

Original Paper

First Generation Immigrant Adolescents' Motives to Volunteer

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Abstract

One of the ways immigrant adolescents may try to pursue their dreams in the new place is by volunteering. Volunteerism is a socially important activity which altruistically helps the other and the local community. It is unclear whether volunteerism is an instrument for social inclusion, or it is the goal in itself. The motives of 1st generation immigrant adolescents to volunteer are still an enigma. Hence, this study aims to answer two different research questions; (1) what motivates them to volunteer? and (2) is there a difference between 1st generation immigrant adolescents and native adolescents in their motivation to volunteer? The analysis yields a higher motivated 1st generation immigrant adolescents compared to the native adolescents. First generation immigrant adolescents perceive volunteerism as an integrative action for their social participation. Volunteerism helps them to understand the new culture and it is an indication for their importance in the new community.

Keywords

immigration, motives, volunteers, adolescents, nonprofit

1. Introduction

Immigration is a complicated experience for individuals. Some theorists equalize it with the process of rebirth (Lee, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2001; Butler & Kozmetsky, 2004), explaining that immigration is a process that eliminates the previous physical environment, while turning previous experiences, homeland language, memories, cultural identity and social knowledge into instruments which are unhelpful and irrelevant to the life of the immigrant in the new place (Ward, & Searle, 1991). Consequently, immigrants, in many cases, have to employ the support of the local community who gracefully expands its services for immigrants in order to fulfill their goals (Bach, 1993). Whereas adult immigrants are often equipped with diverse life experiences and education to help them target their dreams, adolescents mostly find their dreams and goals difficult to fulfill (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999). Dreams and goals are important for the immigrant adolescents' development, and resonate well in the paths that they carve to their new lives (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999).

One of the ways immigrant adolescents may try to pursue their dreams, and speed up the adjustment in the new place, is by volunteering and participating in the local community. Namely, volunteering is being used strategically in their plan for fulfilling their long-term goals, and earning the support of the local community. Volunteerism is often described in the literature (Sherrod & Flanigan, 1998; Schneider & Stevenson, 1999) as a socially important activity which altruistically helps the other and the local community (Clary & others, 1998; Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Altruistic activity aside, studies also portray adolescents' volunteering as an act that emerges from an additional motive (Kidd & Kidd, 1997; Clary & others, 1998; Jaffe & others, 2012). For example, some studies describe adolescents' volunteering as a means for achieving the goal of social inclusion (Friedland & Morimoto, 2005; Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Lee & Pritzker, 2013). Specifically, first generation immigrant adolescents' volunteering is currently being explained using both theories. Still, it is unclear whether they use volunteerism as an instrument for social inclusion, or that volunteerism is the goal in itself. In other words, the motives of 1st generation immigrant adolescents to volunteer are still an enigma. Hence, this study aims to answer two different research questions; (1) what motivates 1st generation immigrant adolescents to volunteer? and (2) is there a difference between 1st generation immigrant adolescents and native adolescents in their motivation to volunteer?

1.1 Adolescents Immigration to Israel

First generation immigrant adolescents, at the age of 15-19 years old, are in the focus of this study. This segment of young immigrants, who followed their parents to a new country, is in a complex and difficult, yet important, stage in their lives. They are expected to be enrolled as high school students. They need to struggle socially and academically, and to plan their ambitions in the unknown new country and community. In Israel, the past two decades were characterized as the most intensive in terms of the sizes of the adolescence immigration waves (Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). To illustrate, the average number of 1st generation adolescents in the last 60 years is 46,080 per decade. Almost double as much, 87,146 adolescents between the ages of 15-19 years immigrated to Israel between the years of 1990-2001. That big wave of adolescent immigrants can only be compared to the initial wave of the adolescent's immigration to Israel between the years of 1948-1960, after Israel was declared as an independent country. Further, the average number of adolescents, ages 15-19 years old, immigrated to Israel in the past 62 years is 4,608 per year. During this decade more than 1 million immigrants entered Israel, most of which are from Eastern Europe (Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Adolescence immigration has both positive aspects and negative associations. Positive engagement with the local society may often bring about academic and social success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). When adolescent immigrants succeed academically in their secondary education, they continue to higher education and often find their way in the job market. Social success is often associated with positive attitudes towards the new community, rejecting of the notion of being loyal

