

Narcissism and the Motivation to Engage in Volunteerism

Research Thesis

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by

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### Abstract

Research suggests that volunteerism and narcissism are at all-time highs amongst young people (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2007; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). The present study used a Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002) framework to understand why people volunteer and examined whether volunteer motivation was associated with narcissism. Because narcissists strive to self-promote (Wallace, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2005), it was predicted that narcissism would be positively associated with extrinsic motivations to volunteer (e.g., enhancement) and negatively associated with intrinsic motivations to volunteer (e.g., enjoyment). For the study, 350 participants completed a series of personality inventories, including inventories of narcissism, empathy, and self-esteem. Participants then completed a questionnaire that assessed if they had volunteered over the past 12 months and why they volunteer. When narcissism was measured with a composite measure consisting of entitlement, exploitativeness, and grandiosity, narcissism was positively associated with identified/integrated, introjected, and external motivations, even while controlling for self-esteem and empathy, suggesting that narcissists experience more pressure to volunteer. When narcissism was measured with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988), results failed to predict volunteer motivation, supporting concerns about instrument content validity (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). Findings suggest that narcissists are highly motivated, even in the realm of volunteering. Implications concerning volunteering with a narcissist are discussed.

**Keywords:** Volunteer; Motivation; Narcissism; Self-Determination Theory

### Narcissism and the Motivation to Engage in Volunteerism

Researchers have long attempted to understand the phenomenon of volunteering. The idea of contributing time and energy without the expectation of compensation has inspired both researchers and organizations alike to better understand volunteerism. The knowledge is used not only to understand volunteer behavior but to recruit and sustain these volunteers (e.g. Shye, 2010).

Between 2009 and 2010, 63 million Americans volunteered (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). This number represents a 30 year volunteer high and equates to 8.1 billion hours of service and 173 billion unpaid dollars (Corporation for Community Service, 2007; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). What motivates these 63 million individuals to volunteer? What personality traits do they possess? In this thesis, the personality variable of narcissism is examined, and volunteer motivation is conceptualized using a Self-Determination Theory framework (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002). In the sections below, Self-Determination Theory is briefly explained, and personality variables associated with volunteerism are examined.

#### **Self-Determined Motivation**

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000; 2002) represents a *meta-theory* that describes humans as active organisms motivated towards mastery and growth. However, individuals participating in behaviors that reflect motivation towards mastery and growth is not always ensured; they may be confronted with environments that hinder rather than support growth towards mastery. Therefore, the theory represents an ongoing battle between feeling motivated towards mastery and growth and finding oneself in social environments that either support or hinder that growth.

Within the *formal* theory of Self-Determination are five mini-theories that are used to explain motivation: Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), and Goals Contents Theory (GCT; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The first of the five mini-theories, Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), explains intrinsic motivation as being motivated inherently or because one endorses a behavior. In the context of volunteering, one's volunteer work would be deemed intrinsic if one volunteers because the activity is enjoyable. Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) looks into aspects of the environment, such as reward systems, and aspects of personality, such as competency, to investigate just how they affect individuals' intrinsic motivations.

The second of the five mini-theories, Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), looks at a different type of motivation: extrinsic motivation. Unlike intrinsic motivation, one would engage in extrinsically motivated behavior for a reason other than the inherent nature of the behavior. For example, in the context of volunteering, one would be motivated extrinsically, if one chose to volunteer for the recognition received.

Though extrinsic motivation can be looked at independently, there are varying degrees of extrinsic motivation: external regulation, introjection regulation, and identification/integration regulation. These motivations represent different degrees of internalization, or autonomy, where external regulation represents the least autonomous and identification/integration represents the most. External regulation includes engaging in a behavior for the purpose of an external motive such as to fulfill a requirement or because of the possibility of a reward. Introjected regulation represents motivation to engage in a behavior to protect one's ego or self-worth. Finally, identified/integrated motivation represents engaging in a behavior for reasons other than the inherent enjoyment of the behavior itself (e.g. one feels an activity is important).

The third of the five mini-theories, Causality Orientations Theory (COT), reflects the idea that individuals differentiate in how they orient towards certain motivations. Individuals may be motivated autonomously, which is choosing to engage in an activity due to the interest, care, or value placed on an activity. In the context of volunteer behaviors, autonomy is encompassed in the motive, “I volunteer because I care about others.” Individuals may also be motivated by control, which is focused on outside influences, such as recognition, reward, or obligation. In the context of volunteering, control is encompassed in the motive, “I volunteer as a course requirement.” In addition, one may be motivated by impersonal or amotivation, which reflects orientation towards anxieties regarding competency or not knowing how one is motivated.

The fourth mini-theory outlined by Ryan and Deci (2000) is Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT). This theory looks at how motivation affects health and well-being. The theory explains that autonomy (i.e., choicefulness) and competency and relatedness (i.e., personal connection with others) are more closely related to well-being. Therefore, environments supporting those tendencies are desirable. Environments not supporting those tendencies could lead to disadvantages in terms of functioning.

