



Predicting the safety performance of volunteers: Does motivation for volunteering influence driving behavior?

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ABSTRACT

Volunteering has long been known for its positive effects on the individual and the community. However, no research to date has examined the safety of individuals when volunteering their services. The safety of individuals when driving a vehicle is particularly a concern in the nonprofit sector as volunteers are leaving organizations due to fear of public liability. As such, this paper aims to identify the internal motivational factors influencing the safety of volunteers when driving a vehicle ($n = 73$). Utilizing Clary's et al. [Clary, E.G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R.D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A.A., Haugen, J., Miene, P., 1998. Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: a functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, 1516–1530] scale of the motivational functions served by volunteering, we found that individuals who volunteer their services for ego-related functioning (protective) were more likely to report higher self-reported driving speeds, while individuals who volunteer their services for altruistic purposes (values) were more likely to report lower self-reported driving speeds. In turn, higher self-reported driving speeds were found to be associated with a greater number of self-reported crashes in the past two years. These results have important implications for volunteer driving organizations, as these results suggest that some motivations are associated with poorer driving performance.

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1. Introduction

Volunteering work has long been known for its beneficial effects on the community, and on enhancing multiple aspects of individual positive well being (Thoits and Hewitt, 2001). According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 26% of the population volunteered their services between 2005 and 2006, while in the Australian context 34% of the population were found to engage in community activities in this period (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2006). Based on these statistics, there is a significant proportion of the population engaging in voluntary activities, and thus, individuals' safety while undertaking voluntary tasks should be considered a priority. Safety while volunteering is a particularly important issue in the Australian context due to the unique legal liability issues surrounding volunteers (McGregor-Lowndes, 2003a,b; McGregor-Lowndes and Nguyen, 2005; McGregor-Lowndes and Edwards, 2004). One group of volunteers that are of particular interest are those who volunteer their driving services.

In the Australian context, transport volunteers have been found to represent a significant proportion of the voluntary activity involvement (>25%) (ABS, 2006). However, voluntary participation in the driving context is struggling as volunteers are leaving organizations because of a fear of public liability. Further complications arise from the recent tort law reform involving the protection of volunteers from personal civil liability and its transfer to the supervising organizations (McGregor-Lowndes, 2003a,b; McGregor-Lowndes and Nguyen, 2005; McGregor-Lowndes and Edwards, 2004). Further, some major insurance company vehicle policy wordings have altered unfavourably against nonprofit workers using their own vehicles for work purposes and to a lesser extent volunteers (NCOSS, 2004). As such, volunteers' safety while driving a vehicle should be considered a priority. However, no empirical research to date has examined the safety of volunteers in the driving context.

Some research has been conducted in the commercial and business sectors, which highlights the extent of the work-related driving problem. Work-related road safety has received increasing attention in recent years, due to the growing awareness of the extent of the issue (Dimmer and Parker, 1999; Downs et al., 1999; Haworth et al., 2000; Stradling, 2000). Road crashes have become the most common form of work-related death, injury and absence from work (Haworth et al., 2000). In the United States,

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motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of work-related deaths (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004). From a total of 5524 work-related fatalities, 1372 were attributed to traffic accidents. Similar statistics have also been found within the Australian context (Stone, 1994). Indeed, Newnam et al. (2002) found that work-related drivers reported higher crash involvement rates in their work vehicle (per kilometre travelled) than their personal vehicle.

These figures suggest road safety should be an important concern for all organizations where employees are engaged in work-related driving. In particular, attention should be given to those organizations where individuals volunteer their driving services. Given the significance of the nonprofit sector in the Australian economy (4.7% of GDP and 6.8% of the workforce), and increasing reliance on welfare service provision, the direct and indirect costs of vehicle crashes pose an undue cost to government service provision affecting those least able to afford such services. As such, the goal of this research is to examine the factors influencing the safety performance of volunteers when driving a vehicle.

This paper will focus on self-reported speeding as a measure of driving performance, as speeding has been found to be one of the leading contributing factors to road crashes, and in particular, work-related crashes (Haworth et al., 2000). Furthermore, speeding has been found to be associated with a lower aversion to risk-taking (Machin and Sankey, 2008). Drivers of employer owned cars and those driving a car for work-related purposes are presumed to be among the groups who are more likely to engage in speeding (Stradling, 2000). Further, work-related drivers have been found to report higher involvement in passive crashes and thrill seeking, higher average and preferred driving speeds, and receiving more speeding offences, compared to individuals who drive for personal purposes (Stradling et al., 1999).

