



## The service volunteer – loyalty chain: an exploratory study of charitable not-for-profit service organizations

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### Abstract

Many not-for-profit organizations rely on volunteers to help accomplish their service objectives. Although volunteers work alongside or in some cases replace employees in the delivery of service, incorporating volunteer labor into the service delivery system of the not-for-profit poses unique challenges. Understanding these challenges represents an important foundation-building step in understanding the implications for service design and service operations when using volunteers. This paper identifies and describes service design and operational factors relevant to volunteer satisfaction in not-for-profit organizations. Using data collected from 288 volunteers working in 43 not-for-profit agencies, the study explores the elements of service delivery that impact volunteer satisfaction, and further tests the relationship between volunteer satisfaction and loyalty to the not-for-profit organization. Findings include that satisfied volunteers are more likely to remain for longer periods of time with the same organization, are more likely to donate financially to the not-for-profit, and are more likely to recommend the volunteer experience to others. Each of these outcomes helps to ensure the continued sustainability of the not-for-profit organization. © 2004 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

**Keywords:** Volunteer service design; Volunteer satisfaction; Not-for-profit sustainability

*It is that they do something very different from either business or government. The “not-for-profit” institution neither supplies goods or services nor controls. Its “product” is neither a pair of shoes nor an effective regulation. Its product is a changed human*

*being.* (Peter Drucker, 1992, *Managing the Not-for-profit Organization: Principles and Practices*)

### 1. Introduction

In 2000, almost half of all adults in the United States volunteered time to not-for-profit organizations, donating over 15 billion hours of volunteer time

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(Independent Sector, 2001). They served as unpaid service employees, often in temporary capacities such as helping to build a home for Habitat for Humanity or serving lunch at a homeless shelter, but also in quasi-employee capacities such as performing administrative duties in libraries or hospitals. Given the financial and operational structure of charitable not-for-profit organizations, it is clear that many, if not most, could not operate effectively without volunteers. However, despite their roles as workers in and for organizations, volunteers are unique in many aspects of service delivery. Their motivations for volunteering tend to be more altruistic than material or instrumental (Farmer and Fedor, 1999). Since a volunteer does not receive compensation from a not-for-profit organization, a volunteer's determination of value in the relationship is different from an employee's. In many respects, service volunteers can also be viewed as customers since they are using the not-for-profit services to further their own goals and objectives. They are also analogous to customers in that they choose to participate and can defect at any time (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

The purpose of this study is to examine the service volunteer – loyalty chain within charitable not-for-profit service organizations. In doing so, it lays the foundation to better understand the operational implications of designing and managing not-for-profit charitable service organizations that rely heavily on volunteer labor. The research uses the service profit chain (Heskett et al., 1997) as a starting point to conceptualize the conditions that must be in place within the operating strategy of service delivery systems to create a cycle of volunteer loyalty and service capability. From this standpoint, this largely exploratory research can be viewed as an extension of linkage research described as inquiry that “identifies those elements of the work environment that are connected, or linked, with important organizational outcomes including customer satisfaction and financial performance” (Pugh et al., 2002, p. 73).

The study draws from service operations, marketing, and management research, as well as research specific to not-for-profit organizations and volunteerism to understand the linkages between service design and operations to service value. By focusing on the role of the volunteer in not-for-profit charitable

service organizations the following questions are addressed:

- (1) What is unique, from an operational standpoint, about using volunteers as service producers?
- (2) What factors contribute to volunteer satisfaction and loyalty?
- (3) How does volunteer loyalty impact the sustainability of the not-for-profit organization?

The next section discusses the role of volunteers in not-for-profit service organizations and specifies a set of propositions to guide the investigation. The subsequent section describes the research methodology and presents the results. The final section discusses the research limitations and managerial implications, concluding with suggestions for future research.

## 2. Service volunteers

In not-for-profit charitable organizations, volunteers often play a critical role in service delivery. In many not-for-profit organizations, volunteer labor outnumbers employee labor. In a recent study of 71 not-for-profit agencies, the ratio of volunteers to employees was 1.1 volunteers to each employee (The Volunteer Center, 2003). However, the ratio of volunteers to employees expanded to 11.7 volunteers to each employee for the 80% of the sample agencies that reported fewer than 200 employees. Service delivery systems for not-for-profit service businesses therefore need to accommodate volunteers and the idiosyncrasies of volunteers' motivations, skill levels, and availability.

Volunteers do not engage in the traditional exchange of service for compensation. Most people volunteer for altruistic reasons – because someone asked them to help, as a way to reciprocate for help they have received in the past, or because their friends or family are volunteering or have benefited from previous volunteer services (Farmer and Fedor, 1999; Guseh and Winders, 2002). Some volunteer for instrumental reasons such as gaining general work experience or specific skills (Anderson and Moore, 1978). Regardless of motivating factors, volunteers differ from employees in that they typically do not receive performance appraisals, are not held to strict

employment standards (Farmer and Fedor, 1999, 2001; Pearce, 1993), and are not subject to coercive control (Etzioni, 1975).

Seasoned volunteers may take on many of the attributes of reliable and experienced employees, but designing service delivery systems that depend on volunteers with varying skill and motivation levels presents a unique challenge for service operations managers. The nature of volunteerism creates variability for not-for-profit organizations. Approximately one of every six volunteers can be classified as a “casual” volunteer, participating only one time for an organization, and the average volunteer participates between 5 and 12 hours per month (The Volunteer Center, 2003). Therefore, there is a high level of turnover in volunteers; new or “casual” volunteers may or may not show up and they also require some degree of orientation, if not training. Given the extent to which not-for-profit charitable service organizations depend on volunteers, designing a service delivery system that efficiently uses the skills and abilities of the volunteer and that helps to create a volunteer work experience that motivates the volunteer to remain loyal to the organization is a central challenge to non-profit-service organizations.

What then, from the standpoint of the operating strategy and service delivery system, drives volunteer satisfaction and subsequent loyalty to the organization? To the extent that volunteers can be viewed as unpaid employees, lessons can be drawn from for-profit models that describe the determinants of service employee loyalty. One of the best known and widely applied frameworks is the service profit chain, first proposed by Heskett et al. (1997). The service profit chain is a model that was developed to “provide an integrative framework for understanding how a firm’s operational investments into service operations are related to customer perceptions and behaviors, and how these translate into profits” (Kamakura et al., 2002, p. 294). The service employee is the foundation of the service profit chain (Cook et al., 2002).

The service profit chain begins internally with the establishment of a service delivery system that enhances productivity and leads to quality outputs. Critical operating strategy and service delivery system factors include workplace design, job design/decision-making latitude, selection and development practices,

rewards and recognition, information and communication, and adequate tools to serve customers (Heskett et al., 1994). These context-dependent factors represent a reinforcing cycle that leads to both employee loyalty and service value. The primary focus of this exploratory research is to understand what factors contribute to volunteer satisfaction and loyalty.

Just as employees’ loyalty increases over time, volunteers also tend to be more committed to service organizations over time (Penner and Finkelstein, 1998; Piliavin and Callero, 1991; Grube and Piliavin, 1996). Farmer and Fedor (2001) concluded that service volunteers invest time in establishing their roles as side bets (Becker, 1960) that solidify their self-commitment in a social structure (Stryker, 1980).