The fifth and final mini-theory is referred to as Goal Contents Theory (GCT). This theory explains how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations behave in regards to how they affect motivation and wellness. Intrinsic goals are looked at as being distinct from extrinsic goals. For example, intrinsic goals may reflect being motivated towards concern over relationships as compared to extrinsic goals which could reflect concerns over popularity. The former intrinsic goal would be associated with greater well-being.

The theory can be applied to volunteer motivation. With the first (CET), second (OIT), and third (COT) mini-theories in mind, I conceptualized volunteer motivation into different types

of motivations. For the purpose of the present study, motivations were categorized into external, introjected, identified/integrated, and intrinsic motivations. An example of an external volunteer motivation was, "I volunteer because I feel pressure from others." An example of an introjected volunteer motivation was, "I volunteer because I want to feel needed." Identified/integrated was depicted with an example such as, "I volunteer because I want to be with my friends." Finally, an example of intrinsic motivation included, "I volunteer because it's fun" (See Appendix for all items assessing volunteer motivation).

## **PERSONALITY**

A review of the volunteer literature demonstrates relationships between personality traits and volunteer behavior. Traits such as extraversion and agreeableness have all been found to be related to volunteer behavior, as have empathy and self-esteem (e.g. Elshaug & Metzger, 2001; Mayer, Fraccastoro, & McNary, 2007; Omoto, Snyder, Hackett, 2010; Penner, 2002; Unger & Thumhuri, 1997). For example, in one study, Elshaug and Metzger (2001) looked at the Big Five (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008) personality inventory, a popular personality measure, and the volunteer behavior of food preparers and firefighters to determine whether or not a relationship existed between the five inventory traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) and their volunteer behavior. For both groups of volunteers, agreeableness and extraversion were positively correlated the participants' volunteer behavior, suggesting the idea that certain dispositional traits may predict volunteer behavior.

Empathic concern has also been found to be positively correlated with volunteer behavior (Unger & Thumhuri, 1997). In a survey assessing empathy, volunteer behavior, and length of commitment of 405 United States adults, results revealed that empathic concern was significantly and positively associated with volunteer behavior and length of commitment.

These results suggest that those who were more empathic were likely to engage in volunteer behaviors and were also more committed volunteers in terms of length of service.

In addition, the personality trait of self-esteem has been examined in the volunteer literature (e.g. Mayer, Fraccastoro, & McNary, 2007). When individuals viewed themselves as meaningful to an organization, they tended to volunteer more days per year and for a longer length of time compared to those who did not view themselves as meaningful to an organization. These findings suggest that organizations need to communicate that volunteers are valued in order to motivate them to devote more time to the organization.

### **Goals of the Volunteer**

Considering the fact that the national volunteer rate is at a 30-year high, it may be tempting to think of the current generation as more caring, empathic, or selfless than ever before (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007). The existing literature would partially support this assumption, since empathy is a predictor of volunteer motivation (Unger & Thumhuri, 1997). However, the 30-year high does not necessarily reflect all volunteer motivation as being due to empathy or compassion for others. Rather, there exist additional motivations that are not easily identifiable through data and statistics alone.

First, the 30-year volunteer high is driven primarily by three age-groups of individuals: older teens, mid-life adults and older adults (Corporation for Community Service, 2007). One of these driving forces, older teens, are volunteering more, but their motives are not entirely “voluntary.” In recent years, high school students have faced more requirements and have felt more pressure than ever before to volunteer. These requirements have forced students to participate in “involuntary volunteering”--volunteering because they have to and not necessarily because they want to (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). These trends have led to an increase in the

number of overall volunteers. For example, the percent of teens volunteering between 1989 and 2006 has nearly doubled, rising from a rate of 13.4% to 26.4% (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007).

In addition to high school requirements, teens are also facing a different type of pressure to volunteer: college admissions. In a recent Community Service and College Admissions survey (Do Something, 2011), community service ranked fourth behind GPA, SAT/ACT, and extra-curricular activities in regards to college admissions considerations. With community service increasing in value in the realm of college admissions, teens may be volunteering now more than ever before to get an edge on the competition and impress admissions officers.

With these recent trends in mind, the nature of volunteer motivation has changed over time. Put another way, volunteer motivation may reflect self-serving, extrinsic motivations rather than selfless, intrinsic motivations. Given that volunteer work looks good on college applications and job resumes, volunteer opportunities may attract some personality types more so than others. For example, more narcissistic individuals may gravitate towards volunteer work, because volunteer work affords one the opportunity to self-promote. Coincidentally, the current generation appears to be more narcissistic than ever before (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Therefore, an examination of the association between narcissism and volunteerism is warranted.

### **An Overview of Narcissism**

Clinical psychologists use the term narcissism to refer to a diagnosable disorder, known as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD; American Psychiatric Association, 2000), which describes about 1% of the general population. By contrast, social psychologists have adopted the term, narcissism, to refer to a measurable personality trait found in the general population (Raskin & Terry, 1988).



