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Willingness to Volunteer Among University Students

by Gender and Holland Personality Type

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Many career development theories are based on the "matching men and jobs" notion proposed by Frank Parsons early in the twentieth century (Parsons, 1909). Theorists have proposed that one way to facilitate career development is to match the personality type of the individual with the occupational environment type (Holland, 1985). In fact, individuals who are satisfied with their work tend to be employed in occupations in which environmental and personality congruence is present (Holland, 1985; Swaney & Prediger, 1985). Further, individuals who are employed in occupations which are congruent with their personality type tend to evidence career stability and positive occupational adjustment (Spokane, 1985).

Many students begin to actively engage in career exploration during their college years. However, a significant number of college students resist the process of career exploration (Savickas, 1989). Various researchers have suggested that participation in volunteer work or experiential learning can help facilitate students' career development (Beale, 1984; Williams & Winston, 1985). Volunteer experience may provide additional information about individuals as potential employees as well as the characteristics of the occupations of interest.

Unfortunately, the number of college students who volunteer is declining (Sergent & Sedlacek, 1990). College

students often

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perceive that they do not have time to volunteer and solely need to focus on their studies. Garland (1985) noted that many students were primarily interested in activities which would further their potential to be employed or to enter the graduate/professional program of their choice. Mason-Sowell and Sedlacek (1984) noted that a great number of college students indicated that the primary purpose of attending college was to find a career. Many of these students may not realize the importance of work experience in career exploration. Thus, college students may fail to participate in work or volunteer experiences which may assist them in their career development and ultimate career choice.

Given that volunteer experiences may facilitate career exploration, the general purpose of this study was to investigate college students' willingness to volunteer in a variety of campus organizations. First, differences among willingness to volunteer based on the compensation for volunteer service were explored (i.e., willingness to volunteer for credit, money or no compensation). It was hypothesized that students would be more willing to volunteer if they received course credit or money for their time. Second, differences in the Holland personality type in choice of volunteer activities were examined. Researchers have found that volunteers in different organizations vary with regard to Holland type and motivation for volunteering (Sergent &

Sedlacek, 1990; Quade, 1986). The authors hypothesize that Volunteer

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Social types would be more likely than other types to indicate interest in volunteering in campus organizations. Finally, gender differences in choice of volunteer service were explored.

It was also hypothesized that women would be more likely to indicate a willingness to volunteer than their male counterparts.

Method

Participants

The participants were 932 entering students (48% female and 52% male) enrolled at a large eastern university. The sample was predominately White (84%) with 16% African American students. Students completed the measures during the summer orientation program which is typically attended by more than 90% of the entering students.

Instruments

Participants were administered a demographic information questionnaire as well as one of three randomly assigned forms of the Campus Involvement Interest Survey (Balenger & Sedlacek, 1991). Students were asked to rate their level of interest in volunteering in eight campus organizations on a five-point Likert scale. The eight campus organizations included a campus recruitment group, homecoming committee, service fraternity, student union programming board, campus hotline/crisis intervention service, as well as the counseling center, health center, and athletic department (see Table 1 for descriptions of

the volunteer opportunities in these organizations). The three Volunteer

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forms differed on the compensation for their involvement in campus organizations, with the first form referring to "serving as a volunteer", the second referring to "earning academic credit as a volunteer" and the third referring to "earning a monetary award as a volunteer". The participants were not aware that differences existed in the surveys.

Students were also administered the Self-Directed Search (SDS) (Holland, 1985). Holland theorized that there are six types that characterize individuals and occupational environments. Realistic types are often practical, athletic, mechanically inclined and curious about the physical world. They like to solve mechanical problems and operate tools and machinery. Investigative types tend to exhibit inquisitive, analytical, scientific and precise characteristics. These individuals enjoy abstract thinking and independent work environments. Artistic types are described as intuitive, imaginative, innovative and individualistic. They value the creative expression of themselves in their work. Social types tend to be friendly, helpful, idealistic, outgoing and understanding. They often enjoy teaching others and planning activities. Enterprising types are often self-confident, persuasive, enthusiastic and enjoy promoting ideas and selling things. Finally, Conventional types tend to be well-organized, accurate, methodical and conscientious. They often work well

within a structured situation and a highly ordered hierarchy.

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The Occupational Daydreams section of the SDS was used to identify the participant's high point personality type based on current occupational choice. This measure has been found to have adequate validity (Holland, 1963; O'Neil, Magoon, & Tracey, 1978). Internal consistency reliability coefficients for the SDS scales range from .67 to .94.