### 2.1. Focus group and propositions

Given the exploratory nature of this research, the authors initially met with 19 volunteer coordinators from charitable not-for-profit service organizations located in a large southwestern city to better understand the nature of designing and managing service operations that rely heavily on volunteers. The primary purpose of convening this focus group was to gain first-hand knowledge and insights into factors that contribute to volunteer loyalty. Participants were recruited by means of an e-mail invitation extended by a representative of the local volunteer center. A structured questionnaire was used to guide discussion which was moderated by one of the researchers and recorded on video. The results of this meeting included anecdotal, yet informed, thoughts about the determinants of volunteer loyalty. The primary questions guiding the discussion included:

- “What makes an organization successful at managing volunteers”?
- “What contributes to volunteer satisfaction and loyalty”?
- “How do volunteers contribute to the sustainability of the non-profit organization”?

These three guiding questions led to a rich discussion of the factors that those responsible for coor-

dinating the efforts of volunteers believe lead to volunteer satisfaction, loyalty and to organizational impacts. Based on these discussions and the extant literature, a conceptual model of the volunteer role in the service delivery chain in the not-for-profit organization (Fig. 1) was developed. As shown in Fig. 1, not-for-profit organizations can take a number of actions that will impact the volunteer’s degree of satisfaction with the volunteer experience. Volunteers who are satisfied are more likely to be loyal to the organization by contributing more time, contributing financially, and by recommending the organization to other potential volunteers. These contributory actions on the part of the volunteer help add to the sustainability of the not-for-profit organization by increasing the amount of volunteer hours and financial donations available to the not-for-profit. In the following subsections, we present key themes from the discussion with the volunteer coordinators and propositions used to guide the subsequent empirical research.

2.1.1. Schedule flexibility

Describing the ‘typical’ volunteer would be difficult. While the stereotype of a volunteer may be a retired senior citizen who wants to get out of the house and do something, the volunteer coordinators described a volunteer pool that was broad in terms of age, working status, and availability to volunteer.

Volunteers range in age from teens (sometimes younger) to seniors. Some are students at either the high school or college level, many work either part time or full time jobs, and some are retired.

Employees’ schedules are typically determined by the employer and employees generally need to fit their work time into the needs of the organization. O’Driscoll et al. (1992) reported that job-based time demands were significantly associated with lower job satisfaction for employees. Farmer and Fedor extended O’Driscoll et al. to examine time-related demands on volunteer behaviors, reporting that volunteers who are also working professionals contribute less to non-profit organizations when the demands of the volunteer experience conflict with other demands on the volunteers’ time.

From a service operations standpoint, a typical service employee scheduling problem involves seeking a lowest cost set of feasible schedules (the timing and quantity of service employees) that satisfy collectively the requirements for each period (Browne, 1997; Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2003). However, for the volunteer, this relationship is almost inverse – the volunteer decides when they can work and how much time they will volunteer. Schedule flexibility was therefore cited by the volunteer coordinators as a key factor in attracting and enabling volunteerism. Given that they have other commitments, volunteers want to volunteer when they are

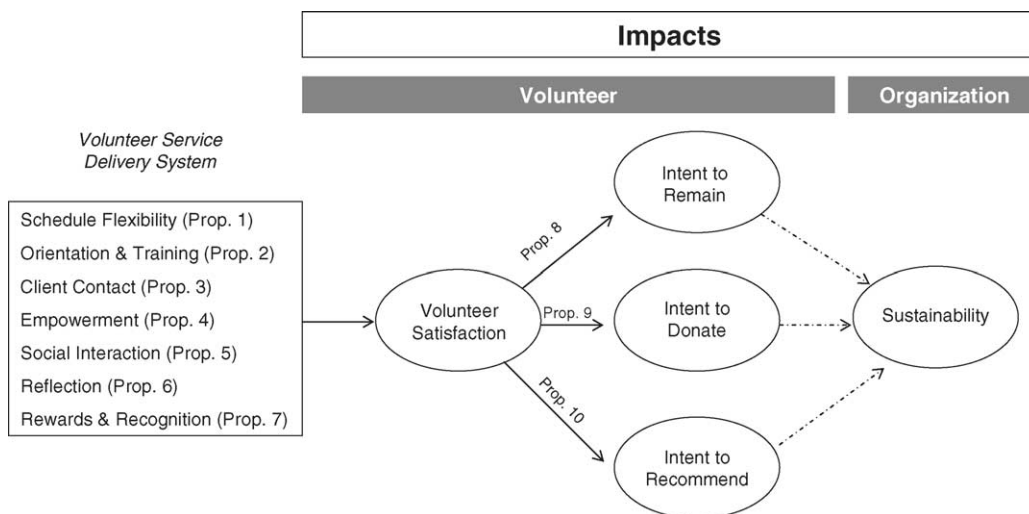


Fig. 1. The “service volunteer – loyalty chain” conceptual model.

able to volunteer. Simply put, service organizations that depend on volunteers must accommodate volunteers' schedule preferences and constraints to the extent possible. This proposition presents significant implications for the design and operation of the service delivery system.

**Proposition 1.** *Schedule flexibility is positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

#### 2.1.2. Orientation and training

Orientation and training is a key component of effectively integrating volunteers into the service delivery system of the non-profit service organization. Orientation and training helps the volunteers to understand the priorities for the organization as well as the philosophy behind these priorities (Fox and Wheeler, 2002). Additionally, orientation and training provides skills and knowledge required to have the service capabilities necessary to support the mission of the organization (Heskett et al., 1997). The focus group volunteer coordinators indicated that training is especially important for not-for-profit service organizations given the high turnover of volunteers. It also serves to help volunteers gain confidence in their skills and to understand the fit of their work in accomplishing the goals of the not-for-profit. Orientation and training includes activities such as introducing volunteers to other volunteers and paid employees, orienting volunteers to the basic workflow of the organization, and specific skills and knowledge training.

**Proposition 2.** *Orientation and training is positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

#### 2.1.3. Client contact

Chase (1978 and 1981) and Kellogg and Chase (1995) describe how understanding the degree of customer contact is central to service system design. Given the altruistic nature of volunteers, as well as the client-focused mission of charitable service organizations, we would expect volunteers to value highly the opportunity to have direct contact with the clients of the charitable service organization. This service factor was generally supported by the volunteer coordinators; however, in some not-for-profit organizations volunteers may not have opportunities for direct client contact. Volunteer contact is limited, for example, in

some not-for-profit organizations that deal with “at risk” populations – only highly trained professionals deal directly with the clients. In other organizations, the volunteer work may benefit populations that are not client-specific (e.g., nature conservancy work). In general, we propose that client contact would more directly connect volunteers to the mission of the organization, and this connection should be satisfying to the volunteer.

