GETTING AND STAYING INVOLVED:
WHAT MOTIVATES VOLUNTEERS IN A NON-PROFILE ORGANIZATION

by

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Abstract

Non-profit organizations rely on volunteer workers to fulfill many of their day-to-day functions. Without a volunteer workforce, many organizations would simply cease to exist. It is vital that we understand what inspires people to provide their services without the desire for monetary compensation. This study was conducted with the volunteers at a Non-Profit Organization, a Christian church in Southern Arizona, to discover what motivates volunteers to get involved and stay involved. This study employed a qualitative research design. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations. Grounded theory methodology was used to analyze the data through a three-step codification process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Through this process, a theory emerged to explain the motivational forces at work amongst the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. The findings revealed that the volunteers are intrinsically motivated because of the value they attribute to their volunteer activities. Volunteers are motivated to serve because they personally value their volunteer activity as seen in their desire to impact the lives of others, desire to build meaningful relationships with others, and their desire for personal enjoyment; and they spiritually value their volunteer activity as seen in their desire to be obedient to God, desire to grow spiritually, and their desire to use their abilities to serve the church and God. The findings are supported in the literature and provide several implications for practical application and future research.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Melynda Ann Johnson. I wish Capella could give you an honorary doctorate degree for all of the work you put into this PhD program. Not only did you protect my schedule and help me find the time to study; you read and edited every paper I’ve written, and, you’ve had to listen to me talk about everything I’ve learned throughout this academic journey. I love you with all of my heart…here’s to you!
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background of the Study

Each year millions of Americans perform work without monetary compensation in the interest of some cause or conviction. This volunteer workforce is estimated to be more than 83 million adults (Independent Sector, 2001), making volunteerism a large industry. “Volunteers are a major source of labor in the United States, performing a variety of important tasks and contributing considerable time and effort in meeting the needs of their communities” (Boraas, 2003, p. 3). In addition, volunteerism is a way for individuals to participate in civic life, foster community, support democracy, and alleviate social problems (Bloom & Kilgore, 2003; Clary & Snyder, 2002).

Although volunteerism is a large industry that is important to American society, it is an understudied topic (Green, 2002). Specifically, little is known as to what motivates these volunteers to serve and what motivating factors contribute to their retention. For example, an individual may be eager initially to enlist in volunteer work, but more research is needed to discover what motivational factors must be present for the volunteer to continue serving over time.

The literature is thorough regarding work-related motivation. Motivational theory can be applied to volunteers, but the primary difference is that managers do not hold any fiscal power over the unpaid worker—he or she serves for other reasons. Without
understanding motivational factors that drive volunteerism, it is difficult to design programs and environments that attract and retain volunteers.

Statement of the Problem

Esmond and Dunlop (2004) write, “What actually motivates a person to volunteer is a complex and vexing question, yet understanding these motivations can be of great assistance to organizations in attracting, placing, and retaining volunteers” (p. 6). Many non-profit organizations attract and place volunteers, but these organizations experience high turnover rates among their volunteer workforce (Mayer, 1999). The problem is that the literature is lacking in regard to volunteer motivation; it is unknown why some people get involved and stay involved while other people quickly grow tired of volunteering or refuse to volunteer.

Purpose of the Study

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of the volunteers at a Non-Profit Organization to discover what motivates them to volunteer and what sustains their participation over time. The intent was to increase the understanding of why individuals volunteer and how to retain their involvement. The researcher explored the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of those who volunteer at a Christian Church, referred to in this study as the Non-Profit Organization, to identify what factors led them to volunteer and what factors inspired them to continue serving.

Because this study employed grounded theory methodology, the researcher did not make any predictions prior to the study. From the data that the researcher collected,
the researcher expected a theory to emerge that would contribute to a better understanding of volunteer motivation.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research for this study.

*Question 1*

What motivates volunteers to donate their time?

1. What functions are filled by volunteering at the Non-Profit Organization?
2. What kinds of rewards, if any, motivate volunteers?
3. How do volunteers in a religious environment perceive the rewards related to volunteering?

*Question 2*

What conditions must be present to motivate unpaid workers to continue serving in a volunteer capacity?

1. To what extent do extrinsic motivators need to be in place to motivate volunteers?
2. To what extent do people volunteer for intrinsic reasons?
3. What is the role of leadership in motivating volunteers to continue serving over time?

Significance of the Study

This study was intended to have a direct impact on the volunteer workforce at The Non-Profit Organization. This organization seeks to grow and develop more volunteers.
Therefore, the results of this study were intended to help the organization create programs and an environment that would allow volunteers to flourish.

The results of this study were also intended to potentially be useful to organizations that attract, recruit, and retain a volunteer workforce, such as social welfare organizations, relief organizations, hospitals, and faith-based communities. It was anticipated that such organizations would be able to increase their effectiveness as they better understand what attracts volunteers and what motivates them to continue serving over time.

Moreover, this study was also expected to potentially assist the leadership efforts of those who manage volunteers. From the results of this study, it was anticipated that leaders would have a better understanding of the environment necessary to sustain volunteerism.

Finally, this study was expected to benefit the field of volunteer motivation, helping to narrow the gap in the literature that has left many unanswered questions.

Definition of Terms

Axial coding. Axial coding is the data analysis procedure in which categories are related to their subcategories; relationships among the categories and subcategories are tested against the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation takes place when someone engages in a certain behavior for external factors, such as rewards, pay, or social approval (Richter, 2001; Witzel & Mercer, 2003).
**Grounded theory.** Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology in which “the researcher attempts to derive a theory by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement of interrelationship of categories of information” (Creswell, 1994, p. 12). In this approach, data is gathered, coded through a systematic process, and theory emerges from this data. (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). “The resulting theory is called *grounded theory* because it is ‘grounded’ in a set of real-world data” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 91).

**Intrinsic motivation.** Intrinsic motivation takes place when someone engages in a certain behavior for internal factors, such as doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Motivation.** The word *motivation* comes from the Latin word *movere*, which means “to move” (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). Motivational theory seeks to explain what moves people into action, what directs such behavior, and how this behavior is maintained (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003).

**Non-volunteer.** In this study, a non-volunteer was an individual who considered himself or herself a part of the Non-Profit Organization but did not serve in a volunteer capacity.

**Open coding.** Open coding is the process by which “events/actions/interactions are compared with others for similarities and differences” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). These events/actions/interactions are also given conceptual labels. “In this way, conceptually similar events/actions/interactions are grouped together to form categories and subcategories” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12).
Participant. In this study, a participant was an adult at the Non-Profit Organization who was involved in this research project.

Self-efficacy. One’s beliefs about his or her capabilities to succeed at a task (Bandura, 1997).

Selective coding. Selective coding is the final step of grounded theory analysis in which the researcher forms the theoretical structure of the analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). At this point, the categories are unified around a core category to further refine and develop a theory (Mellion & Tovin, 2003).

The Non-Profit Organization. In this study, the Non-Profit Organization was a Christian Church located in Southern Arizona. At the time of writing, approximately 40 individuals served in a volunteer capacity at the Non-Profit Organization, and approximately 40 individuals did not serve in a volunteer capacity. Volunteers and non-volunteers were both men and women and ranged in age from 18 to 87. The Non-Profit Organization was a newer organization, started in July 2005.

Volunteer. In this study, a volunteer was someone who helped others for no monetary compensation (Marx, 1999) and gave services freely without the expectation of a reward (Dekker & Halman, 2003). The word volunteer was used to describe individuals at the Non-Profit Organization who donated their time and services.

Assumptions

1. Each participant truthfully and accurately described his or her experiences as a volunteer or non-volunteer at the Non-Profit Organization.
2. Grounded theory was an appropriate methodology to provide rich description and real-world data to construct a theory on volunteer motivation.

3. The researcher’s experience in leading volunteers assisted him in interpreting the responses of the participants in this study.

Limitations

1. This study only examined the volunteers and non-volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization; therefore, the results may transfer to other non-profit organizations, but additional research may be necessary to draw conclusions for other settings.

2. The researcher was the pastor and principal leader of the Non-Profit Organization and administered questionnaires, conducted interviews, and gathered field data. The verification steps in this dissertation assisted the researcher in guarding against bias and subjectivity.

3. Since the researcher was the pastor and principal leader of the Non-Profit organization, the responses of participants may have been influenced by the fact that the researcher was an authority figure in the organization. Participants may have provided answers they thought the researcher would like to hear.

Nature of the Study

This dissertation was a qualitative study. The research for this study took place among volunteers and non-volunteers who served at the Non-Profit Organization. To
accurately understand the dimensions of the life experience of the volunteers and non-volunteers, the researcher utilized the grounded theory approach. This approach provided in-depth exploration of rich detail among the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. Real-world data from in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation were transcribed, coded, verified, and validated systematically through open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Through this grounded theory approach, a theory emerged that aids in the understanding of what motivates volunteers to get involved and stay involved in volunteer work.

The theoretical framework that informed this study is motivational theory. Two lines of motivational theory were reviewed: extrinsic motivational theory from the behavioral school of psychology, and intrinsic motivational theory from cognitive psychologists. Both theoretical frameworks can be applied to volunteer motivation, although there is a lack of evidence regarding what motivates a volunteer to act or behave. This study sought to make a contribution to the theoretical base by assessing the motives of volunteers and theorizing about what motivates their volunteerism and what factors promote lasting habits of sustained participation.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This dissertation is organized in five chapters. This first chapter describes the research problem. The problem is that the literature is lacking in regard to volunteer motivation; it is unknown why some people get involved and stay involved while other people quickly grow tired of volunteering or refuse to volunteer. Chapter 2 discusses the appropriate literature related to the research problem. Motivational theory from the
behavioral school of psychology is reviewed, as well as self-determination theory, social cognitive theory and the self-efficacy model. The literature surrounding volunteerism is also reviewed, and one theory that directly relates to volunteer motivation is examined.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used to respond to the research problem. Most studies that assess motivational behavior take place in laboratory settings and are of a quantitative nature. The methodology that this study uses is qualitative and emerged from real-world data that was collected and analyzed. While a quantitative study provides statistical data regarding how many and how much (Yin, 2003), what was sought after in this study is rich description that focused on data in the form of participants’ own words and onsite observations.

Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the data collected using the methodology described in Chapter 3. This dissertation concludes with chapter 5, which is a summary of conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 also presents recommendations for future research regarding volunteer motivation.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this study with particular emphasis on motivational theory, volunteerism, and volunteer motivation. The purpose of this literature review was not to direct the researcher to form an initial opinion about volunteer motivation. In grounded theory research, the methodology used in this dissertation, theory is grounded in a set of real-world data and not the existing literature (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Therefore, the purpose of this literature review was to establish the broad context for this dissertation and provide the theoretical framework for this study.

Two Groups of Motivational Theorists

The word motivation comes from the Latin word movere, which means to move (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). Motivational theory seeks to explain what moves people into action, what directs such behavior, and how this behavior is maintained (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). Researchers and theorists discuss motivation in terms of extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation takes place when someone engages in a certain behavior for external factors, such as rewards, pay, or social approval (Richter, 2001; Witzel & Mercer, 2003). Intrinsic motivation takes place when someone engages in a certain behavior for internal factors, such as doing an activity for the
inherent satisfaction of the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have been widely researched and theories have been developed regarding what moves people into action and what directs behavior. Because both types of motivation have implications regarding what motivates volunteers, a discussion of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation will follow.

Extrinsic Motivational Theory

Extrinsic motivation is rooted in B.F. Skinner’s (1953) reinforcement theory from the behavioral school of psychology. Skinner’s research, which was mostly conducted with rats and pigeons, demonstrated that laboratory animals will expect a reward for desirable behaviors and a punishment for undesirable behaviors (Skinner, 1953). Today reinforcement theory is applied to motivation by purporting that a manager can control an employee’s behavior by controlling the consequences that follow the employee’s behavior through a set of techniques known as behavior modification (Komaki, 2003). According to reinforcement theory, managers should positively reinforce worker behaviors that lead to positive outcomes and negatively reinforce behaviors that lead to negative outcomes (Skinner, 1953). While some (Kohn, 1998, 2002; Ruenzal, 2000) argue that rewards and punishments seek to control the behavior of individuals and are unethical, recent studies (i.e. Komaki, Coombs, Redding, & Schepman, 2000) describe how reinforcement theory is an effective and innovative method to motivate individuals. In the classroom, positive reinforcement such as praise is used as “a method of identifying to children which behaviors are acceptable and appropriate and which are not” (Sigler & Aamidor, 2005). In the business and corporate world, reinforcement
theory is widely used as a framework to modify the behavior of employees. “Skinner’s belief in the use of rewards and punishments to motivate people has become deeply entrenched in the psyche of American business” (Strickler, 2006, p. 26).

Skinner’s reinforcement theory has direct relevance to a study of volunteer motivation. For instance, to what extent (if any) are volunteers motivated by external factors, such as appreciation, recognition, reputation, and awards. Reinforcement theory shows that individuals may be motivated to perform well if there is a pleasurable consequence. However, reinforcement theory does not explain why some volunteers continue to serve when they receive no rewards or pleasurable consequences. As Kouzes and Posner (1995) explain:

Why do [people] volunteer to put out fires, raise money for worthy causes, or help children in need? Why do people sign up for the Peace Corps or join Mother Teresa in caring for the poorest of the poor?...If extrinsic rewards explained all our behavior, we would be hard pressed to find an explanation for any of these actions. (p. 40).

