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Transitioning Ageing Healthcare Workers from Paid to Unpaid Work through Social Exchange

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TRANSITIONING AGEING WORKERS FROM PAID TO UNPAID WORK IN

NONPROFITS

There has been much discussion about the dwindling pools of knowledge workers (Benson & Brown, 2007) and of volunteers (Basi 2006). Most notably in the nonprofit sector, the reliance on the knowledge and contribution of both paid employees and volunteers has challenged human resource professionals as they compete with other organisations to retain both paid and unpaid knowledge workers.

According to the United Nations (2007), almost one-third of the working-age population in developed countries will be aged 50 or over by 2050. By 2026, one in five Canadians will have reached age 65 (Government of Canada, 2002). Van der Heijden, Schalk and van Veldhoven (2008) note a similar trend in the European Union. This loss of experienced workers to retirement may threaten the ability of organisations to retain valuable tacit knowledge. Such recent social demographic shifts associated with an ageing population, have caused both individuals and organisations to demand new types of work arrangements. Seeking to bridge work and retirement, more flexible part-time, temporary jobs have been introduced by many organisations (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008).   However, structural organisational considerations may constrain their ability to accommodate differing employee needs, and there is a risk that the organisational knowledge and commitment found in older employees will be lost when they retire.

Volunteerism, or "any service to the community given without payment through a group or organisation" (Warburton & Terry, 2000: 249), is becoming increasingly important to the

cash-strapped nonprofit sector. A 2005 study by Statistics Canada estimated that the total value of volunteer work in the not-for-profit sector in Canada amounted to $14 billion, or 1.4 per cent of the gross domestic product (Basi, 2006). Recent projections threaten this value, more specifically, researchers suggest that volunteering could decline by as much as 1 to 2 per cent per year (Selbee & Reed, 2006).   According to Statistics Canada, 73 per cent of all volunteer hours come from 25 per cent of all volunteers, with only seven per cent of all Canadians actually having volunteered (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Despite relatively constant volunteering rates over the last 20 years, the number of hours being offered is dropping among the majority of those who volunteer (Statistics Canada, 2006b).   Thus, securing additional volunteers and maximizing the efficiency of volunteer commitments remain important goals for nonprofit organisations.

In the U.S., more than six out of ten adults age 55 or older are active volunteers (Zedlewski & Schaner, 2006). Recent North American research has described the importance of recruiting older adults before they retire and retaining older volunteers (Butrica & Johnson, 2007) because older volunteers in both Canada and the United States tend to give significantly more time to the organisation (Statistics Canada, 2006a; Zedlewski & Schaner, 2006). This indicates that organisations must consider attracting and retaining ageing volunteers and shapes the need for Human Resource Management (HRM) professionals to help ageing employees transition from paid work to volunteer opportunities.

Hence this research investigates the question: How can HRM professionals develop stronger social exchanges with paid employees and volunteers that will prompt paid employees to volunteer with the organisation upon retirement, particularly when an individual's interests and abilities are aligned with their work environment. A recent study concluded that people's evaluation of their pre-retirement work was related to the decision to take on either volunteer and

paid post-retirement work (Griffin & Hesketh, 2008). Previously, academics and practitioners treated paid and unpaid work as different issues in the literature, with much about unpaid work ending up in volunteer-specific journals, and paid work in business journals. It is provocative to propose that employees may choose to transition from an employment contract mainly based in economic value to a stronger, mainly socially-based relationship with the organization. As both paid and unpaid work can contribute to organisational performance, this paper will provide a synchronized examination of paid and unpaid work in the nonprofit sector.