Analyses

The data were analyzed using a three-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with LSD post hoc tests at the .05 level of significance with survey form, gender and Holland type as the independent variables and the level of interest in volunteering in the eight campus organizations as the dependent variables.

Results

The MANOVA was significant for Holland personality type and gender. No significant interactions were found, and no significant main effect emerged for survey form.

Holland personality type

With regard to Holland personality type, differences emerged among students in their willingness to volunteer at the campus hotline, the counseling center and the health center. In all three organizations, the students with the greatest interest in volunteering (i.e., having the lowest scores on the Campus Survey) were Social, Conventional and Investigative types (see

Table 2). Specifically, students who were Social types indicated Volunteer

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the most interest in volunteering for both the counseling center and the campus hotline while students who were Conventional types were more interested in volunteering at the health center.

Overall, Realistic and Enterprising types indicated the least interest in volunteering (i.e., had the highest scores on the Campus Survey) in the campus hotline, counseling center and health center.

Campus Hotline/Crisis Intervention Service

Additional analysis of these data revealed that Social types indicated significantly more interest in volunteering at the campus hotline than Investigative, Artistic, Enterprising and Realistic types. Investigative types were more interested in this type of volunteer work than Realistic students.

Counseling Center

Social types were significantly more interested in volunteering at the counseling center than Investigative, Artistic, Realistic and Enterprising students. Again, Investigative types were significantly more interested in volunteering at the counseling center than Realistic and Enterprising students.

Health Center

Finally, differences emerged in interest in volunteering at the health center. Conventional types were more interested in this work than Investigative and Enterprising types.

Investigative types were more interested in volunteering at the Volunteer

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health center than Artistic, Realistic and Enterprising types. Social types indicated more interest in the health center than Artistic, Realistic and Enterprising types.

Gender differences

Additional analysis of the main effect for gender indicated that women were more interested in volunteering than men in six of the eight campus organizations (see Table 3). Women were more willing to volunteer than men with the campus tour group, homecoming committee, student program council, campus hotline/crisis intervention service, counseling center, and health center. There were no gender differences in willingness to volunteer with the athletic department or the service fraternity.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that, contrary to our expectations, college students did not differ in their stated interest in volunteering based on the compensation involved. No differences in willingness to volunteer were noted among students who were offered a monetary award, course credit or no payment for volunteer service. It is possible that compensation may be a more salient factor in actual volunteer service as opposed to stated interest in volunteering. However, it may also be that intrinsic interest in volunteering may be the main motivator for the students. This finding would be compatible with the results

of job satisfaction studies that indicate that intrinsic factors
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associated with the actual content of work are more predictive of job satisfaction than extrinsic factors associated with the work environment (Herzberg, Mauser, & Synderman, 1959; Hill, 1986-87).

Further, compensation may become more important as students begin to experience the personal, academic, and financial demands that accompany a college education. Finally, compensation may be more critical for students in leadership positions in campus organizations given the significant amount of time and energy they commit to their volunteer service. Future research might investigate the importance of compensation for volunteer work with advanced undergraduate students and student leaders. Also, the correlation between willingness to volunteer and actual volunteer service would be interesting to explore.

Additional analysis of these data indicate that, as expected, volunteering in campus organizations appears to appeal to a certain type of individual (Social and Conventional types). Further, students who were Social types indicated the most interest in volunteering for both the counseling center and the campus hotline. The finding that Social types were more likely to exhibit interest in volunteering was consistent with previous research (Fitch, 1987; Henderson, 1981) which suggests that a primary reason for volunteering was to connect and interact with others. An additional explanation for these findings may be that the Social types who completed the measures during their

orientation may view volunteering as an opportunity to meet
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people and make friends in college. The perceptions of volunteer opportunities at these organizations may be predominantly interactive, helpful, and altruistic which would be consistent with the characteristics of individuals considered Social types.

The finding that Conventional types indicated interest in volunteering at the health center may be due to the description of the volunteer tasks on the measure. Two of the three tasks listed included administrative assistance and clerical support. These tasks often require a methodical, conscientious and efficient individual. Not surprisingly, these characteristics are commonly found among individuals who are predominantly Conventional types.

Finally, these data provided support for the hypothesis that women would indicate greater interest than men in volunteering in campus organizations. Based on the descriptions of the volunteer tasks, it appears that the women in this sample were more likely than the men to indicate interest in providing campus tours, coordinating homecoming, social and cultural programs, as well as offering support to other students in need. One explanation for this finding may be that women are more likely than men to provide volunteer service. Future research might investigate gender differences in attitudes about volunteer service as well as actual volunteer behavior.

