Factors that Motivate YMCA Volunteers

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FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE
YMCA VOLUNTEERS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Physical Education and Recreation
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Theresa A. Lubke
FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE YMCA VOLUNTEERS

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE YMCA VOLUNTEERS

Theresa A. Lubke December 1997 53 Pages

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The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) is a not-for-profit organization that depends heavily on volunteers. As one of many such organizations, the YMCA must continually strive to find the best methods of recruiting and retaining volunteers. Although the field of psychology has done considerable research on what motivates people to engage in helping behavior and Volunteerism, there has been little applied research in this area. There appeared to be a lack of applicable research that would assist YMCA staff in their recruitment and development of volunteers. This present research focused on helping to fill that gap. The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to determine what factors initially motivate people to volunteer for a YMCA and 2) to determine what factors motivate YMCA volunteers to continue that work.

With the aid of a panel of experts, a survey instrument was developed for serve as the data gathering tool. A total of 720 surveys were sent to YMCAs to distribution to volunteers over two different periods of time. The first period, November 1992, 120 surveys were sent to three YMCAs in Kentucky and Tennessee. The second period, September 1995, 600 surveys were distributed to 20 YMCAs in Ohio and Michigan. The volunteers completed a survey providing demographic data on the volunteers, the type of volunteer service they provided, and factors motivating them to volunteer.
One hundred and twenty six responses were collected from volunteers representing ten of the selected YMCAs throughout the test region. The data collected from these surveys were analyzed using statistical software. The most frequent participants were males between the ages of 35 to 40 and were married with 2.3 children ranging in age from six months to 14 years. The volunteer was employed and worked 41 or more hours per week. For those respondents who had been volunteering for the YMCA for 15 or more years, the strongest motivating factor was the same as those who had volunteered for less than one year: the individual respondent liked helping people. The second most motivating factor was the same for both groups: caring and concern for others.

Based on the findings of the study the researcher recommended the following: YMCA's needing volunteers should ask people to volunteer; YMCA's should emphasize that the volunteer work will help others, improve the community, and is an expression of caring and concern for others; YMCA's should design volunteer positions such that the volunteer is helping others, feels needed and is able to fulfill the position during his/her leisure time. In addition, further research needs to be conducted involving a larger volunteer sample.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introductory Information

This study was conducted to further understand the motivation of volunteers in Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA). A further purpose was to investigate factors that motivate volunteers for a YMCA, and factors that motivate volunteers to continue.

Society today faces many problems and issues where volunteers can have an impact. As stated by William Aramony, President United Way of America,

The need for community involvement has never been greater. Helping a father learn to read a book to his little boy ... serving hot food at a community kitchen on a cold night ... answering the call for help from a teen with a drug problem ... advocating for better systems to meet the needs of the homeless ... Volunteers make a difference in our communities in countless ways every day (United Way of America, 1989, p. v).

Americans are responding to these needs in record numbers. According to a 1990 Gallop Organization study commissioned by the Independent Sector (as cited in Minnesota Office on Volunteer Services [MOVS], 1992), 98 million people in the United States volunteer in some capacity, an increase of 23 percent over 1987. These volunteers gave an average of four hours per week, contributing a total of 20.5 billion hours of service at an estimated value of
Despite these numbers, there is fierce competition among not-for-profit organizations for volunteers (United Way of America, 1989). In 1980 there were a reported 785,000 agencies in the independent sector (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1988), many of whom depend on volunteers (Unger, 1991). The YMCA is one of these organizations with 2200 independent and branch YMCAs in the United States serving approximately 13,000,000 members (K. Rea, personal communication, December 11, 1991). Like most not-for-profit agencies, YMCA staff look for ways to keep costs down while maintaining and improving the level of service they provide communities. One way of doing that is through the use of volunteers (Egan, 1991; YMCA of the USA, 1984). In addition, volunteerism is at the heart of the YMCA. In fact, it was established and run exclusively by volunteers for the first thirteen years of its existence. Volunteers continue to play a vital role in the YMCA. A total of 460,000 people volunteered in YMCAs throughout the United States in 1995 (YMCA of the USA, 1995).

In view of the magnitude of volunteerism, it is important to understand what motivates those who volunteer. "Examining why the volunteer does in fact volunteer his time . . . provides information which will enable us to systematically recruit and train more effective volunteers, maintain their involvement, and sustain their on-going commitment" (Peyser & Hollander, 1982, p.350). Although the field of psychology has researched what motivates people to engage in helping behavior and volunteerism, there has been little applied research in this area. YMCA of the USA has researched the number and type of volunteers but not what motivates them to volunteer. Thus, there appeared to be a lack of applicable research that could help YMCA staff in their
recruitment and development of volunteers. This present research focused on filling that gap.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to determine what factors motivate people to volunteer for a YMCA initially and 2) to determine what factors motivate YMCA volunteers to continue.

**Scope of the Study**

In this study the researcher identified a sample of YMCA volunteers. A total of 720 surveys were sent to YMCAs for distribution to volunteers. The survey was conducted during two different periods. November 9, through November 15, 1992 in which 120 surveys were sent to three YMCAs in Kentucky and Tennessee. The second period of research was conducted throughout the month of September 1995 in which 600 surveys were distributed to 20 YMCAs in Ohio and Michigan. The volunteers completed a survey that questioned their motivation in volunteering for a YMCA. The requested information included demographic data, the type of service they provided, and factors motivating them to volunteer.

**Limitations**

The study was limited by the following:

1. the number of YMCAs within a reasonable distance of the researcher at two different periods of time;
2. the time lapse of three years between two surveys;
3. the geographical difference among YMCAs taking part in the study;
4. the willingness of YMCA staff to follow the prescribed directions;
5. the willingness of YMCA volunteers to participate in the study;
6. the accuracy of the survey answers.
Delimitations

The study is delimited to the following:

1. volunteers thirteen years of age and older
2. active volunteers;
3. the decision of the researcher to study volunteers at both metropolitan YMCA and independent associations;
4. volunteers at the Nashville (Tennessee) Metropolitan YMCA, the Barren County Family YMCA in Glasgow, Kentucky, the Owensboro (Kentucky) Area Family YMCA, the Wooster (Ohio) YMCA, the Cleveland (Ohio) Metropolitan YMCA, the Lima (Ohio) YMCA, the Ashland (Ohio) YMCA, the Farmington Branch YMCA of Detroit, Michigan, the Mount Vernon (Ohio) YMCA, the Tuscarawas County YMCA in Dover, Ohio.

Definition of Terms

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA): A not-for-profit agency, chartered by the YMCA of the USA, that operates under the direction of a volunteer board of directors.