Accordingly, our paper develops a conceptual model that describes how ageing workers might be persuaded to embrace volunteering with nonprofit organisations upon retirement through the dynamics of social exchange, person-environment fit and their individual perceptions of a work climate that values volunteering. This value includes attitudes toward the extra-role activities of both employees and volunteers in the current organisation.   We offer practical recommendations for Human Resource Management professionals as they seek to promote such a transition from paid to unpaid work.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF POST-EMPLOYMENT VOLUNTEER INTENTIONS

We build upon extant volunteer literature to shape a model of post-employment volunteer intentions (Figure 1). We propose how the social exchange processes among the employer, paid employees, unpaid workers (volunteers), and clients will influence how individuals perceive their interest and ability-congruence with the environment, and specifically with respect to the elements of person-organisation fit, person-group fit and person-vocation fit defined in earlier

literature. We conceptualize beyond a dyadic notion of social exchanges to encompass multiple

participants in relationships to shape perceptions that volunteering attitudes and behaviours are

valued. Value congruence between individuals and their environment contributes to the intention

to volunteer and facilitates the transition from an economic to a social exchange between

employer and worker. Finally, we explain how employees' perceptions of the value placed on

volunteering throughout the organisation (inherent in organizational citizenship behaviours and

volunteer status) might moderate the relationship between person-environment fit and intention

to volunteer.

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Volunteer Intentions

Previous research has explained that volunteers are driven by both altruism and egoism

motives (Bowman, 2004). Keith (2003) concluded that differences in volunteer motivation and

skills were explained by age, education and prior volunteer experience. Esteem needs, such as

acknowledgement, recognition and self-actualization, motivate volunteers. Volunteers'

identification with the organisation and their internalization of its goals are related to what

volunteers are willing to contribute (Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1966/1978; Pearce,

1993).   As the motives for volunteering are often linked to the desire for relationship

development with the organisation and characterized by social exchanges (Wilson, 2000),

retiring employees who wish to retain contact with the organisation, their work and/or co-

workers provide a natural pool of volunteers. The transition from an employment arrangement

based on economic to social exchange may be considered a career continuation (bridging)

strategy.

Volunteerism as a Career Continuation Strategy. Super (1980: 282) defined a career as "the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a lifetime." Similarly, a career is "described as the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Hall, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989; Miles & Snow, 1996: 97). Although stage models of employee development and transition have been proposed in the literature (i.e., Fouad & Bynner, 2008), these appear to center on transitions within paid employment. Super, Thompson, and Lindeman (1988 in Sullivan, 1999) describe four career stages that exemplify one's career identification and vocation, and end with a period of disengagement, when one retires. Employees who strongly identify with their jobs experience a crisis upon retirement (Nuttman-Schwartz, 2004). Often employees who retire will seek out bridge jobs - employment between one's long-term career job and permanently exiting the workforce, and their decisions might be linked to financial or social reasons such as recognition and respect (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). Recent longitudinal research has concluded that retirees that had better financial conditions and had experienced less work stress and higher job satisfaction in preretirement jobs were more likely to choose career bridge employment than bridge employment in a different field (Wang, Zhan, Liu, & Shultz, 2008). This has implications for organisations who wish to retain their own workers post-retirement. However, Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser (2008) concluded that many bridging jobs were part-time without job development opportunities.

Previous research has tended to focus upon the transition of ageing workers from fulltime wage-and-salary career employment to wage-and-salary bridging arrangements (e.g., Armstrong-Stassen, 2008). The lack of attention to the transition from paid work to unpaid bridging work might be explained by the divergence in the paid employment and volunteer literatures and the assertion that people consider their careers to be paid work that is sharply

delineated from their non-work lives (Mirvis & Hall, 1996). However, Handy, Mook and Quarter (2008) concluded that many tasks were interchangeable between paid and unpaid workers in their studies of healthcare institutions. Additionally, a comparison of employees and volunteers who were responsible for comparable tasks found similarities in how volunteers and paid workers viewed social exchange at the same healthcare facility (Liao-Troth, 2001). In a U.S. study encompassing two waves of data collected over a three year time frame, the decision to retire from paid work predicted subsequent formalized volunteer involvement (Mutchler, Burr, & Caro, 2003). Similarly, retirees who were satisfied to retire and pre-retirees who proactively sought to identify opportunities to improve their environment were more likely to volunteer in retirement (Griffin & Hesketh, 2008). Thus, the importance of the motivation to volunteer and the volunteer's belief that the environment affords the benefits associated with the motivation are thought to interact to produce volunteer outcomes.

