

Influence of Leader-Member Exchange and Perceived Organizational Support on Volunteer Satisfaction and Turnover Intention of Older LPGA Volunteers

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In 2007, 60.8 million adults participated in some kind of volunteering activities in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2007). Based on Tedrick and Henderson's (1989) estimate that 20% of all U.S. volunteers contribute to the sport industry, 12.15 million of these individuals volunteered for sport related organizations. However, the total number of U.S. volunteers has declined since 2005, when 65 million individuals volunteered. The decline might critically impact operations of non-profit organizations, particularly in sport organizations where volunteers are important contributors to service delivery (Chalip & Green, 1998).

Despite the importance of studying volunteer retention (Kim, Chelladurai, & Trail, 2007), most of the studies regarding sport volunteers have focused on volunteer motivation. As such, past studies have failed to explore the psychosocial aspects of volunteers through positive or negative volunteering experiences and their subsequent influence on volunteers' turnover intention. Therefore, the primary purpose of the current exploratory study was to examine the influence of leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support (POS) on volunteering satisfaction and turnover intention of older LPGA older volunteers.

The framework of the current study consisted of four variables: LMX, POS, volunteer satisfaction, and volunteer turnover intention. Although past research has not investigated all four of these variables in a volunteer setting, we proposed the following hypotheses based on studies of paid employees (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Shore & Tetrick, 1991):

H1: LMX will positively influence volunteer job satisfaction.

H2: POS will positively influence volunteer job satisfaction.

H3: Volunteer job satisfaction will be negatively related to volunteer turnover intention.

The sample of the current study consisted of volunteers over the age of 55 years at an LPGA golf tournament (the individuals in this particular age demographic comprised the vast majority of volunteers at the event). Data collection was conducted throughout all three days of the weekend tournament. Among 197 survey questionnaires distributed to older volunteers at the event, 178 questionnaires were returned (90.0% response) and 159 were usable. The volunteers at the event who responded were mostly Caucasian (n = 149; 94.3%) and male (n = 94; 59.1%).

Twenty seven items from previously validated instruments (Farmer & Fedor, 1999; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Penner, Finkelstein, & Brannick, 2005; Scandura & Graen, 1984) were used to collect data on demographic profiles (e.g., gender, age, marital status, education, income, and ethnicity), POS (7 items), LMX (7 items), volunteer satisfaction (3 items), and volunteer turnover intention (2 items). Respondents indicated the extent of their agreement with each item on a 7 point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) in each section.

The results of a CFA using AMOS 6.0 indicated acceptable model fit after removing two items measuring POS and one item measuring volunteer satisfaction. Specifically, the chi-square per degree of freedom ratio ($197.446/98 = 2.015$), RMSEA ($\epsilon = .080$), and CFI (.944) were acceptable, and all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded .50, indicating that the items represented the constructs well. The internal consistency values ranged from .827 to .945 and the AVE values ranged from .678 to .785. The fit indices for the structural model revealed that the chi-square per degree of freedom ratio ($227.263/101 = 2.250$), RMSEA ($\epsilon = .089$), and CFI (.929) were all acceptable. All path coefficients in the structural model were significant except the path between LMX and Volunteer satisfaction ($\beta = .117, p = .131$). As hypothesized, the path coefficient between POS and Volunteer satisfaction ($\beta = .561, p < .001$) was positive, and the path coefficient between Volunteer satisfaction and Volunteer turnover intention ($\beta = -.392, p < .001$) was negative. <

The results of the current study suggest that volunteers are more likely to be satisfied with their volunteer jobs/tasks when they perceive a high level of organizational support. In turn, the high level of job satisfaction tends to lower volunteers' turnover intention. However, volunteer satisfaction was not significantly influenced by the quality of relationship between a paid- or volunteer leader and a volunteer. The insignificant relationship between LMX and volunteer satisfaction might be a result of the

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uniqueness of the volunteer setting where the leader/boss does not have legitimate power over the volunteer (e.g., evaluation, compensation). Sport organizations who rely upon the assistance of older volunteers need to make sure that they provide quality support to their volunteers. More specifically, the organizations should monitor volunteers' well-being, opinions, job performance, and problems. Perceived organizational support can be enhanced by expressing appreciation to volunteers for their efforts through mediums such as 'thank-you' notes and small gifts and awards.