

ADOLESCENTS OBTAIN POSITIVE VOLUNTEERING BELIEFS AFTER SERVICE PARTICIPATION: TRUTH OR MYTH?

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Research questions

In general, positive volunteering beliefs would enhance further participation among volunteers [1].

Our question is to examine the impact of the service nature to volunteering beliefs via volunteer satisfaction and time spent on volunteering.

Participants and sampling

Hong Kong adolescents were recruited with non-random sampling. The sample size is 2757 high school adolescents with volunteering experience. Females comprised 71.5% of the respondents. The mean age of the sample was 14.77 years (SD = 1.55).

Data collection

Participants anonymously answered a paper-and-pencil questionnaire.

Measures

Time spent as volunteer: actual number of hours spent on volunteering in the last 12 months.

Volunteer experience: one item of service satisfaction.

Service nature. 18 kinds of common services are used including visit, caring, program

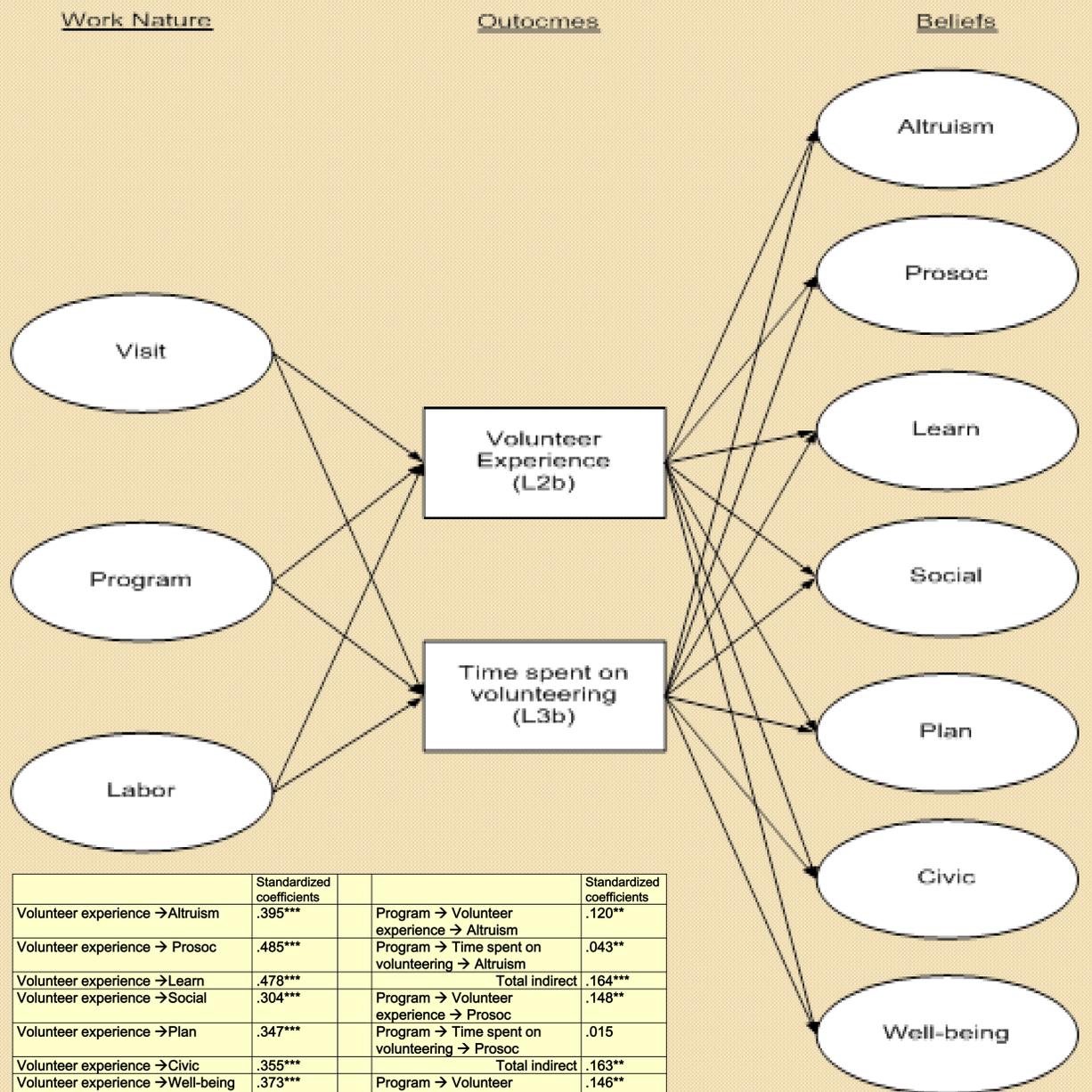
Volunteering beliefs. This was assessed by using the Revised Personal Functions of Volunteerism Scale [2], which consists of seven dimensions of beliefs related to the perceived benefits of volunteering, namely **altruism, prosocial competence (prosoc), learning, socializing with friends, career planning, civic participation, and well-being.**

Statistical approach

Mplus version 7.1 was used in analyzing the data. We first conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the service nature. Then, we examined the proposed model in terms of model fit.