A strategic approach proposes that nonprofit employers encourage volunteering as a possible career continuation strategy. Employees and other stakeholders who have interacted with the organisation prior to retirement may be effective and efficient volunteers because they are already familiar with the organisational culture and routines. In a previous case study of volunteer ombudsmen in a nursing facility, Keith (2003) identified the importance of such skills as social, occupational training, listening, caring and empathy for the sick and aged, leadership, and advocacy. Many of these skills are developed through paid employment, and support why employers may shape effective volunteers from retiring employees.

Research has noted the importance for organisations to recognize and develop the skills and abilities of ageing workers in order to retain employees in the paid workforce (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Sterns & Miklos, 1995; Simpson, Greller, & Stroh, 2002). Previous

researchers have noted differences in the career patterns of younger versus older workers (Huang, El-Khouri, Johansson, Lindroth, & Sverke, 2007), and career limitations faced by older workers, regardless of the independence in their jobs (Platman, 2003). A meta-analysis of aging workers and training concluded that older workers have less mastery of training material and take longer than younger people to train (Kubeck, Delp, Haslett, McDaniel, 1996). However, the authors cautioned that the previous studies included in the meta-analysis did not distinguish potential occupational moderators. Previous researchers have suggested that aging workers are somewhat consistent in their vocational interests (Strong, 1955), although they may choose to move to different levels of jobs, for example supervisory roles relying more upon educational or experiential knowledge rather than on developing abstract reasoning and novel knowledge (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Vocations that require high crystallized intellectual abilities (or broad aspects of educational or experiential knowledge) may show greater stability of interests across the work life span (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004). Such vocations are ideally suited to a bridging or career transition strategy. Results of two other studies reported that workers use several strategies to age successfully at work, and those who plan to reenter the workforce after retirement will focus upon developing their knowledge, skills and abilities (Robson & Hansson, 2007). Additionally individuals who were already involved in bridging activities and who placed a great deal of importance on their work were more likely to take advantage of development opportunities (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008).

For self-development reasons ageing employees may desire to explore career bridging opportunities that provide more choice and depth in their duties (Mirvis & Hall, 1996). For example, nurses who have been limited to core duties in their paid profession may choose to volunteer as compassionate helpers. Those inclined to bridge work might also be interested in

volunteer positions because volunteering provides an alternate flexible and part-time work option. As such, retired school principals might volunteer student mentoring time at schools. In both of these examples, the organisation would be able to retain tacit knowledge and organisational learning.

Social Exchanges with Stakeholders

Social Exchange Theory reflects the exchange of resources characterized by unspecified obligations, reciprocity, self-interest, and reward/costs (e.g., Blau, 1964), and is the basis for most relationship theory (Roloff, 1981). Social Exchange Theory describes two types of exchange, one economic (transactional), the other social. Social exchange considers the interpersonal processes involved in a non-economic transaction and is well-suited to explain the dynamics of the transition from financial to non-financial work arrangements. Relationships between organisational stakeholders such as employer, employees, volunteers, and clients contribute to the organisation's long-term goal attainment.

Previous researchers have conceptualized different aspects of social exchange. Thibault and Kelley (1959) suggested that outcomes are influenced by the personal needs of the individual and the actions of the other party in the relationship. Individuals in relationships must make choices that consider expected behaviours of their relationship partner, but also accept a degree of outcome uncertainty. People can evaluate the quality of relationships through a comparison process based upon prior relational experiences and rewards (Homans, 1961). People may place so much value on the relationship, that they will act in a way that they previously believed to be disadvantageous; employees may forego an opportunity for promotion just to continue to work with certain coworkers (Blau, 1964). Throughout this comparison process, both parties act in

ways to ensure that the relationship fulfills their own individual needs, or self-interests (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1976). Interest fulfillment is linked to how employees and volunteers view their personal fit with the work environment, and is explained in the following section.

