

Differences and Similarities among Volunteers who Drop out During the first Year and Volunteers who Continue after eight Years

María Luisa Vecina Jiménez, Fernando Chacón Fuertes,
and Manuel J. Sueiro Abad
Universidad Complutense (Spain)

Differences and similarities between 130 volunteers who remain for more than eight years in the same non-profit organization and 110 volunteers who quit during the first year were analyzed in this paper. Both groups were chosen from a sample of 851 volunteers that were working as volunteers when we assessed the independent variables (Time 1). After a 12-month follow-up (Time 2), 209 (25%) of them had dropped out and 642 (75%) continued in the same organization. Using the previous time, we formed two groups made up of those who dropped out and had been in the organization less than a year and those who continued and had been in the organization more than 8 years. Results show that differences and similarities between both groups are coherent with the three-stage model of volunteer's duration (Chacón, Vecina, & Dávila, 2007). This model includes the functional approach of volunteers' motivations (Clary & Snyder, 1991), and the role identity approach (Callero, 1985), and indicates that people will remain as volunteers insofar as this satisfies the motivations that are relevant for them at the first stage, they develop organizational commitment at the second stage, and they develop role identity as volunteers at the third stage. More specifically, results show that it is possible to predict 85% of the cases correctly using seven variables. Volunteers who remain after eight years feel a higher level of emotional exhaustion, a higher level of organizational commitment, and a strong role identity as volunteers. They are also highly satisfied with the friendships in the organization and have a stronger intention to remain at the long term (2 years).

Keywords: volunteerism, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, volunteer role identity, satisfaction.

En este trabajo se analizan las diferencias y semejanzas entre dos grupos extremos de voluntarios, uno compuesto por 110 voluntarios que abandonan antes del primer año y otro compuesto por 130 voluntarios que continúan después de ocho. Estos dos grupos fueron seleccionados de una muestra total de 851 voluntarios, que, en el momento en el que se tomaron las medidas de las variables independientes (T1), estaban en activo y que, doce meses más tarde, cuando se midió la variable dependiente tiempo de permanencia (T2), resultó que habían abandonado 209 (25%) y que continuaban con su trabajo voluntarios en la misma organización 642 (75%). Puesto que en todos los casos se midió en el momento inicial (T1) el tiempo previo, se aplicaron dos criterios de selección para configurar los grupos, uno relativo al tiempo previo (menor a un año o mayor de 8 años) y otro relativo a la permanencia (abandona o sigue). Los resultados muestran una pauta de diferencias y semejanzas coherente con los supuestos del Modelo de las tres etapas de la permanencia del voluntariado (Chacón, Vecina y Dávila, 2007), que integra las dos principales líneas de investigación sobre la permanencia del voluntariado, la teoría funcional de las motivaciones (Clary y Snyder, 1991) y la basada en la identidad de rol (Callero, 1985), y que establece como variables explicativas fundamentales en la primera etapa la satisfacción, en la segunda el compromiso con la organización y en la tercera la identidad de rol. Más concretamente los resultados muestran que a través de siete variables es posible predecir correctamente la pertenencia a uno de los dos grupos en un 85% de los casos. Los voluntarios permanentes presentan niveles mayores de cansancio emocional, de compromiso organizacional y de identidad de rol como voluntarios. También parecen estar más satisfechos con las relaciones de amistad en la organización y tienen mayor intención de permanecer a largo plazo (dos años).

Keywords: voluntariado, permanencia, motivaciones, cansancio emocional, satisfacción, identidad de rol, compromiso organizacional.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to María Luisa Vecina Jiménez. Facultad de Psicología. Universidad Complutense. Campus de Somosaguas. 28223 Madrid. E-mail: mvecina@psi.ucm.es

What characterizes people who work for other's well-being or for the common good, continuously and despite the costs and difficulties involved? How are they different from people who, having made the decision to become volunteers, end up dropping out after a short time? Which variables discriminate dropouts from those who remain for decades?

Underlying these questions is the interest in knowing which factors influence sustained volunteerism. This is a key aspect, both at a theoretical level, because permanence defines the concept of volunteerism (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Penner, 2002), and also in practice, because this aspect coincides with one of the main needs of organizations to provide continuity to their programs.

The variables that affect permanence have been the object of much research in the last decade and, according to Penner's (2002) theoretical framework, they can be grouped into various large categories: situational factors, sociodemographic variables, beliefs and values, personality variables, organizational variables, and variables related to personal identity. The models that try to explain volunteer permanence have incorporated some of these variables, and their results seem to focus on two approaches, the functional approach—which underlines the importance of motivations and their satisfaction for maintaining behavior (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, & Stukas, 1998; Snyder, Clary, & Stukas, 2000)—and the role identity approach—which sustains that the incorporation of the volunteer role into the self-concept best explains sustained volunteerism (Callero, 1985; Finkelstein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Marta & Pozzi, 2007; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). The conceptual framework proposed by Penner (2002)

allows the theoretical integration of these two approaches, but the three-stage model of volunteer's duration of service (Chacón, Vecina, & Dávila, 2007), developed with a Spanish sample of volunteers and using a longitudinal methodology for the variable permanence, has contributed empirical evidence that makes the assumptions of the functional approach of motivations compatible with those of the volunteer role identity approach and it has also incorporated a powerful explanatory variable: the behavioral intention of permanence, taken from the theories of reasoned action and planned action (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

The three-stage model of volunteer permanence (Chacón et al., 2007) conceptualizes sustained volunteerism as a complex and dynamic process that takes place within a temporal dimension (Omoto & Snyder, 1995) and in which the influential variables change, evolve, and interact within an organizational context. Volunteers' experience modifies their initial motivations, their support network, and their own self-concept.