**Proposition 3.** *Client contact is positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

#### 2.1.4. Empowerment

Zemke and Schaaf (1989) observed that empowerment was a common theme in effectively managing service businesses. They described empowerment as turning the ‘front line’ loose by encouraging and rewarding initiative and imagination. Bowen and Lawler (1992) referred to an employee’s empowered state of mind that occurs when organizations truly support empowerment through changes to policies, practices, and structures. Empowered employees feel better about their jobs and themselves, in addition to being more responsive, more effective, and better ambassadors in terms of positive word-of-mouth (Bowen and Lawler, 1995).

Empowerment can be expressed through various levels of involvement (Lovell and Wirtz, 2004). Suggestion involvement includes employees through formal programs that solicit employee recommendations; job involvement entails designing jobs to use a wider array of employee skills; and high involvement is when the organization shares information with employees and employees participate in decision-making. Companies such as McDonald’s, Southwest Airlines, and Nordstrom are cited as examples of high-empowerment organizations at one or more levels of involvement (Lovell and Wirtz, 2004).

The volunteer coordinators indicated that volunteers also appreciate and respond positively to empowerment. Volunteer labor needs to feel as though their contributions and skills are valued by the not-for-profit, even though they do not receive paychecks as compensation for their work and ideas. Like their employee counterparts, volunteers who are able to offer recommendations, use their skills, exercise

initiative and make decisions about how to do their jobs tend to be among the most satisfied volunteers.

**Proposition 4.** *Empowerment is positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

#### 2.1.5. Social interaction

“Volunteering is one of the most powerful mechanisms through which individuals build community. Service can be a community commons where people come together to create layers of social connection and relationships” (Nunn, 2002, p. 14). One of the predictors of volunteer satisfaction is the opportunity for social interaction (Fox and Wheeler, 2002; Sargent, 1992). Social interaction also increases the likelihood a volunteer will feel in control, feel complete in the volunteer activity, have enough time for others outside of their volunteer activity, and be comfortable and balanced in their volunteer activities (Fox and Wheeler, 2002).

Social interaction should be both formal and informal. Formal social interaction includes having meals together, whether potlucks or going to out to eat as a group, and social events. Informal social interaction is most likely related to the structure of the volunteer activity and occurs between volunteers and staff as well as between volunteers. Ways to increase informal social interaction include working on teams, arranging “buddy assignments”, and connecting through technology like listservs that help volunteers share ideas, successes, challenges, and support (Fox and Wheeler, 2002; Nunn, 2002).

Consistent with Farmer and Fedor’s (1999) proposition that volunteers often seek to satisfy social needs in addition to needs to provide service to others, the volunteer coordinators indicated that most of their volunteers seek and appreciate social interaction. These volunteer coordinators, however, made it clear that volunteers did not require, or even necessarily want, parties or specific social functions. Rather, they appreciated the opportunity to socialize while doing their work. Therefore, the volunteer coordinators stated that pairing or teaming of volunteers, even if the work could be done well individually, provided significant social benefits that increase volunteer satisfaction.

**Proposition 5.** *Social interaction is positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

#### 2.1.6. Reflection

Nunn (2002) described reflection as formal opportunities for diverse volunteers to get to know each other, as well as providing a mechanism for exchange of experiences and perspectives on the work they do within the organization. Furthermore, reflection “engages [volunteers] in consciously thinking about their experiences and provides an opportunity for them to examine and question values and beliefs and to develop problem-solving skills” (Silcox, 1993, p. 46). The reflection process leads to four possible outcomes: (1) new perspectives and ideas; (2) behavior change; (3) application of new perspectives and ideas; (4) commitment to action in a wide variety of ways (Gibboney, 1996).

The volunteer coordinator focus group explained the need for reflection. Reflection is a way to help volunteers make sense of their experiences – both positive and negative – as they help to accomplish the organization’s mission. In addition, reflection provides an opportunity for volunteers to integrate their experiences with their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and other similar experiences. When volunteers face tough situations that may challenge their current perceptions, reflection provides the support necessary for the volunteer to challenge those perceptions and ensure those tough situations do not become reasons for the volunteer to leave the organization. An example about the importance of reflection was given by the volunteer coordinator of a family crisis organization, where volunteers work with families that are sometimes dirty, destitute, engaged in unlawful behaviors and perhaps not willing to change their situations. Sometimes the same families come back to the crisis center multiple times, and it may seem as though the efforts of the volunteer to find the family shelter, medical or employment help, or to get the children of the family to a safer environment are wasted. Reflection is a necessary tool to help the volunteer see the good that they are doing for the family, and that the family at least recognizes the crisis center as a “safe haven” (or else they would not continue to return).

The focus group stated that those directly supervising volunteers need to take time to discuss the importance of volunteers’ contribution to the charitable service organization, especially when volunteers are donating time and energy for altruistic reasons. They repeatedly cited the need to create opportunities

for service volunteers to connect with the mission of the organization.

**Proposition 6.** *Opportunities to reflect on contributions to the organization's mission are positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

#### 2.1.7. Rewards and recognition

Although for many volunteers, volunteer service itself is an important personal reward (Guseh and Winders, 2002), recognition for their work as well as a supportive environment are positively correlated with volunteer satisfaction (Fox and Wheeler, 2002). The Tempe, Arizona Police Department has a 'Volunteers in Policing' (VIP) program that has been lauded as a model program for volunteers in law enforcement. The VIPs typically stay with the department an average of 5 years and average over 5000 volunteer hours each – performing work that the Tempe Police Department calculates to be worth \$ 14,000 per month. What makes this program so successful is how the volunteers are treated. According to Judy Bottorf, Tempe Police volunteer coordinator: "If you put volunteers in the right positions, oversee them and recognize them for their efforts, then they'll stay. Recognition is their paycheck and it has to be ongoing, not just one big volunteer reception each year" (Park, 2004).

The focus group volunteer coordinators strongly emphasized the importance of rewards and recognition as a means for satisfying the volunteers in their organizations. Non-financial rewards that recognize the contributions of the volunteers, in the absence of compensation, tend to provide an important signal of the value a not-for-profit charitable service organization places on its volunteers' contributions.

**Proposition 7.** *Rewards and recognition is positively related to volunteer satisfaction.*

These first seven propositions relate various aspects of the operating strategy and service delivery system to volunteer satisfaction. Consistent with the service profit chain notion that employee satisfaction leads to employee loyalty, one would expect volunteer satisfaction to be positively related to volunteer loyalty. Loyalty is disaggregated into three concrete actions that volunteers can take to enhance the value of the not-for-profit organization: continuing to volunteer time, donating financially, and recommending the organization to other potential volunteers. The next

three propositions examine the impact of volunteer satisfaction on these three loyalty behaviors.

#### 2.1.8. Satisfaction and intent to remain

Loyalty implies intent to remain with an organization (Hirschman, 1970). The volunteer coordinators stressed the link between satisfying and keeping volunteers. If the work experience is not satisfactory, volunteers will exit. The volunteer coordinators concurred with the volunteer analogy to the service profit chain link between employee satisfaction and loyalty. They also stressed the need to view satisfaction from the perspective of treating volunteers like customers of the organization, allowing for some conceptual links to the literature addressing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Gremler and Brown, 1996; Zeithaml et al., 1996; Kandampully, 1998). As stated by Wilson and Pimm (1996, p. 37), "In a very real sense, volunteers are the organization's "customers" and have to be treated as such. These people are buying the benefits they seek, paying with their time and skills which they can almost invariably take elsewhere".

