clarity regarding the nature of the commitment with the volunteer sending organization, in addition to the likely development in the future.

4. Transparency. Students and community partners should be aware of how program funds are spent and why. Transparency should extend throughout relationships between Volunteer Resource Managers and their volunteers, as well as between sending organizations and local community partners.

5. Environmental Sustainability and Footprint Reduction. Program administrators should dialogue with community partners about environmental impacts of the program and the balance of those impacts with program benefits. Volunteer Program Administrators should take care to analyze and perform impact mediation, which might include practices such as supporting local environmental initiatives.

6. Economic Sustainability. Program costs and contributions should be aligned with local economies or social dynamics within the community. Projects should reflect a strong commitment to sustainability, and take steps to manage program funding effectively and in a socially responsible manner.

7. Deliberate Diversity, Intercultural Contact, and Reflection. The processes that enhance intercultural learning and acceptance involve deliberate intercultural contact and structured reflective processes by trusted mentors. This is true whether groups are multi-ethnic and situated domestically, comprised of international participants, only students, or community members and students. This reflects the goal to have all international volunteer sending organizations adopt cross-cultural understanding as their primary goal.

8. Global Community Building. The program should point toward better future possibilities for students and community members. Among local community partners, the program should promote cultural understanding, as well as ensure continuous contact and commitment regarding program development and goals. For program participants, Volunteer Resource Managers should utilize reflective opportunities and strategies in order to enable individuals to grow in their understandings of themselves as individuals capable of responsible global citizenship (as cited in Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014).

Discussion

In practice, the implementation of these core concepts would be a most challenging endeavor. All voluntourism programs are different, and each VSO has its own mission, as do the various communities in which they serve around the world. Many scholars argue that the commodification of voluntourism by private enterprises, resulting in dramatized depictions of foreign cultures aimed at "selling" international service experiences to the most heads possible, even further constrains the ability of VSOs to adhere to these principles and instill positive, realistic expectations in their prospective volunteers (Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014; Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King, & Smith, 2014). However, this does not mean that certain specific, relatively attainable standards cannot be or should not be adopted when feasible. The Core Principles mentioned in this paper developed by the Building a Better World Forum are not an all or nothing approach. While certainly intended to be a complete system of standards, they were formulated in the hopes of serving as aspirational guidelines for volunteer program administrators, and were not meant to limit initial progress by discouraging small steps of progress.

Although many of the suggestions presented in the literature are seemingly common-sense practices, it should be acknowledged that many volunteer sending agencies or organizations operate with severely limited funding, and the limitations are vast when implementing such changes in training programs for program participants (Mdee & Emmott, 2008). Each VSO will have to consider the principles which most apply to the program in question, and follow through with implementing the ones which are most compatible with the VSOs budget, organization, program goals, and any other constraining factors.

For example, one common type of relatively short term voluntouirism program pertaining to community welfare might consist of the construction of a new local well or school. A thorough needs assessment incorporating a bottom-up approach, with the inclusion of local businesses, organizations, and individuals in the project-planning process from the design phase through final evaluations, would ensure the implementation of the first core principle (Seymour, Benzian, & Kalenderian, 2013; Hartman, Paris, & Blanche-Cohen, 2014). While transparency, the third core principle, can be guaranteed by an organized system of project information communication provided with clarity to all relevant stakeholders associated with the project, including members of the target community to ensure compatibility in meeting their needs as well as yours (Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King, & Smith, 2014). Core principles six and eight can be adhered to by carefully crafted, pre-departure training classes which should be required for voluntourists by all forms of VSOs, and a dedicated shift to longer-term projects or initiatives intended for sustainable relationship building with international communities. Pre-trip classes including lectures, small-group activities, and personal reflection with an emphasis on the avoidance of potential negative outcomes have been proven to increase realistic cultural awareness and to firmly establish organizational goals and expectations, especially when conducted in coordination with individuals who possess expertise of intercultural awareness or have prior experience participating in voluntourism programs (Seymour, Benzian, & Kalenderian, 2013; McCall & Iltis, 2014) A shift to international projects being stretched over a longer period of time has been shown to increase target communities' trust in the VSO and its volunteers, as well as fosters more effective and sustainable relationships with the business and economic situation of the community in question (McCall & Iltis, 2014; Devereux, 2008; Mdee & Emmott, 2008). These are but a few small examples of effective, yet relatively cheap methods

of incorporating these core principles into a sample voluntourism program frequently implemented by universities and faith-based organizations across the country, and indeed, the world.

Implications for Future Research

In addition to guiding the development of future voluntourism programs designed by various VSOs, these Fair Trade Learning principles are also intended to further the establishment of a conceptual framework for future research and evaluation. Future consideration also includes the hope that we might conceive of a formalized system of Fair Trade Labeling for VSOs to indicate their commitment to a non-exploitative voluntourism program (Mdee & Emmott, 2008). Similar to Fair Trade Labeling or agricultural food products, it would be a mark of quality for international volunteer programs to guarantee the public of their observation of Fair Trade Standards. There also remains a strong need for additional quantitative and qualitative research in order to provide sound statistical evidence for Fair Trade Practices and to accurately report impacts of future voluntourism programs.

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