Characteristics of high narcissism includes inflated self-views, feelings of entitlement, and believing that one is better, unique, or more special than others (Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Narcissists also tend to be selfish, experience less guilt and empathy, show disinterest in caring, committed relationships, and have high self-esteem (e.g., Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, & Kernis, 2007; Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; Carroll, 1987).

The correlation between narcissism and self-esteem deserves clarity due to the vast differences between a narcissist and an individual with high self-esteem (Campbell, et al., 2002). These differences can be found in the different domains where positivity resides: for a narcissist, positivity resides in agentic domains (e.g. extraversion; dominance) and for an individual with high self-esteem, positivity resides in communal (e.g. agreeableness; intimacy) domains.

Examining specific traits related to agentic and communal domains, Campbell et al., (2002; 2007) found that narcissists rated themselves as being less moral than others, while those with high self-esteem rated themselves as being more moral. In addition, narcissists rated themselves as less agreeable than their counterparts. What these findings demonstrate is that narcissism is not “really high self-esteem,” because narcissists are not concerned with communal traits.

Traditionally, narcissism has been most commonly assessed with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Those who score high on the scale are deemed more narcissistic in that they tend to have inflated views of the self, they work in ways to maintain positive views of the self, and they also engage in relationships that lack intimacy and warmth (Emmons, 1987; Foster, Shriram, & Campbell, 2006; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). According to Raskin and Terry (1988), there are seven subscales of the NPI: Authority, Superiority, Vanity, Entitlement, Exploitativeness, Exhibitionism, and Self-sufficiency. Others

have claimed that there are four (Emmons, 1987; 1984) and others three (Ackerman et al). Therefore, there has been critical analysis over the NPI. Several scholars (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009; Brunell et al., under review; Foster et al., under review) have argued that the NPI does not adequately assess the subscales of narcissism based on the inadequacies of the psychometrics, such as low subscale reliabilities. Furthermore, some content aspects of narcissism are missing from the measure. For example, Brown et al. (2009) argue that the NPI does not fully encompass narcissistic characteristics of exploitativeness, grandiosity, and entitlement. For these reasons, narcissism in the present thesis was measured with both the NPI and a composite measure of narcissism that includes assessments of entitlement, grandiosity, and exploitativeness.

### **Narcissism and Cultural Changes**

According to Twenge and Campbell (2009), the current generation is more narcissistic than ever before, and popular culture and society's changing value system are attributed to this incidence. The authors claim that this "epidemic" has long-term consequences that are damaging to oneself and to society as a whole, due to concerns being focused on the self and due to the promotion of an unrealistic and unattainable lifestyle.

Cultural changes and statistics lend support to this idea of a narcissism "epidemic." First, cultural changes can be observed from the increase in self-promotion, materialism, and entitlement evidenced in society. With 9 million procedures completed in the past year, plastic surgery is becoming more common than ever before, and now is even considered acceptable by more than 50% of Americans (American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2011). Besides plastic surgery, cultural changes can be evidenced in examples such as the rise in narcissistic

song lyrics, the increase in credit card debt, and the desire for larger square footage of homes (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

Besides the rise in narcissism as evidenced in cultural changes, narcissistic rates measured in the general population have risen amongst young people during the past twenty years (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008). In a cross-temporal meta-analysis, a study found that mean narcissism scores, as measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988), increased across 85 samples of college students between 1979 and 2006. The same data shows a 30% increase in narcissism scores from today's youth versus data collected between 1979 and 1985. This trend suggests that young people endorse more narcissistic traits today as compared to previous generations.

### **The Present Study**

Although Twenge (2006) and Twenge and Campbell (2009) document that narcissism and volunteerism are on the rise, no study has ever examined if a link exists between these two variables. Given narcissists' selfish, self-serving nature, it seems unlikely that empathy, guilt, and forming relationships are at the heart of their motives to volunteer. Rather, narcissists might be more inclined to volunteer for recognition, reward, or to meet requirements for a job or a college course.

It is important to understand the association between narcissism and volunteerism because of the potential negative implications associated with narcissism. For example, narcissists are prone to emerge as leader in leaderless situations (Brunell et al., 2008), but narcissistic leaders are significantly more likely than non-narcissistic leaders to make risky decisions that are bold and attention-seeking (e.g., Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007). When

considered in the context of any organization, and especially a volunteer one, these effects could be detrimental.

In the present study, a survey design was used to assess the extent to which narcissism was associated with volunteerism, while simultaneously examining the independent roles of self-esteem and empathy. Hypotheses are as follows:

H1a: Narcissism would be negatively associated with identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation to volunteer in that narcissistic individuals would be less likely to report volunteering for the inherent nature of the activity.

H1b: Narcissism would be positively associated with introjected and extrinsic motivation to volunteer in that narcissistic individuals would be more likely to report volunteering for external reward systems.

