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Job Attitude and Motivation Differences Between Volunteers and Employees From Comparable Organizations

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Differences in job attitudes and work motivation between volunteers and employees are reported. The sample consists of members of eight organizations: volunteer-staffed and employee-staffed newspapers, poverty relief agencies, family planning clinics, and fire departments. It was expected that volunteers will report greater intrinsic, social, and service motivation, greater job satisfaction, and less intent to leave and that they will report that their activities are more praiseworthy than will employees. The expectation is confirmed for all variables except intrinsic motivation, using 2 (voluntary vs. employing) \times 4 (task type) analyses of variance. These results are consistent with "sufficiency-of-justification" effects. The limitations of the present study and implications of the intrinsic-motivation exception for generalizations of laboratory findings to the workplace are discussed.

The present study reports differences in motivation and job attitudes between volunteers and employees doing similar work. These reports provide a unique opportunity to learn about organizational rewards and can be applied to Staw's (1976) generalization of the sufficiency-of-justification hypothesis to organizational motivation.

Staw (1976), building on the work of Festinger (1961), de Charms (1968), and Deci (1975), proposed that when both extrinsic and intrinsic organizational rewards are abundant, individuals experience "overjustification" for their work and are likely to reduce dissonance by devaluing the less tangible intrinsic rewards. Similarly when individuals perform work for which the rewards are few, they experience "insufficient justification," which leads them to enhance the importance of intrinsic rewards. The research developing from this

proposition has been reviewed by Notz (1975), Staw (1976), and Guzzo (1979), who found mixed support in work settings. Although a diminution of intrinsic motivation has been produced in laboratories, none of the field studies reported this effect (Dermer, 1975; Eden, 1975, Blackburn, Note 1; Cascio, Note 2). In his thorough review of this research, Guzzo (1979) called the basic intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy of organizational rewards, itself, into question. He presented convincing evidence that organizational rewards may vary simultaneously along several attributes.

The two field studies that demonstrated support for the operation of sufficiency of justification are not dependent on the intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy of organizational rewards. Staw (1974) examined cadets' attitudes toward the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) before and after the draft lottery. After the lottery those with high lottery numbers were assured they would not be drafted; it was hypothesized that they would experience insufficient justification for participation in ROTC. Those of this group who did not have committing contracts dropped out of ROTC, whereas committed cadets with high draft numbers developed more favorable attitudes toward ROTC than did cadets with low draft numbers. Note that we need not posit that these cadets were more intrinsically motivated (because participation was enforced by a con-

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tract), but rather that those cadets with less compelling justification for participation developed more positive attitudes toward the organization

Pfeffer and Lawler (1980) demonstrated an effect consistent with insufficient justification on a national sample of college and university professors. Uncommitted professors showed a positive relationship between salary and job satisfaction. Committed professors did not show this relationship, and these two effects were stronger for those who had job alternatives. Again, the differences consistent with experienced insufficient justification appear in attitudes toward the task, not in any difference in the motivation for engaging in the task.

In summary, although there is evidence of change in job attitudes consistent with the sufficiency-of-justification hypothesis, there have been no field studies on work motivation that support the hypothesis. The present report examines differences in both job attitudes and work motivation expected to be consistent with the sufficiency-of-justification hypothesis without reliance on the problematic intrinsic/extrinsic motivation dichotomy.

This survey was conducted in a setting in which the sufficiency-of-justification hypothesis has direct meaning: voluntary organizations. Much work is performed by those not paid for their labor. In clinics, libraries, orchestras, and museums, salaried employees and volunteers work side by side. There is much anecdotal evidence that volunteers often experience insufficient justification. For example, Pearce (1978) quoted a volunteer who stated that volunteers seem to assume a positive attitude about their work because they often do not know why they volunteered, they, therefore, assume they are working because they want to do good. The practical problems of designing organizational reward systems for volunteers not based on monetary compensation dominates their managerial literature (Naylor, 1967; Shindler-Rainman & Lippitt, 1971), and the presence or absence of insufficient justification has practical relevance.