**Proposition 8.** *Volunteer satisfaction is positively related to the volunteer's intent to remain a volunteer.*

#### 2.1.9. Satisfaction and intent to contribute financially

In a national survey of volunteerism, 42% of the respondents reported that they gave both time and charitable contributions (money and goods) to not-for-profit organizations in 2000 (Independent Sector, 2001). While parallels to the service profit chain (Heskett et al., 1997) may exist in the form of revenues leading to the ability to sustain the organization, the source of this revenue is the volunteer, not the client or customer of the services. The focus group participants indicated that many volunteers contribute financial donations in addition to their time and effort. When asked why volunteers donate money in addition to time, the focus group volunteer coordinators stated that satisfied volunteers tend to give more than just time. Interestingly, the Independent Sector (2001) study reported that the average value of a contribution from a volunteer was more than double the average value from a non-volunteer.

**Proposition 9.** *Volunteer satisfaction is positively related to the volunteer's intent to donate financially to the organization.*

#### 2.1.10. Satisfaction and intent to recommend

Word-of-mouth has been cited as a powerful means for setting service customers' expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990, 1996; Wymer, 1997). Word of mouth, particularly from a close friend or relative, is an important motivator of volunteering (Murk and Stephan, 1991). When potential volunteers hear positive word-of-mouth comments from current volunteers, they may choose to volunteer themselves. The focus group volunteer coordinators cited placement by central volunteer agencies, media (articles and advertisements), and their own Web sites as key reasons why potential volunteers contacted their individual agencies for volunteer work. However, they felt strongly that recommendations from current volunteers had the largest impact on the pool of new volunteers. Recent statistics gathered by the Volunteer Center (2003) showed that the majority of new volunteers (over 40%) joined not-for-profit agencies as a result of recommendations from current volunteers.

**Proposition 10.** *Volunteer satisfaction is positively related to the volunteer's intent to recommend the not-for-profit to others.*

These 10 propositions come largely from the information obtained from the volunteer coordinator focus group. Given the relatively uncharted nature of service volunteers and charitable not-for-profit service organizations in the service literature, this study links to existing service literature by viewing volunteers from the perspectives of both unpaid employees and customers. By grounding this exploratory study in the practical reality experienced by practicing service coordinators and links to existing research, the aim is to test this set of relevant propositions to produce knowledge that can be used to form the basis of additional research efforts in the area of service volunteers and charitable not-for-profit services. The next section describes the research methodology used to anchor these propositions in practical reality and test the propositions.

### 3. Research methods

This section describes the data collection procedures, sample, measure development and final

measures used in the research, and the data analysis. This research was conducted in two stages. Research propositions that emerged from the focus group discussions were subsequently tested by means of a cross-sectional descriptive design based on a survey of not-for-profit volunteers.

#### 3.1. Survey

Data collection was by means of a commercial Web-based survey; details of the survey service are obtainable from the authors on request. The survey was created and tested on line. Representatives of 246 volunteer organizations located in a large southwestern city were asked to send their volunteers an e-mail message with a request for participation and a link to the survey site. Potential respondents were assured of confidentiality and were given the phone number and e-mail address of one of the authors in case of questions or concerns. Useable responses were received from 288 volunteers representing 43 organizations. Table 1 reports demographic data of the survey respondents.

#### 3.2. Measures

Measures were developed using a framework outlined by Churchill (1979). To assure construct validity, previous literature was consulted and a pool of items was developed for each construct. Exploratory factor analyses and an examination of the item intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations were used to purify the scales and to assure reliability. Scale unidimensionality was verified using confirmatory factor analysis. Appendix A details the Cronbach alpha scale reliabilities and the individual scale items for each construct. Reliabilities ranged from 0.76 to 0.91, well above the accepted minimum of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix for the measures are shown in Table 2.

##### 3.2.1. Volunteer management measures

The three-item *schedule flexibility* scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.83) measured volunteers' perception that the organization made reasonable demands on their time. As with the other multi-item scales, the responses for this scale were collected on five-point



Table 1  
Sample demographic data

Age	
<20	3.5%
20–40	24.0%
40–60	33.0%
>60	30.9%
No response	8.7%
Gender	
Female	75.3%
Male	21.9%
No response	2.8%
Education	
No college	8.7%
Undergraduate work or degree	45.8%
Graduate work or degree	41.0%
Other	1.7%
No response	2.8%
Income	
\$ 0–25k	22.2%
\$ 25k–50k	27.8%
\$ 50k–75k	19.1%
\$ 75k–100k	8.0%
>100k	10.4%
No response	9.7%
Work	
Do not work	37.5%
Part time	13.5%
Full time	40.3%
Other	7.3%
No response	1.4%

response scales anchored by “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”. The four-item scale for *orientation and training* (Cronbach alpha = 0.91) measured the

extent to which volunteers participated in orientation and training programs.

The measure for *contact with clients* was a single item that assessed the amount of direct interaction between the volunteers and the non-profit organization’s clients. Single-item scales are regarded as acceptable for the measurement of non-attitudinal constructs. Volunteers were asked “How much (face-to-face) contact do you have with the organization’s clients”? Responses for this five-point scale were “none, limited, moderate, significant, or extensive”.

The three-item *empowerment* scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.78) assessed the extent that volunteers were given autonomy within the organization. The six-item scale measuring *social interaction* (Cronbach alpha = 0.76) assessed the extent to which volunteers interacted with paid staff and with one another. The seven-item scale for *reflection* (Cronbach alpha = 0.83) assessed the extent that the organization facilitated volunteer reflection on the results of their volunteer activities. Finally, the six-item scale for *rewards* (Cronbach alpha = 0.78) measured the extent to which the organization expressed its gratitude for their volunteer efforts.

3.2.2. Outcome measures

The five-item *satisfaction* scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.89) assessed the extent that volunteers were satisfied with their volunteer experience. The four-item *intent to remain* scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.86)

Table 2  
Means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix

	Mean	S.D.	SF	OT	CC	E	SI	RF	RW	A	CA	S	I	IRM	ID
Schedule flexibility (SF)	4.28	0.71													
Orientation and training (OT)	4.27	0.79	0.265												
Contact with clients (CC)	4.07	1.17	0.011	0.331											
Empowerment (E)	3.44	0.81	-0.004	0.123	0.081										
Social interaction (SI)	4.00	0.54	0.291	0.334	0.135	0.620									
Reflection (RF)	4.07	0.57	0.261	0.503	0.163	0.609	0.719								
Rewards (RW)	3.97	0.65	0.442	0.394	0.015	0.326	0.525	0.574							
Altruistic motivation (A)	4.33	0.60	0.093	0.145	0.077	0.281	0.269	0.288	0.083						
Career advancement motivation (CA)	2.61	1.04	-0.149	-0.001	0.072	0.122	0.037	0.059	-0.044	0.152					
Satisfaction (S)	4.28	0.63	0.333	0.490	0.191	0.508	0.686	0.734	0.563	0.250	0.023				
Income (I)	2.50	1.29	-0.077	-0.152	-0.018	0.138	-0.012	0.005	-0.117	-0.026	-0.165	-0.094			
Intent to remain (IRM)	4.34	0.73	0.417	0.368	0.057	0.293	0.441	0.473	0.499	0.139	-0.139	0.573	-0.009		
Intent to donate (ID)	3.26	0.90	0.070	0.041	-0.010	0.395	0.324	0.309	0.197	0.231	-0.052	0.385	0.221	0.331	
Intent to recommend (IRC)	4.46	0.61	0.368	0.461	0.208	0.383	0.548	0.580	0.454	0.272	0.009	0.716	-0.076	0.650	0.318

