

1-1-2009

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Melanie J. Randle

University of Wollongong, mrandle@uow.edu.au

Sara Dolnicar

University of Wollongong, s.dolnicar@uq.edu.au

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Recommended Citation

Randle, Melanie J. and Dolnicar, Sara: Does cultural background affect volunteering behavior? 2009, 225-247.

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Keywords

affect, does, background, cultural, volunteering, behavior

Disciplines

Business | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Randle, M. J. & Dolnicar, S. (2009). Does cultural background affect volunteering behavior?. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 21 (2), 225-247.

Does Cultural Background Affect Volunteering Behavior?

Melanie Randle & Sara Dolnicar

School of Management and Marketing, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative investigation is to help nonprofit organizations which rely heavily on the support of volunteers increase the effectiveness of their marketing by accounting for differences in cultural background among community members. It was conducted in the multi-cultural Australian context and included 79 participants from different cultural backgrounds. Findings indicate that as a whole, cultural groups differ significantly with respect to their attitudes, social norm and perceived behavioral control over volunteering. Nonprofit organizations are unlikely to be successful in attracting volunteers from a range of different cultural backgrounds unless they account for heterogeneity among volunteers and customize marketing messages. To the authors' knowledge this is the first study that investigates differences in attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control regarding an important social marketing issue: changing the volunteering behavior of individuals in a multi-cultural society.

Keywords: segmentation; ethnic identification; volunteering; nonprofit marketing

INTRODUCTION

The importance of nonprofit organizations to our society is undeniable. The value of volunteering alone has grown exponentially in recent decades. Each year, the volunteering sector in the United States includes over 84 million individuals who contribute more than US\$239 billion in value to the economy (Independent Sector, 2001). Similarly across the Atlantic, 23 million UK residents volunteer each year, injecting over £44 billion into the economy (European Volunteer Centre, 2006). In Australia, volunteering is estimated to contribute tens of billions dollars to the economy each year, donated by a workforce of over 6.3 million individuals (Volunteering Australia, 2006).

Nonprofit organizations thus represent a major economic sector. Yet, they are lagging behind commercial organizations in adopting marketing strategies and techniques (Akchin, 2001). One possible reason for this late adoption may be the perception of nonprofits that marketing is not compatible with their mission (Andreasen & Kotler, 2003). Increasingly, however, nonprofit organizations have begun to adopt marketing practices as they acknowledge that marketing can help improve their performance with respect to their mission.

One reason for the increased use of marketing concepts is the realization that nonprofits are operating in a competitive environment, just like commercial organizations (Chetkovich & Frumkin, 2003). As more nonprofit organizations enter the market and competition between them increases, volunteers are able to be more selective in their choice of role and

organization. This essentially makes it more difficult for organizations to attract and retain volunteers. With the realization that organizations that do not compete face the prospect of no longer being able to operate, many nonprofits have been forced to take a more pragmatic approach to the running of their organizations (Tuckman, 1998). The key problem facing many volunteering organizations is a typically commercial one: how to (a) identify the right customers (those most likely to become volunteers); (b) attract them (persuade them to start volunteering); and (c) gain their loyalty (keep them volunteering for as long as possible) (Randle & Dolnicar, forthcoming). Although nonprofits are now increasingly using marketing strategies and techniques, they do not appear to have internalized market orientation yet (Akchin, 2001). Consequently, they tend to market what they believe are the attractive features of their mission and their services, rather than starting by assessing the needs of people in the marketplace and matching these needs with the volunteering experience offered by the organization.

As well as a marketing problem, recruiting volunteers could also be seen as a human resource management problem. Indeed, the recruitment challenge involves aspects of both areas. In reality there have been few attempts to apply human resources concepts to the voluntary sector, and where this has been done they are mostly applied to paid employees working in the sector rather than to unpaid volunteers (Nickson, Warhurst, Dutton, & Hurrell, 2008). The few studies that relate human resources concepts to unpaid volunteer recruitment find that in practice they are largely irrelevant because managers are reluctant to reject volunteers, even if they have limited capabilities or are considered to be less suitable for the role (Hartenian, 2007). Therefore, in this study we take a marketing perspective, because the key dimension of pay for work—which is central to recruitment from a traditional human resource perspective—is not present in this context. On the contrary, volunteers “pay” for their participation, mainly by donating time.

There are many possible reasons for differences in needs or benefits sought by the market. For-profit companies frequently use socio-demographic criteria to split consumers into market segments and develop specific products and marketing programs to cater for them. Currently it appears that this is the area in which nonprofits are lagging behind.