Person-Environment Fit

The notion of why someone would seek unpaid work to replace paid work is in itself curious. An individual's perceived financial security may influence this choice. However, the concept of person-environment fit provides a different explanation. Person-environment fit concerns the congruence of the person's interests and abilities with their work environment. Such a fit can take different forms including congruence with organisation, vocation and group (Kristof, 1996). Individuals must match and adjust their interests and abilities to the requirements of the environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) and in so doing they may reflect their vocational interests (Reeve & Heggestad, 2004).

There is a vast literature on person-environment fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Kristof, 1996) and underlying categories of person-vocation fit (Holland, 1985; Rounds, Dawis, & Lofquist, 1987; Super, 1953), person-organisation fit (Chatman, 1989; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996), and person-group fit (Judge & Ferris, 1992; Werbel & Gilliland, 1999).   Although some researchers have also described perceptions of person-job fit, this construct has been found to be highly correlated with person-organisation fit and may be indistinguishable for many workers (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). We expect this to be the case for ageing workers, because as they approach retirement, mobility between paid jobs decreases (Groot & Verberne, 1997). Accordingly, our model does not distinguish person-job fit from person-organisation fit.

The person-environment fit literature has focused on organisational entry for paid employees, but has not considered continuation strategies for those leaving paid employment seeking voluntary work arrangements. Person-environment fit is intuitively important in the context of such a transition because it is a non-monetary explanation for why ageing workers would choose unpaid work in the later stages of their career. Furthermore, multi-faceted social exchanges among the organisation, ageing employees, current volunteers and clients may influence how ageing employees perceive their fit with different aspects of the environment linked to organisation, group and vocation.

Social exchanges shaping person-organisation fit. The opportunity to bolster person-organisation fit presents itself in a late socialization phase that strengthens organisation – employee relationships and helps to retain ageing workers. Unfortunately, disengagement practices such as excluding workers from ongoing training and new projects may signal declining performance and commitment (Berube, 2006). Instead, it is important for organisations to continue to meet the expectations and to deliver on promises to older employees.

Employees may be reluctant to volunteer if their professional skills have not been updated. Although individuals with a strong personal learning orientation may independently seek out training opportunities, organisations that continue to provide ageing workers with training and development will support a strong social exchange (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). In turn, this may lead to a congruence between the norms and values of the organisation and the individual - referred to as person-organisation fit (Chatman, 1989). By reinforcing employee development through social exchanges in later stages, the organisation creates a perception of individual value.

There are also potentially negative social exchanges that create reluctance for employees to maintain ties with the organisation upon retirement. For example, previous researchers have described how employees may be disillusioned and disappointed with senior administrators and potential organisational inability to deal effectively with budget constraints (Schlosser, Zinni, & Templer, 2009). Another potential area for disillusionment arises out of an organisation's inability to recognize the career needs and aspirations of the older paid worker. Rather, organisations turn their attention to the younger paid worker, ignoring the needs and advantages of older staff (Buonocore, 1992).   These types of issues erode the sense of social wellness and cohesiveness among the stakeholders and discourage voluntary involvement in institutional activities. Thus,

> *Proposition 1a: The stronger the social exchange between employees and employer, the greater the employees' perceptions of their fit with the nonprofit.*
>
> *Proposition 1b: The greater the employees' perceptions of their fit with the nonprofit, the greater their intention to volunteer.*

Social exchange shaping person-group fit. Workers may also work past retirement to maintain socially satisfying relationships. Indeed, nearly half the baby boomer generation is planning to work past retirement (Stein Wellner, 2002) implying that those retiring will form a pool of potential volunteers. Continuity theory describes how older individuals, when faced with change, try to preserve existing internal and external structures by applying familiar strategies to familiar areas of life (Atchley, 1989). Such familiarity may lead retired employees to remain with their employers because they perceive their 'fit' with their work group (Judge & Ferris, 1992).