H2a: Empathic concern would be negatively associated with introjected and extrinsic motivation in that individuals high in empathic concern would be less likely to report volunteering for external reward systems.

H2b: Empathic concern would be positively associated with identified/integrated and personal intrinsic motivation in that those high in empathic concern would be more likely to report volunteering for the inherent nature of the activity.

H3a: Self-esteem would be negatively associated with introjected and extrinsic motivation in that those high in self-esteem would be less likely to report volunteering for external reward systems.

H3b: Self-esteem would be positively associated with identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation in that those high in self-esteem would be more likely to report volunteering for the inherent nature of the activity.

## Method

### Participants

Participants included 350 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at The Ohio State University. Partial course credit was given in exchange for participation. Of the 350 participants, 27 participants were not included in final analyses due to incomplete survey responses. Therefore, 323 participants were included: 129 were male, 161 were female, and for 33 participants, gender was not recorded. The average age of participants was 19.29 years ( $SD = 3.39$ ), and the majority of participants (81.4%) identified as Caucasian.

### Materials and Procedure

Upon arriving to the lab, participants were asked to complete several validated personality measures and a measure of volunteerism. These measures were presented via a computer program, and they were presented in the same order for each participant. Prior to completing the surveys, participants gave consent and were informed that the study would take approximately 45 minutes.

#### *Measuring Narcissism.*

The first measure was the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The NPI is a 40-item measure that requires participants to choose between two statements; one of the statements is deemed narcissistic whereas the other is not. For example, a participant would choose between one of the following statements: “I am much like everybody else” or “I am an extraordinary person.” A score of 0 is assigned to non-narcissistic responses while a score of 1 is assigned to narcissistic responses. Scores are then summed to create an overall index of narcissism ranging in value from 0 to 40; higher scores on the NPI represent

higher levels of narcissism. For the current sample, internal consistency was adequate ( $\alpha = .83$ ;  $M = 15.80$ ,  $SD = 6.58$ ).

Following completion of the NPI, participants completed three additional measures to assess three key aspects of narcissism: grandiosity, entitlement, and exploitativeness (narcissism composite hereafter). The first scale, the Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale (NaGS; Rosenthal, Hooley, & Steshenko, 2011), was used to assess grandiosity. The measure consists of 16 grandiose adjectives (e.g., “envied,” “glorious,” “superior”) followed by a 7-point scale that participants use to rate the degree of relatedness with the grandiose adjectives. A score of 1 would represent “*not at all*” while a score of 7 would represent “*extreme*” relatedness to the adjective. Higher scores represent more grandiose characteristics. Internal reliability of the scale yielded high consistency ( $\alpha = .94$ ;  $M = 54.25$ ,  $SD = 17.66$ ).

The next measure, the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004), was used to assess entitlement. The measure consists of 9 statements. Participants rated the degree to which these statements reflected their own beliefs. Statements included, “Great things should come to me” and “I deserve more things in my life.” Scoring involved a 7-point Likert scale with a score of 1 representing *strong disagreement* and a score of 7 representing *strong agreement*. Higher scores represent individuals possessing greater feelings of entitlement. Reliability was adequate ( $\alpha = .85$ ;  $M = 30.25$ ,  $SD = 10.13$ ).

The Interpersonal Exploitativeness Scale (IES; Brunell et al., 2012) was used to assess the exploitation of others. The scale consisted of 8 statements, and participants rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with those 8 statements using a 7-point Likert scale. Statements varied from “Only weak people worry about fairness” to “Vulnerable people are fair game.” A score of 1 meant *strong disagreement* with a statement while a score of 7 meant

*strong agreement*. Reliability was high ( $\alpha = .92$ ;  $M = 18.63$ ,  $SD = 10.25$ ); higher scores represent greater interpersonal exploitativeness. The Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale, the Psychological Entitlement Scale, and the Interpersonal Exploitativeness Scale were all used to create a composite score ( $\alpha = .75$ ) of narcissism (See Appendix for details of shared variance of these constructs).

In addition to scales measuring traits of narcissism, participants also completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to assess global self-esteem. For the measure, individuals specify, with a 5-point scale, the degree to which they agree or disagree with a series of 10 statements. A score of 1 on the scale indicates *strong disagreement* while a score of 5 indicates *strong agreement*. Overall scores are computed by adding the responses to the 10 statements. Higher scores represent higher levels of self-esteem. Examples of statements include: “I certainly feel useless at times,” “I feel that I have a number of good qualities,” and “I am able to do things as well as most other people.” For the current sample, internal consistency was adequate ( $\alpha = .82$ ;  $M = 38.48$ ,  $SD = 6.13$ ).

The last scale, the empathic concern subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980), assessed empathy by presenting participants with different scenarios and then asking how well the scenarios described them. In order to do this, participants were provided with a 5-point scale that ranged from a score of 1 (“*does not describe me well*”) to a score of 5 (“*describes me very well*”). An item reflecting empathic concern included, “When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them” ( $\alpha = .76$ ;  $M = 26.88$ ,  $SD = 4.48$ ). Higher scores represent higher empathic concern.