Firstly, the model assumes that volunteers know their life circumstances better than anyone else and they are the ones who can best estimate the time they are going to remain. Therefore, the variable that best explains real permanence within a certain time interval is the behavioral intention to remain during that same period of time (Arias & Barrón, 2008; Chacón, Vecina & Dávila, 2007; Dávila & Chacón, 2007; Dávila, 2003; Greenslade & White, 2005; Vecina, 2001). Three types of intention are differentiated, because it is assumed that people have different concerns when asked to estimate the probability of continuing at short term (6 months), medium term

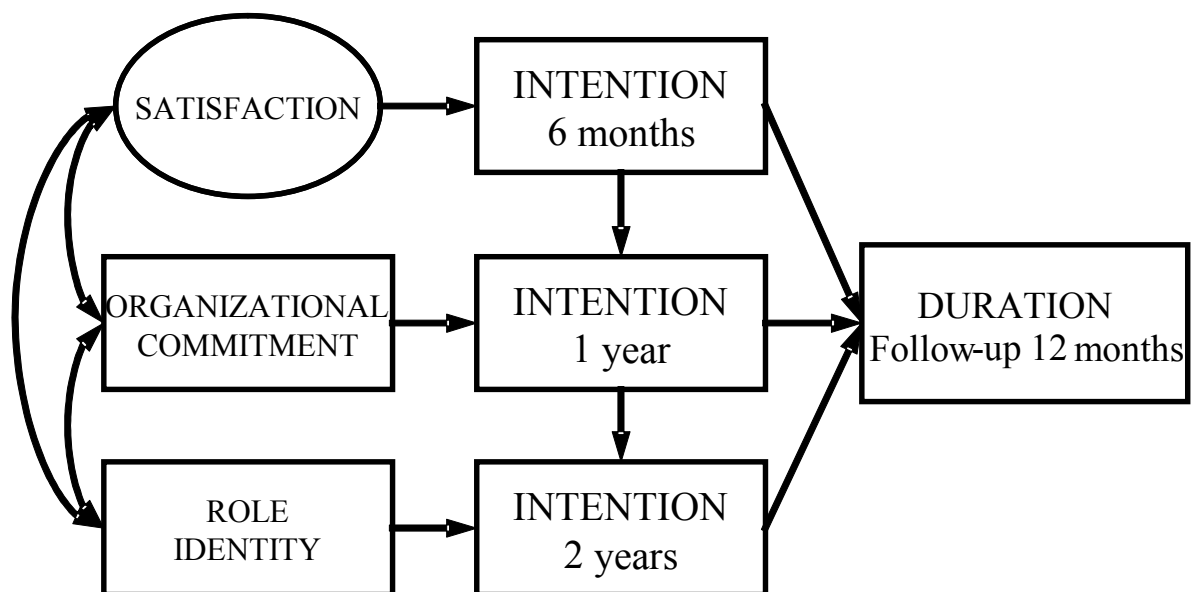


Figure 1. The three-stage model of volunteer's duration of service.

(1 year), and long term (2 years), especially if they are at the first stage, in which various dispositional variables, such as organizational commitment and volunteer role identity, have not yet developed.

Secondly, the model assumes that the relevant variables to explain short-, medium-, and long-term intention of remaining in service depend on the temporal moment of the volunteers' service (see Figure 1). The model distinguishes three stages: in the initial stage, the motivations and the degree of satisfaction are part of the set of variables that have the most impact on the intention of remaining in service (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Clary et al., 1998). Satisfaction at this stage is also achieved from performing the tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1980) and from diverse variables related to the organization management (Jamison, 2003). It is assumed that people have diverse expectations and motivations when they decide to become volunteers and that they compare them with a reality that is partially expected and partially unexpected. Moreover, the passing of time makes the costs more evident in terms of time, money, obligations, burnout, difficult personal interactions, etc., that will make dropout more likely for the volunteers who do not find an optimum degree of satisfaction (Vecina & Chacón, 2005), either because they do not achieve what they expect and consider essential or because they accumulate costs that are not offset by other positive outcomes. Some kind of organizational commitment must be generated for volunteers to go on to the second phase. According to Brickman (1987), commitment is "what makes a person assume or continue a course of action when difficulties or positive alternatives would lead them to give it up" (p. 2). Following an affective and emotional approach (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974), commitment implies a strong identification with a concrete organization, manifested in the belief in and acceptance of its goals and values, with the intention to make an effort for it and with the desire to remain as a member. This variable is especially related to the medium-term intention of remaining in service because it allows one, at least temporarily, to compensate for moderate decreases in terms of satisfaction. In the third stage, and as a consequence of the continued practice of volunteer actions for the organization, volunteers incorporate a new characteristic in the self-concept—the volunteer role—and this volunteer role identity is what best explains the long-term intention of remaining in service (Callero, 1985; Grube & Piliavin, 2000).