Note: Correlations greater than 0.117 are significant at the 0.05 level, while those greater than 0.154 are significant at the 0.01 level.

assessed the extent that volunteers planned to continue volunteering for the organization in the future. The five-item *intent to donate* scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.87) measured volunteers' intention to give money to the organization for which they volunteered. Finally, the four-item *intent to recommend* scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.84) measured the extent to which volunteers were prepared to recommend that their friends and acquaintances volunteer for the organization.

### 3.2.3. Control variables

When asked why volunteers donate time and energy, most of the volunteer coordinators cited altruistic motivation. Those who volunteer for altruistic reasons tend to do so because they identify with the mission and objectives of the charitable service organization (Farmer and Fedor, 1999). The volunteer coordinators believe strongly that volunteers, even those with instrumental motives such as career advancement and skill and knowledge acquisition, are driven by largely altruistic motives. That is, altruism tends to be the dominant reason for donating time and effort to not-for-profit charitable service organizations. Based on the importance of altruistic motivation that emerged from the focus group, we included volunteer motivation as a control variable in our models.

Two scales measured volunteer motivation. A four-item altruism scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.86) assessed the extent to which a desire to help others motivated volunteers. A two-item career advancement scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.82) assessed the extent to which a desire to gain contacts or experience for career purposes motivated volunteers.

Two demographic control variables were also used in the models used to test the relationship between satisfaction and intent to donate. Gender was measured as a categorical variable with "Female" coded as 0 and "Male" coded as 1. Income was measured on a scale ranging in \$ 25,000 intervals from "Under \$ 25,000" to "Over \$ 100,000".

### 3.3. Data analysis

Multiple regression analyses utilizing ordinary least squares estimation were used to test the hypotheses. Separate regression equations were estimated for each dependent variable. Based on the

importance of altruistic motivation that emerged from the focus group, altruistic motivation was included as a control variable in all models. Propositions P<sub>1</sub>–P<sub>7</sub> were tested by estimating the following multiple regression model:

satisfaction

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= b_{10} + b_{11} \times \text{contact with clients} \\
 &\quad + b_{12} \times \text{schedule flexibility} + b_{13} \\
 &\quad \times \text{orientation and training} + b_{14} \\
 &\quad \times \text{empowerment} + b_{15} \times \text{social interaction} \\
 &\quad + b_{16} \times \text{reflection} + b_{17} \times \text{rewards} + b_{18} \\
 &\quad \times \text{altruism} \quad (1)
 \end{aligned}$$

In testing the proposed relationship between satisfaction and intent to remain (P<sub>8</sub>) career advancement was included as a control variable to account for the possibility that volunteers who wanted to make contacts to further their careers might tend to volunteer for shorter periods. P<sub>8</sub> was tested by estimating the following multiple regression model:

intent to remain

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= b_{20} + b_{21} \times \text{schedule flexibility} + b_{22} \\
 &\quad \times \text{orientation and training} + b_{23} \\
 &\quad \times \text{contact with clients} + b_{24} \times \text{empowerment} \\
 &\quad + b_{25} \times \text{social interaction} + b_{26} \times \text{reflection} \\
 &\quad + b_{27} \times \text{rewards} + b_{28} \times \text{satisfaction} + b_{29} \\
 &\quad \times \text{altruism} + b_{210} \times \text{career advancement} \quad (2)
 \end{aligned}$$

Donation behavior has been found to depend at least partly on an individual's gender (Wymer and Samu, 2002) and income (Farmer and Fedor, 2001). We therefore included both gender and income as control variables in our test of the relationship between satisfaction and intent to donate (P<sub>9</sub>). P<sub>9</sub> was tested by estimating the following multiple regression model:

intent to donate

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= b_{30} + b_{31} \times \text{schedule flexibility} + b_{32} \\
 &\quad \times \text{orientation and training} + b_{33} \\
 &\quad \times \text{contact with clients} + b_{34} \times \text{empowerment} \\
 &\quad + b_{35} \times \text{social interaction} + b_{36} \times \text{reflection} \\
 &\quad + b_{37} \times \text{rewards} + b_{38} \times \text{satisfaction} + b_{39} \\
 &\quad \times \text{altruism} + b_{310} \times \text{gender} + b_{311} \times \text{income} \quad (3)
 \end{aligned}$$

Proposition P<sub>10</sub> was tested by estimating the following multiple regression model:

intent to recommend

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= b_{40} + b_{41} \times \text{schedule flexibility} + b_{42} \\
 &\quad \times \text{orientation and training} + b_{33} \\
 &\quad \times \text{contact with clients} + b_{44} \times \text{empowerment} \\
 &\quad + b_{45} \times \text{social interaction} + b_{46} \\
 &\quad \times \text{reflection} + b_{47} \times \text{rewards} + b_{48} \\
 &\quad \times \text{satisfaction} + b_{49} \times \text{altruism} \tag{4}
 \end{aligned}$$

#### 4. Results

The standardized coefficients estimated for Eqs. (1)–(4) describing the antecedents and consequences of volunteer satisfaction are shown in Table 3. Given the exploratory nature of this research, an alpha value of 0.10 or less (two-tailed) was considered to be significant.

##### 4.1. Antecedents of volunteer satisfaction

Proposition P<sub>1</sub>, which proposed a positive relationship between schedule flexibility and volunteer

satisfaction, is supported ( $\beta_{11} = 0.081, P < 0.10$ ). Orientation and training has a significant positive effect on volunteer satisfaction ( $\beta_{12} = 0.147, P < 0.01$ ), supporting P<sub>2</sub>. No support is found for P<sub>3</sub>, the proposed positive relationship between client contact and volunteer satisfaction ( $\beta_{13} = 0.044, P > 0.10$ ). Both empowerment ( $\beta_{14} = 0.091, P < 0.10$ ) and social interaction ( $\beta_{15} = 0.243, P < 0.01$ ) are significantly related to volunteer satisfaction, supporting P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>5</sub>, respectively. Finally, both reflection ( $\beta_{16} = 0.327, P < 0.01$ ) and rewards ( $\beta_{17} = 0.118, P < 0.05$ ) are also significantly related to volunteer satisfaction, supporting P<sub>6</sub> and P<sub>7</sub>, respectively. Surprisingly, given the attention paid to altruistic motivation by our focus group participants, altruistic motivation was not a significant predictor of volunteer satisfaction.