The aim of this article is to investigate one specific socio-demographic criterion that needs to be considered by nonprofit organizations operating either internationally or in a country characterized by population growth by immigration: cultural background. We postulate that social marketing campaigns accounting for differences in cultural background will be more effective, because (a) they will be customized to each cultural group with respect to their volunteering beliefs, (b) they will account for the respective people that influence volunteering behavior, and (c) they will be able to account for the respective obstacles perceived by different cultural groups as preventing them from being involved in volunteering activities. If this assumption is correct, volunteering organizations should rethink their marketing activities. Generic communication messages targeted at the mass market of potential volunteers will need to be changed to customized marketing activities that account for the volunteering-related specificities of cultural groups within the community.

The empirical study conducted to investigate this proposition was undertaken in the Illawarra region, which is located approximately 80 km south of Sydney. Australia has witnessed a significant increase in the heterogeneous nature of the population in the last number of decades, which has been partly due to the immigration policies following World War II. Since the early 1900s, the Illawarra region has been a national hub for steel production;

during the 1950s and 1960s it went through a phase when workers were hard to find, and migrants were encouraged to move to the region (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2005). Currently, over 60% of Illawarra residents strongly associate with a non-Australian ancestry or ethnic group (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). They identify with over 33 different cultural backgrounds, making the Illawarra one of the most culturally diverse regions in Australia.

The nonprofit organization under investigation is Bushcare, a volunteer-based organization with the aim of protecting and regenerating local native bushland. Bushcare's volunteer base consists predominantly of Anglo-Saxon volunteers, and the organization is having difficulty attracting volunteers from other cultural backgrounds. We use the *theory of planned behavior* as the theoretical underpinning for this study in which we investigate whether, and in which way, community members from different cultural backgrounds differ in their beliefs, social norms and perceived behavioral control relating to volunteering. We report on the findings and draw conclusions for social marketing campaigns designed to change the volunteering behavior of community members.

PRIOR RESEARCH

Numerous studies have been conducted with the aim of better understanding heterogeneity in the nonprofit marketplace. To this point, however, nonprofit organizations do not appear to have made effective use of the concept of market segmentation to more successfully target subgroups of the population.

In many instances, a priori segmentation seems to have occurred inadvertently by researchers who focus on one particular type of volunteer only. For example, some have focussed on volunteers for one particular cause, such as the Red Cross (Adams, 1980) or Girl Guides (Nichols & King, 1999). Others have focussed only on volunteers who are similar in one particular socio-demographic characteristic, for example, females (Tiehen, 2000) or older individuals (Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999). Generally, these studies have simply chosen the group of interest and then described it in terms of other socio-demographic and psychographic criteria. A limitation of these studies is that they give no indication of whether the profiles of different groups differ significantly from each other and thus represent distinct groups within the market.

Others have taken a more theoretical and structured approach to segmenting the market. Heidrich (1990) was one of the first to segment volunteers according to the roles they played within the organization in order to demonstrate that different roles were preferred by individuals with different lifestyles. Wymer also recognised the lack of information in relation to segments of the volunteer market and consequently conducted a number of a priori segmentation studies with the aim of providing a starting point from which organizations could begin to differentiate their volunteers (Wymer, 1997, Wymer, 2003, Wymer & Starnes, 1999). In these studies individuals were segmented in a number of ways—whether they volunteered, the role they played as a volunteer, and the cause they volunteered for. Using a series of regression analyses, these studies reveal that the groups did display distinct profiles. The authors suggest that this finding could be used to develop customized marketing campaigns.

In an Australian study, however, Shelley and Polonsky (2002) segmented volunteers using two criteria—age and sex—but found no significant differences in the motivations of mature individuals when compared with younger individuals, or between males and females. In fact, these researchers went further, suggesting that there was limited value in segmenting existing donors using only socio-demographic factors and that generic promotional and recruitment messages would be equally effective for all volunteers.

A posteriori segmentation techniques have been used to segment various markets relating to the nonprofit sector, including monetary donors (Schlegelmilch & Tynan, 1989) and museum visitors (Thyne, 2001). However, very few studies have taken this approach to segmenting the volunteer market. Two recent exceptions are studies conducted by Dolnicar and Randle, which investigated whether heterogeneity could be accounted for by the identification of a posteriori segments within the volunteer market. The first study (Dolnicar & Randle, 2007a) used an Australian sample to segment the volunteer market into motivationally homogeneous groups for volunteering. In this case a six-segment solution was found to be most stable and produced groups that differed significantly in terms of socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics. The second study used a global sample to investigate which organizations compete with each other for the same individuals (Dolnicar & Randle, 2007b). Here, four segments of volunteers were identified. These were again significantly different in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, values, concerns and opinions. This second study used data from the World Values Survey (Inglehart, Basanez, Diez-Medrano, Halman, & Luijkx., 2004), which includes a large, cross-cultural sample. However, results for each country were not analyzed separately so whether significant differences are present between cultures is not known. Indeed, analyzing and reporting results at the global level could mask significant differences between cultures and the possibility that answers could reflect culturally specific response styles. Therefore, questions regarding the effect of culture on volunteering behavior remain unanswered.

