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Attracting volunteers in highly multicultural societies: a marketing challenge

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Publication Details

Randle, M. J. & Dolnicar, S. (2012). Attracting volunteers in highly multicultural societies: a marketing challenge. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*, 24 (4), 351-369.

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Attracting volunteers in highly multicultural societies: a marketing challenge

Abstract

Volunteer managers face a typical marketing problem: how to identify the right consumers (in this case, volunteers), attract them, and keep them loyal. In multicultural societies this challenge is amplified because of the different groups originating from countries that can vary significantly in terms of the extent of volunteering and reasons for being involved. The consequence of this heterogeneity is limited success of generic marketing campaigns. Using the theory of planned behavior, we investigate differences between Australian residents from different cultural backgrounds in their volunteering behavior. Groups differed in attitude, social norm, and perceived behavioral control, suggesting the need for customized marketing strategies. Theoretically, results provide evidence that volunteers in multicultural societies cannot be viewed as one homogeneous mass. Practically, results offer insight into the factors influencing the behavior of each cultural group, and can inform customized campaigns to tap into the large base of volunteers from different backgrounds.

Keywords

challenge, attracting, highly, marketing, societies, multicultural, volunteers

Disciplines

Business | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Randle, M. J. & Dolnicar, S. (2012). Attracting volunteers in highly multicultural societies: a marketing challenge. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*, 24 (4), 351-369.

**ATTRACTING VOLUNTEERS IN HIGHLY MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES:
A MARKETING CHALLENGE**

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This manuscript has not been published elsewhere and has not been submitted simultaneously
for publication elsewhere.

Suggested running head: Attracting Volunteers in Multicultural Societies

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, volunteer managers are facing a typical marketing problem: how to identify the right consumers (in this case volunteers); attract them; and keep them loyal. In multicultural societies this challenge is amplified because of the many different groups originating from countries that can vary significantly in terms of the extent and nature of volunteering and the reasons for being involved. Often, the consequence of this heterogeneity is limited success of generic, community-wide marketing and recruitment campaigns.

Using the Theory of Planned Behavior, we investigate whether significant differences exist between Australian residents from different cultural backgrounds in their volunteering behavior. Groups were found to differ in attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control, suggesting the need for customized rather than market-wide marketing strategies. Results are theoretically important because they provide empirical evidence that volunteers in multicultural societies cannot be viewed as one homogeneous mass. Practically, the results provide detailed insight into each cultural group and the factors which influence their behavior. This can be used to create customized campaigns to tap into the large, but underutilized, base of volunteers from different backgrounds.

Keywords: volunteering, multicultural societies, marketing, segmentation, Theory of Planned Behavior

INTRODUCTION

There has been some debate around whether the issue of volunteer recruitment is a human resources issue (a problem of employment) or a marketing issue (a problem of consumer attraction). However the fact that a key component of paid employment – monetary compensation for labour – is absent from the interaction, means that many human resources strategies have little effect when it comes to volunteers. We therefore take an alternative perspective and view the challenge faced by many volunteering organizations today as a typical marketing problem. That is, how to identify the right consumers (people most likely to volunteer); attract them (get them to start volunteering); and keep them loyal (continue volunteering for as long as possible).

Multicultural societies present particular challenges for marketers because of their heterogeneous nature and the many different cultural groups which can differ significantly in terms of their behavior. One marketing technique commonly utilized by commercial organizations to address the issue of consumer heterogeneity is segmentation: we acknowledge that not all consumers are the same and that they have to be treated in different ways. Mass marketing is generally considered an inefficient alternative.

Whilst used extensively in the commercial sector, segmentation is a tool which has been adopted only relatively recently by the non-profit sector but has proven useful in identifying sub-groups within the population of volunteers. For example Shields (2009) identified distinctive characteristics and motivators for young adult volunteers, while Randle and Dolnicar (2009b) segmented volunteers based on the number of volunteer hours contributed and identified specific profiles for high-contributing volunteers. Other attempts at market segmentation have used more complex bases such as lifestyles (Heidrich, 1990) or specific combinations of motivations (Dolnicar & Randle, 2007).