Previous researchers have concluded that older volunteers are more likely than younger ones to volunteer because of social reasons (Bowen, Andersen, & Urban, 2000; Greenslade & White, 2005; Keith, 2003). To retain key volunteers and develop a positive volunteer identity, nonprofit organisations may reinforce strong team processes and commitment through a stage of volunteer socialization. Socialization tactics might include supportive feedback from paid employees and co-ordinated activities with other volunteers. Building on these thoughts, we propose:

Proposition 2a: The stronger the social exchange between employers, employees and volunteers, the greater the employees' perceptions of their fit with the group.

Proposition 2b: The greater the employees' perceptions of their fit with the group, the greater their intentions to volunteer.

Social exchange shaping person-vocation fit. Reeve and Heggestad (2004) noted that abilities and interests are important influences on career choice and success and as such are related to the concept of person-vocation fit. The "degree of match between the individual's vocational interests and aspects of their work environment" (Harris, Moritzen, Robitschek, Imhoff, & Lynch, 2001: 314) enhances the understanding of vocational choices made by workers. Researchers have focused on the relationship of vocational interests to the outcomes of long-term satisfaction and intention to remain in the occupation (Campbell & Borgen, 1999; Tracey & Rounds, 1995).

Baker and Aldrich (1996) suggest that work and non-work roles actually overlap and shape a person's identity and sense of self.   Personal-identity plays an important role in the career decisions that workers make in terms of authenticity and self-efficacy. This is

complemented by the concept of person-vocation fit (e.g., Reeve et al., 2004). Workers may seek out alternative flexible voluntary work that is aligned with an altruistic benefit.

Prior to job entry, both organisation and employee promise to make contributions to strengthen their relationship. The relationship is reinforced by early socialization and on-the-job experiences with other employees and volunteers. In a vocational environment, the promise is strengthened through social exchange with clients, and supports a congruence between the interests of a person and vocation (Reeve & Heggestad, 2004). Researchers have described the concept of "ideological rewards" (Blau, 1964: 239) as a commitment to pursue a valued cause or principle, even if it meant sacrificing personal non-work time (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). The transition at the end of the employment relationship reflects uncertainty, instability, high turnover, an absence of future commitments and few explicit performance demands or contingent incentives (Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). Transitions distract workers from performing well and may decrease their commitment, so it is important for organisations to implement processes that define these new arrangements. Strong relationships that are developed from social exchanges in the pre-retirement socialization stage may strengthen the commitment of ageing workers and prevent psychological separation as they contemplate retirement and exit. Hence, we suggest the following:

Proposition 3a: The stronger the social exchange among employers, employees, volunteers, and clients, the greater the employees' perceptions of their person-vocation fit.

Proposition 3b: The greater the employees' perceptions of their person-vocation fit, the greater their intentions to volunteer.

Perceived Value of Volunteering

Social exchanges over time will help to shape an employee's perception of the value of volunteering in their organization. Perceived value develops through the recognition that employees receive as they perform voluntary actions that exceed the requirements of their paid jobs. Continuous reinforcement of the value of such 'helping' behaviours in paid workers is augmented by perceptions that unpaid workers hold a desired status in the organization. For example, Schlosser et al. (2009) noted how some employees believed that the volunteers seemed happier and more fulfilled than paid workers.

In the previous section we suggested that ageing employees' fit with the organisation, work-group and vocational interests will help to shape their intentions to return post retirement in a volunteer capacity. In addition, they will be more likely to return to the same organisation if they perceive that volunteering is valued in that organisation. This value would include attitudes toward the extra-role activities of both employees and volunteers in the current organisation. The next sections describe the elements of perceived value of volunteering.