While extrinsic motivation has implications for a volunteer environment, intrinsic motivation might be better suited to explain the internal factors that influence a volunteer’s behavior and motivation.

Intrinsic Motivational Theory

Two prominent intrinsic motivational theories in the literature are self-determination theory (SDT) developed by Deci and his colleagues (Deci, 1972; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Social-Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1976, 1997, 2002). Deci and his colleagues (Deci, 1972; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000) have theorized that
human behavior is based on three innate psychological needs: the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. They argue that these three needs must be met for one to be intrinsically motivated.

The first need, competence, is the need to perceive oneself as capable to accomplish a task. According to SDT theory, people’s actions are driven by the need to perform a task effectively. For individuals to feel competent, they must be provided with the skills, knowledge, and resources to accomplish their tasks (Richter, 2001; Kerka, 2003). The second need, autonomy, is the need to exert a sense of control when one is performing a task. Ryan and Deci (2000) found that

“threats, deadlines, directives, pressured evaluations, and imposed goals diminish intrinsic motivation because, like tangible rewards, they conduce toward an external perceived locus of causality. In contrast, choice, acknowledgement of feelings, and opportunities for self-direction were found to enhance intrinsic motivation because they allow people a greater feeling of autonomy” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, para 7 under “Intrinsic Motivation”).

In this component of SDT, a person needs a chance to have some say in what he or she does, an opportunity to participate in making important decisions, and the freedom to accomplish tasks the best way he or she sees fit (Kohn, 1998; 2002).

Finally, relatedness is the need to connect with others and feel socially valued (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Richter (2001) asserts, “Relatedness is the feeling that one is emotionally tied to significant others in his or her life” (p. 87). While these three needs – competence, autonomy, relatedness – must be met if individuals are to be intrinsically motivated, it is equally important to make sure that an activity that one performs is meaningful to the individual. “It is critical to remember...that people will be intrinsically motivated only for activities that hold intrinsic interest for them, activities that have the
appeal of novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, para 9 under “Intrinsic Motivation”).

Deci (1972) and his colleagues have primarily researched SDT with students who solve puzzles. For example, in his foundational study in the early 1970s Deci gave one group of students a monetary reward for solving puzzles and another group no rewards. Deci found that the students who were given a monetary reward showed less interest in playing with the puzzles (1972). More recently, Vansteenkiste and Deci (2003) tested competitively contingent rewards and intrinsic motivation with undergraduate students to determine if winners were more intrinsically motivated than losers. Using puzzle solving activities, they found that winners were indeed more intrinsically motivated than losers and that positive performance feedback is crucial for maintaining intrinsic motivation in competitive settings (Vansteenkiste & Deci, 2003). SDT, then, has primarily been examined in laboratory-like situations where subjects in a controlled environment engage in puzzle-solving tasks. In this current study, the researcher will examine components of SDT – namely competence, autonomy, and relatedness – to see if these motivators are applicable to the volunteers at the Non-profit organization.

The Great Debate among Intrinsic Motivational Theorists

For more than 30 years, researchers in social psychology have debated the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. In one group, cognitive psychologists argue that rewarding people for performing tasks that are inherently interesting to them with expected tangible rewards such as pay, awards, and prizes, decreases intrinsic motivation (King, Hautaluoma, & Shikiar, 1982; Kohn, 1998; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Ruenzel, 2000). Theorists in this camp believe that extrinsic motivators reduce one’s
intrinsic motivation over time. “When people are rewarded for doing an interesting activity, they are likely to attribute their behavior to the reward and thus discount their interest in the activity as the cause of their behavior, leading to postbehavior intrinsic motivation that is lower than it would be if they had not gotten the reward” (Deci, Koestner, Ryan, 1999).

Behavioral psychologists disagree that extrinsic rewards undermine intrinsic motivation. Cameron, Banko, and Pierce (2001) conducted a meta-analysis regarding the positive effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation, finding that under some conditions (such as when money is offered as a reward) rewards enhance people’s motivation and performance. Pierce, Cameron, Banko, and So (2003) tested the notion that rewards enhance intrinsic motivation in a study using a puzzle-solving task with undergraduate university students. Half the participants were given $1.00 for each correct solution, while those in the no-reward condition were not offered any pay. The researchers found that participants who received a reward ($1.00) spent more time on the task than those in the other conditions. Because researchers have evidence to support their positions, one can conclude that there are conditions under which extrinsic rewards increase intrinsic motivation and conditions whereby extrinsic rewards decrease intrinsic motivation (Urdan, 2003). This current study will seek to address to what extent (if any) extrinsic rewards affect the intrinsic motivation of a volunteer worker.

Another theoretical framework that has direct relevance to the formulation of the current study is Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Also called Social Learning Theory, Albert Bandura (1976, 1997, 2002) developed SCT as a framework of understanding human behavior. From this framework, Bandura devised a behavioral model known as
self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one’s beliefs about his or her capabilities to succeed at a task (Bandura, 1997).

The self-efficacy model, which predicts that a person’s behavior is directly related to their perceived efficacy, has been applied in many different situations. Research conducted by Margolis and McCabe (2006) found that if students have high self-efficacy, they will be more motivated to achieve and work through difficulties. However, if students have low self-efficacy and believe they lack the ability to succeed, they will give up quickly when difficulties arise. Bandura (2005) applies self-efficacy to the health profession. He explains that if an individual has a high sense of efficacy and positive outcome expectations for behavior change, he or she can succeed with minimal guidance to accomplish healthy habits. However, if an individual has low self-efficacy and believes his or her health habits are beyond their personal control, the individual will need greater assistance and personal guidance to improve his or her health. Stajkovic and Luthans (2003) apply self-efficacy to employee behavior, arguing that employees act on their self-efficacy beliefs of how well they can perform the behaviors necessary to succeed. In the same manner, “employees with low self-efficacy doubt that they can do what is necessary to succeed” (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003, p. 131).

SCT proposes that one’s self-efficacy comes from four sources or determinants. The four determinants are: personal mastery of a task; social modeling, namely observing the performance of others; social persuasion, such as receiving suggestions from others; and physiological reactions, or an arousal of one’s emotional state. For example, reducing stress improves one’s efficacy since people perceive tension and anxiety as signs of personal deficiency (Bandura, 1997; Margolis & McCabe, 2006).
Stajkovic and Luthans (2003) apply these four determinants to managers and leaders who motivate their employees. Managers and leaders have four responsibilities (related to the four determinants listed above). First, they must help their employees feel confident about their work. Secondly, leaders must allow their employees to observe “competent and relevant others perform a similar task” that they are performing (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003, p. 137). Thirdly, leaders must enhance employee beliefs regarding employee performance through verbal persuasion and encouragement. Finally, leaders must allow for an environment that is not physiologically or psychologically debilitating (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003). With the self-efficacy construct, the leader sets up an environment which increases the perceived judgment from the employee that he or she can perform well, and when the employees feel competent and self-confident they perform better.

This self-efficacy model has potential application to a volunteer environment. If a volunteer’s self-efficacy is increased, he or she will be induced to perform well. If a leader will ensure that a volunteer is trained and developed, has a good model to follow, is verbally encouraged, and is in a healthy physiological and psychological environment, this model suggests that the volunteer’s performance will improve as his or her self-efficacy increases. However, there is no empirical data to support that this construct applies to a volunteer environment. For example, employers can mandate that employees receive training, and this training will help improve one’s self-efficacy. But a leader of volunteers can only inspire his workers to engage in training and development. Of the millions of individuals who volunteer each year, perhaps many receive minimal training and development.
Theories such as SDT and SCT can surely be applied to the volunteer environment, but there is little empirical support to the notion that what can be said of a paid employee can also be said of a volunteer worker. Further research using SDT will be necessary to examine to what extent (if any) volunteers are motivated by extrinsic rewards. Furthermore, future studies using the SCT framework will be necessary to examine whether or not the four determinants of self-efficacy are applicable to a volunteer environment.

The Value of Volunteers

Every year millions of Americans donate their time for a phenomenon known as volunteerism. A volunteer is someone who helps others for no monetary compensation (Marx, 1999) and gives services freely without the expectation of a reward (Dekker & Halman, 2003). Americans volunteer their time each year to various charities, social welfare organizations, hospitals, cultural organizations, sports programs, schools and colleges, and faith-based communities (Independent Sector, 2001; Freeman, 1997). In 2001 more than 83 million adults – 44% of the adult population – volunteered an average of 3.6 hours a week (Independent Sector, 2001).

Even though millions of Americans provide their services freely each year without compensation, very little academic research has been conducted regarding the performance of volunteers. To some (i.e. Freeman, 1997) this is surprising since volunteering plays a substantial role in the U.S. national income. When volunteer hours are calculated in dollar terms, these hours are worth more than 100 billion dollars a year (Freeman, 1997). “Without volunteering, the country would need a much larger public
sector or would lose considerable charitable, cultural, and educational activities” (Freeman, 1997, p. 145). To others (i.e. Green, 2002) it is not surprising to find volunteerism understudied. Green (2002) explains that most studies concentrate on the business and public sectors because of their strategic roles in the market place and the economy. The voluntary sector, on the other hand, does not appear to be as important. “The diminutive voluntary or ‘third’ sector is regarded as permanently lagging some way behind both, chugging along on the wheels of worthiness, but perennially short of resources” (p. 29). Green (2002) argues that volunteers are often taken for granted and treated as second class citizens rather than being recognized for the gift of their time and effort (Green, 2002). Unpaid workers do play a vital role in society (Freeman, 1997; Green, 2002), and more studies are needed that address the environment of volunteers.

Reasons Individuals Volunteer

A search of the literature reveals that volunteers donate their time for a variety of reasons. First, individuals donate their time because of altruism, the “selfless regard for the well-being of others” (Marx, 1999, p. 52). People also volunteer so that they can be involved in causes that are important to them (Lenkowsky, 2004). If a cause is not appealing to someone, he or she is not likely to dedicate his or her time for that cause (Freeman, 1997).

It is also suggested in the literature that people volunteer to feel needed (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Marx, 1999, Gerstein, Wilkeson, & Anderson, 2004), to give something back (Kumar, Kallen, & Mathew, 2002), to gain skills, knowledge, and abilities that can be applied toward a career (Marx, 1999, Gerstien, Wilkeson, & Anderson, 2004),
personal satisfaction (Kumar, Kallen, & Mathew, 2002), and the opportunity to do work that is of extreme interest to them (Linder, 1998). The literature also suggests that people volunteer to make a contribution with their lives (Allison, 2002, Green, 2002; Karren, 2004, Throop, 2003). Green (2002) writes how volunteers will donate their time if volunteers are assured that they have “the opportunity to make a difference” (p. 31).

Freeman (1997) found that one motivating factor stands above all the others for volunteers. He writes, “one social event – whether a person is asked to volunteer – is the key to understanding why people work for nothing” (p. 160). Analyzing the data of a 1984 survey from the Independent Sector, Freeman (1997) found that “44% of respondents said that they volunteered because they were asked – making this the single most important reason for volunteering” (p. 163).

This does not mean, however, that everyone who is asked to volunteer will do so. Freeman (1997) discusses two factors that lie beneath a person’s response to requests to volunteer. The first factor “is that people value the particular charitable activity” (p. 164). He says that people will agree to requests to volunteer for causes for which they believe. Secondly, Freeman (1997) stresses the notion of social pressure. “You are more likely to accede to personal requests than to telephone or written requests; to requests from employers, colleagues, and the like, than to requests from strangers” (p. 164). In the same way, Freeman (1997) notes that people are more likely to volunteer for activities which benefit their family. For example, if one’s daughter is playing Little League, then one of the parents may volunteer to coach or to help. If that parent’s daughter was not playing Little League, he or she most likely would not volunteer. Freeman (1997) argues that “nearly one-third (31%) of volunteers reported that they first became involved in a
volunteer activity when a family member or friend was involved or would benefit from it” (p. 164).

In summary, volunteers will donate their time for a variety of reasons. These reasons include internal incentives, such as to feel needed or to gain skills that can be applied toward a career, the desire to give something back, and simply being asked to volunteer. While it is suggested in the literature why people decide to volunteer, the volunteer literature is lacking in regard to what sustains volunteerism. What inspires a volunteer to continue serving for the long haul? What moves an individual to perform well in his or her voluntary duties? There is one theoretical approach that has helped to explain what motivates volunteers to serve and what motivates them to continue serving: the functional approach.

The Functional Approach to Volunteer Motivation

Functionalism is a theoretical framework in the field of psychology which purports that people act and strive toward personal and social goals to serve different psychological functions (Clary et al., 1998). Clary et al. (1998) and Clary and Snyder (1999) have applied the functional approach to understand the reasons individuals volunteer and continue to volunteer.