only to their culture, and aspiring to blend in the community (Kaw & Tienda, 1995; Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Conversely, negative engagement in the local community is sometimes characterized with violent episodes of the immigrant adolescents due to underdeveloped resources for negotiation, and inability to make the transition to the new place. Feelings of racial segregation by immigrants may result in anger and in frustration (Orfield & Yun, 1999; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Volunteerism may indeed fulfill the needs of the adolescent immigrant by establishing the connection of immigrant adolescent and the local community (Sherrod & Flanigan, 1998; Lee & Pritzker, 2013). By engaging in volunteerism, immigrant adolescents improve the social participation in the new culture, their personal behavior become culturally fitted to the new community, and they prepare themselves for a better future and career in the new place (Kawashima-Ginsberg & Kirby, 2009; Lee & Pritzker, 2013).

In order to examine the above research questions we first define the key variables in the study. Volunteering is being defined as giving time for a formal association as indicated in Boyle and Swayer (2010). An adolescent volunteer is between the ages of 15-19 who give from their time to their community without receiving any pay or monetary reward (i.e. Haski-Leventhal, Ronel, York, & Ben-David, 2008).

We will examine motivations to volunteer following Clary and others (1998) definitions. While Clary and others (1998) provided the framework for understanding motives for volunteerism, only a small portion of studies have been conducted on 1st generation immigrant adolescent volunteers. We found a gap in the research for the volunteering motives of 1st generation immigrant adolescents. Hence, this study will compare the motives of 1st generation immigrant adolescents to volunteer, with those of the native Israeli adolescents to commit for the same volunteering job. The task of understanding how to engage immigrant adolescents with successful volunteering activities is essential for any community.

Adolescents volunteer for the variety of motivations (Clary & others, 1998). To illuminate, Friedland and Morimoto (2005), Clary and others' (1998), and Jenner (1982) indicate that adolescents volunteer for the Career motivation. Career motivation is a function in which adolescents volunteer for the pursuit of a stronger resume and other career related benefits. According to Clary and others (1998), adolescents volunteer as a preparation for the future job, or for maintaining relevant skills for that job.

Haski-Leventhal (2009), and Clary and others, (1998) emphasize adolescents' volunteering for personal values and altruistic motivation. Clary and others (1998) indicate that volunteering for altruistic motivation correlated with the retaining of volunteers for a longer period of volunteering service.

Jaffe and others (2012), and Haski-Leventhal (2009) argue that social motive appears to be a very important motive for volunteerism of adolescents. The social motivation, according to Clary and others, (1998) drives groups of adolescents to volunteer together. Understanding the social motive can help in understanding behavioral pattern (Jaffe & others, 2012). Adolescents tend to volunteer due to peer

pressure and social engagement, which is very important characteristic of teenagers (Clary & others, 1998).

Clary and others (1998), and Jaffe and others (2012) investigate three other motivations that adolescents volunteer for: the Understanding motivation, which expresses the need to increase knowledge, the Protective function which related to the personal perception and ego, and the Enhancement motive that influences the adolescents' confidence and positive self-importance that increases by other adolescents.

Friedland and Morimoto (2005) indicate that first generation immigrant adolescents are less motivated than native adolescents to volunteer. Native adolescents, Friedland and Morimoto (2005) argue, are wealthier and better educated than immigrant adolescents. Lee and Prizker (2013) claim that although in the U.S. native adolescents volunteer more compared to immigrant volunteers, there is limited influence of demographic characteristics, such as socioeconomic status and education, on whether 1st generation adolescent immigrant volunteer or not.