Value of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. Employees who are highly committed to their clients define their jobs more broadly and so carry out discretionary, extra-role behaviours known as organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (Morrison, 1994). We propose that employee discretionary engagement in the pre-retirement socialization process is signaled by their willingness to engage in OCBs. An earlier study linked pro-social values, such as altruism and other organisational citizenship-type behaviour to volunteerism (Carlo, Okun, Knight, & de Guzman, 2005). Employees who believe they have been treated fairly by an organisation will reciprocate with extra-role behaviours (Organ, 1988). Later, the same sense of fairness may

prompt them to 'give back' as unpaid workers. Extra-role work is essentially the same type of

behaviour and with similar intrinsic motivations and rewards as volunteer work. Previous

research has noted similarities between paid and unpaid workers in their attitudes, levels of

organisational commitment and view of their relationship (Liao-Troth, 2001), signaling strong

person-organisation fit. Consequently organisations should focus upon maintaining strong

relational contracts with ageing employees who exhibit high extra-role involvement because

these employees may be more likely to volunteer when they retire. Accordingly we propose:

> *Proposition 4: The stronger the social exchange between employers and employees, the*
>
> *greater the employees' perceptions of the value of organizational citizenship.*
>
> *Proposition 5: The greater the employees' perceptions of the value of organizational*
>
> *citizenship, the stronger the relationship between their perceptions of person-*
>
> *environment fit and their intentions to volunteer.*

> *Perception of Status of Volunteers.* Employees may increase their volunteer

contributions when they have a chance to interact and remain a part of a desired social

environment. Farmer and Fedor (2001) concluded that volunteer contributions were predicted by

employee role investment, represented by the number of previous positions held in the

organisation, the level of event participation and the volunteer's length of service. As employees

make the decision to transition from paid to unpaid status, they develop a new view of the

organisation, and new experiences as a volunteer. These experiences may shape a volunteer self-

view that is positive or negative (as "just" a volunteer). A study of employees of a nonprofit

organisation concluded that the higher the expectation for satisfaction the more likely their

intention to engage in volunteer work rather than paid work (Griffin & Hesketh, 2008).

The perception that volunteering has status in the organization may influence employees'

intentions to volunteer because volunteering is linked to their self-views situated within the work

environment (Schlosser et al., 2009). Similarly, self-esteem and perceptions of status and P-E Fit

can be linked to the reasons for volunteering outlined by For example Clary, Snyder and Stukas

(Volunteer Functional Inventory: 1996) have explained motives for volunteering that are linked

to perceptions of status and P-E Fit. For example, 1) career and understanding motives consider

the use of previous experience and skills, 2) value enhancement and protection motives

encompass intrinsic motivations related to self-esteem and convictions, and 3) the social

dimension of volunteer motivation considers interpersonal need fulfillment. Liao-Troth (2005)

proposed that these dimensions are not mutually exclusive, because individuals may have

multiple reasons for volunteering.

Additionally, we suggest that social reasons that prompt employees to return in a

volunteering capacity are not easily separated from self-esteem because individuals develop their

identity as a reflection of others' opinions (Cooley, 1902). Similarly, values and experience may

be difficult to separate, as values are shaped through one's experiences. Hence we propose that

employees who intend to continue their careers by transitioning to volunteering will have a

profile of multiple motives that are inter-related and build on a notion of social status and person

fit with the group.

The importance of status may also be symbolized by a paid employee's desire to be a

member of a volunteer group because it would be socially pleasant. This desirability creates a

social identity (Tajfel, 1974) that implies value and recognition for the volunteer efforts. For

example, in many healthcare institutions volunteers wear a uniform so that patients and other

healthcare workers recognize and feel free to approach them for help. Additionally, wearing a

uniform legitimizes their work, alongside paid workers who also wear uniforms, whether these uniforms are a medic's scrubs or an administrator's suit (Schlosser et al., 2009). It makes them instantly recognizable as legitimate and valued workers, hence proving to anyone who sees them that they possess status. Consequently, we propose:

Proposition 6: The stronger the social exchange between employer and employees, the more employees will perceive volunteering to have status in the organisation.