As noted earlier, there is evidence to suggest that people volunteer because they are asked to do so. Freeman (1997) concludes that volunteering is “something that people feel morally obligated to do when asked, but which they would just as soon let someone else do” (p. 140). Functionalists would unquestionably disagree with Freeman’s statement. The functional approach maintains that people volunteer because it fulfills
psychological functions. Through diverse empirical investigations with active volunteers, non-active volunteers, and non-volunteers, Clary et al. (1998) and Clary and Snyder (1999) hypothesized and validated six personal and social functions that are served through the act of volunteering. From their empirical data, Clary et al. (1998) and Clary and Snyder (1999) created and refined an instrument known as the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). The VFI, which employs a Likert rating scale, is a 30-question assessment that measures six specific volunteer motivations: values, understanding, social, career, protective, enhancement. Five questions are asked for each of these six functions to ascertain the motives underlying an individual’s volunteer efforts. The following will introduce these psychological functions.

The first function is the values function. The individual volunteers in order to express or act on values like humanitarianism or altruism. This indicates that some people will volunteer and continue to volunteer over time if their volunteer activity is perceived to be of value. A second function served by volunteering is understanding. This shows that people will continue to volunteer if they are able to engage in new learning experiences and have the opportunity to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities that might otherwise go unpracticed (Clary et al., 1998).

Enhancement is the third function. This explains that volunteers serve for reasons of personal development and growth. The psychological function that is filled in this function “centers on the ego’s growth and development and involves positive strivings of the ego” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1518). A fourth function served by volunteering is called career. Clary et al. (1998) report that volunteers often serve with the goal of gaining career-related experience through volunteering. The fifth function is called social, and
this function explains that volunteers engage in unpaid helping activities to strengthen their social relationships. Clary et al. (1998) note that if individuals can develop significant relationships with others, they are more likely to continue volunteering.

Finally, the last function served through volunteering is labeled *protective*. With the *protective* function, the individual volunteers to “reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address one’s own personal problems” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1518).

The research conducted by Clary et al. (1998) indicates that these six functions serve as benefits to an individual and are foundational for sustained and ongoing volunteerism. “If volunteers’ satisfaction with their volunteer service is associated with receiving functionally relevant benefits, then it follows that their actual intentions to continue serving as volunteers will also be linked to the matching between experiences and motivations” (Clary & Snyder, 1999, p. 158).

The functional approach is helpful in several ways to those who lead volunteers. For example, if a leader is trying to recruit volunteers, it is likely that his or her attempts at recruiting may succeed to the extent that they address specific functions that might be filled through volunteering. In the same way, if a leader desires to have volunteers continue their service over time, functionalist theorizing suggests that a volunteer’s service should be matched with functions that are important to the individual (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

While the functional approach gives an indication as to what motivates volunteers, it has a primary weakness. The functional approach only mentions six functions. There might be additional psychological functions that might be met in addition to the six. Allison, Okun, and Dutridge (2002) used an open-ended probe and...
conducted in-depth interviews with volunteers who served at a non-profit organization known as Make a Difference. The researchers found that, in addition to the six functions espoused by the VFI, three other motives were identified: religiosity, enjoyment, and team building. “One advantage of including an open-ended probe is that volunteer recruiters can identify motives among potential volunteers that are not measured by the VFI” (Allison, Okun, & Dutridge, 2002, pp. 253-254). For the current study, the grounded theory approach served as a viable tool to assess the motives of the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. While the VFI was used in this study to see if any of those six functions are apparent in the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization, in-depth interviews were conducted so participants could generate their own account of why they volunteer (Allison, Okun, & Dutridge, 2002).

Conclusion

This review of the literature presents the broad context for the research problem addressed by this dissertation. Behavioral psychologists have empirical evidence supporting the notion that extrinsic motivators are effective in inducing others to act. Cognitive social psychologists concede that extrinsic rewards motivate individuals, but they are concerned that such extrinsic motivators are controlling and reduce intrinsic motivation. Behaviorists, however, argue that in certain conditions extrinsic rewards actually increase intrinsic motivation. While there is research to support both sides of the debate, the literature is lacking in explanations of how extrinsic factors and intrinsic motivators apply to volunteer workers. In addition, although there is some indication as
to why volunteers initially enlist, such as advancing one’s career or the feeling of making a difference, more research is needed to explain what sustains long-term volunteerism.

While extrinsic and intrinsic motivational theory relating to volunteers is deficient in the literature, there is one theoretical approach, functionalism, which explains why volunteers get involved. Functionalism maintains that individuals volunteer because it fulfills psychological functions. Several studies (i.e. Favreau, 2005; McNay, 2005; Babka, 2003) in recent years have used the VFI to show how the six functions – values, understanding, social, career, protective, enhancement – are evident in the lives of volunteers.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology for this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of the volunteers at a Non-Profit Organization to discover what motivates them to volunteer and what sustains their participation over time. The intent was to increase the understanding of why individuals volunteer and how to sustain their involvement. The researcher explored the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of those who volunteer at a Christian Church, referred to in this study as the Non-Profit Organization, to identify what factors led them to volunteer and what factors inspired them to continue serving.

Because this study employed grounded theory methodology, the researcher did not make any predictions prior to the study. From the data the researcher collected, the researcher expected a theory to emerge that would contribute to a better understanding of volunteer motivation.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research for this study.

Question 1

What motivates volunteers to donate their time?

1. What functions are filled by volunteering at the Non-Profit Organization?

2. What kinds of rewards, if any, motivate volunteers?
3. How do volunteers in a religious environment perceive the rewards related to volunteering?

**Question 2**

What conditions must be present to motivate unpaid workers to continue serving in a volunteer capacity?

1. To what extent do extrinsic motivators need to be in place to motivate volunteers?
2. To what extent do people volunteer for intrinsic reasons?
3. What is the role of leadership in motivating volunteers to continue serving over time?

**Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research design. Merriam (1998) defines qualitative research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). Merriam (1998) lists the essential characteristics of all qualitative research designs: “the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive” (p. 11). Morse (1991) suggests that a researcher use a qualitative design when (a) the concept is “immature” due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous research; (b) a notion that the available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; (c) a need
exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory; or (d) the nature of the phenomenon may not be suited to quantitative measures (p. 120).

A qualitative design for this study was well suited to the research problem. The concept of volunteer motivation is “immature” due to lack of theory and research; theory development is needed to better understand what motivates a volunteer worker; and the nature of this problem is not suited to quantitative measures. While a quantitative study could have provided statistical data regarding “how many” and “how much” (Yin, 2003), what was sought after in this study was rich description that focused on data in the form of participants’ own words and onsite observations.

**Grounded Theory**

Merriam (1998) discusses five types of qualitative research commonly found in the field of educational research: “the basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study” (p. 11). This study used grounded theory, which is a research methodology introduced in 1967 where “the researcher attempts to derive a theory by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement of interrelationship of categories of information” (Creswell, 1994, p. 12). While many research studies are designed to test a theory that has been developed, grounded theory calls for data to first be collected, and then a theory is derived from that data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). “The resulting theory is called grounded theory because it is ‘grounded’ in a set of real-world data” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 91). It was expected that a theory would emerge to explain what motivates the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization to serve and what sustains their participation over time.
The researcher obtained a set of real-world data through the distribution of a self-completed questionnaire, in depth interviews, and observations.

*Questionnaires Administered to Volunteers*

A self-completed questionnaire, which is included in Appendix A, was given to each volunteer at the Non-Profit Organization who agreed to participate in this study. A self-completed questionnaire is a questionnaire that respondents fill in for themselves (Robson, 1993). Because the researcher used participants’ questionnaires as a foil for discussion during the in-depth interview, participants were asked to write their names on the questionnaires.

The design of the questionnaire involved wording that was clear, unambiguous and permitted participants to successfully answer the questions asked (Drennan, 2003). The questionnaire included both closed questions and open-ended questions. In the first section of the questionnaire, volunteers were asked to describe their participation with the Non-Profit Organization. The second section consisted of an open-ended question that asked participants to list their motivations for engaging in volunteer work. The third section employed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999) and consisted of 30 questions which asked participants their reasons for volunteering. The open-ended question from section two preceded the VFI to prevent participants’ answers from being biased from exposure to the reasons listed in the VFI (Allison, Okun, & Dutridge, 2002). The fourth section consisted of basic demographic information, such as name, gender, age, and annual income. The researcher used the results of the questionnaire to help determine the motivational forces underlying the behavior of volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. From the 39 questionnaires that
were mailed to volunteers, 22 individuals responded. From the 19 questionnaires that were mailed to non-volunteers, five responded.

*Questionnaires Administered to Non-Volunteers*

A self-completed questionnaire was also given to individuals who agreed to participate in this study who were not volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. Their responses to the questionnaire, which is included in Appendix B, were analyzed to determine the reasons they do not volunteer. Because the researcher used participants’ questionnaires as a foil for discussion during the in-depth interview, participants were asked to write their names on the questionnaires.

*In-Depth Interviews*

In grounded theory, interviews are the primary method of data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The researcher interviewed 14 volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization using the Interview Guide in Appendix C and using the participants’ completed questionnaire (Appendix A) as a foil for discussion. For interviews with non-volunteers, the researcher used the participants’ completed questionnaires (Appendix B) as a guide to further understand why the participant chose not to volunteer. Only one non-volunteer from the Non-Profit Organization agreed to an interview.

Participants were asked if interviews could be tape recorded. All participants granted the researcher permission, and the researcher recorded the interview with a tape recorder, listened to the recorded answers and transcribed the interviews, and then called some of the participants at a later date for follow-up questions (Patton, 1987). Such a process allowed the researcher to probe “beneath the surface, soliciting detail and
providing a holistic understanding of the interviewee’s point of view” (Patton, 1987, p. 108).

The length of each interview was not predetermined. The researcher, however, kept every interview under two hours, since “two hours seems too long to sit at one time” (Seidman, 1998, p. 14). Interview questions for the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization, which are included in Appendix C, served as a starting point for discussion with the participants. As research progressed the questions were refined. This process was in holding to the tradition of grounded theory, where “ongoing analysis will influence the questions that are asked, with the direction of the interview becoming driven by the emerging theory” (Duffy, Ferguson, & Watson, 2004, p. 70). Therefore, questions were continually refined with each subsequent interview, allowing emerging theory to inform the questions that were posed (Cutcliffe, 2000; Duffy, Ferguson, & Watson, 2004).

Observations

In addition to questionnaires and interviews, the actions and behaviors of volunteers were observed in the field. The researcher served in a “participant-as-observer” role (Robson, 1993). In this role, “as well as observing through participation in activities, the observer can ask members to explain various aspects of what is going on” (Robson, 1993, p. 197). Observations were recorded in a field notebook.

Another observer who is not connected to the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization was solicited to observe the volunteers. This observer served as “marginal participant” (Robson, 1993). The “marginal participant” role is one that is “largely passive, though completely accepted” (Robson, 1993, p. 198). Volunteers at the Non-
Profit organization were informed that the marginal participant would be recording observations in a field notebook. The marginal participant observed volunteers over a 30-day period, observing their behaviors and actions while they were engaged in their volunteer work. The marginal participant was interviewed regarding her observations.

Observations took place during the entire duration of data collection, which lasted about 30 days.

In summary, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations were employed during data collection and analysis. This diversity in data collection ensured that the emerging theory was “grounded” in the data (Duffy, Ferguson, & Watson, 2004).

Setting of the Study and Population

This study took place among the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization, a Christian Church located in Southern Arizona. The location of each initial interview was a local coffee shop. The interviews were held in an area of the coffee shop that was free of distractions. Follow up interviews took place via telephone.

All volunteers and non-volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization were given an opportunity to be included in this study. There were approximately 40 adults who serve in a volunteer capacity and 40 adults who did not volunteer at the Non-Profit Organization. Volunteers and non-volunteers were both men and women and ranged in age from 18 to 87. The Non-Profit Organization is a new organization, started in July 2005. The organization has a culture for volunteerism and involvement. In fact, two of the core values of the Non-Profit Organization relate to volunteerism. The first core value states:
We value every person’s gifts and abilities; therefore, we will nurture an environment of teamwork where every individual can make a contribution and use their gifts and abilities to show their love to God and each other.

This core value invites people to participate in one of the various departments of the Non-Profit Organization. The second core value related to volunteerism encourages individuals to dream:

We value blue-sky thinking; therefore, we will help individuals reach their unlimited potential as they discover the dreams that God has deposited in their hearts. With God, we believe the sky is the limit!

Individuals at the Non-Profit Organization are encouraged to think of ways they can use their gifts to make a difference with their lives. For example, if someonedreams of starting a sports and recreation department for the Non-Profit Organization, that person can volunteer his or her time to create that department.

After approval by Capella University’s Institutional Review Board, each volunteer was mailed a letter (included in Appendix D) describing the research, researcher, the ethical guidelines of confidentiality, and an invitation to participate in the study. Participation was completely voluntary. If a volunteer chose not to participate in this study, such a choice was not prejudicial to the participant (Seidman, 1998).

Instrumentation

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection (Imel, Kerka, & Wonacott, 2002). Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and field data. As the primary instrument, the researcher acknowledged his biases and subjectivities. As the primary leader of the Non-Profit Organization, the researcher sets the culture of the organization and encourages participation. All the individuals of the Non-Profit
Organization recognized the researcher as one who encourages volunteerism, so efforts were made to ensure that participants accurately display their feelings and attitudes and not provide the researcher with information that the participant thinks the researcher might want to hear.