Unfortunately, there is very little organizational behavior research on volunteers or on the comparison of volunteers and employees. Smith and Tannenbaum (1963) compared the influence of groups at different hierarchical levels in a volunteer organization with influ-

ence at different levels in an employing organization, but they did not compare volunteers and employees on any individual difference variables. Pearce (1980) found that volunteers were less willing than comparable employees to assume positions of leadership, but also did not examine differences in motivation or job attitudes. Sociological studies based on community-wide surveys have compared the characteristics of those who are members of voluntary associations with those who are not, the dominant finding is that volunteers tend to have higher socioeconomic status than nonvolunteers (Dotson, 1951; Phillips, 1967)

Voluntary organizations also provide researchers with two unique characteristics: (a) Volunteers do not experience the withdrawal of a salient reward; therefore, differences inconsistent with insufficient justification cannot be explained away as an effect of "frustration" or "experienced inequity," as is possible for Staw's (1974) cadets. (b) Volunteers can be selected that perform the same work as employees do, providing an oversufficient justification comparison. That is, we do not have to compare Junior League members to steelworkers but can match volunteer firefighters with salaried firefighters, so that the noncompensation rewards available to both are as equivalent as possible.

One could argue that many kinds of employed workers experience oversufficient justification. Most professional athletes and commercial artists probably were attracted to their professions by the intrinsic pleasures of the activities themselves. Yet once they command high salaries, experienced oversufficient justification might alter both their work motivation and attitudes. It may be reasonable to assume, therefore, that paid workers performing the same tasks for which others are willing to volunteer could experience oversufficient justification.

Therefore, the following research questions, which are consistent with sufficiency-of-justification differences between comparable volunteers and employees, are addressed: (a) Will volunteers report greater nonextrinsic motivation than employees performing the same tasks? (b) Will volunteers report more positive work attitudes than comparable salaried workers?

Method

Sample

Organizations staffed predominantly by volunteers and those staffed entirely by employees working on the same or similar tasks were paired. Four matched sets, or eight organizations, were sampled: two newspapers, two poverty relief agencies, two family planning clinics, and two municipal fire departments.

The volunteer-staffed newspaper is the student newspaper for a medium-sized private university located in a north-eastern U.S. suburb. Each week 4,000 copies of the 10–12-page paper are distributed, free, on campus newsstands. The paper has been published (more or less) continuously for 30 years. The newspaper has a staff of approximately 30 volunteer male and female undergraduates, six usable questionnaires were completed by these volunteers.

The employee-staffed newspaper is distributed, free, once a week in apartment building lobbies and shops in an affluent residential neighborhood of a large metropolitan city. Each week 50,000 copies of this community-news 12-page paper are distributed. The paper is owned by the editor and publisher, who hired the present staff of 13 men and women. All employees are salaried, and the advertising salespeople receive additional commissions on sales. Eight usable questionnaires were returned by newspaper employees.

The volunteer-staffed poverty relief agency is a non-denominational Christian relief organization in a medium-sized northeastern city. Its primary task is the distribution of food to those who request it (13,245 deliveries in the previous year), but it occasionally provides transportation to medical appointments as well. If clients need food they call a number monitored by an answering service, the answering service calls the telephone volunteer on duty (two shifts a day of about 4 hours each) and leaves the clients' names and phone numbers. The telephone volunteer calls the clients, collects information (address, number of people to be fed, whether or not they are on welfare, etc.), and tells the clients when to expect the deliveries. The telephone volunteer then calls the driving volunteer or leaves a message at the central office. The organization has about 180 male and female volunteers who work one half-day shift each month. They elect the governing committee that hires the two part-time paid coordinators to staff the central office. The agency has been serving the community for over 9 years. Members of the voluntary poverty relief agency returned 11 usable questionnaires.

The employee-staffed poverty relief agency is a municipal department of a medium-sized New England city that is required by statute to provide emergency relief to those who do not qualify for any of the state or federal relief programs. In practice, most of their clients are chronic, usually men with drug or alcohol-related problems. Clients must appear weekly to personally receive their checks from their social workers and usually attend a work or counseling program. Fifty-three men and women work a standard 35-hour week for this agency. This service has been provided by this city for over 300 years, but the present administrative structure was developed during the F. D. Roosevelt presidential administration. Thirteen usable questionnaires were completed by poverty relief employees.