Results (1)

We ran EFA for service nature with a 3-factor structure and ran CFA on the structure with good fit, $\chi^2(116) = 387.540, p < .001; RMSEA = .029$ (90% CI = .026-.032); CFI = .942; TLI = .933. **The three service natures are visit, program, and labor.**



| | Standardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients |
|---|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Volunteer experience → Altruism | .395*** | Program → Volunteer experience → Altruism | .120** |
| Volunteer experience → Prosoc | .485*** | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Altruism | .043** |
| Volunteer experience → Learn | .478*** | Total indirect | .164*** |
| Volunteer experience → Social | .304*** | Program → Volunteer experience → Prosoc | .148** |
| Volunteer experience → Plan | .347*** | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Prosoc | .015 |
| Volunteer experience → Civic | .355*** | Total indirect | .163** |
| Volunteer experience → Well-being | .373*** | Program → Volunteer experience → Learn | .146** |
| | | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Learn | .074*** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Altruism | .076** | Total indirect | .219*** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Prosoc | .027 | Program → Volunteer experience → Social | .093** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Learn | .130*** | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Social | .075*** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Social | .132*** | Total indirect | .168*** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Plan | .102** | Program → Volunteer experience → Plan | .106** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Civic | .134*** | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Plan | .058** |
| Time spent on volunteering → Well-being | .093*** | Total indirect | .164*** |
| | | Program → Volunteer experience → Civic | .108** |
| Visit → Volunteer experience | .422*** | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Civic | .076*** |
| Program → Volunteer experience | .305** | Total indirect | .184*** |
| Labor → Volunteer experience | -.339* | Program → Volunteer experience → Well-being | .114** |
| | | Program → Time spent on volunteering → Well-being | .053** |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering | .108 | Total indirect | .166*** |
| Program → Time spent on volunteering | .569*** | Labor → Volunteer experience → Altruism | -.134* |
| Labor → Time spent on volunteering | -.181 | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Altruism | -.014 |
| | | Total indirect | -.148* |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Altruism | .167*** | Labor → Volunteer experience → Prosoc | -.164* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Altruism | .008 | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Prosoc | -.005 |
| Total indirect | .175*** | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Prosoc | -.005 |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Prosoc | .205*** | Total indirect | -.169* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Prosoc | .003 | Labor → Volunteer experience → Learn | -.162* |
| Total indirect | .208*** | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Learn | -.023 |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Learn | .202*** | Total indirect | -.185* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Learn | .014 | Labor → Volunteer experience → Social | -.103* |
| Total indirect | .216*** | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Social | -.024 |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Social | .128*** | Total indirect | -.127* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Social | .014 | Labor → Volunteer experience → Plan | -.117* |
| Total indirect | .143*** | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Plan | -.018 |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Plan | .146*** | Total indirect | -.136* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Plan | .011 | Labor → Volunteer experience → Civic | -.120* |
| Total indirect | .157*** | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Civic | -.024 |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Civic | .150*** | Total indirect | -.145* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Civic | .014 | Labor → Volunteer experience → Well-being | -.126* |
| Total indirect | .164*** | Labor → Time spent on volunteering → Well-being | -.017 |
| Visit → Volunteer experience → Well-being | .157*** | Total indirect | -.143* |
| Visit → Time spent on volunteering → Well-being | .010 | | |
| Total indirect | .167*** | | |

Results (2)

- Volunteer satisfaction was positively associated with the seven volunteering beliefs (all $p < .001$).
- Time spent on volunteering was positively associated with six beliefs (all $p < .05$).
- Visit and program were positively associated with volunteer satisfaction ($p < .001$), but labor was negatively associated with satisfaction ($p < .05$). Program was positively associated with time spent on volunteering ($p < .05$), but labor was negatively associated with time spent on volunteering ($p < .05$).
- For visit and program, significant positive indirect effects were observed through satisfaction or time spent on several volunteering beliefs ($p < .05$). For labor, significant negative indirect effects were found ($p < .05$).

Conclusions and implications

This study shows that participation does not always bring positive beliefs to volunteers. Policy makers and social workers should articulate the nature of the service clearly. Otherwise, volunteers may perceive the service as meaningless labor. With negative volunteering beliefs, further volunteering participation would be hampered. Prior participation does not guarantee future participation.

Reference:

- [1]: Stukas, A.A., Synder, M., & Clary, E.G. (2016). Understanding and encouraging volunteerism and community involvement. *Journal of Social Psychology, 15*, 13, 243-255.
[2]: Law, B.M.F., Shek, D.T.L., & Ma, C.M.S. (2011). Construction and validation of the Revised Personal Functions of Volunteerism Scale in a Chinese context. *Social Indicators Research, 100*, 517 – 537.