Another instrument used in this study was the VFI (discussed in the literature review). The VFI is a reliable instrument validated by Clary et al. (1998). Clary et al. (1998) performed six studies to test and validate the VFI. They write, “Exploratory and confirmatory analyses conducted on different and diverse samples consistently revealed remarkably congruent factor solutions, suggesting a reliable and replicable six-factor structure” (p. 1527). The researcher used the VFI as a questionnaire to help reveal what motivates the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization.

Data Collection and Analysis

In grounded theory, the researcher devises a theory from the data through the use of multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Jacelon & O’Dell, 2005). “The development of categories, properties, and tentative hypotheses through the constant comparative method is a process whereby the data gradually evolve into a core of emerging theory” (Merriam, 1998, p. 191). The reflective nature of grounded theory allows the theory to change and emerge during the entire data collection and analysis process. “Since phenomena are not conceived of as static but as continually changing in response to evolving conditions, an important component of the method is to build change, through process, into the method” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5).
Although grounded theory allows for much flexibility and latitude, there are specific procedures for data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The researcher engaged in the following process for data collection and analysis which was adapted from Corbin and Strauss (1990):

1. **The researcher collected and analyzed data simultaneously.** Corbin and Strauss (1990) note that the data collection process and the analysis process are interrelated. “In grounded theory, the analysis begins as soon as the first bit of data is collected…analysis is necessary from the start because it is used to direct the next interview and observations” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6).

2. **The researcher analyzed data and assigned conceptual labels from the raw data.** “Only by comparing incidents and naming like phenomena with the same term can a theorist accumulate the basic units for theory” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7).

3. **The researcher developed categories, which were the “cornerstones” of developing theory** (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). “Concepts that pertain to the same phenomenon may be grouped to form categories. Not all concepts become categories” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7). A category is named by constantly trying to fit words to it that best captures its meaning (Glaser, 2002). Categories are “generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences that is used to produce lower level concepts” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7). As data collection and analysis continued, these categories became related to one another to form a theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).
Data continued to be collected in the form of interviews until categories were saturated and the researcher was no long able to identify and contribute new information or data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). During data collection and analysis, the following three-step codification process as described by Corbin & Strauss (1990) was followed.

4. The researcher followed a three-step codification process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

a. open coding – The researcher engaged in the open coding process from the very beginning of data collection. “In open coding, events/actions/interactions are compared with others for similarities and differences. They are also given conceptual labels. In this way, conceptually similar events/actions/interactions are grouped together to from categories and subcategories” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). The researcher created a spreadsheet and shaped the data into categories and subcategories as an abstract representation of events/actions/interactions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

b. axial coding - Axial coding is the data analysis procedure in which categories are related to their subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). At this point in the data analysis, the researcher began to identify the central or major phenomenon and explored the relationships among the categories and subcategories against the data that was being collected.

c. selective coding – The final step of the grounded theory analysis was selective coding, in which the researcher formed the theoretical structure
of the analysis. Selective coding calls for all categories to be unified around a “core” category: “The core category represents the central phenomenon of the study” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 14). At this point, the categories were unified around a core category as the theory was further developed and refined (Mellion & Tovin, 2003). Selective coding occurred in the later phases of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Verification Steps

The researcher endeavored to ensure that the results of this study were accurately portrayed through the constant comparative method, member checking, and triangulation. First, the very nature of grounded theory research cultivates accuracy through the constant comparative method. Concepts and categories were continually compared against one another. Making comparisons assisted the researcher in guarding against bias, allowing the researcher to challenge concepts with fresh data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). “Open coding and the use it makes of questioning and constant comparisons enables investigators to break through subjectivity and bias. Fracturing the data forces preconceived notions and ideas to be examined against the data themselves” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13).

The researcher also employed member checking. The goal of member checking was to provide accuracy and completeness (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The researcher gave each interviewee a transcript of his or her interview, asking the interviewee to make sure the transcript was accurate.
Finally, triangulation, or the use of multiple methods of data collection, was used to guard against bias and subjectivity (Yin, 2003; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) define triangulation as the process of using multiple data-collection methods, data sources, or theories to confirm the validity of case study findings. Marsick and Watkins (1997) list the most frequently used data collection methods in qualitative research designs: interviews, onsite observation, document analysis from archival records, and questionnaires. “Triangulation helps to eliminate biases that might result from relying exclusively on any one data collection method, source, analyst, or theory” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 464). The researcher triangulated data using questionnaires, interviews, observations, and observations from the marginal observer.

Ethical Issues

The researcher sought to protect the identity of the participants in this study. When the questionnaire was distributed to participants, each participant received an envelope so they could seal their questionnaire. Only the researcher reviewed questionnaires and coded the results. Additionally, a person’s name was not be used in this dissertation. Instead, participants were assigned a code number, such as V1, V2, V3, and so forth. When the results were presented in this study, participants were referred to as Volunteer 1, Volunteer 2, Volunteer 3, and so forth. Participants understood and agreed in writing that their responses to the questionnaire were to be anonymous.

This chapter presented the plan of research and described the methodology that was used in this study. Chapter 4 presents the results of this study.
CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of the volunteers at a Non-Profit Organization to discover what motivates them to volunteer and what sustains their participation over time. Two basic research questions were posed: What motivates volunteers to donate their time and what conditions must be present to motivate unpaid workers to continue serving in a volunteer capacity. While the first question was answered in this study, the second question was not thoroughly addressed. This study has been conducted over the duration of one year, which is not long enough to discover what sustains volunteer motivation over time. However, over a period of a year the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization continued to be motivated to volunteer.

The research questions in this study served as a guide in the data collection process. As data were collected and the codification process began, the researcher relied on the concepts and categories that emerged from the data to inform analysis. While the research questions served as a framework to collect the data, the prospective theory that emerged derived from the data that was grounded in real-world data from questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and field observations.

Questionnaires

This study examined the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of people who volunteer at a Christian church in Southern Arizona, referred to as the Non-Profit
Organization, as well as a group of members who do not volunteer. Questionnaires were mailed to 39 church volunteers and 19 non-volunteers. From this pool of potential participants, 22 volunteers and five non-volunteers filled out and mailed back a questionnaire. The respondents were men and women from all adult age ranges. Volunteers served any where from one half of an hour each week to more than 25 hours each week. Four women and one male responded to the questionnaire for non-volunteers. Table 1 gives a summary of the reasons non-volunteers chose not to volunteer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Volunteer</th>
<th>Reasons for not volunteering</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NV1</td>
<td>Too busy; burned out from previous volunteer experience</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Under 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV2</td>
<td>Work schedule prevents volunteerism; desire to spend quality time</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with his/her children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV3</td>
<td>Never been asked; do not know about the volunteer opportunities;</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too busy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV4</td>
<td>Work schedule prevents volunteerism</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV5</td>
<td>Reason not stated</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire, 22 were male and 10 female. In the first section of the questionnaire, volunteers were asked to describe their participation with the Non-Profit Organization. Volunteers served in various capacities, from helping keep score at softball games in the sports ministry to holding leadership positions. In the second section, an open-ended question asked participants to list their motivations for engaging in volunteer work. From these answers, 22 concepts were recorded in the first step of the codification process, which are shown in the following list:
1. There is a need
2. Enjoy it
3. I like the people I volunteer with
4. To reach people for God’s Kingdom
5. To use the gifts God has given me
6. To help others
7. Gives me purpose
8. Gives me joy
9. To make a difference
10. To build relationships
11. I love the fellowship with others
12. To obey God
13. Fulfill my dreams
14. Closer relationship to God
15. Because it is for God and God alone
16. Sense of belonging
17. It is my duty
18. Value instilled growing up
19. I can never do enough for God
20. My share in the commitment
21. To meet new people
22. I want the church to be successful

The above concepts were used as a catalyst for discussion during the in-depth interviews.

The third section employed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999) to examine which of the six psychological functions were fulfilled by the volunteer’s participation at the Non-Profit Organization. These six functions – values, understanding, enhancement, career, social, and protective – were explained in chapter 2 under “The Functional Approach to Volunteer Motivation.” Table 2 describes which function is fulfilled by the volunteer as well as his or her gender, age, and the time that is served on a weekly basis. Along with the 22 concepts recorded from the second section of the questionnaire, the responses to this portion of the questionnaire were also used as a catalyst for discussion during the in-depth interviews. For example,
the VFI indicated that the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization donate their time to fulfill the *values* function; questions were posed to try to understand why the volunteer activity is perceived to be of value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Highest Function</th>
<th>Second Highest Function</th>
<th>Lowest Function</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Weekly Volunteer Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>Values Enhancement</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>Values Enhancement</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>Values Social</td>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V6</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V7</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V8</td>
<td>Enhancement Values</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V9</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V10</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V11</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>12 plus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V12</td>
<td>Understanding Values</td>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V13</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V14</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V15</td>
<td>Values Enhancement</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V16</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V17</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V18</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V19</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V20</td>
<td>Values Enhancement</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V21</td>
<td>Enhancement Values</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>½ hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V22</td>
<td>Values Understanding</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *values* function appeared as either the highest function that is fulfilled or the second highest. Eighty six percent of the church volunteers selected *values* as their primary reason, and for 100% of the volunteers, *values* was either the highest or second highest function. Sixty eight percent selected the *understanding* function as either their highest or second highest reason for volunteering. The questionnaires also revealed that
individuals at the Non-Profit Organization were not volunteering to enhance their career, as this motivational function was the lowest function among the majority of respondents. Seventy seven percent indicated that enhancing their career was not the reason they served. The social function did not appear as anyone’s highest function, and only one person selected it as the second highest function for volunteering. However, as interviews were conducted, it was determined that the volunteers did donate their time to strengthen their social relationships.

Interviews

From the questionnaires, the researcher learned that individuals were motivated to serve primarily because of the value they attached to their volunteer work. This finding assisted the researcher in the interview process. In-depth interviews were conducted to capture words and stories that would help explain the reason one’s volunteer activity was perceived to be of value. Of the 22 volunteers who filled out a questionnaire, 14 agreed to an interview. Of the five non-volunteers who filled out the questionnaire designed for non-volunteers, one person agreed to an interview. Because of the lack of response from non-volunteers, the researcher was unable to make any discoveries about those who do not volunteer that contributed to the conceptual framework of this study. Interviews were conducted at a local Starbucks coffee shop and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

While an interview guide was developed to assist the researcher in asking questions, many of the questions that were posed by the researcher were guided by the participants’ responses. Rather than asking questions in a specific order, the researcher allowed respondents to tell their story and allowed the questions to unfold naturally from
the discussion that was taking place (Duffy, Ferguson, & Watson, 2004). Responses were recorded via tape recorder and later transcribed. With each interview that took place, additional questions emerged as new concepts were discovered. In grounded theory, “ongoing analysis will influence the questions that are asked, with the direction of the interview becoming driven by the emerging theory” (Duffy, Ferguson, & Watson, 2004, p. 70). The researcher sought to continually refine questions with each subsequent interview, allowing emerging theory to inform the questions that were posed (Cutcliffe, 2000; Duffy, Ferguson, & Watson, 2004).

The participants appeared to enjoy the interview process, freely sharing their stories, attitudes, experiences, opinions, and feelings. Each participant shared stories about their volunteer experiences at the Non-Profit Organization and elsewhere. From the interview process, the researcher identified an additional 27 key concepts during the open coding process. The following list shows all of the key concepts.

1. There is a need
2. Enjoy it
3. I like the people I volunteer with
4. To reach people for God’s Kingdom
5. To use the gifts God has given me
6. To help others
7. Gives me purpose
8. Gives me joy
9. To make a difference
10. To build relationships
11. I love the fellowship with others
12. To obey God
13. Fulfill my dreams
14. Closer relationship to God
15. Because it is for God and God alone
16. Sense of belonging
17. It is my duty
18. Value instilled growing up
19. I can never do enough for God
20. My share in the commitment
21. To meet new people
22. I want the church to be successful
23. The work is interesting
24. To experience God’s power
25. Would feel guilty if I weren’t involved
26. See people’s lives changed
27. Leader’s vision
28. Feel appreciated
29. Assists in spiritual growth
30. It is important to God
31. To please the Lord
32. Being a part of something positive
33. Having a say so
34. People like me
35. God expects me to serve
36. Gives goals to work toward
37. To serve God
38. The work has value
39. Worthy cause
40. Being effective
41. Seeing results
42. Having a responsibility
43. When a leader serves by example
44. To feel needed
45. I was asked
46. Things need to be kept fresh
47. I have the time
48. Don’t need or want appreciation
49. I love where the church is going

Observations

Volunteers were observed over a 30-day period, and the researcher recorded observations of volunteers in a field notebook. An individual who was not connected with the volunteers served as a marginal participant and also recorded observations in a field notebook. The researcher interviewed the observer regarding her observations. While no additional concepts were identified through observations, the observations from the
researcher and the marginal participant helped to validate the stories and experiences that were discovered through the questionnaires and interviews.