The few instances where cultural background has been used to segment volunteers usually compares two different groups, such as Caucasian Americans and African Americans and comes to a determination about which group is more likely to volunteer. However results are conflicting depending on the definition of volunteering used, the sample included and the type of analysis conducted (Musick, Wilson, & Bynum, 2000; Smith, 1994). For example in a series of US-based studies, some authors conclude that Caucasian Americans are more likely to volunteer than African Americans (Musick et al., 2000, p. 1555; Palisi & Korn, 1989, pp. 180, 184; Sundeen, 1992, p. 286) while others conclude that African Americans are more likely to volunteer than Caucasian Americans (Auslander & Litwin, 1988, p. 32; Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Olsen, 1970). In their qualitative investigation, Randle and Dolnicar (2009a) compared multiple cultural groups to identify not just rates of volunteering but differences attitudes and perceived social pressure to, or not to, volunteer.

Taking an international viewpoint, many have noted variation in the size and role of the non-profit sector in different countries and for the most part this has been attributed to the political regime and cultural and religious contexts in which the sector has developed (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006, 2010; Salamon & Anheier, 1998). In proposing Social Origins Theory, Salamon and Anheier (1998) theorised four different third-sector regime types based on two key dimensions: (1) level of government spending on social welfare services and (2) the scale of the non-profit sector. Hustinx et al (2010) applied this theory to investigate volunteer motivations across different countries and found that while volunteering is a personal decision and is therefore influenced by individual level factors it is also, to some degree, influenced by the broader social and political environment. Others have confirmed inter-country differences in volunteer motivations such as Hwang et al (2005) who found Canadians significantly more likely than Americans to cite altruistic reasons for volunteering, while Americans were more likely than Canadians to cite self-interested motivations. For

volunteer organisations operating in multicultural societies these findings raise questions regarding the extent to which country- and culture-specific differences in volunteering behaviour remain when many different cultures settle within close proximity to each other to form highly multicultural communities.

The contribution of this paper lies in demonstrating that ignoring the multicultural nature of modern societies can lead to sub-optimal mass marketing strategies which fail to reach communities which consist of multiple cultures. Where multiple distinct cultural groups exist within a society, it may be necessary for organizations to develop differentiated ways of communicating with cultural sub-segments in order to attract volunteers.

We apply an established theory of human behavior, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1988), with the aim of (1) identifying significant differences between cultural groups in their volunteering behavior (i.e. whether customized marketing strategies are in fact required for different groups); and (2) assessing the usefulness of the theoretical framework in providing detailed marketing-related insights which can be used to develop customized marketing campaigns (i.e. the specific marketing mix that will be most meaningful and motivating for each group).

Practically, the contribution of the paper lies in the investigation of the potential mistakes which could be made by organizations which assume a mono-cultural market, or in the present case, the situation where market strategies designed to attract volunteers are aimed only at the prototypical Australian resident.

PRIOR RESEARCH

Multicultural Marketing

Since originally put forward by Levitt (1983) the notion of global marketing has received much research attention. Opposing scholars have debated the extent to which global organizations competing in multiple markets require standardized strategies across markets (Levitt, 1983) or customized marketing solutions (Kotler, 1986).

However, a relatively new global development, the emergence of truly multicultural societies, has received relatively scant marketing attention. Findings of studies of global marketing cannot simply be applied in this situation because of the implicitly heterogeneous and complex nature of the market. The consequence of this lack of research is that the range of approaches needed to best reach the total community is quite possibly grossly underestimated.

Modern Australia is one such multicultural society, with 45 percent of the population either being born overseas or having at least one parent born in another country (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004). In the earlier part of the 20th Century Australia's immigration policies almost exclusively involved white European races. However in the late 1960's, due to growing expectations as a responsible member of the global community, immigration policies were expanded to include migrants from all over the world including Asia and the Middle East. The large proportion of the population that still has strong ties to other cultural backgrounds has important theoretical and practical marketing implications. The issue of consumer heterogeneity is amplified and ethnicity as a consumer characteristic takes on even greater importance.

It is known that the many different consumer groups require customized marketing strategies which go beyond simple linguistic translations of messages (Wilkinson & Cheng, 1999).

While it is recognised as an important challenge for any organization seeking to attract consumers, there has been limited application or evaluation of theoretical models of human behavior, in terms of their ability to provide insight into how the groups differ and the messages which are appropriate for each.