### ***Volunteer Motivation.***

After completing the personality questionnaires, participants were asked to indicate whether they had or had not volunteered over the course of the past 12 months. Participants who reported volunteering within the past 12 months rated 64 statements reflective of volunteer motivation. Statements for the measure were pulled from the Volunteers Functions Inventory (VFI; Clary et al., 1998) or adapted from the Motives for Physical Activities Measure – Revised (MPAM-R; Ryan, Frederick, Lepas, Rubio, & Sheldon, 1997) to reflect motives for volunteerism. However, items on these two measures were not exhaustive. Therefore, additional motivations were added to the measure in an attempt to create a more complete list of volunteer motives. See the Appendix for the complete list of items.

The goal of the volunteer measure was to assess motivation using the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Therefore, I categorized each statement into the classes of Self-Determination Theory: intrinsic motivation, identified/integrated motivation, introjected motivation, and extrinsic motivation. Examples of volunteer motivation statements included intrinsic motivations such as, “I volunteer because it’s fun.” Identified/Integrated motivations reflected statements such as, “I volunteer because I feel a personal connection to the organization.” “I volunteer because it’s what I am supposed to do,” represented introjected motivators, and lastly, external motivators were reflected with statements including, “I volunteer because I feel pressure from others.” Participants used a 7-point Likert scale to indicate how true each statement was of them. Scores of 1 represented the statement “*not being true at all*” for the participant while scores of 7 represented being “*very true*” of the participant. Higher scores represent a greater endorsement of each regulatory style.

## **Results**

Descriptive statistics revealed that 66.3% of participants reported volunteering in the past



12 months. The average age for these participants was 19.41 years ( $SD = 3.39$ ). The majority of these volunteers were female (56%), and the majority (81%) identified as Caucasian.

A repeated measures analyses of variance revealed that participants were more motivated by intrinsic reasons ( $M = 5.26$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) followed by identified-integrated reasons ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), introjected reasons ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ), and lastly, external reasons ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ );  $F(1.59, 213) = 119.93$ ,  $p < .001$  (with the Greenhouse-Geisser correction for the violation of the sphericity assumption).

Table 1 displays the intercorrelations among measures. NPI scores were not correlated with any of the motivations to volunteer. However, the narcissism composite was positively correlated with external motivation to volunteer, suggesting those who score high on the composite report greater external pressure and control (e.g., recognition) to volunteer. The narcissism composite was also positively correlated with the NPI, suggesting relatedness between the two measures.

Intercorrelations among measures revealed the Rosenberg as negatively associated with introjected and external motivations to volunteer, suggesting those who score lower on self-esteem, volunteer because of pressure and control. Lastly, the empathic concern subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index was positively associated with intrinsic and identified/integrated motivations and negatively associated with introjected and external motivations. This pattern suggests those who score high in empathy volunteer for more intrinsic reasons and suggests that those who score low in empathy volunteer more for pressure and control.

### **Hypotheses Tests**

Hypotheses tests examined the extent to which narcissism predicted volunteer motivation, while controlling for self-esteem, empathy, and gender. In order to examine these

questions, multivariate regression procedures were computed (see Edwards, 1995) to allow examination of whether narcissism was more strongly related to one form of volunteer motivation over another.

Multivariate regression provides individual estimates for the four outcome variables (e.g. intrinsic, identified/integrated, introjected and external). The advantage is the ability to investigate the independent effects of narcissism for each type of motivation taken together in one analysis. Multivariate regression provides a statistic, the Wilks'  $\lambda$ , a kind of test (distributed as an  $F$ -test), that examines whether the relationship between narcissism and motivation was significant overall. If the Wilks'  $\lambda$  is statistically significant, then narcissism is associated with the four forms of motivation considered together, but the effects of narcissism are different for each form of motivation.

First, I computed a multivariate model using NPI scores, self-esteem, empathy, and sex to predict each of the four forms of motivation. The results are displayed in Table 2. When narcissism was assessed with the NPI, it failed to predict motivation. Results did show that self-esteem was negatively associated with external and introjected motivation, but not associated with identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation, suggesting that those who scored lower on self-esteem endorsed pressure and control as volunteer motivations. Results in this analysis also revealed empathy as a significant predictor of volunteer motivation. The more empathic participants were, the more they endorsed identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation and the less they endorsed external motivation as reasons they volunteer, suggesting that more empathic individuals are motivated more by autonomy than control. Analyses also revealed that women were more likely than men to endorse intrinsic motivation; otherwise, sex was not a predictor of volunteer motivation.