Coding the Results

The data collected from questionnaires and in-depth interviews were broken down using specific procedures. The researcher followed a three-step codification process to code and to analyze the data: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Spreadsheets were used to code concepts, and theoretical memos were used to keep track of all the concepts and categories that evolved in the analytical process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Theoretical memo writing began with the first coding session and continued to the end of the research process. Memos allowed the researcher to continually report on the research and its implications (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Open Coding – There are two stages in the open coding process: assigning labels to core concepts, and grouping core concepts together to form categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In the first stage events, actions, and interactions were given conceptual labels (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The researcher examined data to discover the shared experiences, stories, attitudes, and feelings of participants that contributed to the motivation for volunteerism at the Non-Profit Organization. From the questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the researcher identified 49 concepts and assigned labels to these concepts. The labels given to the concepts came from the wording of the participants. The list on pages 44-45 displays these concepts. With each subsequent interview, concepts were coded and compared against other concepts (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). This coding and constant comparison continued until no new concepts could be identified and
theoretical saturation had occurred. Theoretical saturation takes place “when newly gathered findings essentially replicate earlier ones” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 269).

In the second stage of open coding, the researcher grouped these concepts into overarching categories, which are classifications of concepts (Eaves, 2001). Four categories emerged after the concepts were analyzed: desire to serve one’s needs, desire to serve God, desire to serve others, and desire to serve the organization. For each of these categories, subcategories were constructed to answer questions about the phenomenon such as why and how (Mellion & Tovin, 2003). Table 3 shows these categories and subcategories.

Table 3. Overarching Categories and Subcategories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire to Serve One’s Own Needs</th>
<th>Desire to Serve God</th>
<th>Desire to Serve Others</th>
<th>Desire to Serve the Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable and Fulfilling</td>
<td>Desire to please God</td>
<td>Desire to help others</td>
<td>Help is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build caring relationships</td>
<td>Desire to obey God</td>
<td>See people’s lives changed</td>
<td>The vision of the organization is inspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a difference with one’s life</td>
<td>Desire to reach people for God’s Kingdom</td>
<td>See people give their hearts to God</td>
<td>Worthy cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives me purpose</td>
<td>Feel called by God</td>
<td>Serve others with the gifts God gave</td>
<td>Makes one feel needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Axial Coding – In this step of the codification process, the researcher began to identify the major phenomenon and investigate the relationships among the categories and subcategories. Analyzing the categories and subcategories against the initial 49
concepts, the axial coding process narrowed these 49 concepts to six primary concepts that were further identified with two core categories. These core categories with their related concepts are seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Core Categories and Primary Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Category 1: Personal Values</th>
<th>Core Category 2: Spiritual Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related Primary Concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to impact the lives of others</td>
<td>Desire to be obedient to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to build meaningful relationships with others</td>
<td>Desire to grow spiritually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for personal enjoyment</td>
<td>Desire to use abilities to serve the church and God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The volunteers who participated in this study identified key motivational factors that have inspired them to volunteer and to continue volunteering at the Non-Profit Organization. The participants donate their time in weekly service without pay because their volunteer activity is perceived to be of value both personally and spiritually. The following stories, accounts, and statements from the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization will provide a rationale for the analysis presented above. The researcher has removed elements that might identify the participants’ identity, replacing such identifiers with the researcher’s words in brackets.
Core Category 1: Personal Values

The participants in this study are motivated to serve because they personally value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to impact the lives of others, (b) desire to build meaningful relationships with others, and their (c) desire for personal enjoyment.

The desire to impact the lives of others was a consistent topic that was shared by participants during in-depth interviews. The following stories highlight how personal value is achieved when volunteers impact the lives of others.

Volunteer 4 shared:

I want to help others. I have compassion for people who are in need. Even sometimes I feel like, how come others don’t see things the way I do – they don’t want to help other people? I realize that you can’t help everybody, but if there’s a need there and I can fill it, I just can’t turn my face. To me it’s just not about making a difference; I like to see people’s lives changed.

Volunteer 5 described:

Knowing that I am making a difference in the lives of others is huge! If you don’t see any results out of something, eventually you’re going to get burned out on it. And you’re going to look for something else that’s going to give you results. For me, I see the results of [Volunteer 5 states his volunteer activity]. What I do doesn’t affect everyone in the same way, but it affects some people greatly and it’s helping them. That’s what motivates me. [Volunteer 5 explains how his life has been impacted by others at the Non-Profit Organization]. Several months ago when my wife was pregnant, the doctors believed she had [Volunteer lists a disease]. Mike [name changed] prayed about it with me. He helped me out and encouraged me. He helped give us hope.

Volunteer 7 offered:

I like to see people happy. I like to help. In fact, it’s one of the boundaries I need to set in life, because if there is a need, I want to fill it. I like to do something that helps someone out. It helps me feel good about myself.

Volunteer 8 explained:

[Volunteering] makes me feel needed because I know I am helping others. I enjoy serving behind the scenes. Whenever I can help someone from the church,
whether it is someone from the church or even a leader, it makes me feel good. For example, I was recently asked to help with [Volunteer 8 names the volunteer activity]. I have a lot of experience with [the volunteer activity], and I was able to help complete a task that was needed, and it made me feel good.

Volunteer 10 declared:

I wouldn’t feel guilty [if I were not volunteering]— I’d feel wasted, like I’m dead weight. People know what I am capable of, and if I walked away from [his volunteer activity], I’d be another statistic. I like knowing that I’m helping [individuals] make great decisions and helping them turn their life around if they’re making bad decisions.

Volunteer 11 revealed:

I don’t want to see anyone hurting over anything. I want of fix it if there is something [wrong]. I want to help others and just be there for them. Brenda [name changed] wrote a note to me a couple of weeks ago and said that I have made a difference in her life. It made me feel so good. I thought, “Oh Gosh, what kind of crisis has she had in her life. What have I done to make her life better?” The little things like that show that we’re making a difference. What we’re doing is helping others, even though we don’t realize we’re helping them. That right there is worth it all by itself.

Volunteer 13 offered:

I enjoy volunteering because I can see that I am effective. The joy I get is because I can see the growth of the kids [Volunteer 13 is one of many teachers at the Non-Profit Organization]. They are talking to me, they are listening to me, and they are getting it. They are growing, and they are starting to ask really good questions on their level no matter what grade they’re in. And so that brings me joy. It’s like the Lord saying, “Good work.”

Volunteer 14 shared:

The Salvation Army has a motto: Christianity in Action. And I think that when you volunteer, you are putting what you believe into action. If I can show somebody who is going through a tough time – something along the same lines I have been through, such as my divorce or losing both of my parents – that there is light at the end of this tunnel, that something good will come from this, then why not be involved and be able to touch somebody positively?
Field notes recorded by the marginal observer, who observed volunteers over a 30 day period, offered further testimony to how volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization desire to help others.

When the marginal observer was interviewed, she said:

“At the end of service one Sunday, a man was crying and obviously having a hard time about something. Two other men were praying with him and appeared to be encouraging him. The two men who were spending a lot of time with the troubled man appeared to take as much time with the man as was needed to time to help him through his situation. I sensed compassion from the two men who were helping this guy. ”

Volunteering at the Non-Profit Organization gives participants an opportunity to impact the lives of others. They perceive that their volunteer activity is of personal value because it makes them feel needed, makes them feel good, and it brings them joy to see that they are being effective with their lives.

The second primary concept that emerged from the data was the desire for participants to build meaningful relationships with others. This desire was expressed in various ways.

Volunteer 1 said:

Serving has given me the opportunity to meet everyone at [the Non-Profit Organization]. There’s a sense of belonging there. I feel like [the Non-Profit Organization] gives me so much. There’s an opportunity to connect with others, and people are so supportive.

Volunteer 3 experienced:

I put 31 years into working with people that I didn’t have a choice of who I’d be working with, and I guess I came to the conclusion that now I don’t have to deal with people unless I want to. At [the Non-Profit Organization], it feels like family; there is a closeness here.
Volunteer 5 shared:

While I’m [Volunteer 5 names his volunteer activity], I am able to talk to others about things in my life. It has shown me another avenue – here is your church family here to help you just as I am here to help you. I am growing closer to the core people who are there.

Volunteer 8 expressed:

Volunteering gives me an opportunity to meet new people. When I am [mentions her volunteer activity], I get to say hi to others and introduce myself. This is good since I’m shy. At the regular church service, it would be hard for me to go up to someone and talk to them. But when I’m serving in [mentions her volunteer activity], I get to talk to people and get to know them. This is so important to me since my family doesn’t live here. This is my family.

Volunteer 9 described:

When I serve, [other volunteers] encourage me to keep on going. Even this past Sunday, Bob [not his real name] really encouraged me. I gave up smoking a couple of months ago, and just talking to him got me through it. Just the other day he reminded me that I made it through that and I can make it through anything. He said I was an overcomer!

Volunteer 11 stated:

I enjoy building friends at [the Non-Profit Organization]. I think it would be a completely different situation if we were all just co-workers. I think we all take into consideration what is in each other’s hearts. We’re friends, and that motivates me to keep showing up. I know what’s on Sandy’s [name changed], and I know how to be praying for her.

Field observations also showed the desire among volunteers to build relationships.

On many different occasions, the researcher observed that relationships were being built among the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. For instance, on one Sunday the researcher observed that volunteers were doing their volunteer activity after church, and several of them decided to go out to lunch after they were done. It was observed that they
enjoyed serving together and that they wanted to continue their conversations even after their volunteer activity had ended.

The third primary concept that emerged from the data was the desire for personal enjoyment. The following quotations from church volunteers show how they enjoy their participation at the Non-Profit Organization:

Volunteer 3:

I enjoy [names his volunteer activity]. I’m having a good time. If I wasn’t having a good time, I wouldn’t be doing it. I enjoy the people and I’m having a good time with what I’m doing.

Volunteer 5:

If I didn’t enjoy what I am doing, I’d find a different avenue of [volunteering]. For instance, I’m not a big fan of [names a volunteer activity], so I don’t get involved in [names the volunteer activity]. So I choose to do what I’m doing now because I enjoy it. If I were asked to do something else – even something I don’t enjoy – I’d do it if I was requested to do it, but I would probably look for something else to continue doing [over time]. It helps when you enjoy something.

Volunteer 11:

I like it [the volunteer activity]. I like what we’re doing. When we first started, I didn’t know if I’d like it or not. But I really like it.

Volunteer 12:

If I didn’t enjoy it, I’d be less inclined to do it well. I might do it half-hearted or spend less time doing it. If you’re not enjoying it, maybe you’re not supposed to be doing it. God’s not going to call you to something you’re not going to enjoy. I really enjoy what I’m doing. It gives me a lot of pleasure.

Volunteer 13:

In my position, I love teaching, and that’s the joy in my position. There are certain joys in my position [volunteer 13 names several of the things she does].
Volunteer 14:

I’m having fun. When something isn’t fun, why do it? Obviously there are things we must do that aren’t fun. But when it is a volunteer position and you’re not required to do it, and you’re not getting a paycheck for doing it, you have to enjoy it to do it.

Field observations recorded from both the marginal observer and the researcher noted that people who volunteer appear to be genuinely happy. The marginal observer attended a meeting geared for young mothers, and the observer said: “A volunteer was sitting at the table to greet people. She was by herself, but had a very big smile on her face. When people arrived, she would get up from the table to hug others and welcome them.” The researcher also observed volunteers having fun together, laughing, and playfully teasing one another. Volunteers appear to be enjoying the volunteer activities they have signed up to perform.

From the data that have been collected, analyzed and codified, the participants in this study appear to be motivated to serve because they personally value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to impact the lives of others, (b) desire to build meaningful relationships with others, and their (c) desire for personal enjoyment.

Core Category 2: Spiritual Values

The second major theme that emerged during data collection, analysis and codification related to spirituality. Not only are the participants in this study motivated to serve because they personally value their volunteer activity; participants also volunteer because their volunteer activity is of spiritual value, as seen in their (a) desire to be
obedient to God, (b) desire to grow spiritually, and their (c) desire to use their abilities to serve the church and God.

The desire to be obedient to God was a primary concept shared by the majority of participants in this study. The Non-Profit Organization is a faith-based institution, and participants freely and openly shared their beliefs that God desires them as Christians to serve each other. When the researcher explored the reasons volunteers donate their time, obedience to God was a popular subject. Volunteer 7 said, “The Lord wants me to serve.” Similarly, volunteer 2 and volunteer 6 said that is a duty to serve. Volunteer 9 said, “God expects me to [serve].” When volunteer 5 was asked if he would still serve if he never received any appreciation, he said, “Absolutely. I am doing this for God.” When Volunteer 12 was asked if he would be disobedient if he were not involved in ministry, he replied: “Yes. I got to do what I’m called to do.” The following statements describe how volunteering brings spiritual value to volunteers as they seek to be obedient to God.

Volunteer 5 believed:

It’s all for God. Everything I do is for him. It’s not just for me or whatever. That’s what I like about it. I’m doing it for God.

Volunteer 9 expressed:

Following the Word of God, the Bible, is my book of instructions. Following God’s Word is fulfilling to me. God wants me to give freely to what he has given me. He’s given me freedom. He died on the cross for me. I owe him everything. I freely took what he gave me, so I need to freely give back to what he gave me. Obedience to God. I feel God called me to this. That’s why I do it.

Volunteer 10 shared:

I could never do enough for God. Just the simple fact of one man giving his life for so many people, including me; No matter what I give from this point, I can never repay that. How can you match that?
Volunteer 13 explained:

For me it boils down to obedience to what I’ve been asked to do by God. It’s obedience to God that is the driving force behind my motivation because, for some reason, he has placed in me a servant’s heart. I want to serve God and others.