The most significant body of multicultural marketing literature originates from the United States, a market which is characterised by fewer, and larger, cultural groups. However similar studies are less common for other more broad-based multicultural societies such as the UK, Canada and Australia (Burton, 2002). Possible reasons include the complexities of undertaking research with ethnic minority groups, the costs associated with developing products and services to meet their needs, and confusion as to the need for, or nature of, customized promotional strategies for different groups (Burton, 2000).

One review of multicultural marketing efforts in Australia highlighted the success of a social marketing campaign (a health care campaign related to the dangers of smoking) in reaching different minority groups within the community (Wilkinson & Cheng, 1999). However to this point, similar applications of multicultural marketing strategies have not been extended to volunteering market.

Volunteering and Multiculturalism

The investigation of the influence of cultural background on volunteering behavior has been largely limited to studies of one or two groups and comparing their level of involvement in volunteer activities. There is general agreement that cultural minorities are under-represented in volunteering efforts (Fisher & Cole, 1993; Martin, 1999, p. 27) and a number of explanations have been suggested to explain this, including that volunteering serves as a way

of providing social support services for minority communities which are otherwise not provided by government (Joseph, 1995).

In Australia, volunteering appears to be designed in a way that suits mainstream Australians, but which in fact excludes many minorities who might otherwise become involved (Kerr, Savelsberg, Sparrow, & Tedmanson, 2001). A key problem is that newly arrived Australians often have no equivalent term for volunteering in their native language, and cannot relate to the rationale for volunteering and therefore cannot see the value in getting involved (Martin, 1999).

The aim of the present study is to assess whether cultural groups in a multicultural society differ in the specific factors which influence their decision to volunteer. This contributes to our current knowledge about volunteering because it accounts for heterogeneity within the volunteering market with regard to cultural background and enables that differences be considered by nonprofit organizations as they confront the important challenge of attracting sufficient numbers of volunteers. The theoretical basis for the investigation is provided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1988).

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Underpinning

The Theory of Planned Behavior postulates that an individual's behavior is a result of three constructs: attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control. An individual's attitude towards a particular behavior is a result of their beliefs about the consequences of performing that behaviour (behavioural beliefs) combined with their evaluations of these consequences (evaluation of consequences). An individual's perceived social norm towards a behavior

results from their beliefs about the normative expectations of others in relation to the behaviour (normative beliefs) combined with whether they want to comply with those expectations (motivation to comply). An individual's perceived behavioral control results from their perception of factors which make it easier or more difficult to perform the behaviour (control factor facilitation) combined with the perceived importance of these factors (control factor salience).

The Theory of Planned Behavior was considered the most appropriate framework for this investigation because (1) it has proven valuable in predicting other consumer behaviors, for example internet purchasing (George, 2004); (2) it has proven valuable in predicting volunteering behavior, and in fact, superior when compared to other frameworks such as the functional approach (Greenslade & White, 2005); and (3) it has proven effective in predicting behavior of people from different cultural backgrounds (Kalafatis, Pollard, East, & Tsogas, 1999).

In the field of marketing, the Theory of Planned Behavior is particularly useful because it deals not only with the constructs at the aggregate level, but allows for the measurement of attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control at the individual belief level. This provides marketers with information relating to the beliefs which are influencing each construct, and can be used to develop customized and specific marketing mixes which are most suitable for the target market. It is these indirect (or belief based) measures of the three constructs that are particularly interesting to the research questions for this study and are the focus of the results and conclusions sections.

Measurement Instrument

The development of measures followed the procedure specified by C-OAR-SE theory (Rossiter, 2002, 2011). C-OAR-SE requires that as a first step, the constructs of interest be

carefully defined in terms of the object, the attribute and the rater entity. Based on this definition an appropriate measure can be developed and a score derived. C-OAR-SE theory differs from more traditional psychometric approaches to scale development because of its focus on content validity rather than measured reliability. Construct definitions are provided after each subheading in the remainder of this section.

