Psychometric Properties of the Planned Behavior Model and its Predictive Power for Future Intention in Volunteerism

Ka Man Leung, Hong Kong Baptist University
Eddie T.C. Lam, Cleveland State University

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In the last two decades, social and developmental researchers have applied theories and models to the topic of volunteerism in order to understand why people are willing to devote their time in serving others. One of these models is the Theory of Planned Behavior, which assumes people’s behaviors are rational with systemic usage of available information (Ajzen, 1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior was initially developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action, which aimed at studying the determinant of people’s behaviors that were under volitional control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The purpose of this study was to examine the psychometric properties of the Planned Behavior Model using the three salient beliefs: Outcome Beliefs, Normative Beliefs, and Control Beliefs. The format of the questionnaire followed the recommendations of Ajzen (2002). Item generation in the three salient beliefs was based on a thorough review of related literature (e.g., Ajzen, 1991, 2002; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Chung, Pang, & Law, 2002; Doherty, 2005; Wanderman, Florin, Friedman, & Meier, 1987) and a pilot study. Outcome Beliefs were measured by positive (16 items) and negative outcome beliefs (8 items) of volunteering. Normative Beliefs were measured by eight items that assessed the influence from peers, friends, society views about volunteers. Control Beliefs (13 items) were based on the volunteering constraints identified by previous studies (e.g., Chung et al., 2002; Doherty, 2005; Institute of Volunteering Research, 1997). Item response was based on a 5-point Likert scale (e.g., “1” = “no influences at all” and “5” = “very large influence”). Additionally, “not applicable” was included in the questionnaire if any of those items did not apply to the participants.

Participants were male (n = 107) and female (n = 97) volunteers from the sport organizations in Hong Kong. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to examine the factor structure of the beliefs. Results of the EFA indicated that Outcome Beliefs, Normative Beliefs, and Control Beliefs had six factors (23 items), three factors (8 items), and four factors (12 items), respectively. Stepwise multiple regression analysis showed that the Model was significant (R2 = .24, p < .001). Social Benefit (β = .26, p < .001), Self-Development (β = .20, p < .001), and Lack of Drive (β = -.26, p < .001) were significant predictors of volunteers’ future intention to continue volunteering. In conclusion, this study supported the Planned Behavior Model that was based on the three salient beliefs: Outcome Beliefs, Normative Beliefs, and Control Beliefs. We also conclude that Social Benefit and Self-Development have significant positive impacts on volunteers’ future intention to continue volunteering, while Lack of Drive has a negative impact on volunteers’ future intention to continue volunteering. Nevertheless, this current study adopted a convenience nonrandom sample from Hong Kong. The findings of this study might not be generalized to other populations or regions. For this reason, future studies should include a representative sample which includes volunteers from a more diverse setting (e.g., disability sport organizations). Furthermore, only three salient beliefs were included in this study, it is suggested that researchers should include other factors in explaining volunteers’ future intention to continue volunteering.