The participants in this study indicated that they are motivated to volunteer because of an expectation they believe is from God and the Bible. Although they believe it is their duty, it is an obligation they are eager to accept. As Volunteer 6 explained, “Not that it is a duty like a burden, but you are inspired to do it because we need each other. For me personally, that’s the main reason I serve.”

The second primary concept that emerged in regard to spiritual values was the desire for participants to grow spiritually. The participants in this study made a connection between spiritual growth and volunteering. They expressed that volunteering at the Non-Profit Organization assisted them in their spiritual growth. The following quotation describes how volunteers feel their participation helps them grow spiritually:

Volunteer 5:

Anytime you are around like-minded people or people with the same interests, you’re going to grow. If you just come to church from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., you will get something out of it for sure. But when you serve in a ministry on Sunday or during the week, you grow more spiritually. You’re around people that are in the same boat as you trying to grow spiritually. So you’re going to talk about it more, and you’re going to talk less about the football game that you watched the other day. You’re going to talk more about what we’re doing in church, what we’re doing to get closer to God, what Scriptures we may have read, all of those things. The more you talk about something, the better off you’re going to be.

Volunteer 6:

[Volunteering] provides you an opportunity to talk to others about stuff. Instead of trying to call somebody and ask them for help, they are right there. I think that
does help you spiritually. It helps me. And then you get to see other people grow, which encourages you to grow too.

Volunteer 8:

Serving enhances my spiritual growth. If I’m not doing anything with the church during the week, the week goes by. But if I’m involved with others, it keeps me on track.

Volunteer 10:

If I were not involved, I don’t think I would be growing spiritually. I think I’m growing a lot because I’m able to teach others. You always learn from the people you work with, and you learn from those you teach.

Volunteer 11:

I have definitely grown spiritually since serving at [the Non-Profit Organization]. I think especially in working with [she states her volunteer assignment]. I think we’ve all learned to pray a lot more. And I think if I didn’t have this, I think my life would be a little bit empty because I would do things like forget to pray and be motivated to do my devotional. I have always been horrible about doing my devotions. I try to do it, and I do good for a couple of weeks, and then I stop. But what got me back on track this time is accountability with [other volunteers]. We’re keeping each other accountable to do our Bible reading and journaling, and I’m proud to say that I haven’t missed a single day. This has helped me really be consistent in my spiritual life.

Volunteer 12:

When we serve in a ministry, for some reason it seems we grow spiritually. I think it is how God made us. He made us to serve Him and serve in the church. Once we’re doing that, we’re one step closer to where we’re supposed to be spiritually.

Volunteer 14:

I believe I am growing spiritually because what I am doing is pleasing to the Lord, and I feel that my personal relationship with Christ is growing. Being around a body of believers who have the same purpose and goals helps in this growth process.

Many of the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization feel that serving in a ministry fosters their spiritual growth. Because they are a part of a faith-based organization,
growing spiritually is an activity that is perceived to be of value. As Volunteer 5 said, “I really believed serving at [the Non-Profit Organization] has drawn me closer to God. I am growing in my faith, and that is motivating me to keep on serving.” Volunteer 12 explained, “Growing spiritually encourages me to keep on serving. Spiritual growth is like the fuel that keeps me going. If I wasn’t growing, I’d probably get discouraged and give up!”

The third primary concept that emerged in regard to spiritual values was the desire to use one’s abilities to serve the church and God. Several explained how the vision of the church inspired them to use their gifts and abilities. Volunteer 5 described, “This church is trying to capture people’s key abilities and gifts to better each other and the church and everybody involved. The vision helps to get people involved as you tap into their interests.” Volunteer 9 shared how his abilities can be used to fulfill his dreams: “God gave me gifts, and I want to use them for him. God has given me dreams and aspirations, and I know that I will fulfill these dreams with the gifts and abilities he has given me.” Volunteer 10 said, “[The leaders] of this church have a way of bringing things out of me that have been buried or neglected or not used. I never thought I could [names his volunteer assignment], but [the leaders] here have a way of bringing things out of me.”

The following accounts and stories show how the following participants are using their gifts and abilities to serve the church and God.

Volunteer 1 shared:

God has given me a gift. For a lot of years, it wasn’t used. I am now using my gift and it is a great opportunity just to minister to people.
Volunteer 4 explained:

I don’t want to neglect the gifts God gave me or use them just for me – I want them to be used for his purposes.

Volunteer 7 described:

God has given me gifts that bring me joy, such as painting. When I was at [my last church], I started a painting club where people would come to my house and paint around a Biblical theme. At that time I was just calling out to the Lord to give me a purpose, to give me a reason why I’m still here; to give me something to know that he’s still with me and that I am important to the church. Painting is a gift God has given me that I can use to bless other people, and it helps me realize that I can make a contribution.

Volunteer 10 offered:

If I didn’t use my abilities, it would be a waste. It would be like a professional ball player not using his talent. I’ve wasted enough years. God blessed me with those abilities, and I need to use them.

Volunteer 12 stated:

Everybody has their place in this church where they can serve. If I’m not using my gifts, then somebody else is going to have to do double duty.

Volunteer 14 believed:

I believe everyone has a different thing to offer. Every person can contribute something. I feel sometimes that older people have so much to offer, and yet, they are not a tapped-in resource. I’m guilty of that. We need to invite them to use their abilities here so they feel needed. Everyone has something to offer, it’s just finding it.

Using one’s gifts and abilities was a third primary concept that emerged from the data.

When the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization use their abilities to serve their church and God, they perceive their activities to be of spiritual value.

Selective Coding. The above analysis shows the methods used in open and axial coding, as well as the core categories and six primary concepts that were predominant.
Stories, accounts, and statements from the participants were provided as a rationale of the analysis. The final step of grounded theory analysis was selective coding, in which the researcher formed the theoretical structure of the analysis. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), “Selective coding is the process by which all categories are unified around a ‘core’ category…the core category represents the central phenomenon of the study” (p. 14). The categories were integrated to form a core category as the theoretical framework was refined (Mellion & Tovin, 2003). The central category that tied all of the categories in this study together is the value that is intrinsically fulfilled through volunteering. Intrinsic value was considered a central category because all of the categories and primary concepts were connected to it and appeared frequently in the data. The participants in this study clearly donate their time without pay because of the intrinsic value it yields, both personally and spiritually. They are motivated to donate their time without any monetary compensation because it is both personally and spiritually fulfilling.

Conclusion

Three types of data were collected in this study: questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and field observations. From the questionnaires, the researcher learned that individuals were motivated to serve at the Non-Profit Organization because of the value that is attached to the volunteer work they perform. This finding assisted the researcher in the interview process. In-depth interviews were conducted to capture stories, experiences, feelings, and attitudes that would help explain the reason one’s volunteer activity was
perceived to be of value. Field observations allowed the researcher and a marginal observer to watch and study the volunteers in action.

From the data that were collected, 49 initial concepts were coded onto a spreadsheet through open coding. These concepts were words or phrases taken from the participants’ stories, experiences, feelings, and attitudes. The concepts were constantly compared with new data from each subsequent interview (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This coding and constant comparison continued until no new concepts could be identified and theoretical saturation had occurred. Theoretical saturation takes place “when newly gathered findings essentially replicate earlier ones” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 269).

The researcher then grouped these 49 concepts into overarching categories and subcategories (Evans, 2001). Four categories emerged after the concepts were analyzed: desire to serve one’s needs, desire to serve God, desire to serve others, and desire to serve the organization. For each of these categories, subcategories were constructed to answer questions about the phenomenon such as why and how (Mellion & Tovin, 2003).

In the next stage of data analysis, axial coding, the researcher identified the major phenomenon and investigated the relationships among the categories and subcategories. Analyzing the categories and subcategories against the initial 49 concepts, the axial coding process narrowed these 49 concepts to six primary concepts that were further identified with two core categories. These two core categories were personal value and spiritual value. The findings revealed that the participants in this study are motivated to serve because they 1) personally value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to impact the lives of others, (b) desire to build meaningful relationships with others, and their (c) desire for personal enjoyment; and 2) they spiritually value their volunteer
activity as seen in their (a) desire to be obedient to God, (b) desire to grow spiritually, and their (c) desire to use their abilities to serve the church and God.

In the final stage of data analysis, selective coding, the researcher formed the theoretical structure of the analysis. All categories were unified around a core category that represented the central phenomenon of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The central category that ties all the categories in this study together is *the value that is intrinsically fulfilled through volunteering*. The volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization donate their time without pay because of the intrinsic value it yields, both personally and spiritually. They are motivated to donate their time without any monetary compensation because it is both personally and spiritually fulfilling.

This chapter has presented the research findings from data that were collected from the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization. Chapter 5 will present the conclusions of this study, as well as a discussion of the findings, recommendations for practical application, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of the volunteers at a Non-Profit Organization to discover what motivates them to volunteer and what sustains their participation over time. The intent was to increase the understanding of why individuals volunteer and how to sustain their involvement. The researcher explored the experiences, feelings, and attitudes of those who volunteer at a Christian Church, referred to in this study as the Non-Profit Organization, to identify what factors led them to volunteer and what factors inspired them to continue serving.

Because this study employed grounded theory methodology, the researcher did not make any predictions prior to the study. From the data the researcher collected, the researcher expected a theory to emerge that would contribute to a better understanding of volunteer motivation.

Research Questions

The following research questions helped to guide the research for this study.

Question 1

What motivates volunteers to donate their time?

1. What functions are filled by volunteering at the Non-Profit Organization?
2. What kinds of rewards, if any, motivate volunteers?

3. How do volunteers in a religious environment perceive the rewards related to volunteering?

**Question 2**

What conditions must be present to motivate unpaid workers to continue serving in a volunteer capacity?

1. To what extent do extrinsic motivators need to be in place to motivate volunteers?

2. To what extent do people volunteer for intrinsic reasons?

3. What is the role of leadership in motivating volunteers to continue serving over time?

Although the research questions in this study served as a guide to help direct the researcher in the data collection process, as the data was collected and the codification process began, the researcher relied on the concepts and categories that emerged from the data to inform analysis rather than the research questions. While the research questions served as a framework to collect the data, the prospective theory that emerged derived from data from questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and field observations.

**Summary of Findings**

From the data that were collected, 49 initial concepts were coded onto a spreadsheet through open coding. These concepts were words or phrases taken from the participants’ stories, experiences, feelings, and attitudes. The concepts were constantly compared with new data from each subsequent interview (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This coding and constant comparison continued until no new concepts could be identified and
theoretical saturation occurred. The researcher then grouped these 49 concepts into overarching categories and subcategories (Evans, 2001). Four categories emerged after the concepts were analyzed: desire to serve one’s needs, desire to serve God, desire to serve others, and desire to serve the organization. For each of these categories, subcategories were constructed to answer questions about the phenomenon such as why and how (Mellion & Tovin, 2003).

In the next stage of data analysis, axial coding, the researcher identified the major phenomenon and explored the relationships among the categories and subcategories. Analyzing the categories and subcategories against the initial 49 concepts, the researcher narrowed these 49 concepts to six primary concepts that were further identified with two core categories.

The two core categories that emerged were personal value and spiritual value. The findings revealed that the participants in this study are motivated to serve because they personally value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to impact the lives of others, (b) desire to build meaningful relationships with others, and their (c) desire for personal enjoyment; in addition, they spiritually value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to be obedient to God, (b) desire to grow spiritually, and their (c) desire to use their abilities to serve the church and God.

In the final stage of data analysis, selective coding, the researcher formed the theoretical structure of the analysis. All categories were unified around a core category that represented the central phenomenon of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The central category that ties all the categories in this study together is the value that is intrinsically fulfilled through volunteering.
Conclusions

The findings that emerged from this study reveal that the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization donate their time without pay because of the intrinsic value it yields. Intrinsic motivational theory holds that individuals will engage in certain activities and behaviors for internal reasons, such as doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction the activity yields (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The individuals at the Non-Profit Organization perceived volunteering to have intrinsic value, both personally and spiritually. They are motivated to donate their time without any monetary compensation because it is both personally and spiritually fulfilling. Following are the two core categories that emerged from the data, the supporting concepts from the literature, and the meaning of these findings.

*Core Category 1: Personal Values*

The volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization are motivated to serve because they value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to impact the lives of others, (b) desire to build meaningful relationships with others, and their (c) desire for personal enjoyment. Each of these intrinsic motivational factors is supported in the literature. First, the desire to impact the lives of others is supported by the *values* function in the functional approach. “One function that may be served by involvement in volunteer service centers on the opportunities that volunteerism provides for individuals to express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concern for others” (Clarey et al., 1998, p. 1517).

During the interview process, volunteers shared that they experienced personal satisfaction and were motivated to give their time when they were able to help others, see
people’s lives changed, and feel like they were making a difference. The following participant descriptions demonstrate the *values* function in the functional approach.

Volunteer 4 shared:

I want to help others. I have compassion for people who are in need. Even sometimes I feel like, how come others don’t see things the way I do – they don’t want to help other people? I realize that you can’t help everybody, but if there’s a need there and I can fill it, I just can’t turn my face. To me it’s just not about making a difference; I like to see people’s lives changed.