Despite the large number of adolescents entering the country in the previous two decades, little is known about their motives to volunteer and their motivations to engage in their new local society. This study seeks to reveal the differences in the motives of native adolescents and 1st generation immigrant adolescents with the ramification of increasing social engagement in a new place.

2. Research Approach

This study uses matched pairs sample of adolescents who formally volunteered for a nonprofit organization in Israel. A matched pairs design enabled us to investigate 1st generation immigrant adolescent volunteers and compare their motives to those of the native adolescent volunteers from the same organization (Mertens, 2005). We choose to use a matched pairs sample since randomization was not possible (Mertens, 2005), hence, participants were grouped into pairs based on being a 1st generation immigrant volunteer or a native volunteer. The participants were assigned randomly from a larger pool of volunteers after we found a match (Mertens, 2005).

We chose to measure the motives for volunteering in only one organization to control the bias of different motives for working in two associations or doing two kinds of volunteering work. Magen David Adom (MDA) in Israel was a convenient organization for our study since MDA is a competitive organization for adolescents to volunteer for. MDA is Israel's first aid and EMS organization, which employ volunteers ages 15-18 as volunteers in its ambulance teams. MDA has thousands of adolescent volunteers and we conveniently used a snapshot examination of 356 volunteers on one day. The volunteers who participated in our study arrived for a week- long seminar at one of MDA's facilities. The participants were asked to participate in the study for no reward or sanction of any kind. The questionnaires were collected in a box so we could not identify the participants.

Out of the 356 adolescents, who completed the questionnaire, only 36 participants identified themselves as 1st generation immigrants. We characterized the 36 immigrant adolescents with the

variables of Socio-Economic Status, Level of education of their parents, Religion, Level of religiosity, Age, and Gender. Then we sorted out the rest of the 320 native adolescent volunteers for the same variables. We randomly selected, every second perfect case, to match the 36's 1st generation adolescent volunteers. In this way we ended up having 36 matched pairs of adolescents. Each pair had the same level of socio-economic status, same level of parents' education, same religion, and same level of religiosity. They were at the same age, and had the same gender. The only difference between the two groups was whether they were 1st generation immigrant adolescents or native adolescent volunteers. Participants in this study completed Clary and others' (1998) thirty-item questionnaire to investigate their motives for volunteers.

Our data contained the motives of 72 participants whose average age was 17.5 years. Most of them were living in moderate socio-economic households (54.5 percent), and most of them have parents with academic degree (44.4 percent of the fathers have bachelor degree, and 38.2 percent of the mothers are holding a bachelor degree). Males made up 45.8 percent of the participants, while 54.2 percent were females. All of the participants were Jewish, yet 66.7 percent indicated that they did not practice Judaism. Only one third of the participants practiced Judaism on various degrees. The exact parameters of volunteers' population in MDA are not available, yet professionals in MDA confirm that the data we collected is representative of the segment of immigrant adolescents in MDA. Hence, the transferability to MDA's immigrant adolescents is possible.

3. Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Motives of 1st Generation Immigrant Adolescent to Volunteer Compared to the Motives of Native Adolescents

Motivations	Immigrants' Mean	Natives' Mean	Immigrants' Std. Deviation	Natives' Std. Deviation
Career	4.89	4.63	1.375	1.305
Social	4.19	4.09	0.988	1.068
Values	5.76	5.6	1.096	1.076
Enhancement	4.92	5.16	1.239	1.141
Protective	4.1	3.94	1.31	1.143
Understanding	5.77	5.6	0.818	0.985

*mean difference significant at the 0.001 level (Two-tailed)