The volunteer-staffed family planning clinic provides

gynecological, contraceptive, and related counseling services to women in a New England town. The current patient load is 200 women. Pregnancy testing is done once a week, and clinics are held 2 evenings a month. The office is staffed during weekdays by the salaried secretary. The clinic is run by a core group of 14 female volunteers who work anywhere from 4 hours a month to over 40 hours a week. The volunteers elect their own governing body. This organization has been providing these and similar services for over 50 years. Ten usable questionnaires were completed by family planning volunteers.

The employee-staffed family planning clinic provides sex education, gynecological, contraceptive, and related counseling services to women in a large northeastern city. Clinics are held 4 days and 1 evening a week, and the case load is 4,000 women. This clinic is a component of a municipal health department. Twenty women and one man are the full-time employees, physicians are hired on an hourly basis to conduct examinations. The clinic has been serving the community for 7 years. Family planning employees returned 16 usable questionnaires.

The volunteer fire department provides emergency medical technicians, fire prevention, and fighting services to a rural New England town of about 15,000. They responded to over 500 alarms in the previous year. In an emergency, the town dispatcher is called, she makes an announcement through the radio and blasts a horn so others will get to their radios. The closest fire fighter goes to the station to take the apparatus (engine, hook and ladder, or ambulance) to the destination, while other volunteers proceed there directly in their own cars. The department is composed of four companies—three pump and one hook and ladder. Each company elects a house administrative group and its officers, the department as a whole elects the chief and two assistant chiefs. The state allows each company 40 full members (all are men), and there is a waiting list for these positions. Thirty-one usable questionnaires were completed by the volunteer fire fighters.

The employee-staffed fire department provides fire prevention and fighting services to a northeastern suburb of 26,000. The department answers an average of 200 calls a month. There is a central firehouse, in which five fire fighters and their chiefs are stationed, and two outlying stations with two fire fighters each. There are four shifts working an average 42-hour week (two shifts a day, three days on, three days off). The department is composed of 46 men and one female secretary. Eleven usable questionnaires were returned.

Procedure

The data collection procedure followed the same pattern in each organization. Entry began with a telephone call, followed by one or more site visits with one or more subgroups or individuals until a decision was reached to either forego participation or to participate. Data collection began with interviews with a random sample (with oversampling of office holders and supervisors) of 10 or fewer organizational members, followed by distribution and collection of questionnaires. Interviewees received a number on their questionnaires so the researcher could match instruments, noninterviewees were completely anonymous. Both pairs of the four matched task sets were studied.

simultaneously to ensure that the passage of time would not confound comparisons between volunteers and employees and to allow daily comparisons of their respective norms and practices. Because only one researcher collected data, the matched pairs were studied serially, in the order listed above.

Measures

All data for these analyses were taken from a single questionnaire, interview responses are used only to demonstrate scale convergent validity.

Motivation scales Based on Guzzo's (1979) critique of the intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy of organizational rewards, a wide variety of reward items were chosen, based on the work of Pearce (1983). The nine work-reward items formed three scales: intrinsic, social, and service work rewards. Questions concerning pay, fringe benefits, and promotions are not included because they are unavailable to the volunteers. All nine items consist of the stem "How important is this reward to you?" followed by nine work rewards that the respondent rated from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

The Intrinsic Motivation Scale consists of these rewards: "doing tasks that hold my interest," "an interesting job," and "enjoyment of just doing the work" ($\alpha = .73$). Social Motivation is composed of "enjoyment of the company of my co-workers," "working with people I like," and "associating with a good group of people" ($\alpha = .77$). Service Motivation consists of "the chance to further the goals of this organization," "a chance to make a real contribution," and "identification with the mission of the organization" ($\alpha = .69$).

Job attitude scales Three job attitudes are used in the present analyses: "Job satisfaction" and "intent to leave" were used by Pfeffer and Lawler (1980). However, an additional variable has been added that is a better approximation of likely sufficient justification cognitions, it is called "job praiseworthiness."