As can be seen, very little of this work has focused on differences between nations or cultural background in relation to the behavior of volunteering. Some research has been conducted in the United States that compares voluntary participation rates of Caucasian-Americans and African-Americans. Some have found that Caucasian-Americans volunteer more than African-Americans (Musick, Wilson, & Bynum, 2000, Palisi & Korn, 1989, Sundeen, 1992), while others find the opposite result (Auslander & Litwin, 1988).

In Australia, a number of researchers have noted the particularly mainstream approach to volunteering that tends to exclude other cultural groups which do not share the same values and customs in relation to civic participation activities such as volunteering (Martin, 1999, Kerr, Savelsberg, Sparrow, & Tedmanson, 2001). This is reinforced by national surveys which indicate that individuals born in Australia are more likely to be involved in formal volunteering activities than those born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001). Several authors have highlighted the importance of the cultural diversity present in Australian society that is reflected in volunteer workforces (Warburton, Oppenheimer, & Zappala, 2004). If minorities are excluded from mainstream volunteering activities these groups, which often have limited access to suitable resources and services, can actually become even more marginalized (Cain, 2005).

Findings are inconclusive and there is still much disagreement as to which ethnic and cultural groups are the more likely to volunteer. However, what is commonly agreed and found in

almost all studies in this area is that ethnic groups do differ in their level of participation in volunteering activities.

METHODOLOGY

Approach and Theoretical Framework

The current research adopts a qualitative approach for two reasons. Firstly, exploration was central to the objectives of the project and the currently available information was limited. In this situation Sarantakos (2005) recommends the use of a qualitative approach because it is able to gain in-depth information into the thoughts and feelings of participants. Secondly, the socially sensitive nature of the topic under investigation—reasons for, and especially for not, volunteering—had the potential to create pressure to conform to societal attitudes and to invade individuals' privacy.

In this study, we use the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1988) to set boundaries around the research whilst allowing flexibility in relation to the development of the framework. While not the only theoretical model used to predict and explain social behaviors, most researchers agree it is one of the leading models (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Smith, & Phoenix, 2004, Rhodes & Courneya, 2003). It has been tested and has received empirical support across a wide range of human behaviors, including blood donation (Amponsah-Afuwape et al., 2002), driver compliance (Elliot, Armitage, & Baughan, 2003) and exercising (Downs & Hausenblas, 2003). Furthermore, the researchers consider it the most appropriate theoretical framework to use for this investigation because it has been tested in the context of volunteering (White & Greenslade, 2004, Warburton and Terry, 2000) and has been found to be superior to other approaches in the prediction of this specific type of volunteering behavior (Greenslade & White, 2005). The study sought to apply the theory of planned behavior to an important problem: low rates of volunteering for certain organizations.

The theory of planned behavior proposes that behavior is determined by three constructs. Firstly, the individual's beliefs about the consequences of performing a behavior, combined with the individual's evaluations of these consequences, produces a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the behavior. Secondly, the individual's beliefs about the normative expectations of important others in relation to the act, combined with the extent to which the individual wants to comply with these expectations, results in the perceived social norm towards the act. Thirdly, the individual's perception of control factors that facilitate or impede performance of the act, combined with the perceived importance of these factors, produces the perceived behavioral control over performing the act (Ajzen, 2002). These three constructs—attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control—provide the structure within which volunteering is investigated here.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork took place between November 2004 and February 2005 in the Illawarra region. The methodology employed for this study followed many aspects of the systematic approach to qualitative research specified by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their model of *grounded theory*. Unlike grounded theory, however, in this case the approach was not adopted with the objective of developing new theory. Instead, selected processes prescribed in grounded theory were used to design the research and collect and analyze data. These were the

“theoretical sampling” procedure (progressive sampling) and the “constant comparison” method (for data analysis).

The sample for this study comprised two main groups: (a) representatives from the three largest cultural groups in the region and (b) experts in the field of volunteering and multiculturalism.