The three-stage model of volunteer permanence (Chacón et al., 2007) does not include as a predictor variable the so-called *burnout* syndrome (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), but theoretically, it may be related to volunteer dropout, especially in intervention spheres involving direct contact with users. Emotional fatigue is one of its main

dimensions, and many studies have revealed that a lot of the tasks carried out by volunteers are susceptible to generating burnout or at least high scores in some of its dimensions (Capner & Caltabiano, 1993; Maslanka, 1996; Nesbitt, Ross, Sunderland, & Shelp, 1996; Snyder, Omoto, & Crain, 1999) and this is related to a higher likelihood of dropout (Claxton, Catalán, & Burgess, 1998; Lafer, 1991; Ross, Greenfield, & Bennett, 1999). In Spanish samples of volunteers, burnout was related to previous time of permanence (Chacón, Vecina, Barrón, & De Paúl, 1999) and to dropout during follow-up (Vecina, Arias, Dávila, Barrón & Chacón, 2001), in the first case, observing that the volunteers who had spent more time in an organization presented a lower level of burnout and, in the second case, that the level of burnout reached its maximum level in volunteers who dropped out. The presence of a higher level of emotional fatigue among those who remain for more than eight years would allow us to directly confirm the presence of important costs in volunteers, an assumption in the three-stage model, and indirectly confirm the neutralizing influence of variables such as organizational commitment and volunteer role identity.

This work has two goals. On the one hand, to analyze the differences and similarities between two extreme groups of volunteers, one made up of those who dropped out during their first year of volunteerism and the other made up of those who continue after eight years, and, on the other hand, to identify the variables that afford the best prediction of belonging to one group or the other.

All the variables to be compared were measured at the same temporal moment (T1) and when the volunteers of the sample were practicing. Twelve months later, a telephone follow-up was conducted to determine real permanence during that follow-up time (T2), which, along with the datum of previous time, allowed us to select the two target groups. With this procedure, we aim to verify whether the dynamism of the process studied, which is difficult and costly to reproduce methodologically, is reflected in a static photograph of two extreme groups. This would contribute validity to some of the assumptions of the three-stage model of sustained volunteerism (Chacón, Vecina & Dávila, 2007) and it would allow us to determine the most relevant variables that are susceptible to eventual manipulation in the context of managing volunteerism programs.

Given the characteristics of the sample selected and according to the reference model, it can be assumed that most of the volunteers who ended up dropping out before one year did not get through the first stage successfully, whereas those who continued after eight years of previous permanence had already gone through the first and second stages and were in the third stage. If so, we could expect some group differences already at the initial moment (T1) when the independent variables were measured and when all the volunteers of the sample were practicing.

Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Hypothesis 1: The volunteers who drop out before the first year will present the same or a lower level of satisfaction with the three dimensions of the concept (motivational satisfaction, task satisfaction, and satisfaction with the organization management) than the volunteers who continue after 8 years.
- Hypothesis 2: Volunteers who remain in service will present a higher level of organizational commitment and a stronger volunteer role identity. Their intention of remaining in service in the organization at short, medium, and long term will also be higher and they will display a lower level of differentiation among the three types of intention.
- Hypothesis 3: Volunteers who remain in service will present higher levels of emotional fatigue than those who drop out before one year.
- Hypothesis 4: Lastly, it is hypothesized that the variables that predict belonging to one or the other group will be the variables that theoretically require the passing of time to become established and which will therefore be fully developed in the volunteers who remain in service, but not in those who drop out before the first year. These variables are: organizational commitment, role identity, long-term intention of remaining in service, and emotional fatigue.

Method

Participants

Of a total sample of 851 volunteers, belonging to 56 different socio-assistential organizations, 240 volunteers were selected: 110 had dropped out of the organization before completing the first year (Group 1) and 130 continued after eight years (Group 2).

With regard to the sociodemographic characteristics of Group 1, the mean age of this group was 26 years ($SD = 8.7$), ranging between 16 and 64 years. Of the group, 27.5% were men and 72.5% women and 56% had university studies. With regard to work situation, 32% were working, 15% were unemployed, 46% were studying, and 7% defined themselves as housewives or retirees. Regarding volunteer activity, the volunteers from this group dedicated an average of 1.5 days and 5.5 hours per week, and they needed an average of 36 minutes to travel to the organization.

