

THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO VOLUNTEERISM IN ORGANIZATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to broaden and update the demography, attitudes, motives, outcomes and commitment of volunteers using a functional approach. A variation of Clary et al.'s (1998) Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was administered to organizational volunteer samples in the mid-Missouri area. Electronic questionnaires were disseminated to each of the samples over the summer of 2011. Demographic results were consistent with previous studies, which portrayed the general volunteer as white, middle aged, highly-educated, financially stable and female. In terms of motivation and outcomes, the values function was considered the most important driving force and outcome for voluntary activity. The functional constructs of understanding, self-enhancement, social, career and ego-protection were also present in secondary varying order among organizations. Volunteers from these samples were also highly ambitious to continue volunteering one full year in the future and were not overtly influenced by organizational intent. Though the results of this study are not fully representative of the complete administration of the VFI or to all volunteers and locales, they do help reaffirm previously obtained findings that used a similar functional approach and shed light on a few additional nuances toward the investigation of volunteerism.