Group 1: Cultural representatives

The first group included individuals who strongly identified with one of the three largest ethnic groups in the region. These were the Australian, Anglo-Celtic (English, Irish, and Scottish), and Southern European (Italian, Macedonian, Greek, and Serbian) backgrounds (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

For the Southern European group, participants were recruited by searching the phone directory for organised welfare groups, churches or clubs, and making initial contact with community leaders over the phone. Community leaders were instrumental in identifying community members who would provide contrasting views on the subject at hand, and in inviting participants and facilitating interactions with them.

Participants for the Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups were recruited by asking colleagues and friends to recommend people they knew who strongly associated with that ethnic background and were both external to the university and unaware of the project. For the Australian group this included individuals who, when asked which ethnic backgrounds/ancestries they strongly associate with, could nominate their Australian heritage and no other ethnic background. Typically this included people whose parents, grandparents and great-grandparents were born in Australia. In all cases, participants were chosen with as wide a range of socio-demographic characteristics as possible (with regard to sex and age), to obtain a full spectrum of opinions and beliefs.

Data collection included face-to-face individual depth interviews and group depth interviews. The appropriate combination of interviews for each cultural group was determined following consultation with community leaders and on the advice of experts within the fields of multiculturalism and volunteering. The number of individual depth interviews and/or group depth interviews was decided using the judgement of the researchers as to when theoretical saturation had been reached. This occurred after two individual depth interviews and two group depth interviews for the Australian group (total 17 participants), and after six individual depth interviews and one group depth interview for the Anglo-Celtic group (total 15 participants). The Southern European group, however, included seven individual depth interviews and five group depth interviews, with a total of 39 participants. The reason this group required a greater sample size was because a number of different countries were included in this grouped category and the researchers wanted to be entirely confident that the views of each were sufficiently captured to ensure that they were comfortable that this was an appropriate grouping structure. This is why the sample size for the Southern European is substantially larger than the other two groups. The total sample size for the ethnic groups was 71 and is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Ethnic Group Sample Composition

	Individual depth interviews	Group depth interviews	Total participants
Ethnic groups			
Australian	2	2	17
Anglo-Celtic	6	1	15
Southern European	7	5	39
Total	15	8	71

Table 2. Expert Sample Composition

Volunteering and multicultural experts	Individual depth interviews
Wollongong City Council Bushcare Program	2
Bankstown City Council Bushcare Program	1
Wollongong City Council Community and Cultural Development Division	1
Volunteering Australia	1
Volunteering Illawarra	2
Wollongong Multicultural Resource Centre	1
Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council	1
Total	8

Interviews were semi-structured with an interview guide developed to provide a framework for the discussion and to ensure the key constructs of the theory of planned behavior were fully investigated. Interviews started with general perceptions of volunteering, different volunteering organizations and typical volunteers. The discussion then sought to determine the important people in their lives and what those people would think about a decision on their part to volunteer. Finally, discussion focussed on the factors that would prevent them from volunteering and those that would make it easier. Throughout the interviews, the researchers used projective techniques to ascertain the true beliefs of respondents, rather than mere socially acceptable responses. The techniques were a third person perspective, sentence completion and word association. The use of interview guides enabled an informal conversational approach guided by the researcher rather than a formal interview style with a list of questions for the respondent. Participants were encouraged to speak freely about any issue of interest or relevance.

Group 2: Experts in volunteering and multiculturalism

The second group included in the sample were industry “experts” within the fields of volunteering and multiculturalism. Experts were included as a way of gaining an additional, different perspective on the issues under investigation and to achieve the aim of gaining as broad a range of views as possible. They were selected based on searches in the local directory for organizations presumed to have expertise in the areas of investigation—namely volunteering and multiculturalism. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with individuals from each organization. The same interview structure used for the cultural participants was used for expert interviews, though participants were asked for their opinions based on their experience dealing with the different groups in a volunteering context. They

were asked to discuss issues relating to the attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioral control for each cultural group. We considered this an important part of the study, because the experts were able to take a more objective view of the dynamics of each group, and comment from an external perspective on the nature and extent to which each theory of planned behavior construct affected the different cultural groups.

To ensure participants were as relaxed and comfortable as possible all interviews were held in the location preferred by them. For example, one interview with a member of the Scottish community was held in the local Collegians Club over a counter lunch as part of his weekly routine. One group depth interview with Greek participants was conducted at the local Greek Welfare Centre after their regular social morning tea, and another, with the Macedonian group, at the Macedonian Welfare Association after the local women's group had their weekly meeting. The preference of most of the experts was to conduct the interview at their place of work. However, in one case they conducted an interview at the local coffee shop.