YMCA of the USA: The formal organization, headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, that performs certain services for independent YMCAs.

Association: An independent YMCA with its own charter from the YMCA of the USA.

Branch YMCA: A YMCA that is chartered as part of a metropolitan association.

Metropolitan YMCA: A YMCA that has branches.

Volunteer: A person who engages in "...unpaid work within the context of a formal organization or a voluntary association" (Cohen-Mansfield, 1989, p.215).

Volunteerism: The activity of volunteers; the entire scope of volunteer service and behavior
Motivation: "That which influences or moves someone to act in a certain way" (Henderson, 1979, p.7).

Prosocial behavior: "Behavior that benefits other people" (Staub, 1978, p.2).

Not-for-profit organizations: Organizations under the Federal tax code as 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of the literature relative to volunteerism, specifically YMCAs, indicated no previous studies relating to factors responsible for YMCA volunteering. Literature was reviewed for this study in the areas of motivational theory, with an emphasis on studies of prosocial behavior and volunteering; volunteerism; and the YMCA. For purposes of clarity, the review of literature chapter was divided accordingly.

Motivation

Random House's Unabridged Dictionary (1993) defines motivation as "the act or an instance of motivating" (p.1254). Wolman (1977) states, "In a general way, motivation is concerned with what has been referred to as the active, as opposed to the receptive or passive, functions of mind" (p.290). Perhaps a clearer understanding of motivation and motivational theory is given by Porter and Lawler (as cited in Henderson, 1979). They explain motivational theory as attempts to explain how behavior gets started, is sustained, directed, and stopped. Also included is the study of what subjective reaction is present in the organism while the action is taking place. Unfortunately, there is no precise, agreement concerning these questions. Instead, the field of study regarding motivation is composed of many different theories.

One of the oldest theories in human thought is that of hedonism, or the
position that all choice is governed by anticipated pleasure or removal/reduction of pain (Wolman, 1977; Weiner, 1991). Freud's psychoanalytical theory fits into this basic model (Weiner, 1991). He theorized that original human nature is composed of instincts lodged in what he called the id. The id was amoral, with no knowledge of good and evil. These instincts were seen as sources of energy and tension which sought to be released. It was the ego part of the individual that was in touch with reality and responsible for discharging the id's impulses (Wolman, 1977). Consistent with hedonism, the id, through the ego, was seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.

Another early hedonistic theory of motivation was Hull's drive theory. He saw needs as the energy which propels the organism to action (Weiner, 1991, p. 293). Weiner (1991) also points to Lorenz and Tinbergen's hydraulics in ethnological theory as hedonistic. This theory contends "that if particular responses are not expressed in action, then their associated energy accumulates and 'overflows', activating these or other action patterns in inappropriate settings" (p. 923).

Even some more recent, cognitive theories of motivation find humans to be hedonistic. Although these theories explain humans as rational, the basis of all behavior is still seen as pleasure seeking and pain avoiding (Weiner, 1991, p. 925; Wolman, 1977, p. 292). Weiner (1991) points to Atkinson's expectancy - value theory as an example.

They (humans) are aware of all possible alternative goal-related actions, they know the likelihood that each action will result in goal attainment, and the value of each goal has been determined. Then all of the available choices are compared regarding their expectancies of resulting in goal attainment and the values of the goals. The most
hedonic selection is then made (p. 925).

Heider and Kelley's attributional theory ascribes the primary source of motivation as knowledge, understanding, or cognitive mastery of the causal structure of the environment. This causal knowledge then becomes a guide for subsequent action (Weiner, 1991). Although not necessarily hedonistic, this theory still views the basis of motivation to be self-centered without concern for others. This rather one sided view of human motivation does appear to be changing. Weiner (1991) states that "the psychology of motivation has become increasingly human, social, and other directed, and decreasingly subhuman, viscerogenic, and intrapsychic" (p. 927). Within the contexts of these various motivational theories is the question of what motivates prosocial behavior, including volunteering. Much of the literature focuses on the broad question of whether a helper's motives are (or can be) altruistic (other-concerned) as opposed to egoistic (self-concerned) (Clary and Orenstein, 1991). The answers seem to be divided into two schools of thought: one of which allows for some prosocial behavior to be altruistically motivated and a second which denies this possibility.

Batson, Futz and Schoenrade (1987) summarize the dualistic conceptualization of prosocial behavior, "prosocial motivation is egoistic when the ultimate goal is to increase one's own welfare; it is altruistic when the ultimate goal is to increase another's welfare" (p. 22). Clary and Orenstein's (1991) study of volunteer crisis counselors supports this position of both egoistic and altruistic motivations, and even points to both influencing one individual simultaneously. This study was a self-report in which volunteers ranked in numerical order their reasons for volunteering. Examples of altruistic reasons included "a chance to help others," "to express concern to people in need," and
"a chance to give of myself without expecting some sort of payoff" (p. 63).

Egoistic reasons for volunteering included "personal growth," "to acquire new skills, experience," "to meet new people," "to increase my self-confidence," "to 'repay' previous use of volunteer services," "to have fun and do something constructive at the same time," and "to develop better human relations skills" (p. 63).

Other literature pointing to both altruism and egoism as motivators for prosocial behavior includes Jenner's (1982) survey of selected women volunteers. She found that "altruism and self-actualization were about equally important motivators" (p. 35). Similar results were reported by Peyser and Hollander (1982) in a study of volunteers at a Hebrew home for the aged. Here the greatest number of self-reported reasons for volunteering were related to helping or serving others. Helping or serving others was followed by motives of self-satisfaction, social duty and religious obligation, utilization of spare time, obtaining experience and social interaction. In their study of Kentucky Hunter Education volunteers, Crume and Lang (1990) also found a dualistic motivation, although they reported motivations of helping others to be much stronger than those related to rewards.

Although Schoenrade, Batson, Brandt, and Loud (1986) found both altruistic and egoistic motivators for helping someone not in distress, these appeared to be situationally mutually exclusive.

... in the absence of any prior relationship, anticipated accountability significantly increased the rate of benefit to the other, suggesting egoistic motivation to gain socially mediated self-benefits. But when a prior relationship existed, benefit to the other was as likely when accountability was not anticipated as when it was, suggesting altruistic motivation to
increase the other's welfare (abstract).

According to Staub (1978) motivation to behave prosocially is divided into three categories or reasons: self-gain, personal values and norms, and empathy and identification with other people. Of these reasons, only the last can be seen as altruistic. Of self-gain as a motivator, Staub (1978) states,

Considerations of self-interest guide people not only to adhere to social values and norms, but also to benefit others in the hope of being rewarded (p. 43).