Thus, it would seem that narcissism is not a predictor of volunteer motivation. However, the picture changes somewhat when the composite of narcissism was used instead of the NPI. When narcissism was assessed with the narcissism composite, significant associations were found between motivations. The narcissism composite was significantly associated with external, introjected, and identified/integrated motivation to volunteer but was not associated with intrinsic motivation, suggesting that more narcissistic individuals are motivated by control and are not motivated by autonomy. In this model, empathy was positively associated with introjected, identified/integrated, and intrinsic motivation but was not associated with external motivation, suggesting that more empathic individuals are motivated by both autonomy and control. Finally, this model revealed that self-esteem continued to negatively predict external and introjected motivation but not identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation. In regards to sex as a predictor, women, again, were more likely than men to endorse intrinsic motivation; otherwise, sex was not a predictor of volunteer motivation.

### **Discussion**

These results reveal that when it comes to volunteer motivation, individuals appear to be volunteering for the “right” reasons. Overall, participants were more likely to report choosing to volunteer because they enjoyed it, because they felt compassion towards people in need, or because they wanted to bring about social change. They were less likely to report being motivated to volunteer because they felt pressure, because they wanted the recognition, or because they wanted others to say nice things about them. These intrinsic motivations have been deemed “the right reasons” in that research shows that intrinsic motivation is positively associated with well-being and enhanced performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Recall that hypothesis 1a predicted that narcissism would be negatively associated with identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation to volunteer, and hypothesis 1b predicted that narcissism would be positively associated with introjected and extrinsic motivation. Although the NPI did not support these predictions, results partially supported these expectations when narcissism was assessed with the narcissism composite measure that consisted of scales assessing grandiosity, entitlement, and exploitativeness. Narcissists reported being motivated to volunteer for more extrinsic motivations (i.e., external, introjected, and identified regulation) rather than for intrinsic motivation. These findings suggest that narcissists are motivated to volunteer for reasons like attempting to gain recognition and notoriety, because they feel pressure to volunteer, or because they think volunteering is important, despite the fact that they may not enjoy it.

Hypothesis 2a predicted that empathic concern would be negatively associated with introjected and extrinsic motivation, and hypothesis 2b predicted that empathic concern would be positively associated with identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation. When empathic concern was considered, results revealed empathy to be a significant predictor of volunteer motivation. The only instance where this was not the case was when pure extrinsic motives were considered. These findings support the idea that those who score high in empathy are more autonomous in their volunteer motivation, and support the current literature demonstrating a link between empathy and volunteer motivation (e.g. Penner, 2002; Unger & Thumhuri, 1997).

Hypothesis 3a predicted that self-esteem would be negatively associated with introjected and extrinsic motivation, and hypothesis 3b predicted that self-esteem would be positively associated with identified/integrated and intrinsic motivation. In regards to self-esteem, intrinsic and identified motivations were not associated with self-esteem while introjected and extrinsic motivations were negatively associated with self-esteem. These results support the idea that

those who score lower in self-esteem were more likely to endorse pressure or control as volunteer motives. For example, those with lower self-esteem might report volunteering because they feel it is what they should do or because they would feel bad if they did not volunteer.

A question remains as to how these different motivations affect a volunteer's performance. Though research related specifically to volunteer motivation and performance in the context of Self-Determination Theory has not been examined, to the researchers knowledge, other research supports the idea that pure intrinsic motivation is closely related to greater well-being, interest, and excitement for an activity. This, in turn, manifests itself as enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Pure extrinsic motivation affects performance in the opposite way and is related to lower well-being, less interest, and less excitement for an activity, which, in turn, is manifested as poorer performance (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawthorne, & Ilardi, 1997).

The present study was significant in that it examined the previously unexamined relationship between narcissism and volunteer motivation. This relationship was especially important to explore with claims of a narcissism epidemic affecting the country (Twenge & Campbell, 2009), and with the tendency for narcissists to emerge as leaders (Brunell et al., 2008) who make risky and volatile decisions (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007).

Findings offer promise in that the majority of individuals reported volunteering for intrinsic motivation. This information should be reassuring for volunteer organizations that rely heavily on volunteers for the success and continuation of their goals.

Despite these findings, limitations of the study exist. First, the nature of the study was self-report. These self-reports asked questions about volunteering behavior and a bias could have been a concern for social desirability (Fleming & Zizzo, 2011). In addition, the volunteer

measure asked participants if they had volunteered in the past 12 months and why. Volunteers may not have remembered why they chose to volunteer, which could have influenced their ratings of the statements on the volunteer measure, and volunteers may have volunteered more than once, in which case it is unclear to which time they reported their motivation. Despite these limitations, the implications of the study should not be dismissed.

Future directions of the study should go beyond *why* individuals choose to volunteer and examine what impact narcissistic individuals have *when* they volunteer. For example, how well do narcissists perform in a volunteer organization? Are they rated favorably or unfavorably by their supervisors? In regards to length of commitment, how are narcissists choosing to volunteer? Are they participating in long-term volunteer service or are they participating in short-term, episodic volunteering (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2006). Finally, future studies should examine how narcissists' peers are affected when serving together in a volunteer organization and how those who are served are affected when they encounter a narcissistic volunteer: do they do good work, make good decisions, and behave ethically? These are all unanswered questions that should be examined.