Analysis

The data obtained from the study included tape-recorded interviews as well as handwritten accounts of interactions. Analysis was an iterative process of categorizing and conceptualizing the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The “constant comparative” method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used, which involves comparing incidents and how they apply to each category derived from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this context, incident refers to any comment, statement, or event that expressed a participant's opinion, attitude or feeling in relation to the issue under investigation. The term category refers to a conceptual category or a theme in the data and is inferred by the analyst. Interviews were analyzed prior to, and at the same time as, the collection of new information. Since the researchers used the theory of planned behavior to guide this exploration, they adopted its three main constructs—attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control—as conceptual themes for the study.

While most researchers acknowledge that volunteering involves some element of time donation by individuals, there are diverse views in relation to the definition and measurement of volunteerism. For the purposes of this study, we define volunteering as “giving unpaid help to an organization or group,” a definition adapted from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Voluntary Work Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001). We further defined organizations or groups as welfare groups, local community organizations, religious groups, schools, sporting or social clubs, or cultural organizations (adapted from Warburton & Terry, 2000).

FINDINGS

In this section results are reported separately for each of the three ethnic groups included in this study: Australian, Anglo-Celtic, and Southern European. For each group, the three constructs of the theory of planned behavior—attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control—serve to structure the reporting of findings. The three constructs then form the basis for the discussion of the findings and comparison of results between ethnic backgrounds. Following the discussion,

Table 3 provides a snapshot of results for each group. We conclude the section by reporting additional insights which emerged from the study but fell outside of the originally stated aim of

identifying volunteering related beliefs, social norms and factors of perceived behavioral control.

Table 3. Snapshot of Findings

	Attitude	Social norm	Perceived behavioral control
Australian	Positive attitude.	Moderate influence.	Greater control.
	Everyone should contribute to society at some stage.	Others mostly positive, this is considered but does not determine decisions.	Key barriers were paid work and family commitments.
Anglo-Celtic	Positive attitude.	Low influence.	Moderate control.
	Enables individuals to support causes that are important to them.	Little regard for what others think.	Key barriers were looking after family and paid work.
Southern European	Varying attitude.	High influence.	Lesser control.
	Seen as a way to support their own community but wary of working for no pay.	Views of others vary and do influence volunteering decisions.	Key barriers were language, transport, family commitments.

Australian Background

Attitude

The attitude of the Australian group towards volunteering was very positive. This stemmed from parents being involved when the respondents were young and, for the most part, if members of the group were not currently involved in some form of volunteering they had been involved at some time in the past. Those who were not yet at retirement age intended to become involved later in life and felt it a sense of duty to contribute at some stage—that is, they believed that everyone should give something back to society when they could.

[My child's] hockey competition wouldn't run without the help of parents, I am happy to do it because she loves it and it is a good thing for her to do to keep fit. (Female Australian participant, aged 18-35)

Social norm

The general belief of the Australian group was that the opinion of family and friends would have a moderate influence on their decision to volunteer. It should be noted, however, that important others viewed volunteering either positively or neutrally, which effectively gave individuals freedom to choose whether they became involved or not (i.e., there were no negative consequences of not being involved). For the most part, the group felt free to make decisions without requiring approval from others.

Perceived behavioral control

In cases where Australians were not involved in volunteering it was not because the act was not seen as worthwhile. Generally, those not involved either had been in the past or intended

to be in future, but were not currently active because of factors outside their control. Most commonly these included having no time due to paid work or their current family situation (such as having small children), or in the case of older individuals because of their health.

I used to go and help out at the church but now that I don't drive anymore I can't get down there ... the bus takes too long. (Female Australian participant, aged over 55)

A small component of this group was not involved because of a general preference to do other things with their time, such as playing sport or socializing with friends who were not involved with volunteering organizations. They were open to the suggestion that they might become involved at later stages in their lives, but currently they were more interested in doing other things.

Anglo-Celtic Background

Attitude

The attitude of the Anglo-Celtic group (English, Irish, and Scottish participants) towards volunteering was very similar to the Australian group. Volunteering is common in the UK, so the concept was familiar. The overall attitude was positive, with volunteering seen to enable individuals to support causes that are important to them. The group would become involved to help others and give back to society. The Anglo-Celtic group also acknowledged the various personal benefits gained from volunteering, such as enjoyment, socializing and the opportunity to help out family and friends who were involved with the organization.