Likewise prosocial behavior motivated by personal values and norms is egoistic. Such behavior is based on self-reactions: seeking a positive self-evaluation, self-reward, and the positive emotions as a result of acting according to a norm. Also sought is avoidance of negative emotions, including guilt, which may occur when deviating from a norm (Staub, 1978).

Unlike the first two reasons, empathy (the vicarious experience of another's emotions) is altruistic according to Staub. Staub (1978) states that "either experiencing or anticipating another's distress can motivate action aimed at eliminating the distress. Anticipating another person's positive emotions can lead to behavior that will promote their welfare" (p. 44).

In contrast to this dualistic view of motivation to behave prosocially, there is a smaller, more traditional body of literature that attributes all such behavior to egoistic motives. Much of the disagreement on this issue seems to be based on interpretation of study results. Fultz and Batson (1986), in discussing their research which appeared to show altruistic motivation to help, admit that these may be interpreted as egoistic and that the helpers may be doing so to avoid self-censure in the form of guilt or to attain positive social or self-rewards. Similarly, Schoenrade et al. (1986) claim that behavior appearing to be
altruistic may in fact be egoistic as "one may anticipate intrinsic self-rewards in the form of feelings of satisfaction and pride at a good deed done (or shame and regret at having left undone that which ought to have been done)" (p. 562).

Hull's (as cited in Baston et al., 1987) drive theory of motivation claimed that even behavior that is motivated by empathy is, at the core, motivated by the need to relieve one's vicarious emotional arousal. Other hedonistic based motivational theories, such as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, would find similar, self-centered, reasons for behaving prosocially, even when that behavior appears to be based on empathy and lacking in external rewards.

Literature outside of the field of psychology relating to the motivation of volunteers tends to be less concerned with the issue of altruism verses egoism and more concerned with practical applicability by voluntary agencies. This literature is limited as neither private organizations nor public agencies who use volunteers conduct surveys on a regular basis (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1984). However, research in this area, does provide some knowledge of what motivates volunteers. In a study of older American volunteers, Cohen-Mansfield (1989) found the chief self-reported reasons for volunteering were ideological and philanthropic. Filling leisure time and interest ranked third and fourth respectively. Peyser and Hollander (1982) found similar results among older volunteers. They also found career exploration and skill maintenance, as well as helping others, to be strong motivators among younger volunteers.

Cohen-Mansfield (p. 189) also asked what motivated non-volunteers to not volunteer and found that 38.5% gave health problems as the primary reason and lack of free time as the next most frequent reason. A similar question posed to non-volunteers of all ages by the Gallop Corporation (as cited in United Way, 1989) found the most common reason for not volunteering was lack of time.
The second most common reason was poor health. Wroblewski (1994) cited a 1992 study by the Independent Sector that listed the following self-reported reasons for not volunteering: "their personal schedules were too full"; "they had no interest"; and "they simply weren't asked" (p. 155).

Seeming to confirm Schoenrade et. al's (1986) study on the importance of a previous relationship in motivation to help, several studies on volunteers found that having a child in the program was a frequently mentioned reason for volunteering (Unger, 1991; Henderson, 1979). Other studies have shown that the desire to help others was a strong self-reported motivator for volunteering. Sixty-eight percent of the volunteers surveyed by Hettman and Jenkins (1990) "chose 'to help others less fortunate' as one of their reasons for volunteering" (p. 301). A 1974 study done by ACTION (as cited in Henderson, 1979) found "the main motivations for volunteering were: wanting to help people, having a sense of duty, having a child in the program, and enjoying volunteer work" (p. 50). A study of volunteers for the Kentucky Hunter Education Program also found the primary self-reported motivation for volunteering to be related to helping others (Crume and Lang, 1990).

Two of the most recent and comprehensive studies on volunteering were commissioned by Independent Sector: a not-for-profit organization that provides support information for tax exempt voluntary organizations. The first, conducted by the Gallop Organization (as cited in United Way of America, 1989), found the most common reasons people gave for volunteering to be "to do something useful," "enjoy the work," and "a family member or friend would benefit from the activity" (p.6). More recently, the Independent Sector's 1992 (as cited in Wroblewski, 1994) study asked volunteers why they volunteer. The following reasons were given as very important: "they feel it's important to help
others"; "they feel compassion toward people in need"; "they can do something for a cause that is important to them" (p. 154). However, interpreting these self-reported reasons is not necessarily straightforward. "People may give these answers . . . because they view them as socially acceptable. It may be difficult, for example, to say that you want to volunteer in order to meet a potential husband or wife" (Wroblewski, 1994, p. 154).

Somewhat opposite results from the Independent Sector's studies were reported by Grieshop (1985) in a study of volunteers of a Master Gardener program. This study focused on the types of incentives that motivated 600 volunteers to participate, and how strong and durable those incentives were. "Material benefits were reported to be the strongest in this order: 1. New sources of information 2. New gardening knowledge 3. Access to experts and information" (p. 222). Grieshop concluded that in an exchange or barter economy "... altruism is but one of several incentives operating, and a relatively minor one at that" (p. 223). Cohen-Mansfield (1989) also looked at motivation to continue volunteering by asking older Americans who had previously volunteered why they had stopped. The most common response was health problems, followed by lack of free time and the organization closing. Of the volunteers who had continued their commitment, "92% characterized themselves as either satisfied or very satisfied with the volunteer work . . ." (p. 217).

Schaubroek and Ganster (1991) found that affective commitment to the organization and intrinsic satisfaction were both strong indicators of continued volunteering. With reference to the difference between motives to volunteer initially and to continue in service, Lammers (1991) concluded "people seek voluntary positions in part to find new skills. People stay in voluntary positions
while they continue to train more formally and because they find intrinsic rewards in the work experience" (p. 140). On this same subject Stooke (1992) states, "the greatest single reason volunteers continue to work for an organization is because they are making a contribution that makes a difference to the organization and to the people it is serving" (p. 24).

Volunteerism

The scope of volunteerism in the United States is growing. Not only are there more volunteers now than ever before (MOVS, 1992; United Way, 1989), but the number of organizations using volunteers has increased in the past decade (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1984). With this increase, as stated by MOVS (1992)

Volunteer opportunities are more diverse than ever before. Volunteers can choose from a myriad of activities depending upon their interests. Professional expertise such as public relations, accounting, law, and computer programming is often sought from volunteers by community organizations. Volunteers also serve as advocates, mentors and counselors and coaches. They conduct research, are involved as trainers, tutors and in many other areas (p. 1).