Volunteer 5 described:

Knowing that I am making a difference in the lives of others is huge! If you don’t see any results out of something, eventually you’re going to get burned out on it. And you’re going to look for something else that’s going to give you results. For me, I see the results of [Volunteer 5 states his volunteer activity]. What I do doesn’t affect everyone in the same way, but it affects some people greatly and it’s helping them. That’s what motivates me. [Volunteer 5 explains how his life has been impacted by others at the Non-Profit Organization]. Several months ago when my wife was pregnant, the doctors believed she had [Volunteer lists a disease]. Mike [name changed] prayed about it with me. He helped me out and encouraged me. He helped give us hope.

Volunteer 7 offered:

I like to see people happy. I like to help. In fact, it’s one of the boundaries I need to set in life, because if there is a need, I want to fill it. I like to do something that helps someone out. It helps me feel good about myself.

Volunteer 8 explained:

[Volunteering] makes me feel needed because I know I am helping others. I enjoy serving behind the scenes. Whenever I can help someone from the church, whether it is someone from the church or even a leader, it makes me feel good. For example, I was recently asked to help with [Volunteer 8 names the volunteer activity]. I have a lot of experience with [the volunteer activity], and I was able to help complete a task that was needed, and it made me feel good.

Volunteer 10 declared:

I wouldn’t feel guilty [if I were not volunteering]— I’d feel wasted, like I’m dead weight. People know what I am capable of, and if I walked away from [his volunteer activity], I’d be another statistic. I like knowing that I’m helping
[individuals] make great decisions and helping them turn their life around if they’re making bad decisions.

Volunteer 11 revealed:

I don’t want to see anyone hurting over anything. I want of fix it if there is something [wrong]. I want to help others and just be there for them. Brenda [name changed] wrote a note to me a couple of weeks ago and said that I have made a difference in her life. It made me feel so good. I thought, “Oh Gosh, what kind of crisis has she had in her life. What have I done to make her life better?” The little things like that show that we’re making a difference. What we’re doing is helping others, even though we don’t realize we’re helping them. That right there is worth it all by itself.

Volunteer 13 offered:

I enjoy volunteering because I can see that I am effective. The joy I get is because I can see the growth of the kids [Volunteer 13 is one of many teachers at the Non-Profit Organization]. They are talking to me, they are listening to me, and they are getting it. They are growing, and they are starting to ask really good questions on their level no matter what grade they’re in. And so that brings me joy. It’s like the Lord saying, “Good work.”

Volunteer 14 shared:

The Salvation Army has a motto: Christianity in Action. And I think that when you volunteer, you are putting what you believe into action. If I can show somebody who is going through a tough time – something along the same lines I have been through, such as my divorce or losing both of my parents – that there is light at the end of this tunnel, that something good will come from this, then why not be involved and be able to touch somebody positively?

The church volunteers, therefore, expressed that helping others and impacting the lives of others is a value that contributes to their motivation to volunteer. This finding is consistent with the values function in the functional approach to motivation.

The desire to build meaningful relationships with others is reinforced by both self-determination theory (SDT) and functionalism. According to SDT, one of the psychological needs that must be met for one to be intrinsically motivated is relatedness, where individuals can connect with others and feel socially valued (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
In addition, the *social* function in Functionalism explains that volunteers engage in unpaid helping activities to strengthen their social relationships. Clarey et al. (1998) theorize that “volunteering may offer opportunities to be with one’s friends or to engage in an activity viewed favorably by important others” (p. 1518). The church volunteers revealed that building relationships was a strong motivator for their volunteerism. These volunteers said they are motivated to serve because of the friendships they are able to build with others. For example:

Volunteer 1 said:

Serving has given me the opportunity to meet everyone at [the Non-Profit Organization]. There’s a sense of belonging there. I feel like [the Non-Profit Organization] gives me so much. There’s an opportunity to connect with others, and people are so supportive.

Volunteer 3 experienced:

I put 31 years into working with people that I didn’t have a choice of who I’d be working with, and I guess I came to the conclusion that now I don’t have to deal with people unless I want to. At [the Non-Profit Organization], it feels like family; there is a closeness here.

Volunteer 5 shared:

While I’m [Volunteer 5 names his volunteer activity], I am able to talk to others about things in my life. It has shown me another avenue – here is your church family here to help you just as I am here to help you. I am growing closer to the core people who are there.

Volunteer 8 expressed:

Volunteering gives me an opportunity to meet new people. When I am [mentions her volunteer activity], I get to say hi to others and introduce myself. This is good since I’m shy. At the regular church service, it would be hard for me to go up to someone and talk to them. But when I’m serving in [mentions her volunteer activity], I get to talk to people and get to know them. This is so important to me since my family doesn’t live here. This is my family.
Volunteer 9 described:

When I serve, [other volunteers] encourage me to keep on going. Even this past Sunday, Bob [not his real name] really encouraged me. I gave up smoking a couple of months ago, and just talking to him got me through it. Just the other day he reminded me that I made it through that and I can make it through anything. He said I was an overcomer!

Volunteer 11 stated:

I enjoy building friends at [the Non-Profit Organization]. I think it would be a completely different situation if we were all just co-workers. I think we all take into consideration what is in each other’s hearts. We’re friends, and that motivates me to keep showing up. I know what’s on Sandy’s [name changed], and I know how to be praying for her.

Participants indicated they enjoy their volunteer activities because they are able to build meaningful relationships and develop closeness with others. Both SDT and the functional approach support the finding that building relationships is a motivational factor for volunteerism.

The desire for personal enjoyment is also supported in the literature. Studies have shown (Kumar, Kallen, & Mathew, 2002; Linder, 1998) that individuals volunteer for reasons of personal satisfaction and the opportunity to engage in work that is of extreme interest to them. Studying the motivational factors of physicians who volunteer their time to teach, for example, Kumar, Kallen, and Mathew (2002) found that physicians volunteer their time due to the personal enjoyment that comes from volunteering. “It is gratifying that personal satisfaction is what drives a large number of physicians to take on volunteer teaching roles in the era of shrinking medical school budgets” (p. 123).

For the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization, the personal satisfaction that they received through volunteering was a predominant motivational factor. Participants
revealed that they served for the sheer pleasure it gave them. Some did not know the reason they enjoyed volunteering. For instance, Volunteer 2 said, “I enjoy participating. I don’t know why – it’s just fun!” Other participants were more descriptive in their responses. The following describes how volunteers enjoy their participation at the Non-Profit Organization:

Volunteer 3:

I enjoy [names his volunteer activity]. I’m having a good time. If I wasn’t having a good time, I wouldn’t be doing it. I enjoy the people and I’m having a good time with what I’m doing.

Volunteer 5:

If I didn’t enjoy what I am doing, I’d find a different avenue of [volunteering]. For instance, I’m not a big fan of [names a volunteer activity], so I don’t get involved in [names the volunteer activity]. So I choose to do what I’m doing now because I enjoy it. If I were asked to do something else – even something I don’t enjoy – I’d do it if I was requested to do it, but I would probably look for something else to continue doing [over time]. It helps when you enjoy something.

Volunteer 11:

I like it [the volunteer activity]. I like what we’re doing. When we first started, I didn’t know if I’d like it or not. But I really like it.

Volunteer 12:

If I didn’t enjoy it, I’d be less inclined to do it well. I might do it half-hearted or spend less time doing it. If you’re not enjoying it, maybe you’re not supposed to be doing it. God’s not going to call you to something you’re not going to enjoy. I really enjoy what I’m doing. It gives me a lot of pleasure.

Volunteer 13:

In my position, I love teaching, and that’s the joy in my position. There are certain joys in my position [volunteer 13 names several of the things she does].
Volunteer 14:

I’m having fun. When something isn’t fun, why do it? Obviously there are things we must do that aren’t fun. But when it is a volunteer position and you’re not required to do it, and you’re not getting a paycheck for doing it, you have to enjoy it to do it.

Personal enjoyment and satisfaction contributed to the motivation to serve at the Non-Profit Organization. This finding is consistent with the literature, which shows that personal satisfaction is one of the motivators for those who volunteer their time and services.

The findings in this study, as well as the body of research in the literature, suggest that volunteers want to be personally fulfilled and their volunteer activity to be of personal value. The volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization are motivated to serve and are likely to continue serving over time if they can make an impact on the lives of others, build meaningful relationships, and enjoy their volunteer work. For organizations that utilize volunteer laborers, the findings in this study suggest that an organization will keep their volunteers motivated to continue volunteering if they can discover the personal values of its volunteers. Organizations should create an environment where individuals can experience personal fulfillment. Buhler (2007) writes: “Employees today want personal and professional fulfillment…Today’s workforce wants to embrace strong core corporate values that are aligned with their own personal values” (p. 16).

The volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization were also motivated to donate their time because they value their volunteer activity as seen in their (a) desire to be obedient to God, (b) desire to grow spiritually, and their (c) desire to use their abilities to serve the church and God. These three values are broadly supported by SDT and functionalism.
According to SDT, individuals are motivated by activities that hold intrinsic interest for them, such as activities that have value (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The functional approach, namely the values function, also maintains that individuals are motivated by activities that are perceived to be of value (Carey et al., 1998).

The three values above, (a) desire to be obedient to God, (b) desire to grow spiritually, and the (c) desire to use one’s abilities to serve the church and God, were consistent topics during the interview process. For example, Volunteer 13 explained: “For me it boils down to obedience to what I’ve been asked to do by God. It’s obedience to God that is the driving force behind my motivation because, for some reason, he has placed in me a servant’s heart. I want to serve God and others. In regard to the desire to grow spiritually, Volunteer 14 said: I believe I am growing spiritually because what I am doing is pleasing to the Lord, and I feel that my personal relationship with Christ is growing. Being around a body of believers who have the same purpose and goals helps in this growth process. Volunteer 4 was motivated because she can use his abilities to serve the church and God: “I don’t want to neglect the gifts God gave me or use them just for me – I want them to be used for his purposes.”

While spirituality was intrinsically valuable for the church volunteers, a concept emerged during this study that has not been directly addressed in the literature: the notion that obedience to God, the desire to grow spiritually, and the desire to use one’s abilities to serve God are values that are intrinsically motivating. The volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization do not only donate their time because it is personally fulfilling but because they want to please God. If they feel they are being obedient to God and pleasing God, then there volunteerism is spiritually valuable; there is a direct connection to their
volunteering and their spiritual fulfillment. As suggested later, future research should examine spirituality in the volunteer workforce as a potential motivating factor. Spirituality in the workplace has been researched in recent years (Duffy, 2006; Marques, 2005), but the research is lacking in regard to the impact spirituality has in motivating individuals to donate their time. This finding has the potential to help those who oversee volunteers in faith-based settings. If individuals are motivated to serve because they are spiritually fulfilled, managers of volunteers might consider finding ways to nurture one’s spirituality. Nurturing a spiritual mindset may not only result in good outcomes within one’s own work environment, but ultimately it may have an effect on the organization; if individuals are spiritually fulfilled, this fulfillment can enhance their productivity and lead to a better overall performance of the organization (Marques, 2005).

This study showed that people will volunteer their time if their volunteerism is of intrinsic value. For the majority of volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization, extrinsic motivators do not need to be in place if their intrinsic needs are being met. In fact, for several individuals, extrinsic rewards were unappealing. When Volunteer 4 was asked if she would be motivated by receiving such things as a gift certificate to Starbucks, she said: “I would almost feel bad….Put that money toward a ministry that needs to grow or that needs the money.” For Volunteer 14, neither rewards nor expressions of appreciation were important. “Kudos are great, but if you’re volunteering just for that, you need to find another line of work.”

When Volunteer 5 was asked if he is motivated when he feels appreciated, he said: “If no one ever said anything that wouldn’t bother me because that’s not my motivating factor for doing it [volunteering].” Similarly, Volunteer 7 said, “It’s very nice
that you say, ‘Thanks for working [names her volunteer assignment]. But it doesn’t drive me to do it the next week.”

One of the research questions that helped to guide the research for this study was, how do volunteers in a religious environment perceive the rewards related to volunteering? Some cognitive psychologists (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; King, Hautaluoma, & Shikiar, 1982; Kohn, 1998; Ruenzel, 2000) argue that rewarding people for performing tasks that are inherently interesting to them with expected tangible rewards such as pay, awards, and prizes, decreases intrinsic motivation. In this study, however, when someone received a reward, the reward did not appear to reduce his or her intrinsic motivation to serve. Volunteer 10 said, “They’re [tangible rewards] kind of cool, but they’re not the reason I’m doing it.” When Volunteer 11 was asked if she was motivated by rewards, she said: “No, that’s just a nice perk. I think the first time I received a gift card I was surprised. I didn’t do it for that.” Volunteer 13 welcomed such things as gift cards. She said: “We’re always working toward something or reading or serving, but being able to take a 10-minute break and say, Hey go to Starbucks, don’t think of anything else, just sit there and relax; that I value more than just a verbal appreciation because it’s like giving me permission to take some time off.”

For the volunteers who participated in this study, extrinsic motivators did not seem to impact one’s commitment to volunteer. Even Volunteer 13, who enjoyed receiving gift cards, said that her service was not contingent upon receiving appreciation or rewards. Because the volunteers are intrinsically motivated by the value they place on finding personal and spiritual fulfillment, extrinsic motivation did not lead to positive or
negative outcomes. Therefore it is argued that when one is fulfilled both personally and spiritually, rewards and other extrinsic factors have little effect on one’s desire to serve.