I do it to stop being bored at home, really, not to help others. I do it for myself, social interaction, meeting people, keeps me busy and out of mischief. (Male Scottish participant, aged over 55)

Social norm

The Anglo-Celtic group felt that family and friends would either support their involvement in volunteering activities or not care one way or the other. However, for the most part, it did not really matter because what others thought did not influence behavioral intention to volunteer. In common with the Australian group, the Anglo-Celtic group did not really identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic group because they felt so much a part of mainstream society. For this reason the views and opinions of others from the same background were not influential in their decision to volunteer.

I've never really talked about it [with my family] but I guess they would encourage me to [volunteer]. (Male English participant, aged over 55)

Perceived behavioral control

The control factors that were most important in influencing volunteering intentions of the Anglo-Celtic group were other commitments (e.g., full-time work or family to take care of), and issues relating to health and age. In particular, the Anglo-Celtic group expressed feelings of obligation to look after other family members (particularly older generations) in cases where most of their extended family was still in the United Kingdom, so the responsibility for looking after family had fallen on them.

These obstacles prevented Anglo-Celtic people from volunteering when they would otherwise have liked to be involved. For the most part, the factor preventing them from being involved was considered a temporary obstacle, and they planned to become involved in volunteering once their circumstances changed, for example, when they finished full-time work or when their children had left home.

I don't [volunteer] now because I spend a lot of time helping out family. I care for my mother-in-law and take her out shopping or to the club. (Female English participant, aged 36-55)

Southern European Background

Attitude

For the Southern European group (including Italian, Greek, Macedonian, and Serbian participants), volunteering enabled them to socialize with people who are similar to them. This was particularly the case for the older generations, who did not feel comfortable speaking English. Volunteering also enabled this group to support others from their own background and was a way of preserving the culture for future generations.

I volunteer my time for the Macedonian Welfare Organization mainly for social reasons—to get out of the house. Language is a big issue so socializing with Macedonian people is important and there are not a lot of chances to do it. (Male Macedonian participant, aged 36-55)

Unlike the Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups there was not an expectation that everyone should volunteer at some stage in their lives, or a feeling that individuals had an obligation to help. It was instead a positive way to help out others and to give something back to society after they had been the beneficiaries of good fortune in this country. For the most part the group was positive about volunteering and viewed it as a worthwhile and positive activity; however, there was a certain segment of the Southern European group that did not agree. A small component expressed the view that working for no pay is fundamentally wrong and that anyone who does this is foolish.

Social Norm

For the Southern European group, the older generation was very influenced by those from the same ethnic group. For example, women were influenced by their husbands and their own ethnic group in relation to volunteering. In addition, they were reluctant to go against the traditional roles that they had occupied within their families and ethnic groups for many decades. However, this was not the case for the younger generation. The elders within the group expressed frustration with the younger generation because they are more influenced by their peer group than by their ethnic group in relation to how they spend their leisure time.

The next generation are not interested in volunteering their time, especially for the Italian community. They are selfish and spoiled and are not as close-knit as the older generations. (Female Italian participant, aged over 55)

Perceived behavioral control

Lack of English-speaking skills was a common barrier to mainstream volunteering participation for older generations.

The language barrier is probably the biggest obstacle to them being involved in more mainstream volunteering activities—they are more likely to be involved in cultural activities. (Female Serbian participant, aged 36-55)

Similarly, transport difficulties prevented involvement due to the fact that women (who were more likely to volunteer than the men) never worked and never had the need to obtain a drivers licence. Health issues were more common among the older generation, while paid work arrangements and commitments to children and other family members were more problematic for the younger in the group.

For that part of the group that expressed more negative attitudes toward volunteering these control beliefs were largely irrelevant. For example, older men who thought it inappropriate to work for no pay would not be involved even if they were comfortable with the group of people and were more proficient with English.

Additional Findings

An additional finding from this study was that the beliefs identified for all three constructs of the theory of planned behavior changed when the actual name, or brand image (in this case Bushcare), of a particular volunteering organization was added to the behavior of interest. In this circumstance participants attached very different behavioral, normative and control beliefs to the behavior under discussion. For example, the Southern European group expressed very positive attitudes towards volunteering at a general level because they anticipated that a consequence of their involvement would be helping others from their own ethnic background (e.g., by volunteering for their local church, dance group or other culturally specific cause). However, when discussing Bushcare, attitudes were initially not nearly as positive because the group could not easily make the link between helping the local natural environment and how this would benefit their own cultural group. Also, more control factors not present when discussing volunteering in general were identified when discussing volunteering for Bushcare—for example, the physical requirements of working outdoors with nature.