Most of this activity is occurring in the independent sector. Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1984) define the independent sector as "those not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations that are voluntary organizations, churches, private schools, and foundations. . . company-sponsored foundations that engage in charitable, educational, religious, scientific and other not-for-profit activities that serve the public good, as well as social welfare and civic associations" (p. 9). In 1982 there were 785,000 organizations reported in the independent sector with a total of 1.2 million not-for-profit organizations in the United States.
The number of volunteers, the number of hours given in time, and the economic value of that time have all been growing steadily. According to Gallop Organization polls (as cited in Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1984), the number of adult volunteers in 1981 was 80 million (52% of the population). Although this figure remained the same for 1987 (New Independent Sector, 1988), it increased by 23% in 1990, with a total of 98 million people reported by the Gallop Organization (as cited in MOVS, 1992) as volunteering. These volunteers contributed an estimated 19.5 billion hours of time in 1987 (New Independent Sector, 1998) and 20.5 billion such hours in 1990 (MOVS, 1992).

The estimated value of volunteer time has increased from $28 billion in 1974 to $52 billion in 1980 (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1984). In 1987 that estimate increased to $150 billion ("New Independent Sector, 1988). The most recent figures given by the Gallop Organization (as cited in MOVS, 1992) place the value of volunteer time in 1990 as $170 billion. These figures represent an overall increase of 607% over a sixteen year period.

Selected characteristics of volunteers are described in the literature. In describing an average volunteer, Hettman and Jenkins (1990) state "the person most likely to volunteer is an educated, married, upper-income woman who lives in the West and has a part-time job" (p. 208). They also found that those aged 35 to 49 are most likely to volunteer and that volunteering increases with education and income. Lammer's (1991) study of 147 volunteers at a crisis and information center supports much of that description. The median age of those volunteers studied was 40, with 70% being under the age of 50. In addition, 84.8% had some college education, and the largest percentage came from households with incomes above the national average.
A recent comprehensive study by the Gallop Organization, commissioned by the Independent Sector (as cited in United Way, 1989), also found that volunteering is most prevalent among those aged 35 to 44, followed closely by the age group of 45 to 54. According to this research, men and women appear to be volunteering at an almost equal rate: 47% for the female population and 44% for the male. Supporting Hettman and Jenkin’s data the Gallop study (as cited in United Way, 1989) concluded that "the higher an individual's annual household income, the greater the chance that individual will volunteer" (p. 2), and "as education level increases, the rate of volunteering increases" (p. 4). Other characteristics prevalent among volunteers included being Caucasian, self-employed, employed in a professional job or a full-time student, married, and living in the Midwest (United Way, 1989).

The YMCA

The YMCA was founded by George Williams as an evangelical Bible study group for young male drapery workers in London, England, on June 6, 1844 (Ripley, 1987). Its membership soon spread to include other manufacturing workers, with many YMCA groups springing up throughout London. In 1851 the first YMCA was formed in the United States by Thomas Sullivan in Boston, Massachusetts (Sowchek, 1978). At this time, the primary purposes of the YMCAs were still Bible study and Christian fellowship. In 1857 the first professional secretary, John Wanamaker, was employed by the Philadelphia YMCA (YMCA of the USA, 1988). Prior to this time all YMCA workers were volunteers. By 1878 there were 854 associations in the United States with a membership of 71,932 (Sowchek, 1978). In 1991 there were 2200 YMCAs with approximately 13 million members (K. Rea, personal communication, December 11, 1991).
The USA is:

The YMCA is a charitable association dedicated to building healthy spirit, mind and body. Part of a world wide movement, it puts Christian principles into practice through programs that promote good health, strong families, youth leadership, community development, and international understanding (YMCA of the USA, 1988).

The program history of the YMCA in the United States is extremely diverse. What began as an evangelical mission soon moved into new directions, meeting the different needs of those the YMCA served. In 1891, the YMCA triangular logo and the motto of developing the spirit, mind and body were adopted (YMCA of the USA, 1988). This movement quickly led the YMCA into the area of sports and physical fitness. Both the games of basketball and volleyball were invented by YMCA professionals in the late 1800s. Two other program areas that have become central to the YMCA began just after the turn of the century, aquatics and youth leadership. During World War I the YMCA branched out again, and with the cooperation of several other agencies, founded the U.S.O. (YMCA of the USA, 1988). In the 1950s, YMCAs recognized the needs of women, girls, and entire families, and membership began to open up to those of both genders (YMCA of the USA, 1984). By 1984, programs had become extremely diversified and included health and fitness, child care, Bible study, homeless shelters and others based on the needs of the community where each YMCA was located (YMCA of the USA, 1984).

Although each YMCA has a paid staff, volunteers are still a vital and integral aspect of the YMCA from those in policy making positions to individual program leaders. As stated by the YMCA of the USA (1984),

...there is neither time nor budget to get along without volunteers, nor
should there be. The development of volunteers is in itself a goal of the YMCA, not just a financial necessity to be reluctantly tolerated. The YMCA has been a significant force in American society in teaching youth and adults the importance of voluntarism in our communities (p. 27).

A recent report on national trends (YMCA of the USA, 1995) estimated that there are 460,000 volunteers in the YMCA. The importance of volunteers within the YMCA is reflected by the current effort of YMCA of the USA to strengthen volunteer development. As part of this effort a national director of volunteers has been hired, and a task force to work on increasing volunteerism in the YMCA is being put together (Stooke, 1992). In addition, YMCA of the USA conducted a survey of YMCAs focusing on volunteer development (D. L. Danbury, personal communication, November 15, 1995). In YMCA of the USA's (1992) survey, 1,290 YMCAs were sampled regarding their volunteer development programs, with 774 responding that they did have such a program. Of these 774 YMCAs 459 have staff persons assigned responsibilities for volunteer coordination, reflecting the importance these YMCAs are putting on volunteers. As stated by a YMCA professional, "our (YMCAs) survival is very much dependent on our ability to meaningfully involve our community's best as . . . volunteers" (Lund, 1992, p. 22).

Despite its importance, literature on volunteers within the YMCA continues to be limited and antidotal. YMCA of the USA has conducted no studies on the factors that motivate YMCA volunteers to volunteer nor on what motivates them to continue volunteering (C. J. Wroblewski, personal communication, February 14, 1992). However, the 1990 YMCA census conducted by YMCA of the USA (1991) provides information about the number of its volunteers. Six hundred and five independent YMCAs reported a total of
143,317 volunteers. The greatest number (74,651) of volunteers were serving in the area of program leadership. Although YMCA of the USA may have more information on the demographic characteristics of YMCA volunteers, this researcher was unable to obtain it.
CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to determine what factors motivate people who volunteer for a YMCA initially and 2) to determine what factors motivate YMCA volunteers to continue. To attain this purpose, a survey was distributed to a sample of YMCA volunteers in Glasgow and Owensboro, Kentucky, and Nashville, Tennessee, during November 1992; and in Detroit, Michigan, and Wooster, Cleveland, Lima, Ashland, Mt. Vernon, and Dover, Ohio, in 1995.