Job Satisfaction is composed of three semantic differential bipolar adjectives for "my job": "unpleasant-pleasant," "boring-interesting," and "bad-good." It has an alpha of .73, and a correlation of .61 with the interview question tapping job satisfaction: "All and all, as of today, how much would you say you liked your job?" (scored from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied). Intention To

Leave is composed of four 7-point Likert scale items, for example, "I rarely think of quitting" (negatively scored), "Every now and then I think about leaving." It has an alpha of .81, and no corresponding interview question. Finally, Job Praiseworthiness is composed of three semantic differential items: "praiseworthy-unpraiseworthy" (negatively scored), "useless-useful," and "receiving-giving," and has an alpha of .63 and no corresponding interview question.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between these scales appear in Table 1. More detailed information about the sample, procedures, and measures used in this report are available in Pearce (1978).

Results

Although the use of eight organizations matched on four task types aids in generalizing to the larger population of organizations, it presents some unusual problems in data analysis. It would be desirable to obtain as much information as possible about differences between those working on these very different tasks, yet to treat this sample as a set of four paired comparisons reduces statistical degrees of freedom to an unacceptably low level. Therefore, the best approach appears to be the use of 2×4 (Staff Type [volunteer vs. employee] \times Task Type) analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Each of the eight organizations is placed in a cell corresponding to its volunteer or employee staff and its task type (newspaper, poverty relief, family planning, or firefighting). Because the cell frequencies are both unequal and nonproportional, the ANOVAs were run with each main effect adjusted for the other and the interaction adjusted for both main effects. When combined with the two-step analysis used in this study (significant main effects considered only if the interaction is

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, and Intercorrelation Matrix

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Staff type ^a	—	—	—						
2. Intrinsic motivation	5.54	1.02	.07	.73					
3. Social motivation	5.45	1.07	-.31***	.27**	.77				
4. Service motivation	5.69	.98	-.40***	.27**	.50***	.69			
5. Job satisfaction	5.79	1.12	-.40***	.17*	.30***	.37***	.73		
6. Intention to leave	3.26	1.60	.52***	-.22**	-.33***	-.44***	-.50***	.81	
7. Job praiseworthiness	5.68	1.22	-.24**	.11	.14	.21**	.45***	-.29***	.63

Note. $n = 106$.

^a Scored: volunteer = 1, employee = 2.

* $p = .05$ ** $p = .01$ *** $p = .001$

Table 2.
Analysis of Variance for Work Motivation and Job Attitudes

Source	Intrinsic motivation		Social motivation		Service motivation		Job satisfaction		Intention to leave		Job praiseworthiness							
	MS	F	ω^2	MS	F	ω^2	MS	F	ω^2	MS	F	ω^2						
Staff Type (A)	1.47	1.47	01	7.30	7.11*	06	12.96	16.78*	13	15.78	17.39*	12	59.05	31.25*	22	8.04	5.75*	05
Task Type (B)	1.51	1.51	04	1.34	1.31	03	1.16	1.51	03	6.22	6.86*	14	2.53	1.34	03	52	37	01
A × B	2.06	2.06	06	1.28	1.25	03	2.09	2.70*	06	1.16	1.28	03	1.39	0.74	02	3.21	2.30	06
Error	1.00			1.03			77			91			1.89			1.40		

Note: For all analyses, df for staff type = 1, df for task type = 3, df for Staff Type × Task Type = 3, and df for error = 98
* $p < .05$

nonsignificant), this treatment of unequal cell sizes is conservative. If either the interaction term or the main effect for task type is significant, the relationship between the staff-type difference and the dependent variable will be more closely examined.

Motivation

The ANOVA tables showing staff-type differences in work motivation appear in Table 2; the means are reported in Table 3. There is no statistically significant difference in reported intrinsic motivation. However, volunteers are more likely to report that they work for the rewards of social interaction than are employees. Most interesting is the substantial difference between the service motivation reported by volunteers and employees. The significant service motivation interaction reflects relatively less service motivation among both newspaper volunteers and employees than among those performing the more purely service tasks of poverty relief, family planning, and fire fighting.

Job Attitudes

Tables 2 and 3 contain the analysis of variance tables and means for job attitudes. Volunteers reported greater job satisfaction, less intent to leave, and greater praiseworthiness of their work than did comparable employees. The significant difference effect for job satisfaction is the result of lower job satisfaction among newspaper and poverty relief workers when compared to family planners and fire fighters. These staff-type differences support the job attitude findings of Staw (1974) and Pfeffer and Lawler (1980).