Regarding the characteristics of Group 2, the mean age was 41 years ($SD = 14.97$), ranging between 22 and 82 years. Of this group, 54% were men (70) and 46% (60) were women, and 56% had university studies. With regard to work situation, 68% were actively working, whereas 8% were unemployed, 6% were studying, and 15% were included among housewives or retirees. The volunteers of

this group dedicated an average of 2.8 days and 11 hours per week to volunteerism and they needed an average of 24 minutes to travel to the organization.

Procedure

All the independent measures were assessed at a single temporal moment (T1). One year later, a telephone follow-up was conducted to find out who continued and who had dropped out of the organization they belonged to (T2). This procedure allowed us to select two groups of volunteers as a function of their previous time in the organization and their continuity or dropout at follow-up. In order to compare the extreme groups, we eliminated the cases that did not meet these criteria from the analysis.

Instruments

The following sociodemographic variables were assessed: age, sex, educational level, and work situation. Participants were also asked how many days and hours per week they dedicated to volunteerism and how long in minutes they needed to travel to the organization.

Volunteer Satisfaction (Vecina, Chacón, & Sueiro, 2009). This measure included three subscales: motivational satisfaction, task satisfaction, and management satisfaction. The first subscale includes 6 items that measure the degree to which the activity carried out fulfills the six motivations identified in the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998), for example: *values* “My volunteerism allows me to express the values that are important for me”, *knowledge* “...allows me to learn new and interesting things”, *social relations* “...allows me to establish social relations with other people”, *improving one's curriculum* “...provides me with the necessary training and experience to be a good professional”, *defense of the self* “...helps me to forget my problems”, and *improving self-esteem* “...makes me feel good and raises my self-esteem.” The scale ranges from 1 to 7 and the Cronbach α index of internal consistency was .720.

Task satisfaction includes 4 items that examine aspects such as clarity in the definition of task goals, performance feedback provided by the task, the transcendental meaning of the tasks, and the level of self-efficacy that can be derived. It includes items such as: “the tasks I normally carry out have clearly defined goals,” “I can tell while I am performing my volunteer tasks whether I am doing them well,” “I am satisfied with the efficacy with which I carry out my tasks.” The instrument is rated on a 10-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 10 = *strongly agree*) and the internal consistency of this instrument was .682.

Management satisfaction includes 7 items referring to various aspects of the management of the organization. This is a 7-point scale (1 = *completely dissatisfied*, 7 = *totally*

satisfied) and includes items such as: “I am satisfied with the way the organization manages volunteerism,” “...with the training provided to improve volunteer work,” “...with the current mechanisms to solve problems the volunteers might encounter when carrying out their tasks,” “...with the friendly relations I have within the organization.” The internal consistency of the instrument, measured with Cronbach’s alpha, was .842.

Organizational Commitment. We used the instrument originally designed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) and adapted to Spanish population (Dávila & Chacón, 2003). It has 9 items referring to the emotional link between volunteers and their organization. It includes items such as: “I am concerned about the future of this organization,” “I find that my values and the values of the organization are very similar,” “I am proud to be able to say that I am a part of this organization.” The instrument was rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The reliability of the instrument was .851.

Volunteer Role Identity. We used the instrument designed by Grube and Piliavin (2000), adapted to Spanish population (Dávila, Chacón, & Vecina, 2005). It includes 5 items such as: “I often think about volunteerism,” “For me, being a volunteer is more important than the specific tasks I carry out,” “volunteerism is an important part of my identity.” It was rated on a 10-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 10 = *strongly agree*). The reliability of the instrument was .674.

Emotional Fatigue. We used the 9-item scale of Emotional Fatigue of the Burnout Inventory of Maslach and Jackson (1986), adapted to Spanish population (Chacón et al., 1999). It includes items such as: “I feel emotionally let down by my volunteer activity,” “I feel the work I carry out tires me,” “I feel that I spend too much time performing my volunteer activities,” “I feel that my volunteer activity is wearing me down.” The instrument was rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *daily*). The reliability of the instrument was .817.

Intention of remaining in service. This was measured by 3 items that asked participants about the likelihood of their remaining in the organization at 6 months, one year, and two years. The instrument was rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all probable*, 7 = *extremely likely*).

Data Analysis

First, we analyzed the differences and similarities of the two groups of volunteers in the variables of interest by means of multivariate analysis of variance (one-factor MANOVA, independent measures, and fixed effects). Then, we carried out a logistic regression analysis (with the method of forward stepwise inclusion of variables, based on the similarity rate, criterion $p < .05$) to identify the set of variables that best predicted the inclusion of each case in one of the two groups.

Results

Regarding motivational satisfaction, no significant group differences were observed at the confidence level of .95 (Table 1). However, when the motivations were analyzed separately, we observed significant differences in the motivational satisfaction of values, improving one’s curriculum, and knowledge ($F = 20.04$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$; $F = 6.61$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$; $F = 5.53$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). The direction of these differences indicates that the volunteers who dropped out before 1 year achieved a significantly lower degree of satisfaction for their motivation of values, although, at the same time, they seem to find a higher degree of satisfaction for their motivation of knowledge and improving their relevant skills in professional environments (improving one’s curriculum).