Once constructs were defined the specific beliefs which make up each construct were identified through a comprehensive qualitative stage. This involved interviews and focus groups with (1) individuals from different ethnic backgrounds and (2) experts in the fields of volunteering and multicultural societies. The total number of participants involved in the qualitative stage was 156. Based on either their personal experience and opinions on volunteering, or their professional and community experience with dealing with particular cultural groups, participants were asked about the perceived positive and negative consequences of volunteering (behavioural beliefs), the nature of any social pressure to volunteer and the extent to which this influenced individuals' decision to volunteer (normative beliefs) and perceived facilitators and barriers to volunteering and the extent to which these impacted different cultural groups (control beliefs). Data was then analysed by the researchers to determine the salient beliefs for each construct, which then formed the basis for the items used to measure constructs in the quantitative phase.

Definition of Volunteering

The definition of volunteering (the “act” in the Theory of Planned Behavior) was the same as that used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001): “giving unpaid help to an organization or group”. “Organizations or groups” were further defined as “welfare groups, local community organizations, religious groups, schools, sporting or social clubs, or cultural organizations” (adapted from Warburton & Terry, 2000). This definition was used to measure

all Theory of Planned Behavior constructs, as recommended by Ajzen's "principle of compatibility" (Ajzen, 2002).

Customised indirect (or belief-based) items were used to measure attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control. This tailored approach to scale development was consistent with Ajzen's recommendation that the answer scales used for measuring Theory of Planned Behavior constructs be determined by the researcher for the particular behavior being investigated, rather than simply using seven point scales as a matter of course (Ajzen, 2005).

Attitude

Behavioral Beliefs

The construct Behavioral Beliefs was defined as Australian residents' personal beliefs about the consequences of giving unpaid help to an organization or group. Twelve beliefs were identified as salient to the behavior of volunteering. These were identified following a review of available literature and a qualitative investigation which involved conducting interviews with a range of individuals associated with volunteering (e.g. current volunteers, volunteer managers) and represent the perceived consequences of individuals' volunteering. These beliefs were that volunteering for an organization or group would:

1. ...enable me to support a cause that is important to me
2. ...be enjoyable for me
3. ...enable me to give something back to society
4. ...enable me to socialize and meet new people
5. ...enable me to help those less fortunate than myself
6. ...take my mind off my own problems

7. ...enable me to assist my family and friends who are also involved with the organization
8. ...broaden my perspective on life
9. ...enable me to help people from my own ethnic background
10. ...make me feel like I am valued
11. ...enable me to help improve the natural environment
12. ...enable me to learn new skills

For consistency and ease of completion the beliefs were presented as positive statements. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each statement on a 7 point scale ranging from 0 = “Do not believe” to 6 = “Strongly believe”.

Evaluation of Consequences

The construct Evaluation of Consequences was defined as Australian residents’ personal evaluations of the consequences of them giving unpaid help to an organization or group. Pre-testing identified that asking respondents to rate some of the outcomes (for example “For me to do something enjoyable is”) on a scale ranging from -3 = “extremely bad” to $+3$ = “extremely good” was nonsensical. For this reason, it was decided to go against the generic recommendation of Ajzen and Madden (1991) to use bipolar answer scales, and the scale was changed to a four point unipolar scale of importance. The response categories were: “not important at all”, “moderately important”, “very important”, and “extremely important”.

Social Norm

Normative Beliefs

The construct Normative Beliefs was defined as Australian residents' personal perception of reference groups' attitude towards giving unpaid help to an organization or group. The reference groups used were the three identified as important in qualitative phase: family, close friends, and ethnic group. Normative beliefs were measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which each of these reference groups thought that they should give unpaid help to an organization or group on a bipolar scale ranging from $-2 =$ "I should not" to $2 =$ "I should".