## **Conclusion**

When people experience empathy, they are, in turn, prompted to engage in prosocial behaviors such as volunteering (Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, & Isen, 1983; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). However, if people lack empathy and are focused on the self instead, how will they contribute to the needs of others or the community? With the increase in "involuntary" volunteerism and with the increase in narcissism in today's youth, it is important to monitor these trends and their impact on the nature of volunteer motivations and performance.

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*Appendix*

Table 1: Intercorrelations Among Measures.

|                      | NPI     | NC      | Self-Esteem | Empathy  | Internal | Identified | Introjected | External |
|----------------------|---------|---------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|
| NPI                  | ---     |         |             |          |          |            |             |          |
| Narcissism Composite | .562*** | ---     |             |          |          |            |             |          |
| Self-Esteem          | -.284** | .113    | ---         |          |          |            |             |          |
| Empathy              | -.225** | -.464** | .062        | ---      |          |            |             |          |
| Internal             | -.020   | -.062   | .103        | .408**   | ---      |            |             |          |
| Identified           | .007    | .082    | -.004       | .237***  | .789***  | ---        |             |          |
| Introjected          | -.018   | .097    | -.246***    | .117     | .485***  | .765***    | ---         |          |
| External             | .073    | .318*** | -.208***    | -.228*** | -.56     | .384       | .578***     | ---      |
| Sex                  | -.070   | -.082   | -.063       | .270***  | .232**   | .127       | .151        | -.069    |

Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , # $p < .10$ . Sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female.

Table 2: Multivariate Regression Predicting Volunteer Motivation from the NPI, Self-Esteem, Empathic Concern, and Sex

|                  | External | Introjected | Identified | Intrinsic |                      |
|------------------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------------------|
|                  | B        | B           | B          | B         | Wilks' $\lambda$ (F) |
| Narcissism (NPI) | .14      | .38         | .28        | .13       | .98 (.74)            |
| Self-Esteem      | -.40***  | -1.23***    | -.19       | .18       | .81 (10.61)***       |
| Empathic Concern | -.35*    | .78         | 1.31**     | 1.37***   | .84 (9.16)***        |
| Sex              | -.74     | 4.71        | 3.69       | 4.79*     | .95 (2.49)*          |

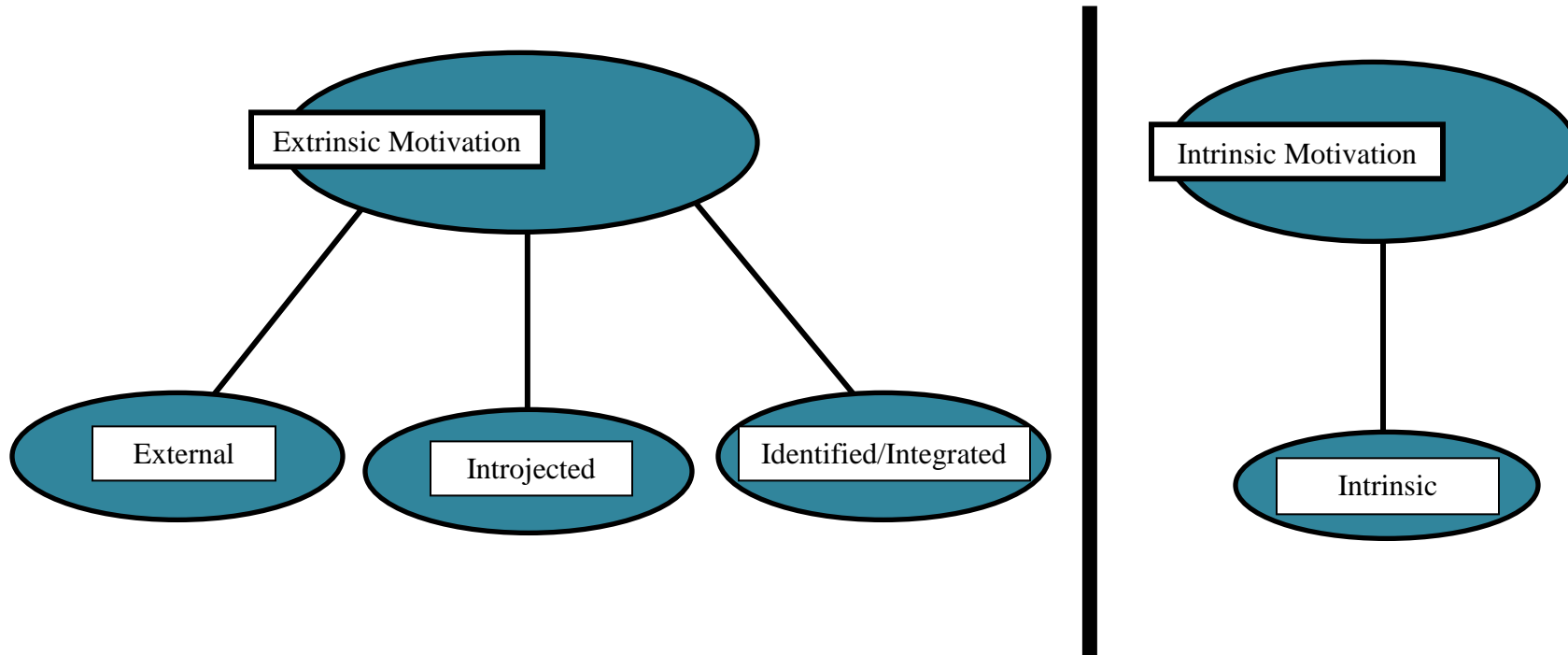
Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , # $p < .10$ . Sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female.