Recommendations for Practical Application

According to the findings in this study, those who manage volunteers will motivate a volunteer workforce if the volunteers can make an impact on the lives of others, build friendships and lasting relationships, and enjoy their volunteer work. To create an environment which fosters such personal values, the following is recommended:

1. A volunteer organization should connect volunteers with known needs in the organization or community at large so volunteers can get a sense of fulfillment by enhancing the lives of others through their service. In addition to fulfilling needs, a volunteer organization can create a program where experienced volunteers train less experienced volunteers with the skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform activities and tasks. Experienced volunteers will have the potential of discovering personal fulfillment as they help others learn and grow.

2. A volunteer organization should create opportunities for individuals to build meaningful relationships. Leaders of volunteers can encourage volunteers to work in teams, as well as holding social events such as ice-cream socials, Christmas and other holiday parties, and volunteer appreciation events.

3. A volunteer organization should match people’s interest with their areas of service so that one’s work will be personally enjoyable. A questionnaire can be developed that specifically asks volunteers their likes, dislikes, skills, abilities, interests, etc. In addition, managers of volunteers should seek to create a positive
working environment, where people feel appreciated and humor and fun are encouraged.

According to the findings in this study, those who manage volunteers in faith-based organizations can also motivate a volunteer workforce if the volunteers perceive their activities to have spiritual value. To create an environment which encourages one’s spirituality, the following is recommended:

1. Provide opportunities for volunteers to grow spiritually, including Bible studies and prayer groups designed specifically for volunteers.

2. Those who volunteer should be encouraged to pray for each other while volunteering, especially if someone is feeling like he or she is in need of prayer.

3. Volunteers can be encouraged to share with each other the good things they perceive that God is doing in their lives.

4. Managers of volunteers can emphasize that serving each other and serving society is indeed a biblical value. For example, 1 Peter 4:10 says, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

Finally, it is recommended that managers of volunteers make a concerted effort to understand their volunteer workforce. In this study, the researcher, who is the principal leader of the Non-Profit Organization, interviewed those who donate their time each week. The interviews were invaluable in helping him understand the motivational forces behind his volunteer workforce. It is suggested that managers of volunteers conduct informal interviews with volunteers after they have been recruited. During the interview,
the following questions could be asked to help the manager understand the motivational forces behind the individual’s volunteerism:

1. What inspired you to choose this organization to volunteer? What is attractive to you about this organization?
2. What activity would be of most interest to you? What activity would you dislike participating in?
3. What are your expectations? In other words, what do you expect from volunteering?
4. How do you know when someone appreciates you? Do you like receiving small tokens of appreciation?
5. Do you work better independently, or would you rather work with others?
6. Does your desire to volunteer relate to you wanting to make an impact on the lives of others? Why or why not?
7. What do you consider an enjoyable working environment?
8. What gifts and abilities can you share with others? Do you bring any professional skills with you?

For faith-based organizations, the following questions can be added:

9. In what way does your volunteering relate to your desire to be obedient to God?
10. How do you think this volunteer activity will affect your life spiritually?
Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, there are several avenues for additional research in order to more fully understand what attracts and sustains volunteers in non-profit organizations.

Future research should focus on the connection between volunteer motivation and organizational performance. A motivated volunteer is likely to be more effective than an unmotivated volunteer, so future research needs to address how volunteer motivation impacts organizational performance. This study theorizes that people donate their time without pay because of the intrinsic value it yields, both personally and spiritually. Future research that is focused on the organizational performance of volunteer organizations could address the following research questions to expand upon the emerging theory in this current study:

1. To what extent, if any, does the nurturing of a volunteer’s personal values enhance the organizational performance of a volunteer organization?

2. To what extent, if any, does the nurturing of a volunteer’s spiritual values enhance the organizational performance of a volunteer organization?

Future research should also examine spirituality in the volunteer workforce as a potential motivating factor. Spirituality in the workplace has been researched in recent years (Duffy, 2006; McLaughlin, 2005; Marques, 2005), but the research is lacking in regard to the impact spirituality has in the volunteer workforce. Studies can address how spirituality affects volunteer motivation and how non-profit organizations can nurture a spiritual mindset.
In addition, researchers should investigate to what extent, if any, one’s spirituality or religiousness shapes the types of volunteer activities one pursues. Does a person who serves in a faith-based community, for example, favor certain types of activities or tasks? Is such a person less motivated to serve in a non-faith-based community or will that person volunteer his or her time as long as the person is being fulfilled both personally and spiritually?

Future research should also focus on the reasons individuals choose not to volunteer or reasons volunteers left their service. For this study in volunteerism, the majority of those who do not volunteer at the Non-Profit Organization did not respond to the questionnaire that was mailed to them. A study that focuses on the reasons people do not get involved or the reasons people quit may help expand the present understanding of volunteer motivation. In other words, are there certain activities, attitudes, forces, behaviors that “de-motivate” individuals?

Finally, to discover what sustains volunteer motivation over the long haul, it is recommended that an extended study be conducted with volunteers. If a study can be carried on over several years, researchers will have a better understanding of what sustains volunteer motivation.

Implications

This study has addressed the motivational forces that drive individuals to volunteer their time. From the real world data that was collected through interviews, questionnaires, and field observations, a theory emerged. The theory showed that the volunteers at the Non-Profit Organization volunteered their time because they were
intrinsically motivated as a result of the personal and spiritual fulfillment they received while serving as volunteers. This fulfillment was enough for them to be motivated to continue serving as volunteers. While personal fulfillment has been demonstrated to be a volunteer motivational force, the notion of spiritual fulfillment as a volunteer motivational factor is a newer concept and needs to be further explored.
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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VOLUNTEERS AT PATHWAY OF HOPE

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please be as honest as you can with your replies and answer from your own perspective. All information you give will be treated in complete confidence.

Section 1:

1. Please describe your participation at Pathway of Hope.

2. How long have you volunteered at Pathway of Hope?

3. In what capacity are you volunteering?

4. How much time per week on average do you serve?

5. Using the 7-point scale below, please indicate your intention to continue volunteering with this organization by circling the number that best indicates your position.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

   No intention          Very strong intention
   to continue volunteering     to continue volunteering
   with this organization        with this organization
Section 2:

Please list your motivations for engaging in volunteer work at Pathway of Hope. For what reasons do you serve as a volunteer?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Section 3:

Directions: Using the 7-point scale below, please indicate how important or accurate each of the following reasons for volunteering is for you.


 Reason for Volunteering                                           Rating
1. Volunteering can help me get my foot in the door at a place I would like to work.  _____
2. My friends volunteer.  _____
3. I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.  _____
4. People I’m close to want me to volunteer.  _____
5. Volunteering makes me feel important.  _____
6. People I know share an interest in community service.  _____
7. No matter how bad I’ve been feeling, volunteering helps me forget about it.  _____
8. I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.  _____
9. By volunteering I feel less lonely.

10. I can make new contacts that can help my business or career.

11. Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.

12. I can learn more about the cause for which I am working.


14. Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.

15. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.

16. I feel compassion toward people in need.

17. Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.

18. Volunteering lets me learn through direct “hands on” experience.

19. I feel it is important to help others.

20. Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.

21. Volunteering will help me succeed in my chosen profession.

22. I can do something for a cause that is important to me.

23. Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.

24. Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.

25. I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.

26. Volunteering makes me feel needed.

27. Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.

28. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.

29. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.
30. I can explore my own strengths. _____
31. I volunteer because I was asked to participate. _____
   This is an additional question not on the VFI.

Section 4:

Demographic Information (please check one answer for each question):

1. Name: __________________________________________________________

2. My gender is: Male _____ Female _____

3. My age is: Under 30 _____ 30-39 _____ 40-49 _____ 50-64 _____ 65+ _____

4. Education:
   Less than high school _____
   High School graduate _____
   Some college or some technical school _____
   College graduate or some additional professional school _____

5. My annual income is (optional): Under $25,000 _____ $25,000 – $49,000 _____ $50,000 - $99,999 _____ $100,000 or more _____
### VFI Factors and Related Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>No matter how bad I’ve been feeling, volunteering helps me forget about it</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>I can do something for a cause that is important to me</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I can make new contacts that might help my business or career</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Volunteering allows me to explore different career options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession</td>
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<td>Social</td>
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<td>My friends volunteer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>People I’m close to want me to volunteer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>People I know share an interest in community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>I can explore my own strengths</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This questionnaire was adapted from Clary et al. (1998) and Clary & Snyder (1999).
APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REGULAR ATTENDERS
AT PATHWAY OF HOPE

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please be as honest as you can with your replies and answer from your own perspective. All information you give will be treated in complete confidence.

Section 1:

1. Please describe your participation at Pathway of Hope (i.e. how often do you attend church, do you attend a small group or participate in any other activities at Pathway of Hope? etc.).

2. Do you volunteer your time in a ministry at Pathway of Hope? (If yes, please request to take the questionnaire titled, “Questionnaire for Volunteers at Pathway of Hope).

3. If you do not volunteer, please indicate why below (check as many boxes as appropriate):

   I do not volunteer at Pathway of Hope because:
   [ ] I already volunteer at another organization
   [ ] I have never been asked to participate at Pathway of Hope
   [ ] I do not know about the volunteer opportunities at Pathway of Hope
   [ ] I don’t feel I have anything to contribute
   [ ] I am too busy
   [ ] My work schedule prevents me from volunteering
   [ ] I have volunteered to serve elsewhere in the past and was not appreciated for the donation of my time
   [ ] I have volunteered elsewhere in the past and got burned out
   [ ] Other reason (if selecting this box, please write out your answer)
4. Using the 7-point scale below, please circle the number that indicates your intention to begin volunteering with this organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>Very strong intention to begin volunteering with this organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What might keep you from volunteering at Pathway of Hope?

6. What might motivate you to begin volunteering at Pathway of Hope?

Section 2:

Demographic Information. Please check one answer for each question:

1. Name: __________________________________________________________

2. My gender is: Male _____ Female _____

3. My age is: Under 30 _____ 30-39 _____ 40-49 _____ 50-64 _____ 65+ _____

4. Education:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or some technical school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate or some additional professional school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. My annual income is (optional):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 – $49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $99,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Volunteer Motivation – Extrinsic Rewards

- When you receive appreciation from the pastor or another leader, how does it make you feel?
- When you receive appreciation, do you feel inspired to continue serving?
- When you do not feel appreciated from the pastor or another leader, how does it make you feel?

- When you receive public recognition for your service from the pastor or another leader, how does it make you feel?
- When you receive public recognition, do you feel inspired to continue serving?
- When you do not receive public recognition from the pastor or another leader, how does it make you feel?

- When you receive praise for your service from the pastor or another leader, how does it make you feel?
- When you receive praise, do you feel inspired to continue serving?
- When you don’t receive praise from the pastor or another leader, how does it make you feel?

- If you have received any rewards for your service from the pastor or another leader, such as gift certificates to Starbucks or restaurants, awards or certificates, etc, how does it make you feel?
- If you have received such rewards, do you feel inspired to continue serving?
- If you have not received any rewards for your service from the pastor or another leader, such as gift certificates to Starbucks or restaurants, awards or certificates, etc, how does it make you feel?

Intrinsic Factors

- Do you enjoy volunteering at Pathway of Hope? Why or why not?
- What are the specific reasons you volunteer?

Competence (SDT)

- For your current volunteer assignment, do you feel you are capable of accomplishing your tasks?
- Do you feel you’ve been adequately trained?
• Have you been able to learn new skills or competencies as a result of volunteering? In what way (if any) is this beneficial to you?

**Autonomy (SDT)**
- Do you feel like you can make your own decisions when serving and have a sense of control?
- Do you feel like you have the freedom to accomplish tasks the best way you see fit?
- Do you feel like you participate in important decisions?

**Relatedness (SDT)**
- Have you been able to make new friends as a result of volunteering? If so, in what way (if any) do you find this beneficial?
- In what ways do you or don’t you enjoy volunteering with others?
- Do you feel like others enjoy serving along side you? Why or why not?

**Self-Efficacy (SCT)**
- Do you feel confident about performing tasks in your volunteer assignment?
- Has someone modeled to you how to do your task?
- Do you receive encouragement from your leader when you serve?
- Has there been a time when you felt unqualified or you felt like you didn’t have the talent or the gifts to perform your task? If you felt like you didn’t have the talent or gifts, did you let your leader know? If your leader knew how you were feeling, how did he or she respond?
- Do you like the environment in which you serve? Is it ever stressful? What can improve the working environment?
- Has volunteering boosted your self-esteem in any way?

**Spirituality**
- Do you think people in a church volunteer because they think God expects them to help and server others? How about you?
- Does volunteering and working with others assist you in your spiritual growth development?

**Vision of Pathway of Hope**
- When the pastor presents the vision of the church to you, are you motivated to serve? Why or why not?
- Do you volunteer because you are committed to the church’s vision?
- When the pastor encourages you to dream about making a difference with your life, does that inspire you to stay involved?
- One of the core values at Pathway of Hope states that we value every person’s gifts and abilities. Is this a reason you want to volunteer?
• Because Pathway of Hope has a culture of volunteerism, do you feel pressured to volunteer in any way?

Past Volunteer Experience
  • Do you volunteer anywhere else at this time?
  • Are there any places you volunteered but are no longer volunteering? Which places?
  • What were the reasons you stopped volunteering?