Instrument Design

A survey method was used for this research, since the data desired were descriptive in nature and obtainable through a self-report instrument (Appendix A). The survey was based in part upon a previously used instrument which questioned what motivated 4-H volunteers to volunteer (Henderson, 1979). Other parts of the survey were developed by the researcher. The survey was divided into four sections: general demographic, YMCA background of the volunteer, information on the amount and type of volunteer work done, and motivation.

A draft of the survey was reviewed for construct validity by this thesis' committee. The survey was also sent to six YMCA professionals who were asked for comments (Appendix B). Five of the six, or 83%,
responded, and their suggestions resulted in the addition of one question.

Fourteen of the 17 motivational questions were taken from the doctoral dissertation Motivations and Selected Characteristics of Adult Volunteers in Extension 4-H youth programs in Minnesota (Henderson, 1979). That survey was tested for construct validity by being reviewed with a consultant from Measurement Services at the University of Minnesota. Content validity was tested by a committee of twenty of 4-H staff members. A pilot study of 30 selected 4-H volunteers determined the instrument's reliability (Henderson, 1979).

A pre- and posttest study was conducted to determine the reliability of the survey questions on motivation added by the researcher. The survey was given to 11 selected YMCA volunteers in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Of this group, ten or 90.9% returned both the pre- and posttest. A Pearson's correlation coefficient was conducted to determine the reliability for each question. Value of .80 or greater was used as a test of question reliability. Reliability of questions in the pre- and posttest ranged in value from .974 to 1.00.

Study Design and Procedures

The survey was distributed to volunteers at 10 YMCAs over two different time periods. The first period of research was conducted in the fall of 1992 while the researcher was living in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The second distribution of surveys was conducted in 1995 while the researcher was living in Wooster, Ohio. In October of 1992 the survey was distributed to volunteers at Barren County Family YMCA, Owensboro Area Family YMCA, and the seven branches of the Nashville Metropolitan YMCA. These associations were chosen due to their geographical accessibility to the researcher and the different sizes of the communities. The Barren County Family YMCA served the
smallest community, Owensboro an intermediate community, and the combination of the Nashville branches, the largest (YMCA, 1987). Both Barren County and Owensboro are independent associations with no branches.

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study at each YMCA, with the exception of two of the Nashville branches where the researcher made three unsuccessful attempts to speak with a specific staff member. The cover letter (Appendix C) included specific directions for administering the surveys. The YMCA staff was asked to distribute one survey to each volunteer who came into their YMCA during the course of one week.

Each participating YMCA was sent a packet containing a cover letter (Appendix C), sufficient surveys for the number of volunteers expected during one week, and a stamped self-addressed envelop for returning the completed surveys. The survey was conducted from November 9 to November 15, 1992.

One week after the surveys were to have been completed a follow-up letter was mailed to each participating YMCA thanking those who had returned surveys and reminding those who had not (Appendix D). One week after the follow up letter was mailed, telephone calls were made to those YMCAs who had not returned their surveys. Calling resulted in the return of one more survey packet. The final response rate was 38%.

The second period of survey distribution followed similar procedures. In August of 1995 the researcher attended a YMCA staff conference in Toledo Ohio. Staff persons from 20 different YMCAs were asked to assist with the study. Each person was given a packet containing a cover letter (Appendix E); 30 surveys; and a stamped self-addressed envelop. This research was conducted throughout the month of September, 1995.

Two weeks later a post card was sent thanking those who returned the
surveys and encouraging others to do so (Appendix F). The response rate of surveys sent to YMCAs in 1995 was 13%. A total of 720 surveys were distributed between the two research periods. The final combined response rate was 17.8%.

**Treatment of the Data**

The research design for this study was a questionnaire. The procedures for treating the data included developing a coding format. The data were entered into a computer using MYSTAT statistical software. The data were analyzed independently using descriptive statistics of ranges, percentages and mean values.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Responses were collected from 126 volunteers representing 10 YMCAs. All 10 YMCAs participating were independent associations, three were multi-branch metropolitan YMCAs, and seven were single facility operations. The 31 question survey was divided into four sections (Appendix A). The data collected in the survey were analyzed independently with MYSTAT statistical software.

Demographic Questions

There were 124 usable responses to the demographic question of age. The range was from a low of 14 to a maximum of 76, with a medium of 40.2 years. The age ranges were divided into five year intervals starting at age 10 through age 79 (Table 1). Two ranges, 35 - 39 and 40 - 44, had 25 in each range. The next largest number of responses was in the 30 - 34 range.

Table 1
Age Ranges of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24
Table 1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 - 79</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 124

The question on gender resulted in 126 usable responses. The majority of respondents were male, 79 compared to 47 females. This gave a percentage of 62.7% males and 37.3% females. There were a total of 122 responses to the question being single or married of which 87 respondents, 71.3%, were married. Thirty-five respondents, 28.7%, were single.

Of the 126 returned surveys, there were 124 usable responses to the question of whether or not they had children. Ninety-two respondents answered that they had children, 32 responded they did not. There were a total of 193 age responses of the children. Ages for children ranged from .5 years to 52. The researcher recorded these ages into age categories from zero to 54 in five year increments (Table 2). The largest number of responses were in the age ranges of five to nine and 10 to 14 with 40 responses in each range. A total of 118 responses, or 61.1% fell into three categories ranging from zero to 14 years.
### Table 10

**Age of Children in Five Year Increments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 193

The question on employment generated 120 responses. Of these, 101 responded that they were employed and 19 responded they were not. The next question asked those who responded yes to being employed to indicate the approximate number of hours per week worked. There were 99 responses. The largest number of respondents were in the range of 41 hours per week and over with 61 responses (Table 3).
Table 3

Number of Hours Worked per Week Given by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per Week</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - and over</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 99

YMCA background

The first question in this section asked whether or not the respondent was a YMCA member. There were 125 usable responses to this question. Eighty-five responded yes, they were YMCA members and 40 responded no. The second and final question in this section was to be answered only by those responding yes to the first question. This question generated 84 usable responses. Of these, 33.3% answered that they had been YMCA members for over 15 years (Table 4). The next largest group of respondents had been YMCA members for 6 to 10 years.
Table 4
Length of Time as a YMCA Member Given by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 1 year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 84

Volunteer Information

The next section dealt with specific questions related to their YMCA volunteer experience. The first question asked for the number of years of volunteer service for the YMCA. There were 124 usable responses. The time frame of 1 - 5 years had the largest number of responses, 49, followed by under one year with 35, and 6 to 10 years with 21. Eleven to 15 years received only 4 responses; however, over 15 years had 15 responses (Table 5).