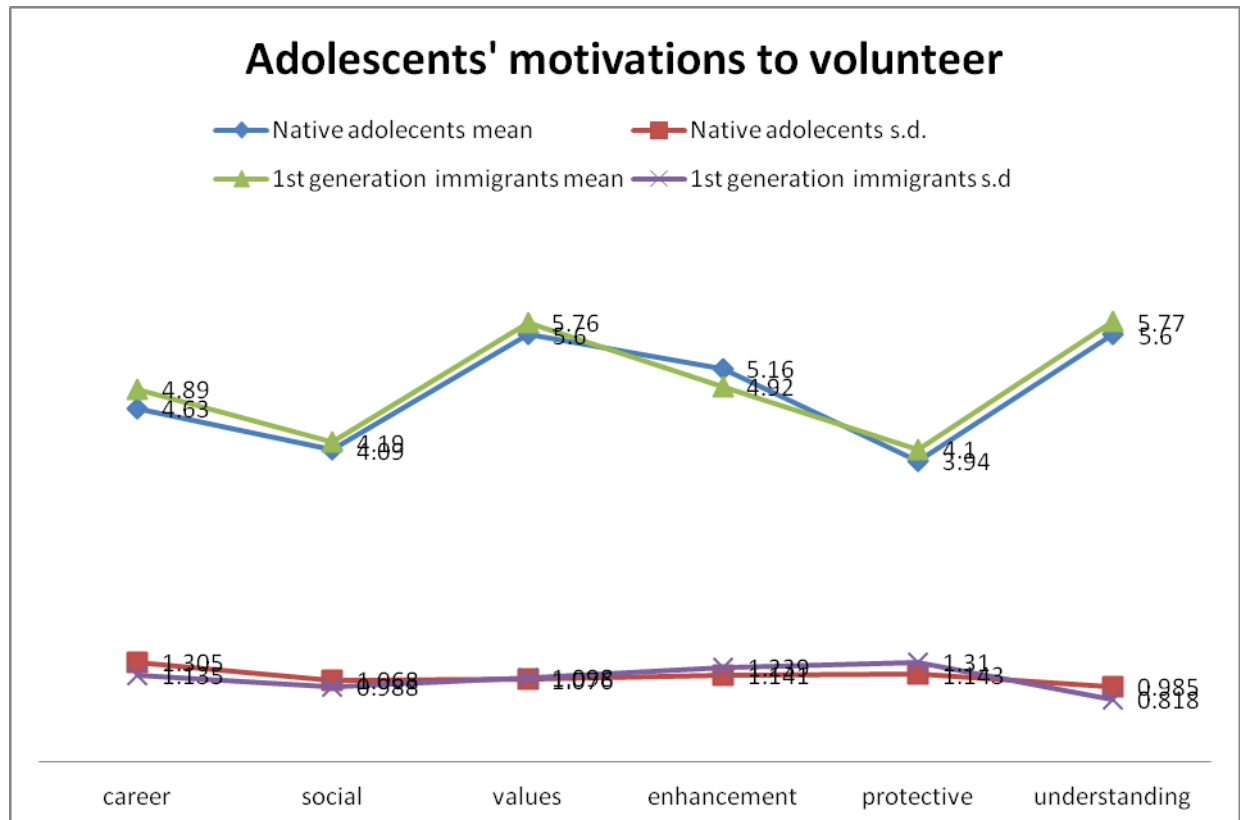


Figure 1. The Difference in Motivation to Volunteer between Immigrant and Native Adolescents

To answer the questions at the center of this investigation, we use descriptive statistics which we validated with paired samples T test (Mertens, 2005). Table 1 and Figure 1 compare the motives of 1st generation immigrant adolescents to volunteer with those of native adolescents. The results of the survey show that the two groups are significantly different from each other. To illuminate, the motivations; Understanding and Values, are the highest motivations for volunteering in both groups, while Protective and Social motivations were rated low by both groups. Figure 1 indicates that the motivation Enhancement is rated second after the motivations of Understanding and Values, and the motivation of Career is rated below the motivation Enhancement and above the motivation Social and Protective for both groups.