##### 4.2. Consequences of volunteer satisfaction

Proposition P<sub>8</sub>, which proposed a positive relationship between volunteer satisfaction and intent to remain a volunteer, is supported ( $\beta_{28} = 0.344, P < 0.10$ ). Once again, altruistic motivation was not predictive of intent to remain; however, career advancement motivation showed a significant negative relationship with intent to remain a volunteer. It is also

Table 3  
Regression model results

	Dependent variable			
	Satisfaction	Intent to remain	Intent to donate	Intent to recommend
Schedule flexibility	0.081*	0.192***	-0.042	0.142***
Orientation and training	0.147***	0.090	-0.084	0.096*
Contact with clients	0.044	-0.042	-0.044	0.061
Empowerment	0.091*	0.074	0.200**	0.044
Social interaction	0.243***	-0.007	-0.037	0.027
Reflection	0.327***	0.012	-0.058	0.035
Rewards	0.118**	0.152**	0.033	0.000
Altruism	0.023	0.007	0.161***	-0.081*
Career advancement		-0.119**		
Satisfaction		0.344***	0.377***	0.522***
Gender			0.164***	
Income			0.195***	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.638	0.426	0.298	0.558
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.628	0.405	0.266	0.543
Significance of F for Model	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

\*  $P < 0.10$ , two-tailed test.

\*\*  $P < 0.05$ .

\*\*\*  $P < 0.01$ .

interesting to note that the effects of schedule flexibility and rewards are not totally mediated by satisfaction, but appear to have additional direct effects on intent to remain.

Volunteer satisfaction also has a significant positive relationship with intent to donate to the organization ( $\beta_{38} = 0.377$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), supporting P<sub>9</sub>. Another interesting result from this regression model is the finding that altruism ( $\beta_{310} = 0.161$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) is significantly positively related to intent to donate. In addition, the results suggest that empowerment ( $\beta_{34} = 0.200$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) has a separate positive effect (unmediated by satisfaction) on intent to donate.

Finally, volunteer satisfaction shows a positive impact on volunteers' intent to recommend the organization to other potential volunteers ( $\beta_{48} = 0.522$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), supporting P<sub>10</sub>. In addition, the results show that schedule flexibility ( $\beta_{41} = 0.142$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and orientation and training ( $\beta_{42} = 0.096$ ,  $P < 0.10$ ) have separate positive effects (unmediated by satisfaction) on intent to recommend. Finally, these results suggest that altruism has a mildly significant negative relationship with intent to recommend ( $\beta_{49} = -0.81$ ,  $P < 0.10$ ).

## 5. Limitations, implications, and conclusion

### 5.1. Limitations

The conceptual model hypothesized that satisfied volunteers would be more loyal to the organization as expressed by the volunteer in three key ways: donating more time, donating financially, and recommending the organization to other potential volunteers. Many not-for-profit service organizations depend upon grants and charitable donations for funding, and they could not operate without having volunteers to help fulfill their service mission. Therefore, part of their organizational capacity and sustainability relies on the volunteer donating time and potentially funding to the organization. Likewise, volunteers who bring in other volunteers through their positive recommendations ("word of mouth") further enable the capacity and future sustainability of the not-for-profit as those new volunteers donate time, money, and eventually recommend the agency to their circle of friends and family. The volunteer coordinators confirmed that

these three components of volunteer loyalty were critical to their continued success in fulfilling their missions. According to the Independent Sector (2001), the value to organizations of the formal volunteer workforce was \$ 239 billion in 2000. Although these elements of volunteer loyalty are key success factors for the sustainability of not-for-profit organizations, the data collection for the study was at the level of the individual volunteer, not at the level of the non-profit organization. Therefore it was not possible to statistically test the relationship between volunteer loyalty and organizational sustainability.

Another potential limitation was introduced by the use of a Web-based survey. Despite the growing popularity of Web-based data collection, it is possible that the sample obtained via e-mail solicitation might not be fully representative of a population of volunteers in general. In the United States, where 72% of households had Internet access in January 2002 (Rose and Rosin, 2002), Internet access is positively correlated with income (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000). However, to minimize bias income was included as a control variable in the model for intent to financially donate.

### 5.2. Implications

Charitable non-profit service organizations are faced with challenges that are not typically faced by service organizations in the for-profit sector, including a service delivery system that relies heavily on volunteer labor as a primary resource for the organization. Volunteers introduce variation into the work processes of the organization – in terms of their motivations for participation, skill levels, willingness and availability to work, and their commitment to an organization. Although there are some parallels between service employees in the for-profit and service volunteers in the not-for-profit sectors, we have identified some important distinguishing characteristics of the role of the volunteer in designing a service delivery system that helps lead to organizational sustainability. Following are the findings that we view as key components of the service volunteer – loyalty chain.

#### 5.2.1. Orientation and training

The finding that orientation and training was significantly associated with volunteer satisfaction

was consistent with both the volunteer coordinators' expectations and supported by related research. However, discussions with the volunteer coordinators provided insights into how the role of orientation and training is unique in the not-for-profit world. Most volunteers are not working primarily to gain skills, but because they connect with the mission of the organization and they want to feel as though they are being helpful. As described by the volunteer coordinators, the most effective orientation and training processes were those that give a sense of a "welcoming community". Many volunteer jobs (e.g. licking envelopes, pulling weeds, reading books, distributing magazines) do not require much technical training for the volunteers. For these volunteers, the most effective orientation and training processes are those that link the work of the volunteer to the fulfillment of the organization's mission. This process helps to connect the work of the volunteer, even in back office or seemingly menial jobs, to accomplishing goals that have meaning for the volunteer. Other volunteers are in jobs that require stronger technical skills or training to accomplish (e.g. hospital aides, crisis-line volunteers, people working with at risk populations). In these volunteer roles, the technical part of the orientation and training takes on more importance, but the link to the organization's mission does not diminish in importance. For these volunteers, who may be in some ways more vulnerable to the emotional aspects of their work, it is especially essential that the not-for-profit agency emphasize the importance of the volunteers to fulfilling the mission of the organization. This linkage needs to be part of the orientation and training processes (early in the volunteer's tenure) and also needs to be reflected upon throughout the volunteer experience. For all volunteers, in addition to the skills and knowledge that come from orientation and training, the orientation and training process also provides an important opportunity for socialization and relationship building to begin between volunteers.

Another important aspect of orientation and training takes place through volunteer interaction with paid staff. One of the factors that enables the Tempe Police Department volunteer program to be so successful is that the volunteers report to paid staff managers, so that they are integrated into the organization, rather than managed as though they

are a separate function. Not only does this approach help the volunteer to better learn the organizational culture and needs, but it also creates efficiencies and better effectiveness in the volunteers' efforts (Park, 2004).