Table 5
Length of Volunteer Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 1 year</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 124
The following question asked respondents to indicate areas in which they were currently volunteering. There were 122 responses. Fifty-four individuals gave multiple areas of volunteering resulting in a total of 221 areas indicated as volunteering in (Table 6). The researcher separated youth sports from the "other" category, since 27 respondents indicated they had volunteered in that area. Policy making was the category respondents indicated volunteering in most frequently, with 50 responses equaling 22.6% of the total responses.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>childcare</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintenance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building supervision</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aquatics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camping</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policy making</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>office work</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fitness / aerobics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special events</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teen programs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community outreach</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fundraising</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth sports</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N - 221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked to indicate the number of volunteer hours per week. Possible answers were in increments of five hours. The largest number of responses was in the range of 1 to 5 hours with 96 of 117 responses. No respondents indicated volunteering more than 20 hours per week (Table 7).

Table 7
Number of Hours Respondents Volunteered per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 117

The next question asked for the time of day the respondent usually volunteered. There were four choices: morning, early afternoon, late afternoon and evening. Responses were: 50 in the evening, 22 in the morning, 12 in the early afternoon, and 11 in the late afternoon.

The final question in this section was broken into two parts. The first asked if someone from the YMCA had asked the respondent to volunteer. Those who responded yes were asked to indicate who had approached them. Of the 108 who responded to the question of whether or not they were asked to volunteer, 80, or 74.1%, indicated they had been asked to volunteer. There
were a total of 92 responses to the question of who asked the respondents to volunteer. Although this question was intended to be answered only by those answering yes to the first question, 12 respondents who answered no they were not asked also answered this question making the results less clear (Table 8).

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paid staff member</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteer</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't know</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivating Factors

The fourth section of the survey included 16 statements regarding factors that motivated the respondents to volunteer at the YMCA. The Likert Scale ranges for response were from 1, representing most “strongly disagree,” 4 representing “neutral,” and 7 representing “strongly agree” (Table 9). A seventeenth Likert Scale statement was an open ended “other,” which allowed respondents to write in their own statement and then indicate their agreement or disagreement to it. This “other” question had nine usable responses and the overall highest mean with a value of 6.6 (Table 10).
Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of leisure time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obligation to YMCA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel needed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to meet others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community status</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to learn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like helping people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to be with my children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can't say no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caring for others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for perks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assigned by courts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>christian mission</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Statements Written in by Respondents as "Other"

The Y is a strong, sound force working positively within our community.

I just love the Y and the mission to help others. It is a great place to grow the mind and body!

The YMCA is critical to community.
Seeing people smile.

Lifelong learning.

Children orientated.

I am a YMCA volunteer because of the opportunities it affords my son.

Because my wife is a director and she told me to do it.

It benefits me and others physically and emotionally.

Of the 16 Likert Scale questions that were written for the respondents the statement, "I am a YMCA volunteer because I like helping people" had the largest mean value of the of 5.9 with N = 117. Volunteering as a way to improve their community was the factor with the next largest mean, with it’s value being 5.8. That factor was followed by volunteering as a way to express caring and concern for others. Other factors with a mean value indicating a greater agreement than neutral (4) were: constructive use of leisure time; perceived obligation to the YMCA; respondent felt needed; to meet other volunteers; to learn new things; to be with their children; as a way to express caring and concern for others; and to help promote the YMCA’s Christian mission (Table 11).

The least motivating factor, as indicated by the respondents, was being assigned community service hours by the courts. This statement had a mean of
1.2, followed closely by the statement indicating motivation due to perks such as free membership, with a mean of 1.8. Other factors with a mean value indicating disagreement (a value of less than 4) were: to gain experience and skills leading to employment; to receive recognition; to receive status in the community; and because respondent can not say no when asked (Table 12).

Table 11
Statements with Means Indicating Agreement with the Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like helping people</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve community</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caring for others</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of leisure time</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel needed</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to meet others</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian mission</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obligation to YMCA</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to learn</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to be with my children</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12

Statements with Means Indicating Disagreement with the Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assigned by courts</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for perks</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognition</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community status</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can't say no</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V
FINDINGS

Introduction

In lieu of a hypothesis the findings of this study were divided into four groups according to the purpose of the study and the questions in the survey.

Demographic Information

From the 126 survey respondents, the researcher was able to profile the typical volunteer participating in the study. The average volunteer was a male (62.7%) between the ages of 35 to 40 (40.3%); was married (71.3%) with 2.27 children ranging in age from six months to 14 years (61.1%). This volunteer was employed (84.2%) and worked 41 or more hours per week (61.6%). The gender of this volunteer is in contrast to the findings of Hettman and Jenkins (1990) cited in the Review of Literature. In that particular study, the researchers found the average volunteer to be female (p. 208). In addition, their volunteer was employed part-time, while the average volunteer in this study was employed full time.

Of the male respondents in this YMCA study, the mean age was 40. The youngest male was 19 and the oldest 76. The average male respondent was married (77.6%) with 2.3 children. This male volunteer was employed (98.7%) and worked 41 or more hours per week (73.7%).

Of the female respondents, the mean age was 40.4. The youngest female volunteer was 14, with the oldest being 75. The average female respondent was married (58.7%) with 2.3 children. This female volunteer was
employed (57.1%) and worked either 31 to 40 hours per week (31.0%) or 41 or more hours per week (31.0%).

YMCA Background Information

The second section of the survey contained only two questions designed to give background information on the volunteers' YMCA involvement. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents (85 out of 125) who answered the question as to whether they were a YMCA member responded positively, that yes they were a YMCA member. Of the 85 YMCA members, 84 answered the question on the length of time they had been a member. The two largest ranges of years of membership were 15 and over (33.3%) and 6 - 10 (32.1%).

Volunteer Information

The largest percentage of volunteers indicated they had been volunteering for the YMCA for 1 to 5 years (39.5%). This was followed by 28.2% indicating they had been volunteering for less than one year. Thus, the majority, 84 out of 124, of those answering this question had been volunteering no more than five years.

One hundred and twenty-two respondents answered the question regarding areas of volunteer service. Some respondents indicated more than one area of service, totally 221 responses. The largest number of responses indicated volunteering in the area of policy making with 22.6%. Policy making was followed by fundraising with a percentage of 16.7. Of the service areas considered program related, the largest number of responses were written in as youth sports, with 12.2% of the respondents indicating they were volunteering in this area. Program areas were indicated 101 out of the 221 total responses or 45.7%.