The finding has major implications for research into the marketing of volunteering organizations in general as it suggests that treating the behavior of volunteering as a generic entity may mask the influence of brand image on the act of volunteering for a specific organization. This calls into question the validity and practical use of those previous studies of volunteering that have viewed volunteering as a generic behavior without specifying the actual organization or role in the behavior of interest.

While theoretically interesting, the findings also have direct practical implications for volunteering organizations, namely that in the current competitive volunteering market it is no longer sufficient to send a generic message to a large heterogeneous mass of potential volunteers. Instead, it is important to be aware of the brand image of the target organization, as well as the benefits sought by different market segments of potential volunteers. Based on this knowledge, customized messages can be developed to attract volunteers more successfully.

For example, if Bushcare wanted to design a marketing message for the Southern European group, they would have to communicate clearly how an individual's involvement would benefit members of their own community. This could be done, for example, by creating groups of Bushcare volunteers made up entirely of people from a Southern European background. This would provide an opportunity for them to get out of the house and socialize with others like themselves, with whom they could communicate easily in their native language, essentially creating a support network for other Southern Europeans.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to identify differences between community members from different cultural backgrounds with respect to attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control towards volunteering. A qualitative study was conducted with 79 members of the community from a range of backgrounds, who were grouped into Australian, Anglo-Celtic and Southern European community members.

The overriding conclusion from this study is that cultural groups do differ in their attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control towards the act of volunteering. The three cultural groups included in this study were characterised by different issues for all three constructs, which indicates that different marketing messages would be appropriate for each group.

With respect to attitudes towards volunteering, the research found differences between groups. The Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups had a similarly positive attitude towards volunteering and saw it as a way to contribute to society. There was a strong feeling of reciprocity and that everyone had an obligation to contribute at some stage of their life. In general, if they were not currently involved in any volunteering activities they either had been in the past or planned to become involved at some stage in the future.

It is something I need to do after I finish working, I absolutely plan to get involved later when I have the time. (Female English participant, aged 36-55)

Primarily, the Southern European group felt that volunteering was a way to support others from their own cultural background. There was more variation in this group in general attitudes towards volunteering, with the view that by volunteering they could do something that would help other people, society or the environment. A portion of this group, however, placed more conditions on the types of volunteering activities that were considered acceptable. There was a general feeling that working for no pay was an exploitative form of labor, and that if a job really needed to be done it should be paid for by the government. In addition, this group was interested in who else would be involved in volunteering, what specific tasks would be required and which cause would be the beneficiary of their services. For example, women in this group indicated they would be happy to volunteer with other women from their own culture but not with men. They also had specific views on the types of roles appropriate for men and women to undertake, for example, outdoor activities such as bush regeneration, planting, and weeding were seen to be more appropriate for males.

There seem to be heaps of volunteer opportunities for women but not a whole lot for men—I know a lot of men that are really into their garden and this could be something they could get involved in. (Female Greek participant, aged 36-55)

An effective marketing strategy for Bushcare would be to target males within this group who already believe that this type of activity is appropriate for them, and who could possibly see their involvement as a way of socializing with other males from similar Southern European backgrounds.

In relation to social norms, the Southern European group was more influenced by members of their ethnic group than the Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups. This indicates to Bushcare that attracting people from this background would involve focussing not only on those individuals likely to volunteer, but on the Southern European community as a whole. The aim of this would be to ensure that social views within the community were positive, therefore exerting positive influence on the actual volunteers. However, the influence of the older generation seemed to be further diluted with every generation born in Australia. In many cases the older generation expressed frustration at the younger generation because they felt they did not listen to what they had to say. This was also evident among younger participants, who were less concerned with what others within their ethnic group thought, and either made decisions themselves or were more likely to listen to their peers in deciding whether or not to volunteer.

The Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups did not care as much what important reference groups thought about volunteering. The Australian group could be described as being moderately influenced by social norms, while the Anglo-Celtic group was influenced by important others to an even lesser degree. The Anglo-Celtic group also felt that family, friends and other people from the same background would not care if they volunteered or not. In other words, the individuals who did not care what others thought were also the ones that faced no negative consequences (e.g., disapproval from important others, pressure to discontinue volunteering) either way. For the most part, those who thought others might view their volunteering negatively also placed more weight on what they thought, probably because they were more conscious of the social consequences of their decision.

Within the three groups there was variation in social norm. These ranged from explicit accounts of a spouse or ethnic group disapproving of an individual's involvement, to indications that all reference groups would support the decision to volunteer, even to a point where there was an expectation to be involved at some stage.