### 5.2.2. Reflection

The importance of reflection cannot be overstated for volunteers in the not-for-profit service organization. Reflection enables the volunteers to see the good they are doing and what they are accomplishing, and enables the volunteer to 'step back' and see how the volunteer's role is helping to accomplish the mission of the organization. This is especially important to the volunteer from two aspects. One is that the nature of a volunteer's job may not enable the volunteer to see the end results of a process. That is, the volunteer's time may be sporadic or fragmented (they do not work every day) and the volunteer is often assigned tasks that are more menial in the organization (stuffing envelopes, filling boxes, sorting clothes, making phone calls). For these volunteers, the process of reflection is a way to link the work they are doing with the mission-oriented organizational outcomes. Secondly, many volunteers work in circumstances that could be described as hard or potentially depressing. They may work helping people that are impoverished, abused, without capacity to effectively take care of themselves, perhaps dying from illness. Volunteers working under these conditions especially need to be able to reflect upon the good they are doing, otherwise they may tend to become overwhelmed by all the 'bad' they see through their volunteer work.

### 5.2.3. Interaction with staff and clients

The significance of the social interaction to volunteer satisfaction was strongly suggested by the volunteer coordinators and confirms prior research studies. Social interaction is a means of fulfilling both the social needs of the volunteer (through interaction with both staff and other volunteers) and of helping the volunteer to feel more involved in the work of the organization (through interaction with paid staff of the organization). However, although we found that the volunteers were more satisfied when they interacted among themselves and with paid staff, this positive interaction effect was not significant for interaction with clients of the not-for-profit agency.

Given the altruistic nature of volunteers, one expects that they would feel more satisfied by having direct contact with the clients of the organization. Direct client contact would help them to see first-hand what they were accomplishing. Surprisingly, while the coefficient for client contact was positive, it was not significant. From examining the volunteer data and from post hoc discussions with volunteer coordinators, the following insights are offered into why the direct client contact variable was not significant. First, a number of respondents do not work with clients directly, for example volunteers working on trail repair or natural resource restoration, and volunteers with theatre groups whose main task is to seat theatre patrons. Another volunteer commented “being that the organization [I volunteer for] is a Police Department, I do not have direct contact with their clientele, nor [do I] want to for that matter”. Volunteers without expected or wanted client contact would not be expected to derive satisfaction from client contact. The volunteer coordinators also suggested that some direct client contact made the experience a ‘hard’ one for volunteers, which may lead to less satisfaction with the volunteer experience. Factors that might make direct contact with clients less-than satisfying are that some clients of not-for-profit agencies are in very disagreeable circumstances (drug addicts, street people, indigents, etc.) and this might make some volunteers uncomfortable. Other volunteers might also be overwhelmed the direct contact experience – feeling that the problems are so big and that they just cannot make much of a difference. Reflection is one way to minimize this and to maximize satisfaction with the volunteer experience. Another factor influencing this outcome is that although most volunteers say they volunteer primarily for altruistic reasons (wanting to help others), there is also a strong social dimension to volunteering (to get out of the house, to be with friends, to keep busy). Volunteers whose motivation is more social may not be as comfortable with direct client contact, or they may not require this for their own personal satisfaction levels.

#### 5.2.4. *Other components of satisfaction*

The need for schedule flexibility is somewhat unique for the service volunteer; the volunteer coordinators emphasized that volunteers must feel as though they can work “on their terms” time-wise,

giving as little or as much time to the organization as they desire. One of the challenges of the volunteer coordinators is to ensure that there is enough schedule flexibility so that the volunteer can contribute time when the volunteer is available. For the volunteers, having opportunities to work as little or as much time as they desire, when they want to work, is key to building volunteer satisfaction and loyalty. One survey participant commented: “My hours are extremely flexible. The volunteer coordinator is easy to reach by phone and I can change the hours I signed up for if I have personal business instead”. However, another volunteer explained why they did not volunteer more for the organization: “A good percentage of the volunteer work [the organization] needs is during regular business hours. I would like to do more for the organization; however, that conflicts with my work schedule”.

Volunteer managers may therefore need to target their recruitment efforts to address scheduling issues. For example, if an organization needs volunteers during the day perhaps they might recruit volunteers from senior centers, retirement communities or other places frequented by unemployed or people employed at non-traditional work times. If an organization needs volunteers during the evenings or weekends then the recruitment efforts might focus more on student populations or recruiting volunteers from the working population.

The impact of empowerment on volunteer satisfaction is not unlike the impact that has been described for other service employees (Bowen and Lawler, 1992, 1995). Volunteers want to feel like they are a part of the organization, even though they are not official employees of the not-for-profit. A survey respondent commented that the volunteer experience is improved when “the organization hears and acts upon suggestions by those made at the front line”. Another related that having a “voice being heard” was important to satisfaction with volunteering. Many survey participants commented on the importance of two-way communication – being able to make suggestions that were considered and acted upon by the not-for-profit organization made the volunteer feel as though they were adding value to the organization and they were not being taken for granted. A survey respondent who has volunteered for 7 years with a symphony organization offered that “Volunteers have to be

treated with respect and some modicum of appreciation. The volunteer effort should require some thinking and judgment, i.e., decision-making”.

Finally, rewards and recognition were also shown to significantly impact the satisfaction of volunteers. While rewards and recognition can be either formal or informal, they must be personal, sincere, and genuine. Informal rewards and recognition are those things that show the volunteer they are thought about. These informal rewards and recognition can be anything from a “pat on the back and verbal thank you”, to a card on the volunteer’s birthday, to a comment by an organization client that demonstrates the impact of the volunteer’s efforts. Formal rewards can include mugs, t-shirts, annual recognition events, coupons to local restaurants and/or stores and “volunteer of the month” awards. Rewards and recognition that are consistent with the volunteer’s motivation for volunteering have the most impact. For example, if a volunteer is attempting to gain work experience, recognition may include a letter of recommendation to prospective employers or a certificate that can be added to an employment application.

#### 5.2.5. *Satisfied volunteers lead to organizational sustainability*

Given the importance of the volunteer to the not-for-profit service organization, it is critical for the management of these agencies to understand how to maintain and increase the loyalty of the volunteer worker. Volunteer loyalty is critical to many not-for-profit service organizations since volunteers ensure the continued sustainability of the not-for-profit. In fact, some organizations might not exist without them. In this current research project, key processes have been identified that not-for-profit managers can use to help impact the volunteer’s satisfaction with the volunteer experience. As demonstrated by the results of this study, satisfied volunteers continue to volunteer with the organization, will be more likely to donate financially to the organization, and will be more likely to recommend the organization to others for volunteer opportunities. Volunteers thereby provide essential resources of labor, knowledge, money, and recommendations to friends and family to join the volunteer corps – thereby exponentially increasing the resource base available to the not-for-profit.

#### 5.3. *Conclusions and suggestions for future research*

This research provides a foundation from which service operations researchers can begin to examine operational implications for organizations that rely on volunteers. This foundation-building work relied heavily on the other two legs of the service triad – services management and services marketing. For example, the findings provide empirical support for the positive effects of orientation and training, empowerment (Bowen and Lawler, 1992, 1995), and rewards and recognition on volunteer service provider satisfaction, generally areas within the domain of service management. We have also leveraged the services marketing concept of the service profit chain (Heskett et al., 1997) to better understand the linkages among the operating system, volunteer satisfaction, and outcomes such as retention and intent to donate. While this study builds on the existing service literature, it also extends this literature to the volunteer sector by testing a conceptual framework for not-for-profit service organizations that depend on volunteers.