Significant group differences were observed in task satisfaction ($F = 16.44$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) (Table 1). The direction of the differences indicates that the volunteers who remain for more than 8 years feel that their tasks have better defined goals and a significant purpose, they carry them out with efficacy, and, furthermore, the tasks provide immediate feedback about their level of performance.

Lastly, regarding satisfaction with the organizational management, no significant group differences were obtained ($p < .001$). Both groups seemed to be equally satisfied with the way the organization was managed, the specific management of volunteers, the frequency and fluidity of communications, the problem-solving mechanisms, training, and acknowledgement of the role of volunteerism (Table 1).

From the above pattern of differences and similarities, we can conclude that, as proposed in Hypothesis 1, the volunteers who drop out before 1 year are either as satisfied as or less satisfied than those who continue after 8 years. Specifically, they seem to be as satisfied with the management and the degree of motivational satisfaction, but more dissatisfied with the tasks they carry out.

Significant group differences were observed in the remaining variables of the three-stage model, which confirms Hypothesis 2 (Table 1). The direction of these differences indicates that, as we had assumed, the volunteers who dropped out of volunteerism during the follow-up year presented a lower level of commitment to the organization ($F = 44.27$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), a weaker volunteer role identity ($F = 32.45$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), and as a consequence, less intention of remaining at short, medium, and long term ($F = 17.76$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$; $F = 54.76$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$; $F = 66.53$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). These volunteers also discriminated much more among the three types of intention than the volunteers who remained; in effect, the volunteers from Group 1 gave a much lower estimation of their future intention to remain in service and they discriminated much more among short-, medium- and long-term intention (a difference of 1.8 points on a 1-to-7

point scale for Group 1; whereas there was a difference of .77 for Group 2).

As proposed in Hypothesis 3, the degree of emotional fatigue was significantly higher in the volunteers from Group 2 (who remained after 8 years of previous service) ($F = 19.86, df = 1, p < .001$), which may indicate that sustained volunteer activity involves diverse costs to sensitive volunteers, which is reflected in what has been called emotional fatigue and which accumulates to a lesser degree among volunteers who drop out after a short time.

Table 1 presents a summary of all the contrasts carried out, with the means and standard deviations of both groups, the contrast statistic, its significance, and the statistical power of the test (for a level of significance of .05). It can be seen that the powers are high for the contrasts with no null hypothesis. Given that power is interpreted as the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false, these results support the existence of group differences in these variables.

All the variables assessed were introduced in the logistic regression analysis, even the ones that did not yield significant group differences in the analysis of variance. The reason is that the analysis of variance focused on intergroup variability, considering the within-group differences as error, whereas the regression analysis focused on the predictive power of the variables to classify each subject in one of the groups, maximizing the number of correct prognoses.

After seven iterations, we found a solution that included seven predictor variables. The seven variables that allowed us to correctly classify 84.9% of the volunteers were: emotional fatigue, organizational commitment, volunteer role identity, intention of remaining in service at 2 years, motivational satisfaction of knowledge (-), satisfaction with friendly relations, and satisfaction with the acknowledgement of the role of volunteerism in the organization (-). In the group of volunteers who dropped out before the first year, 81.7% of the subjects were correctly classified, and 87.8% were correctly classified in the group of volunteers who remained after 8 years.

According to Nagelkerke's R^2 statistic, this model explains 64.9% of the variance of the variable Group (dropped out before one year vs. remained after 8 years).

$$Pr = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(11.25 + .38 \cdot IR + .77 \cdot C + 2.59 \cdot CE + .57 \cdot IP - .62 \cdot SM7 + .85 \cdot SG11 - .55 \cdot SG12)}}$$

Where:

- Pr is the probability of belonging to the group that continues volunteerism.
- IR is the score in Role Identity
- C is the score in Commitment
- CE is the score in Emotional Fatigue

Table 1
Differences between Volunteers who Dropped out and Volunteers who Remain and Power of Contrasts

	Dropped out before 1 year		Remain after 8 years		F	p	Power
	M	SD	M	SD			
Motivational satisfaction (scale 1-7)	5.14	.89	5.11	.97	.07	.782	.059
1. Values	5.43	1.18	6.07	1.03	2.04	.000	1.000
2. Knowledge	6.33	.95	6.00	1.15	5.53	.020	.649
3. Improve curriculum	5.21	1.94	4.56	1.86	6.61	.011	.726
4. Social relations	5.93	1.33	5.91	1.22	.10	.919	.051
5. Improve self-esteem	4.42	1.59	4.63	1.69	.90	.343	.157
6. Defense of the self	3.51	1.81	3.67	1.86	.40	.523	.098
Task satisfaction (scale 1-10)	7.00	1.25	7.60	1.02	16.44	.000	.981
Management satisfaction (scale 1-7)	5.36	1.05	5.58	.88	3.23	.073	.433
Organizational commitment (scale 1-7)	4.96	.96	5.72	.77	44.27	.000	1.000
Role identity (scale 1-10)	6.23	1.53	7.38	1.53	32.45	.000	1.000
Emotional fatigue (scale 1-5)	1.43	.395	1.71	.55	19.86	.000	.993
Intention of remaining in service at 6 months (scale 1-7)	5.53	1.76	6.41	1.43	17.76	.000	.987
Intention of remaining in service at 1 year (scale 1-7)	4.50	1.85	6.12	1.48	54.76	.000	1.000
Intention of remaining in service at 2 years (scale 1-7)	3.73	1.87	5.64	1.68	66.53	.000	1.000