Discussion

Volunteers, doing the same work as employees, are more likely to report that they work for the rewards of social interaction and service to others, that their work is more praiseworthy, and that they are more satisfied and less likely to leave their organizations.

That these reports were produced by experienced sufficiency of justification must be assumed; sufficiency-of-justification cognitions in this study, as in all of the field studies cited above, were not directly measured. Alternative

Table 3
Means for Work Motivation and Job Attitudes

Staff type	Task type			
	News- paper	Poverty relief	Family planning	Fire- fighting
	Intrinsic Motivation			
Volunteer	5 83	4 47	5 63	5 65
Employee	5 50	5 67	5 54	5 79
	Social Motivation			
Volunteer	5 34	5 30	5 53	6 07
Employee	4 79	5 26	5 15	5 00
	Service Motivation			
Volunteer	6 17	6 20	5 90	6 03
Employee	4 42	5 12	5 58	5 64
	Job Satisfaction			
Volunteer	6 11	5 60	6 50	6 33
Employee	4 37	4 88	5 94	5 64
	Intention to Leave			
Volunteer	3 06	2 67	2 03	2 50
Employee	4 92	3 98	4 23	3 70
	Job Praiseworthiness			
Volunteer	6 33	6 25	5 60	5 89
Employee	4 56	5 25	5 75	5 55

hypotheses include differential selection into volunteer work and employment and some effect of the very different nature of spare-time volunteer work and holding a job. Regarding differential selection, for this sample there were no differences between the groups in age or sex; virtually all of the volunteers were employed and many of the employees had also been volunteers. This indicates that the volunteers and employees in this sample do not represent different social classes but does not address the concern that volunteering and going to work may represent vastly different psychological approaches to organizational participation. This article presents attitudinal differences consistent with one psychological difference—sufficiency of justification—but offers no evidence that this is the only, or even the most important, difference.

Differential retention is a real threat to the interpretation of job attitude differences. It is much less costly for dissatisfied volunteers to quit than it is for employees, who derive their

income from their jobs. Therefore, the employee sample may contain a broad range of satisfied and dissatisfied members, but the volunteer sample is probably restricted to the satisfied (see Pearce, 1982, for an extended discussion). However, this argument is less plausible for motivation. It is unlikely that employees who remain working because they depend on their salaries would report less social and service motivation than unsalaried volunteers, unless they are experiencing oversufficient justification and therefore deemphasizing the job rewards available to both groups.

Among the more striking findings in this study are the insignificant differences in reported working for intrinsic rewards. This is particularly interesting because Staw (1976) proposed that it would be intrinsic motivation that would be affected by extrinsic rewards. I would like to suggest that Staw's (1976) proposition is overly narrow. Why should individuals experiencing insufficient justification necessarily emphasize the interestingness of their jobs? Why not attend to the way in which saving lives and property from fire is serving the community?

Individuals can increase the sufficiency of the justification for their activities by enhancing the importance of any number of rewards, and the targets of this enhancement will depend on the nature of the work. Producing newspapers, relieving poverty, staffing clinics, and fighting fires are, after all, all services to their respective communities. In addition, most of the volunteers in this study had developed close friendships over the years. In contrast, most laboratory experiments provide few opportunities for meaningful social contact, and such tasks as copying sheets of random numbers (Pallack, Sogin, & Van Zante, 1974) or solving puzzles (Deci, 1972) cannot be reasonably regarded as services to others. There really is nothing else in the setting subjects can use to increase sufficiency of justification. Laboratory studies are useful for identifying a sufficiency-of-justification effect, but care must be taken when generalizing the results to workplace motivation.

In conclusion, these results are consistent with, and suggest a broadened understanding of, the sufficiency-of-justification concept in work motivation. In this study volunteers and employees in similar jobs differed in job at-

titudes and placed different relative importance on the work rewards that were equally available to both groups. The present study illustrates that Staw's (1976) generalization of sufficiency of justification to organizational motivation may be appropriate once it is separated from the problematic intrinsic/extrinsic reward dichotomy.

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