Most of those completing the survey volunteered between one and five
hours per week. Ninety-six out of 117 respondents indicated volunteering one to five hours per week. The majority of volunteering was done in the evening, as indicated by 52.6% of the responses to the time of day question. This finding is consistent with the fact that the majority of volunteers answering the survey responded that they worked on average 41 or more hours per week (61.2%).

On the question of whether the volunteers responding to the survey had been asked to volunteer, 74.1% of those answering this question indicated they had been asked. This result supports the findings of Wroblewki (1994) discussed in chapter three, which listed not being asked as a primary reason for not volunteering (p. 155).

**Motivating Factors**

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to determine what factors motivate people to volunteer for a YMCA initially and 2) to determine what factors motivate YMCA volunteers to continue. To this end, the researcher compared the answers to the 16 Likert Scale questions given by those who answered that they had been volunteering for the YMCA for under one year to each of the other five year incremental response choices. The responses with the three highest mean values in each time of volunteering increment are listed in Table 13. Of the 16 Likert Scale questions, five were repeated in the top three motivating factors throughout each length of volunteer time increment. Helping people was one of the three highest mean values in each of the five volunteer time intervals and the only factor appearing in the top three of each of the intervals. The factor "as a way to express caring and concern for others" was among the three highest mean values in four out of the five volunteer time intervals. Also repeated were the following two factors: "as a way to improve my community" appeared in three of the increments, and "as a constructive use
of leisure time" in two of the five increments. Being a volunteer because the individual felt needed by the YMCA was only in the increment of six to ten years, with a mean value of 5.9 (Table 13).

Table 13
Motivators with Respect to Length of Volunteer Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Time</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under one year</td>
<td>like helping people</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>caring and concern for others</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use of leisure time</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>improve community</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>like helping people</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>caring and concern for others</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>improve community</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>helping people</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feel needed</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>helping people</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>caring and concern for others</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use of leisure time</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15 years</td>
<td>helping people</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>caring and concern for others</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improve community</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirty-five respondents indicated they had volunteered for under one year. Of this group, the motivating factor with the highest mean value was that the individual liked helping people (mean value of 5.6), this was followed by expressing caring and concern for others (mean value of 5.0), and constructive use of leisure time (mean value of 4.8). For those indicating they had
volunteered from one to five years \((N = 49)\), the motivating factor with the highest mean value \((6.1)\) was as a way to improve their community. This factor was followed by helping people and, thirdly, to express caring and concern. For those respondents indicating they had been volunteering for the YMCA for 15 or more years, the motivating factor with the highest mean value was the same as those indicating they had volunteered for under one year, that the individual respondent liked helping people. The second most motivating factor was also the same, that of expressing one's caring and concern for others. Thus, there were more similarities between factors motivating those studied in this research to volunteer initially and factors motivating volunteers to continue volunteering than there were differences.

At the opposite end of the continuum are those factors found to be least motivating. Each of these was compared individually in the five increments of self-reported length of volunteer time (Table 14). The factor with the lowest mean value in all five time increments was being appointed by the courts. This value ranged from 1.5 \((N = 33)\) for those reporting volunteering less than one year to 1.0 \((N = 17)\) for those reporting volunteering 11 and more years.
Table 14

Least Motivating Factors with Respect to Length of Volunteer Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Time</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under one year</td>
<td>court appointed</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for free perks</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lead to employment</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>court appointed</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lead to employment</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>receive recognition</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>court appointed</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for free perks</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lead to employment</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>court appointed</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lead to employment</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for free perks</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15 years</td>
<td>court appointed</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for free perks</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>receive recognition</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A variable that may have resulted in different motivating factors was whether or not the volunteer had children. Ninety-four volunteers responded that they did have children. Among these 94, the factor with the highest mean value (5.8, N = 88) was volunteering because the individual liked helping people. For the 31 respondents indicating no children, the factor with the highest mean value (6.2, N = 28) was as a way to improve their community, this was followed by volunteering because the individual liked helping people (mean value of 6.0, N = 28). For the factor of volunteering to be with their
children in the program, of those who indicated that they had children, the mean value was 4.4 (N = 83).

Gender was another demographic variable that may have resulted in different motivating factors. Of the 79 male respondents, the factor with the greatest mean value (5.7, N = 71) was volunteering as a way to improve their community. Of the 47 female respondents, this same factor had a mean value of 5.9 (N = 45). However, there were two factors with greater mean values among the female respondents: volunteering because the individual liked helping people with a mean of 6.2 (N = 46) and volunteering as a way to express caring and concern for others had a mean value of 6.0 (N = 46).

As a final analysis, the researcher looked at the five motivating factors with the overall highest mean value in terms of whether the motivation appeared to be altruistic (other-concerned) as opposed to egoistic (self-concerned) (Clary and Orenstein, 1991) (Table 15). The factor with the highest overall mean value was volunteering because the individual liked helping people. Volunteering because one likes helping people is other-concerned, and thus could be defined as altruistic. This same definition could apply to volunteering to improve one’s community and as a way to express caring and concern for others. Egoistic motivators included volunteering as a constructive use of one’s leisure time and because the individual felt needed. Both of these factors are more self-concerned than other-concerned. Of the five factors with highest means, three could be considered altruistic. Thus, the volunteers responding to this research were motivated more by altruistic factors than egoistic.
Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Altruistic or Egoistic</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like helping people</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Altruistic</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve community</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Altruistic</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for others</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Altruistic</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of leisure time</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Egoistic</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel needed</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Egoistic</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations

Based upon the findings discussed in this chapter, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

1) YMCA’s needing volunteers should ask people to volunteer.
2) When recruiting volunteers, YMCA’s should emphasize that the volunteer work will help others, improve the community, and is an expression of caring and concern for others.
3) When designing volunteer positions, YMCA’s should do so such that the volunteer is helping others, feels needed and is able to fulfill the position during his/her leisure time.
4) Further research needs to be conducted using a larger volunteer sample, giving it more applicability for YMCA’s recruiting and retaining volunteers.
Appendix A

YMCA VOLUNTEER SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

age:
sex:
single/married
children: yes/no how many: ages:

Are you employed? yes/no
If yes, approximately how many hours per week do you work?
1-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41 and over

YMCA BACKGROUND

Are you a YMCA member? yes/no
If yes, for approximately how long have you been a member?
under 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years over 15 years

Were you a YMCA member as: a child as a teen

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

How long have you been volunteering for the YMCA?
under 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years over 15 years

Area you are currently volunteering in (circle as many as apply):
childcare maintenance building supervision aquatics
camp policy making

How many hours per week do you volunteer?
1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 over 40

What time of day do you usually volunteer?
morning early afternoon late afternoon evening

Did someone from the YMCA approach you and ask you to volunteer initially? yes/no
If yes, was it a: paid staff member volunteer don't know

The following statements may be reasons why YOU are volunteering your time and services with
the YMCA. Please read the statements and respond by circling the number that corresponds to
the degree that you agree with it. 1 represents most "strongly disagree", 4 represents "neutral", 7
represents most "strongly agree".
I am a YMCA volunteer in order to gain experience and skills which might lead to employment.