Proposition 7: The more employees will perceive volunteering to have status in the organisation, the stronger the relationship between the employees' perceptions of fit and their intentions to volunteer.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR HRM

The pool of ageing volunteers is set to explode with close to 50 per cent of the baby boomer generation planning to retire. Such demographic changes, including a predicted shortage of skilled paid workers and a surplus of younger, and potentially more active and healthy retirees, create a fertile environment for transition from paid to unpaid work. Although some of these retirees will return to some sort of paid 'bridging' work, some may decide to volunteer. These employees provide a rich source of skill and tacit knowledge, and post-retirement retention of these capabilities is essential for continued organisational learning. Human Resources (HRM) can embark on a number of initiatives to build the desire for employees to volunteer upon retirement. This section of the paper suggests programs which can be championed by HR

managers that target each component of our conceptual model to encourage post-retirement

volunteerism within their institutions.

Social Exchanges

Building strong relationships amongst workers, managers, clients, and volunteers

encourages a lasting volunteer base. We suggest that the volunteer's social exchange with the

institution is connected to previous work and volunteer experience, thus providing a basis for

effective volunteer work for the same employer. However, organisations must be mindful of the

differences between the social exchanges experienced as a paid worker vis-à-vis an unpaid

worker. Flexibility and working relationships may be limited if paid workers perceive volunteers

to lack professional expertise and if collective agreements, stemming from unionized employees,

are stringently enforced.

Person-Environment Fit

Workers may be inclined to source out new opportunities in volunteerism to satisfy

career aspirations not previously available to them during their tenure in their respective

institutions. This indicates that effective volunteer orientation programs, with job descriptions,

should be explained and provided to all workers on the cusp of retirement and new volunteers.

Ageing volunteers can benefit greatly from training opportunities to help them to perform

their tasks effectively (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). Holland, Magoon, and Spokane

(1981) also described career interventions and vocational supports that might be translated to

post-retirement volunteer work. Volunteers may want to continue working in their previous

departments, but may also wish to transfer into other areas of the nonprofit organisation, and

may require additional training. The organisation can benefit greatly from allowing volunteers to engage in such training and development activities and transactions that protect and even strengthen self-concept and identity (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Previous researchers have examined mid-career change, and developed counseling processes and assessments to help employees deal with this change (e.g., Perosa & Perosa, 1997; Super, Osborne, Walsh, Brown, & Niles, 1992). Some of these assessments might be also used to identify employees' fit with future volunteering opportunities.

It is also important for HR to effectively co-ordinate volunteer capabilities with paid and potentially unionized workers. This strategy requires HR professionals who understand how to deal with the recruitment, training, performance and recognition of volunteers. Such management is complicated by the lack of financial and formal arrangements involved in volunteering. Human Resources must appropriately match the skills of the volunteer to the right department which might be challenging when volunteers lack practical experience. Former employees may not want to return to their departments, opting to carry out volunteer activities in other areas, perhaps alongside friends. Just securing a volunteer is not the only important goal but so too is retention. If the skills are not matched appropriately, the institution will run the risk of losing the volunteer (Reeve & Heggestad, 2004). High turnover of volunteers does not lend itself to building a culture where paid workers would want to transition to unpaid work.

Perceived Value of Volunteering

Volunteers must be seen as a necessary resource to the effective operations of the institution, with their work valued by everyone. Paid workers may see unpaid workers as a threat to their position, resulting in a competitive environment (McCurley & Lynch, 1996).

Managers may also feel that because a volunteer is unpaid they may be unwilling to complete a

task, and they may also be hard to manage (Cookman, Haynes, & Streatfield, 2000), thus

exposing the unpaid worker to a distrustful and demoralizing environment. Activities can be

introduced that measure the effectiveness of the entire team, including the volunteer assigned to

the specific tasks. In this way, the volunteer can be made to feel a valued member of the team,

and not just the "unpaid volunteer".