IP is the Intention of remaining in service at long-term (2 years)

SM7 is Satisfaction of the motivation of knowledge

SG11 is Satisfaction with friendly relations

SG12 is Satisfaction with the acknowledgement of volunteerism in the organization

Discussion

This work has shown that volunteers who remain in service and accumulate a previous permanence of 8 years seem to be achieving higher levels of satisfaction from the tasks they carry out than the volunteers who drop out. Moreover, their motivation of values—which turns out to be the most important for volunteers in most of the studies (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Orenstein, 1991; Davis, Hall, & Meyer, 2003; Okun & Eisenberg, 1992; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Vecina & Chacón, 1999; Winniford, Carpenter, Stanley & Grider, 1995)—is more highly satisfied, they feel more committed to the organization to which they belong, they have developed a more solid volunteer role identity (Chacón et al., 2007; Marta & Pozzi, 2007), and they have a stronger intention of remaining at the short, medium and long term, even though, at the same time, they are suffering from a higher level of emotional fatigue (Chacón et al., 1999). The latter aspect directly confirms the presence of important costs in volunteers' actions and indirectly confirms the influence of other variables such as commitment and role identity which neutralize this negative influence in Stages 2 and 3.

In contrast, volunteers who drop out before the first year seem to be finding more satisfaction for their motivations of knowledge and curriculum improvement, whereas they express less satisfaction from the tasks performed and as much satisfaction from the management of the organization as the volunteers who continue (Group 2). These results are compatible with the assumption that satisfaction is necessary but insufficient to explain sustained volunteerism.

With the interpretational reservations due to this kind of comparative analysis, it can be concluded that the pattern of differences and similarities found is mostly consistent with the assumptions of the three-stage model of volunteers' duration of service (Chacón et al., 2007). On the one hand, we expected and could, in fact, observe important group differences in the variables that develop over time and that explain the dynamism of the process: higher organizational commitment, stronger role identity, stronger intention of remaining in service at the long term, and more emotional fatigue in volunteers who remain after 8 years (Stage 3). In contrast, we expected the volunteers who dropped out before 1 year (they did not complete Stage 1) to be either as satisfied or less satisfied with the diverse aspects of their volunteerism and, in effect, we

observed less task satisfaction and equal satisfaction in the other two dimensions (management and motivations). The three-stage model assumes that, in this first stage, volunteers compare their expectations and motivations with reality and, for some time, there are adjustments, the balance of which must be positive and contribute to the development of an emotional link with the organization (commitment) in order to explain permanence in Stage 2. This is the only way to offset the costs that are undoubtedly involved in maintaining volunteerism in organizational contexts and that can be inferred from the higher level of emotional fatigue among volunteers who remain for long periods of time. In other words, the model predicts that people who are dissatisfied will not go on to Stage 2, and neither will those who are satisfied, but who do not develop organizational commitment. The results obtained seem compatible with these constraints proposed by the model; function satisfaction is a necessary but insufficient condition to explain permanence, that is, manifest dissatisfaction is related to dropout at this first stage (necessary condition), but satisfaction in itself would not explain going on to the next stage (insufficient condition).

The results of the logistic regression analysis allow us to conclude that the variables that predict belonging to one or the other group are developed over time: organizational commitment, volunteer role identity, emotional fatigue, and intention of remaining in service at long term. Some isolated items of the satisfaction dimensions were also good predictors: satisfaction with friendly relationships within the organization, satisfaction of the motivation of knowledge (higher in the dropout group), and satisfaction with the acknowledgement of the role of volunteerism in the organization (also higher in the dropout group). These results can be interpreted in the light of the logic of the model, according to which, in order to remain in service at long-term, it is necessary to develop an emotional link with the organization and subsequently a self-concept that incorporates the volunteer role. When this occurs, permanence is associated with factors that are more dispositional than situational, making the organization's acknowledgement of the volunteers or the satisfaction of learning needs less relevant. This last assumption of the model also receives indirect empirical support in this work, as we observed that the volunteers who had developed commitment and volunteer identity (dispositional variables) made less differentiated estimations of their intention of remaining in service at short, medium, and long term.