In summary, only certain types of students indicated

willingness to volunteer in several campus organizations. This
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may be due to the description of the tasks on the instrument or students' perceptions of the type of volunteer work available at these campus organizations. Clearly, participation in campus organizations provides students with important information about themselves and potential career choices. Career counselors and university educators might critically examine their volunteer recruitment and retention strategies to determine if they actually provide diverse volunteer opportunities of interest to a wide range of students. Many campus organizations may be limiting their effective use of volunteers by restricting the range of volunteer opportunities. For example, campus organizations could use students who like to initiate projects, sell things, organize activities and lead a group. These activities often appeal to Enterprising types, who according to our study, have little interest in volunteering for campus organizations. Campus organizations could describe and promote their volunteer activities in a manner that would appeal to Enterprising types. Publicity about volunteering should accurately describe the tasks involved and should attempt to reflect a variety of tasks that would appeal to various Holland types. Clearly, both campus organizations and college students would benefit from this added effort.

Further, counselors and educators might want to promote volunteering as an effective career exploration tool. Future

research might investigate the relationship between vocational
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identity and volunteer or work experience. Also, the efficacy of
programs which educate students about the benefits of applied
experience on career exploration would be interesting to explore.

To conclude, as counselors and educators who value the
importance of "hands-on" career exploration, we have a
responsibility to provide a greater variety of volunteer
opportunities and to make these options more attractive to more
college students in order to further assist all types of
individuals in their career exploration process.

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Table 1

Description of the Volunteer Opportunities Available in the
Campus Organizations

Campus Organization	Description of Volunteer Activities
Campus Recruitment	Provide campus tours for visitors and prospective students.
Homecoming Committee	Help to plan and coordinate the various activities related to the celebration of Homecoming.
Student Union Programming Board	Help to plan and implement social and cultural programs in the student union.
Campus Hotline/ Crisis Intervention	Provide distressed callers with support and information/referral assistance as a counselor on the campus "hotline".
Counseling Center	Provide support in one of the Center's services for students with special needs (e.g., Learning Assistance Service) or assist with research projects relating to student development.
Health Center	Work in the Health Center as a peer educator, or provide administrative/clerical support.
Athletic Department	Provide tutoring services to student athletes in your "area of expertise".
Co-ed Service Fraternity	Work with a national co-ed service fraternity on various campus and community service projects.

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Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Interest in Volunteering by
Holland Type Where Differences Were Found

	Campus Hotline		Counseling Center		Health Center	
Volunteer Opportunity	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Realistic	3.32	1.12	3.32	1.08	3.51	1.10
Investigative	2.90	1.28	3.06	1.13	3.02	1.25
Artistic	3.00	1.02	3.31	.91	3.46	.97
Social	2.56	1.11	2.66	1.17	3.07	1.07
Enterprising	3.09	1.23	3.42	1.06	3.53	1.13
Conventional	2.86	1.07	2.86	.69	2.57	1.27

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Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Interest in Volunteering by Gender

	Women		Men	
Volunteer Opportunity	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Campus Recruitment	2.66	1.12	3.08	1.58*
Homecoming Committee	2.49	1.12	3.26	1.11*
Student Union Programming Board	2.97	1.09	3.15	1.09*
Campus Hotline/ Crisis Intervention	2.64	1.19	3.30	1.14*
Counseling Center	2.91	1.16	3.39	1.01*
Health Center	3.04	1.24	3.48	1.06*
Athletic Department	3.11	1.24	3.12	1.18
Co-ed Service Fraternity	2.92	1.14	2.97	1.05

* Indicates significant differences at the .05 level.

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Research Report # 1-92

SUMMARY

Various researchers have suggested that participation in volunteer work or experiential learning can help facilitate students' career development (Beale, 1984; Williams & Winston, 1985). Volunteer experience may provide additional information about individuals as potential employees as well as the characteristics of the occupations of interest. Unfortunately, many college students fail to participate in work or volunteer experiences which may assist them in their career development and ultimate career choice.

Given that volunteer experiences may facilitate career exploration, the purpose of this study was to investigate college students' willingness to volunteer in a variety of campus organizations. The results of this study indicated that college students did not differ in their stated interest in volunteering based on the compensation involved. Further, volunteering in campus organizations appears to appeal to a certain type of individual (Social and Conventional types). Finally, women indicated greater interest than men in volunteering in campus organizations. The implications of these findings for career counselors and campus organizations are discussed.

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