Further, 1st generation immigrant adolescents were found to have similar levels of the Understanding and Values motivations, though higher than those of the native adolescents. Table 1 shows that 1st generation immigrant adolescents' Understanding motivation to volunteer ($M=5.77$, $S.D.=0.818$) is stronger than the native adolescents Understanding motivation to volunteer ($M=5.6$, $S.D.=0.985$). In addition, 1st generation immigrants adolescents Values ($M=5.76$, $S.D.=1.096$) is higher than the Values motivation for native adolescents ($M=5.6$, $S.D.=1.076$).

Furthermore, table 1 and figure 1 show that the Protective and Social motivations are both rated low for the two groups compared to the other four motivations, though 1st generation immigrants motivations

of Protective ($M=4.1$, $S.D.=1.31$) and Social ($M=4.19$, $S.D.=0.988$) are significantly higher than the natives' Protective ($M=3.94$, $S.D.=1.143$) and Social ($M=4.09$, $S.D.=1.068$) motivations.

Table 1 and Figure 1 also indicate that 1st generation immigrant adolescents have significantly higher rate of Career motivation ($M=4.89$, $S.D.=1.375$) to volunteer than that of the native adolescent ($M=4.63$, $S.D.=1.305$).

As table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate, Enhancement is the only motivation in which the native adolescents score significantly higher ($M=5.6$, $S.D.=1.141$) than 1st generation immigrants ($M=4.92$, $S.D.=1.239$).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis yields a higher motivated 1st generation immigrant adolescents compared to the native adolescents, when controlling for demographic variables. Surprisingly, these findings contradict the study of Friedland and Morimoto (2005) who claim that 1st generation immigrant adolescents are less motivated to volunteer than native adolescents. This contradiction with our results can be explained by the design of the current study. In our study we controlled for demographic variables, such as socioeconomic and education, while Friedland and Morimoto (2005) explained their findings using the differences in wealth and education between the two groups of adolescents. The findings in our study are therefore intriguing since 1st generation immigrant adolescents indeed tend to be motivated to participate socially in their community.

The findings underscore the motivations Understanding and Values as highly influenced motivations for 1st generation immigrant adolescents to volunteer. This line of work follows an established foundation on adolescents' motivations to volunteer. For instance, Haski-Leventhal (2009), and Clary and others (1998), indicate that adolescents volunteer for personal values and altruistic motivations. Our study extends the same insight to the 1st generation immigrant adolescents as well. 1st generation immigrant adolescents perceive volunteerism as an integrative action for their social participation. Volunteerism helps them express their focus on the new place and new community. In addition, getting acquainted with the new place and people results in high motivations to understand the new culture and integrating in it through volunteering.

Further, the results indicate that career is not the highest motivation that 1st generation immigrant adolescents engage with volunteerism, but it is not the lowest one as well. As Friedland and Morimoto (2005) and Jenner (1982) argue, adolescent volunteer for career motivation as well. When it comes to 1st generation immigrant adolescents, Career as a motivation to volunteer is important since they have to look at volunteering as an instrument for survival.

One approach to increase adolescents' volunteering, points to the Social motivation as a very important motive (Jaffe and others, 2012; Haski-Leventhal, 2009). According to our results, 1st generation immigrant adolescents have less peer pressure to volunteer. Their social network is not as developed so they have less social pressure to volunteer.

Moreover, 1st generation immigrant adolescents are less motivated by ego and personal Enhancement as the native adolescents are. We explain this result with the difference between the perceptions of each population toward the organization under investigation. While native adolescents value MDA, its role in the community as an EMS organization, and the decorated uniforms they wear, immigrants lack this cultural knowledge. Immigrant adolescents are partly blind to these values for their enhancement and ego.

Finally, volunteerism is a pathway for 1st generation immigrant adolescents to the community. Volunteering, for the 1st generation immigrant adolescents, is an indication for their importance in the new community. By volunteering, they increase their cultural understanding, engage socially, and being treated as responsible members of society.

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