Regarding the sociodemographic variables, at a merely descriptive level, as shown by most of the studies (Cortes, Hernán, & López, 1998; Dávila, 2003; FEAPS, 2004; Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Lemon, Paisleys, & Jacobson, 1972; Medina, 2000; Pérez & López, 2003; Smith, 1983; Vecina, 2001; Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, &

Meier, 1987), the educational level of the volunteers is considerably high: in both groups, more than 50% of the subjects had university students. With regard to sex, the results obtained in this work force us to qualify some firmly established ideas, such as the notion that socio-assistential volunteerism is phenomenon carried out mostly by women (Cortes et al., 1998; Dávila, 2003; Medina, 2000; Pérez & López, 2003; Vecina, 2001). In this work, we observed that the proportion of women is much higher in the group of volunteers who dropped out during the first year, but it is practically the same as that of men in the group of volunteers who remained in service after 7 years. In view of these results, we see that, although volunteerism may be initially carried out by women, over time and due to the dropouts, these differences become blurred, and the proportion of men and women is equivalent when we refer to sustained volunteerism.

Diverse management strategies can be derived from this work, which could be aimed at promoting the aspects that characterize the group of permanent volunteers. In a context that involves important costs, efforts should be made to promote maximum task satisfaction for volunteers (Vecina & Chacón, 2005) or, in the terminology of Hackman and Oldham (1975, 1980), to increase the motivating potential of the post. In accordance with the functional theory of motivations (Clary et al., 1998), organizations should attempt to fulfill the volunteers' most important motivations, and the organizations and their programs should be managed so that at least the unforeseen negative aspects that emerge over time are neutralized. All this would be necessary but insufficient if it does not lead to the development of an emotional identification link with the organization, the people who make it up, etc., and which would manifest, according to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), in a strong desire to continue to be a member of the organization, high levels of effort in benefit of the organization, and acceptance of its values and goals. In other words, it would manifest by providing continuity to action, despite its costs or positive alternatives. Lastly, sustained work in these conditions would make it more likely for people to incorporate the role they had been performing into their self-concept, which would ultimately lead them to continue performing behaviors that are coherent with this self-concept (Piliavin & Callero, 1991; Piliavin, Grube, & Callero, 2002).

References

- Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Jul & J. Beckmann (Eds.), *Action-control: From cognitions to behaviors* (pp. 11-39). New York: Springer.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood-Cliffs, New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Arias, A., & Barrón, A. (2008). El apoyo social en la predicción a corto y medio plazo de la permanencia del voluntariado socioasistencial. *Psicothema*, 20, 97-103.
- Brickman, P. (1987). *Commitment, Conflict, and Caring*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Callero, P. L. (1985). Role-identity salience. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48, 203-215.
- Capner, M., & Caltabiano, M. L. (1993). Factors affecting the progression towards burnout. A comparison of professional and volunteer counseling. *Psychological-Reports*, 73, 555-561.
- Chacón, F., Vecina, M. L., Barrón, A., & De Paúl, P. (1999). Burnout en voluntarios que trabajan con pacientes de SIDA o cáncer. *Clinica y Salud*, 10, 137-150.
- Chacón, F., Vecina, M. L., & Dávila, M. C. (2007). The three-stage model of volunteer's duration of service. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 35, 627-642.
- Clary, E., & Orenstein, L. (1991). The amount and effectiveness of help: The relationship of motives and abilities to helping behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17, 58-64.
- Clary, E., & Snyder, M. (1991). A functional analysis of altruism and prosocial behavior: The case of volunteerism. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Prosocial behavior: Review of personality and social psychology* (Vol. 12, pp. 119-148). London: Sage.
- Clary, E., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A. A., Haugen, J., et al. (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1516-1530.
- Claxton, R. P. R., Catalán, J., & Burgess, A. P. (1998). Psychological distress and burnout among buddies: Demographic, situational and motivational factors. *AIDS-Care*, 10, 175-190.
- Cortes, L., Hernán, M. J., & López, O. (1998). *Las organizaciones de voluntariado en España*. Madrid: Plataforma para la Promoción del Voluntariado en España.
- Dávila, M. C. (2003). *La incidencia diferencial de los factores psicosociales en distintos tipos de voluntariado*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Dávila, M. C., & Chacón, F. (2003). Adaptación de instrumentos para la evaluación de aspectos organizacionales en ONGs. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, 19, 159-179.
- Dávila, M. C., & Chacón, F. (2007). Prediction of longevity of volunteer service: A basic alternative proposal. *Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 10, 115-121.
- Dávila, M. C., Chacón, F., & Vecina, M. L. (2005). El modelo de la identidad de rol de voluntario: análisis de sus componentes básicos en una muestra de voluntarios. *Revista de Psicología General Aplicada*, 58, 333-346.