In this paper we argue that internal influences (e.g., personal dispositions), as opposed to external influences (safety climate) (i.e., Newnam et al., 2008), are likely to influence speeding among volunteer drivers. The following will present an overview of the external and internal factors that have been found to influence work-related driving performance. This discussion will be followed by an outline of the theoretical model utilized to develop the hypotheses.

1.1. Factors influencing the safety of volunteers

Past research has found that work-related drivers are exposed to external influences, related to the nature of their job, and internal influences related to drivers' personal dispositions and other individual characteristics, which can impact on driving performance (Newnam et al., 2002). Several factors have been suggested in the literature that could act as important external influences on work-related driver safety. These include high mileage (Griffiths, 1997), time pressures (Downs et al., 1999) and the priority given to safety within the organization (Newnam et al., 2008). However, unlike work-related driving in general, external influences would be less likely to impact on the driving performance of volunteers as they are not employed in the traditional sense, do not receive remuneration for their services, and often use their own vehicles. As such, it is more likely that internal influences will impact on volunteers driving performance.

One internal factor that could influence volunteers' driving performance is their motivations for volunteering. Clary et al. (1998) developed a theory of the functions served by volunteers, which categorises the psychological foundations underlying their motivations. The argument preceding the categorisation of volunteering motivations is that the act of volunteering may reflect different motivational processes. This issue is particularly important in the driving context, as particular motivations for volunteering may impact differently on the driving performance of volunteers.

We argue that there may be particular determinants of volunteering that are more likely to result in poorer driving performance. Specifically, some research has focused on individuals' attitudes and values (Sundeen, 1992), or personality/dispositional attributes (Penner et al., 1998) as determinants of volunteering. However, in this paper, we will be adopting Clary et al. (1998) volunteer motivational model to determine the goals attained by volunteering and their relationship with safety performance while driving. The central tenet underlying the Clary's et al. volunteer motivational model is that individuals perform the same behaviors but in different psychology functions. In other words, the model attempts to identify the underlying motivation processes for volunteering. As past research has found that particular motivations serve different functions for different people when volunteering (e.g., Clary et al., 1998; Penner et al., 1998), it is argued that particular motivations may be associated with poorer or safer driving performance. As such, the aim of this study is to examine the relationships between motivations for volunteering and driving performance.

1.2. Theoretical development

Volunteer motivations have primarily been examined from a functional approach (Clary et al., 1998). This approach to volunteering was based on the functional approach to motivations, which states that people maintain their behaviors provided they fulfil one or more individualistic needs (Snyder and DeBono, 1987). Clary and his colleagues posited that individuals will volunteer if they perceive volunteering to fulfil one or more of six motivational functions (see Clary and Snyder, 1991; Clary et al., 1992, 1998). Each of these functions will be briefly described: (1) values as a function of volunteering provides individuals the opportunity to express their values related to altruistic reasons for helping others; (2) understanding as a function of volunteering relates to the need for new learning experiences, and the chance to exercise new knowledge, skills, and abilities; (3) protective as a function of volunteering serves the purpose of reducing guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address ones own personal problems; (4) career as a function of volunteering provides individuals the opportunity to enhance their career related benefits; (5) social as a function of volunteering serves the purpose of having social relationships with others, and (6) enhancement as a function of volunteering provides individuals the opportunity to enhance or maintain positive affect.

The volunteer functional inventory (VFI) has been utilized to provide insight into the functions underlying volunteering and their importance to respondents. Within the volunteer domain, the predictive qualities of the VFI have received support. For instance, Clary et al. (1996): ($N = 2671$) found that values, career, social and understanding functions of volunteering significantly predicted volunteer behavior of the previous year. The motivations approach to understanding volunteer behavior has also been useful in determining the potentially positive outcomes associated with volunteering.

Based on the six functions of volunteering, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between individuals' motivations for volunteering and self-reported speeding behavior. Our argument is based on the premise that motivations relating to serving others or personal relationships (i.e., values and social) would be less likely to result in speeding while driving a vehicle when volunteering. Results have found that high risk groups on the road include young males characterized by low levels of altruism (Ulleberg, 2001). In support, Ulleberg and Rundmo (2003) found in a study of 1932 adolescent drivers that those who reported a high active concern for others (i.e., altruism) were significantly less likely to report engaging in risk-taking behavior in traffic (defined in terms of self-assertiveness, speeding, and rule violations). Furthermore,

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