New employees might be introduced to a volunteer program during orientation. HR

might create testimonial-style videos that interview former workers in specific roles who discuss

why they chose to contribute to valuable volunteer programs. These ideas can be further instilled

throughout the worker's tenure so that the worker has already previously been oriented to the

idea for the future. Based on a longitudinal study Mutchler, Burr and Caro (2003: 1287)

described the "overwhelming impact of prior participation in volunteer work on late-life

volunteer activity", and most notably, on formal volunteering activities. However, the same

study also concluded that paid work activity is negatively associated with the involvement in

volunteer activity. Consequently it is important for HR to encourage workers to develop an

appreciation for the value of volunteer activity.

When unpaid workers are exposed to a positive work context, the situation can lead to

increased positive outcomes. HRM must work actively to mitigate the negative image reflected

in the language related to ageing (words like 'senior' and 'retired') and replace it with a newer

vision of 'active' senior life (Center for Health Communication, 2004). When pre-retirement

programs are being introduced to the workers, the volunteer program might be used as a tool to

help the worker transition from a full-time worker to a part-time volunteer. As workers near

retirement one strategy that is often used to transition the worker easily into the new role is to

allow them to work four days, and take one day off, gradually reducing the working time to less days. During this transition period, workers could be introduced to volunteering by having them use those non-work days to engage in a volunteer activity of their choice in their institution. The employee will get a sense of the expectations, and more importantly, the gratification they may feel from helping others. This strategy may be more successful if the worker is being paid for their transition time, similar to volunteering programs sponsored by organisations (such as "loan an employee for a year" type arrangements). When time is not being reimbursed, the program can still be offered as a strategy to help workers transition into retirement.

ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although almost 60 per cent of workers who leave their full-time jobs after age 50 find bridging employment (Cahill, Giandrea, & Quinn, 2006), most of the research to date focuses on changes from wage-and-salary employment to wage-and-salary bridging employment. In contrast, we examine career bridging strategies from paid to unpaid work arrangements.

Our paper supplements previous literature by combining theories of social exchange and person-environment fit to develop a model of volunteer intention in nonprofit organisations. This model of volunteer intention can be quantitatively tested. We describe new relationships using distinct variables with previously validated measures. An effective model would include the collection of longitudinal data for the hypothesized relationships presented in this paper. Nonprofit institutions would likely be receptive to this type of research given the importance placed upon volunteer workers and their contributions. As we describe social exchanges among

organisations, paid and unpaid workers, and clients, empirical design must also consider the implications of multiple foci included in the social exchange.

The testing of such research might also consider transitions from paid to unpaid work arrangements in other 'vocational' careers found in the military, education systems, professional associations, sports groups and non-government organisations (NGOs). For example, Steer (1970 in Super, 1980) demonstrated that retired teachers and principals were most satisfied by retirement activities related to those that they had enjoyed in their later working years.

Future researchers must consider potential differences in the employment context of workers in different countries. Some jurisdictions have a traditional mandatory retirement age, while others have abolished the practice. Differences in retirement policies may influence the pool, quality, and attitudes of ageing workers to pursue post-retirement (or later stage pre-retirement) volunteering. For example, unpaid work may be stigmatized in comparison to paid work. Also, the value or nature placed on volunteer duties may change. Moreover, volunteerism might also be influenced by the informal culture underlying such formal regulatory differences. As this is beyond the scope of our micro-level model, future research might consider volunteerism in nonprofits at a more macro level by comparing various country and cultural differences.

CONCLUSION

We have developed new theory regarding the importance of building strong social exchanges and perceptions of fit with employees on the cusp of retirement, in order to attract them to return

as volunteers. In so doing, employers can utilize their knowledge of the norms and routines of the institution to provide better client care and manage relationships with paid employees.

With an increasing pool of available recruits associated with an ageing population, nonprofit organisations should mobilize their resources quickly to take advantage of this opportunity. Incorporating concepts of corporate social responsibility, pre-retirement programs, and introducing better human resource programs, volunteerism can be enhanced for the betterment and effectiveness of better client service.

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FIGURE 1:

Conceptual Model of Ageing Workers' Intent to Volunteer