- Davis, M. H., Hall, J. A., & Meyer, M. (2003). The first year: Influences on the satisfaction, involvement, and persistence of new community volunteers. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *29*, 248-260.
- FEAPS. (2004). *El voluntariado en el movimiento asociativo FEAPS*, retrieved from http://www.feaps.org/voluntarios/documentos/voluntariado_interesa.pdf
- Finkelstein, M. A., Penner, L. A., & Brannick, M. T. (2005). Motive, role identity, and prosocial personality as predictors of volunteer activity. *Social Behavior and Personality*, *33*, 403-418.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Florin, P. K., Jones, E., & Wandersman, A. (1986). Black participation in voluntary associations. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *15*, 65-86.
- Greenslade, J. H., & White, K. M. (2005). The prediction of above-average participation in volunteerism: A test of the theory of planned behavior and the Volunteers' Functions Inventory in older Australian adults. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *145*(2), 155-172.
- Grube, J. A., & Piliavin, J. A. (2000). Role identity, organizational experiences and volunteer performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 1108-1119.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *60*, 159-170.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Jamison, I. B. (2003). Turnover and retention among volunteers in human service agencies. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *23*, 114-132.
- Lafer, B. (1991). The attrition of hospice volunteers. *Omega Journal of Death and Dying*, *23*, 161-168.
- Lemon, M., Paisleys, B. J., & Jacobson, P. E. (1972). Dominant status and involvement in formal voluntary associations. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *1*, 30-42.
- Marta, E., & Pozzi, M. (2007). Young people and volunteerism: A model of sustained volunteerism during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Adult Development* *15*, 35-46.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1986). *Maslach Burnout Inventory*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*, 397-422.
- Maslanka, H. (1996). Burnout, social support and AIDS volunteers. *AIDS Care*, *8*, 195-207.
- Medina, M. E. (2000). *Perfil del voluntario*. Murcia, Spain: Plataforma para la Promoción del Voluntariado en la región de Murcia.
- Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *14*, 224-247.
- Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W. & Steers, R. M. (1982). *Employee-organization linkages. The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover*. New York: Academic Press.
- Nesbitt, W. H., Ross, M. W., Sunderland, R. H., & Shelp, E. E. (1996). Prediction of grief and HIV/AIDS related burnout in volunteers. *AIDS Care*, *8*, 137-143.
- Okun, M. A., & Eisenberg, N. (1992). Motives and intent to continue organizational volunteering among residents of a retirement community area. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *20*, 183-187.
- Omoto, A. M., & Snyder, M. (1995). Sustained helping without obligation: Motivation, longevity of service, and perceived attitude change among AIDS volunteers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *68*, 671-686.
- Penner, L. A. (2002). Dispositional and organizational influences on sustained volunteerism: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, *58*, 447-467.
- Penner, L. A., & Finkelstein, M. A. (1998). Dispositional and structural determinants of volunteerism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 525-537.
- Piliavin, J. A., Grube, J. A., & Callero, P. L. (2002). Role as resource for action in public service. *Journal of Social Issues*, *58*, 469-485.
- Piliavin, J. A., & Callero, P. L. (1991). *Giving blood: The development of an altruistic identity*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pérez, V. & López J.P. (2003). *El tercer sector social en España*, Madrid: MTAS.
- Porter, L.W., Steers, R.M., Mowday, R.T. & Boulian, P.V. (1974). Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover among psychiatric technicians. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *59*, 603-609.
- Ross, M. W., Greenfield, S. A., & Bennett, L. (1999). Predictors of dropout and burnout in AIDS volunteers: A longitudinal study. *AIDS Care*, *11*, 723-732.
- Smith, D. H. (1983). Synanthrometrics: On progress in the development of a general theory of voluntary action and citizen participation. In D. H. Smith, J. V. Til & otros (Eds.), *International perspectives on voluntary action research*. Washington, DC: University Press of America.
- Snyder, M., Clary, E. G., & Stukas, A. A. (2000). The functional approach to volunteerism. In G. R. Maio & J. M. Olson (Eds.), *Why we evaluate: Functions of attitudes* (pp. 365-393). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Snyder, M., Omoto, A. M., & Crain, A. L. (1999). Punished for their good deeds: Stigmatization of AIDS volunteers. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *42*, 1175-1195.
- Vecina, M. L. (2001). *Factores psicosociales que influyen en la permanencia del voluntariado*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Vecina, M. L., Astray, A. A., Dávila, M. C., Barrón, A., Chacón, F., & De Paúl, P. (2001). Influencia del burnout en el abandono de los voluntarios. *Intervención Psicosocial*, *10*, 157-168.
- Vecina, M. L., & Chacón, F. (1999). Estudio sobre las motivaciones de una muestra de voluntarios españoles en el campo del SIDA. *Estudios de Psicología*, *62*, 55-66.
- Vecina, M. L., & Chacón, F. (2005). Positive emotions in volunteerism. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, *8*, 30-35.

- Vecina, M. L., Chacón, F., & Sueiro, M. J. (2009). Satisfacción en el voluntariado: estructura interna y relación con la permanencia en las organizaciones. *Psicothema*, *21*(1), 112-117
- Wandersman, A., Florin, P. K., Friedmann, R. R., & Meier, R. (1987). Who participates, who does not participate, and why? Participation in block and neighborhood organizations in the United States and Israel. *Sociological Forum*, *2*, 534-555.
- Winniford, J., Carpenter, D., Stanley, & Grider, C. (1995). An analysis of the traits and motivations of college students involved in service organizations. *Journal of College Student Development*, *36*, 27-38.

Received November 17, 2008

Revision received June 30, 2009

Accepted July 2, 2009