I am a YMCA volunteer because it is a constructive use of my leisure time.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I feel an obligation to the YMCA because of what it has done for me.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I feel needed in the YMCA.

I am a YMCA volunteer because it is a way to improve my community.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I like to receive recognition for being a volunteer.

Volunteering with the YMCA gives me a chance to meet other volunteers.

I receive status in my community because I am a YMCA volunteer.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I want to learn new things.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I like helping people.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I want to be with my child(ren) in YMCA programs.

I volunteer with the YMCA because I can't say no when I'm asked.

I am a YMCA volunteer because it is a way I can express my caring and concern for others.

I am a YMCA volunteer because of the perks, such as free membership, that I gain as a volunteer.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I was assigned community service hours by the courts.

I am a YMCA volunteer because I want to help promote its Christian mission.

Other: 

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Appendix B

Theresa A. Lubke
P.O. Box 8160
Bowling Green, KY 42101

5-4-92

Eric Ellsworth
Executive Director
Southwestern Indiana YMCA
222 N.W. 6th Street
Evansville, IN 47708

Dear Eric,

I am currently working on my Master's thesis at Western Kentucky University. The purpose of my study is to investigate what factors motivate those that volunteer for a YMCA to do so, and what factors motivate such volunteers to continue volunteering. I am designing a survey to measure this, and am in need of your assistance, if you are so willing.

I am asking several YMCA experts, yourself included, to review the enclosed survey in order to determine if its content is valid and appropriate. I would greatly appreciate if you would read the survey and make comments about its content. Are the questions appropriate? Are they clearly worded? Are there possible motivators that I have not included? Any comments and suggestions you may have would be helpful.

I have provided a self-addressed return envelop for your convenience. Please return the survey with your comments to me by May 20, 1992. I hope to conduct this study in July at several YMCAs near Bowling Green and your timely response will help me reach that goal.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. I am excited about this project, and hope the results will be valuable to YMCAs as they continue to recruit and retain volunteers. I will be happy to share a summary of these results with you when it is completed next fall.

God bless.

Respectfully,

Theresa A. Lubke
Brian Crall  
Executive Director  
Owensboro Area Family YMCA  
900 Kentucky Parkway  
Owensboro, KY 42301  

Dear Brian;  

Thank you for agreeing to assist me with my research. Much research has been done on the demographics of YMCA volunteers, but none (according to YMCA of the USA Volunteer Services) on what motivates them to volunteer. With this knowledge in hand, YMCA professionals may be better able to recruit new volunteers and retain current ones.  

For the purpose of this study a YMA volunteer is defined as anyone who engages in unpaid work within the context of the YMCA.  

The surveys enclosed should be distributed to all volunteers who come into your YMCA during the week of November 9th through 15th. Thus, the first day of distribution should be Monday and the last Sunday. This is coordinated with the several other YMCAs participating in the study. The survey takes no more than five minutes to complete and should be done at the YMCA and returned to the person distributing it immediately upon completion. Please provide each volunteer completing the survey with a writing utensil and, if possible, a quiet place to write. The completed surveys should be placed in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided and returned in the mail to me on Monday November 16th.  

Thank you once again for your cooperation. I know your YMCA is a busy place, and anything that changes the routine and adds to your work load can be a disruption. I believe your efforts will be worthwhile though as we learn more about the people who make up the Y. Please do not hesitate to call me if any problems arise or you have any questions. Thank you, and God bless your YMCA.  

Sincerely,  

Theresa A. Lubke
Dear Participating YMCA:

Recently you were asked to participate in research on what factors motivate YMCA volunteers to volunteer. I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your assistance in this, and to request that if you have not yet mailed back the completed surveys to do so as soon as possible, as it is vital to the applicability of this research to have a high response rate.

Once again thank you for your cooperation in this matter. If you would like the results of this research, I would be more than happy to share those with you upon completion of this project.

Respectfully,

Theresa A. Lubke
August 24, 1995

Dear YMCA Professional:

Much research has been done on the demographics of YMCA volunteers, but none (according to YMCA of the USA Volunteer Services) on what motivates them to volunteer. With this knowledge in hand, we may be better able to recruit new volunteers and retain current ones. For this reason, I am researching what motivates a YMCA volunteer to volunteer as my Masters thesis. I am dependent on others, such as yourself, to assist me in this, as I hope to get as wide as a sample of volunteers completing the enclosed survey as possible. The better the response, the more useful the data for all of us. I hope you will choose to participate.

For the purpose of this study, a YMCA volunteer is defined as anyone who engages in unpaid work within the context of a YMCA.

The surveys enclosed should be distributed to all volunteers who come into your YMCA during the month of September. Thus, the first day of the distribution is Friday, September 1st and the last Saturday, September 30th. This is coordinated with the other YMCAs participating in the study. The survey takes no more than five minutes to complete and should be done at the YMCA and returned to the person distributing it immediately upon completion. Please provide each volunteer completing the survey with a writing utensil and, if possible, a quiet place to write. The completed surveys should be placed in the self-addressed stamped envelop provided and returned in the mail to me on Monday, October 2, 1995. Please also complete and return the enclosed cover sheet.

Thank you for your cooperation with this important research. I know your YMCA is a busy place, and anything that changes the routine and adds to your work load can be a disruption. I believe your efforts will be worthwhile though as we learn more about the people who make up the Y. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions, problems arise, or would like a copy of the finished research. Thank you, and God bless you and your YMCA.

Respectfully,

Theresa A. Lubke
Sr. Program Director
Wooster YMCA
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!

Dear YMCA Colleague,

Thank you for returning the Volunteer Surveys in a timely manner. Your assistance and participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

If you have not yet returned your Volunteer Surveys, it is not too late. Please take the time to ask your volunteers to complete them and return them to me as soon as you can. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Theresa A. Lubke
References


YMCA of the USA (1988, October). Career Development Program. Symposium conducted Blue Ridge Conference Center YMCA.