I would be expected to volunteer for the Greek [community] first; it would be not as good to volunteer for other groups when we need help here. (Female Greek participant, aged over 55.)

The factors preventing involvement in volunteering activities (perceived behavioral control factors) also varied between the groups. Lack of English-speaking skills was a problem within the Southern European group, which has large communities within the Illawarra and whose members are able to avoid speaking English in their everyday lives. Transport problems were also cited as reasons for non-participation within this group. The Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups were more likely to state that other commitments that competed for their time were reasons for not being involved, for example, paid-work commitments or looking after family members (usually young children). In the latter case, an effective message for Bushcare would be to promote their volunteer activities as a healthy, outdoor activity ideally suited to families with children, to promote environmental awareness and education about the natural environment. In other words, parents could combine their

involvement in Bushcare activities with their family responsibilities to achieve positive outcomes for all parties.

These results indicate that volunteering organizations can no longer afford to take a mass-marketing approach in attracting 'generic volunteers' for 'generic volunteering tasks'. Rather it appears that more customisation is needed, not only with respect to different cultural groups, but also with respect to the nature of the volunteering work and the fit with benefits that potential volunteers may be seeking.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

It is important to note that, while general themes were found within each group that could form the basis of targeted marketing campaigns, it cannot be concluded from this study that everyone within the same ethnic group has identical beliefs about volunteering. It is possible that other socio-demographic factors—such as age, family status and gender—also contribute to an individual's volunteering behavior. A combined approach accounting for cultural background as well as socio-demographics may lead to groupings of community members that could be targeted even more effectively, as the amount of heterogeneity could be further reduced. That way even more specific marketing messages could be created—messages which tap into the motivations of each group more efficiently, ultimately leading to more efficient spend of volunteering organizations' limited marketing dollars.

A number of interesting areas for further research follow from this study:

First, the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior have proven valuable in understanding differences between cultural groups. If, however, a firm link with volunteering behavior needs to be established, a quantitative follow-up study could be conducted using the elicited items from the current study as the basis of questionnaire development.

Second, the extensive qualitative work aimed at identifying cultural differences has also revealed additional dimensions that could be used in a combined approach. This would lead to even smaller and more homogeneous sub-segments for which marketing messages could be customized. In particular, age, family situation, relationship status and employment status emerged as potentially useful segmentation variables.

Third, it appears that the strength of identification with the original culture differs between members of cultural subgroups and may have an effect on attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioral control regarding volunteering. Combined segmentation studies thus present an interesting field of future exploration, which may lead to further potential for improving the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns designed to attract volunteers.

Finally, further investigation is needed into understand whether studies into generic volunteering behavior can produce valid results or indeed, as the additional findings from this study indicate, volunteering behavior may be very specific to certain forms of volunteering and that community members of all cultural backgrounds have different beliefs, are influenced by different people around them and perceive different hurdles with respect to different forms of volunteering.

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Notes

This research was funded by the Australian Research Council through the Linkage Grant Scheme (LP0453682) and our industry partner, Bushcare Wollongong, a division of Wollongong City Council. We would particularly like to thank Paul Formosa, Natural Areas Coordinator for Wollongong City Council, for his support and assistance with this project.

List of Tables

Table 1. Ethnic Group Sample Composition

	Individual depth interviews	Group depth interviews	Total participants
Ethnic groups			
Australian	2	2	17

Table 1. Ethnic Group Sample Composition

	Individual depth interviews	Group depth interviews	Total participants
Anglo-Celtic	6	1	15
Southern European	7	5	39
Total	15	8	71

Table 2. Expert Sample Composition

Volunteering and multicultural experts	Individual depth interviews
Wollongong City Council Bushcare Program	2
Bankstown City Council Bushcare Program	1
Wollongong City Council Community and Cultural Development Division	1
Volunteering Australia	1
Volunteering Illawarra	2
Wollongong Multicultural Resource Centre	1
Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council	1
Total	8

Table 3. Snapshot of Findings

	Attitude	Social norm	Perceived behavioral control
Australian	Positive attitude. Everyone should contribute to society at some stage.	Moderate influence. Others mostly positive, this is considered but does not determine decisions.	Greater control. Key barriers were paid work and family commitments.
Anglo- Celtic	Positive attitude. Enables individuals to support causes that are important to them.	Low influence. Little regard for what others think.	Moderate control. Key barriers were looking after family and paid work.
Southern European	Varying attitude. Seen as a way to support their own community but wary of working for no pay.	High influence. Views of others vary and do influence volunteering decisions.	Lesser control. Key barriers were language, transport, family commitments.