Table 3: Multivariate Regression Predicting Volunteer Motivation from Grandiose Narcissism, Self-Esteem, Empathic Concern, and Sex

|                      | External | Introjected | Identified | Intrinsic |                      |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------------------|
|                      | B        | B           | B          | B         | Wilks' $\lambda$ (F) |
| Narcissism Composite | 1.11***  | 2.09**      | 2.53***    | .85       | .89 (5.66)***        |
| Self-Esteem          | -.39***  | -1.16***    | -.18       | .20       | .81 (11.09)***       |
| Empathic Concern     | -.09     | 1.21**      | 1.91***    | 1.56***   | .85 (7.95)***        |
| Sex                  | -.87     | 4.48        | 1.91       | 4.69*     | .95 (2.52)*          |

Note: \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05, #p < .10. Sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female.

Figure 1: Self-Determination Motivation Continuum



### Motives for Volunteerism Measure

#### Intrinsic

- I like the excitement of participation (MPAM-R)
- It's fun (MPAM-R)
- I enjoy spending time with others doing this activity (MPAM-R)
- I like engaging in activities which challenge me (MPAM-R)
- I care for others (VM)
- I like to do the activity (MPAM-R)
- I like the challenge (MPAM-R)
- It makes me happy (MPAM-R)
- I want to learn new things (VM)
- I think it's interesting (MPAM-R)
- I find this activity stimulating (MPAM-R)
- I'm concerned about those less fortunate than myself (VFI)
- I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving (VFI)
- I can learn more about the cause for which I am working (VFI)
- I feel compassion towards people in need (VFI)

#### Identified/Integrated

- It is an important activity to the people I know best (VM)
- I can learn how to deal with a variety of people (VFI)
- I want to obtain new skills (MPAM-R)
- My membership in an organization that promotes volunteering (VM)
- I want to be with my friends (MPAM-R)
- I can explore my own strengths (VFI)
- I feel a personal connection to the organization (VM)
- I want to improve existing skills (MPAM-R)
- I want to bring about social change (VM)
- It is consistent with my life goals (VM)
- I will use the skills in a job (VM)
- It's important for me to volunteer (VM)
- I want to meet new people (MPAM-R)
- I want to get better at the activity (MPAM-R)
- People I know share an interest in community service (VFI)
- I can make new contacts that help my business career (VFI)
- It allows me to gain a new perspective on things (VFI)
- It allows me to explore different career options (VFI)
- Others with whom I am close with place a high value on community service (VFI)
- It lets me learn through direct "hands on" experience (VFI)
- I feel it is important to help others (VFI)
- It helps me succeed in my chosen profession (VFI)
- I can do something for a cause that is important to me (VFI)



Introjected

It is a good escape from my own troubles (VFI)  
I want to feel needed (VM)  
I want to look good (VM)  
It makes me feel better about myself (VFI)  
It makes me feel needed (VFI)  
I want others to approve of me (VM)  
I want to keep up my current skill level (MPAM-R)  
I will feel bad about myself if I don't do it (VM)  
That's what I'm supposed to do (VM)  
I want others to say nice things about me (VM)  
I feel really proud of myself if I volunteer (VM)  
I want others to see I can do it (VM)  
My friends do it (VFI)  
It makes me feel important (VFI)  
No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me forget about it (VFI)  
By volunteering, I feel less lonely (VFI)  
Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others (VFI)  
It increases my self-esteem (VFI)  
It helps me work through my own personal problems (VFI)

External

I have to (due to work, school, internship, etc.) (VM)  
I feel pressure from others (VM)  
It looks good on a resume (VFI)  
I might be rewarded (VM)  
People I'm close with want me to volunteer (VFI)  
It can help me get my foot in the door at a place where I'd like to work (VFI)

*Note:* VM is the volunteer measure used for this thesis. VFI is the Voluntary Functions Inventory (Clary & Snyder, 1997). MPAM-R is Motivations for Physical Activities Measure-Revised (Ryan, Frederick, Lepas, Rubio, & Sheldon, 1997), which was modified to reflect volunteer motivation.