Previously, volunteer organizations may have assumed that the altruistic motivation of their volunteers was sufficient to ensure their satisfaction and loyalty. In sharp contrast to this, findings from this research show that there are not only strong parallels between the antecedents of satisfaction for paid and volunteer service providers, but also that there are additional factors that influence volunteers. A particularly significant finding is the importance of encouraging volunteers to reflect on the value they are adding to the organization and its clients. From an operations perspective, this suggests that opportunities for reflection may need to be built into work processes. Alternatively, schemes such as job enrichment or job rotation could be implemented to allow volunteers whose task is somewhat removed from the organizations’ clients to better understand the mission of the organization.

Another valuable finding is the importance of flexible volunteer schedules, which implies the need to buffer volunteers from the requirements of the client service schedule, and therefore has important operational scheduling consequences. Finally, the important role of social interaction during the work process in

driving volunteer satisfaction, suggests that volunteer organizations would benefit from paying attention to work design and job enrichment. Appropriately applied, these findings have the potential to significantly improve the sustainability of non-profit organizations with implications at the intersections of service operations, services marketing, and service management.

Future research could employ a longitudinal design in which volunteer management and satisfaction could be related to organizational sustainability outcomes. This could be accomplished by combining volunteer data with organizational-level data, such as volunteer longevity, total volunteer hours, and volunteer donations. We would also suggest future research to further explore the relationship between client contact (Chase, 1978, 1981; Kellogg and Chase, 1995) and volunteer satisfaction. We failed to find significant results in our study, but future research might evaluate whether there are variables that mitigate the relationship between client contact and volunteer satisfaction. For example, certain personality traits of the volunteer might make client contact more (or less) satisfying, or there may be management practices that mediate the link between client contact and satisfaction. Another of many potential avenues would be to examine service fail-safing (Chase and Stewart, 1994) when involving service volunteers. Finally, this current study could be extended by testing the linkages between volunteer loyalty and organizational sustainability. We earlier described “sustainability” as the ability of the not-for-profit to fulfill its mission. Research is needed to operationalize sustainability as a quantifiable construct and further link volunteer actions to measures of sustainability.

This initial foundation-building step in understanding what drives volunteer satisfaction, retention, and intent to donate provides a basis for further examining how to design and deliver value-adding services when we rely on volunteers as key elements in our service delivery systems. When volunteers act as substitutes for employees, service designers and service operations managers must first consider the unique attributes of volunteers before assuming that service operations involving volunteers will be the same as, or even similar to, service operations that involve paid employees. By highlighting some of these key differences, we hope to have stimulated

interest in pursuing additional research into volunteer-based not-for-profit organizations.

## Appendix A. Scale reliabilities and items<sup>1</sup>

Schedule flexibility ( $\alpha = 0.8346$ ):

- *The organization's demands are so great that they take away from my other activities (e.g., family, work, outside interests) (reverse-coded).*
- *In my volunteer activities I have so much to do that it takes away from my personal interests (reverse-coded).*
- *My volunteer activities take up time that I'd rather spend with family/friends (reverse-coded).*
- The hours that I volunteer fit my schedule just fine.
- Short term assignments are available in this organization.

Orientation and training ( $\alpha = 0.9075$ ):

- *Volunteers receive training prior to beginning work in this organization.*
- *Training is part of this organization's volunteer management program.*
- *The organization has an orientation program for all new volunteers.*
- *The organization provides an orientation packet to volunteers.*
- Volunteers are regularly trained during their time with this organization.
- The organization provides minimal training to new volunteers (reverse-scored).

Empowerment ( $\alpha = 0.7766$ ):

- *Volunteers are actively involved in planning and development of activities.*
- *The organization provides leadership opportunities for volunteers.*
- *The organization modifies its processes in response to volunteer feedback.*
- Volunteers do not have contact with our organization's clients (reverse-scored).
- Volunteers have direct contact with the people the organization serves.

<sup>1</sup> Items used in final scale are in italics; the other items were eliminated to purify the scale.



Social interaction ( $\alpha = 0.7613$ ):

- *Volunteers have the opportunity to interact with each other.*
- *Volunteers interact with our paid employees on a regular basis.*
- *People in this organization are friendly.*
- *The organization makes sure that I get along well with my fellow volunteers.*
- *The organization facilitates social interactions between volunteers.*
- *Staff members of this organization are very pleasant to deal with.*

Reflection ( $\alpha = 0.8325$ ):

- *The organization provides information to volunteers about the mission of the organization.*
- *The organization provides information to volunteers about policy issues related to the mission of the organization.*
- *The organization provides opportunities for volunteers to reflect on their experiences.*
- *The organization frequently reminds volunteers about the impact that they have on the people that we serve.*
- *The organization makes sure that all new volunteers understand the positive impact they are having on the people it serves.*
- *Volunteers receive feedback on the impact of their work.*
- *Volunteers understand how much they matter in fulfilling the organization's mission.*

Rewards ( $\alpha = 0.7826$ ):

- *The organization arranges parties or luncheons to thank volunteers.*
- *Volunteers receive thank you letters or certificates of appreciation from our organization.*
- *The organization has a volunteer reward program.*
- *Staff members constantly express their appreciation for our volunteer efforts.*
- *The organization recognizes outstanding volunteers.*
- *Volunteers receive no special recognition in our organization.*

Satisfaction ( $\alpha = 0.8930$ ):

- *Overall, I am satisfied with my volunteer experience.*
- *I am satisfied with the people who manage the organization.*
- *I am satisfied with the organization's policies.*
- *I am satisfied with the support provided by the organization.*
- *I am satisfied with the opportunities for advancement in the organization.*

Intent to remain ( $\alpha = 0.8566$ ):

- *I intend to continue volunteering for this organization.*
- *I would like to remain a volunteer here.*
- *I do not intend to remain a long-term volunteer for this organization.*
- *I plan to quit volunteering here soon.*

Intent to donate ( $\alpha = 0.8713$ ):

- *I have donated to this organization in the past.*
- *I donate to this organization on a regular basis.*
- *I intend to donate to this organization in the future.*
- *I would be prepared to support this organization financially.*
- *I would like to contribute money as well as time to this organization.*

Intent to recommend organization to others ( $\alpha = 0.8377$ ):

- *I would encourage friends and/or family to volunteer for this organization.*
- *I would not recommend doing volunteer work for this organization (reverse-scored).*
- *I would discourage those close to me from volunteering here (reverse-scored).*
- *I would recommend that others consider volunteering for this organization.*

Altruism ( $\alpha = 0.8618$ ):

- *I want to help others.*
- *I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.*
- *I feel compassion toward people in need.*
- *I feel it is important to help others.*

- I want to do something for a cause that is important to me.
- I want to give back to the community.
- I want to do something worthwhile.
- By volunteering I help to create a better society.
- I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.

Career advancement ( $\alpha = 0.8167$ ):

- *I want to make new contacts that might help my business or career.*
- *Volunteer experience will look good on my resume.*

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