Motivation to Comply

The construct Motivation to Comply was defined as the extent to which individuals want to comply with reference groups. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they cared what each reference group thought they should do by answering the following question for each of the three reference groups: "Generally speaking, how much do you care what (reference group) thinks you should do?". Respondents could indicate their answer on a seven point scale ranging from $1 =$ "do not care at all" to $7 =$ "care very much". The use of a bipolar scale to measure normative beliefs and unipolar scale to measure motivation to comply is consistent with the recommendation of Ajzen and Madden (1991) who found that with the use of such scales the correlation between belief-based and direct estimates of subjective norm are optimized.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Control Factor Facilitation

The construct Control Factor Facilitation was defined as personal perception of factors that could facilitate or impede personal ability to give unpaid help to an organization or group. A total of six control factors were identified as salient to the behavior of volunteering. These were family situation; paid work arrangements; availability of car transport; availability of public transport; English-speaking skills; and health.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether each factor made it easier or more difficult for them to give unpaid help. A seven point semantic differential scale was used ranging from — 3 = “Easier” to +3 = “More difficult”. This scale offered a neutral midpoint if the factor had no impact on their ability to give unpaid help. The more positive response of “Easier” was deliberately placed at the negative end (the left hand side) of the answer scale to neutralize answer bias.

Control Factor Salience

The construct Control Factor Salience was defined as personal assessment of the impact of control factors on individuals personally. Respondents were asked to indicate the demands of time placed on them by (1) their family situation and (2) their paid work arrangements using the following four point scale: 1 = “very few demands on my time”, 2 = “some demands on my time”, 3 = “many demands on my time”, and 4 = “heavy demands on my time”. They were then asked to indicate whether for them (1) car transport and (2) public transport is 1 = “rarely available”, 2 = “sometimes available”, 3 = “available most of the time”, or 4 = “always available”. In terms of their English-speaking skills respondents were asked “when speaking English to people I don’t know I am” 1 = “not at all confident”, 2 = “fairly confident”, 3 = “very confident”, or 4 = “totally confident”. Finally, in relation to their health

they were asked to complete the sentence “I experience health problems...” 1 = “almost never”, 2 = “occasionally”, 3 = “often”, or 4 = “very frequently”. The items were deliberately worded neutrally, with the intensity of answers incorporated into the response alternatives.

The category labels were pre-tested and participants were asked to specify their interpretation of the answer categories. They were refined and changed numerous times before tests showed consistent interpretation of the meaning of the labels.

The questionnaire made use of a number of multi-item scales. Where appropriate, the items within these scales were presented in random order to minimise response-set artefacts and rotated to avoid order bias (Becker, 1954). As much as possible, answer scales for each construct were varied in an effort to maintain respondent interest and to minimise common methods bias.

Data Collection

Data was collected in September-October 2006 using an online internet panel which is set up and maintained such that is representative of the Australian population. An online research design was chosen because it allowed a national Australian sample to be collected within the cost and time constraints of the project. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to a sub-set of this panel which was also representative of the Australian population.

Screening questions categorized respondents into the cultural group or ancestry with which they most closely identified. The “Australian” sample group was made up of individuals who stated that they associated most strongly with their Australian background and could not nominate any other association. The other groups were Australian residents but nominated a non-Australian background as their strongest association. Respondents were invited to complete a questionnaire which was available online until a minimum number of each group had completed the survey (approximately four weeks).

Sample

The data used for this study was part of a larger project investigating a range of topics relating to volunteering. The sample for the larger study included individuals from 14 different ethnic backgrounds, which was required to provide detailed profiles of each group. Given that the aim of the present paper is to demonstrate the need for multi-cultural marketing rather than profiling a set of 14 different cultural groups, only three cultural groups (one from Asia, one from Europe and one from America) were selected for comparison with the dominant Australian culture in the present study. The selected three cultures were Chinese (n = 91), German (n = 77), and North American (n = 35) groups to compare with the Australian (n = 100). The total sample size for this study is 303.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The sample for this analysis was 55 percent female and 45 percent male. Fifty-four percent were employed full-time, 17 percent were employed part-time and 11 percent were full-time students. Thirty-one percent had at least finished high school and 37 percent had a Bachelors degree. The age group most highly represented was the 26-35 year olds (36 percent) followed by the 18-25 year olds (25 percent) and the 36-45 year olds (20 percent). In terms of relationship status, 39 percent were married, 38 percent were single and 17 percent were living with a partner.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for differences between the Australian group and each of the non-Australian groups. Results are shown in Table 1. Figures marked with an asterisk (*) are those which are significantly different from the Australian group at the 95% confidence level.

Table 1: Comparison of Australian and other groups

	Australian	Chinese	German	North American
ATTITUDE				
Behavioral Beliefs about Volunteering				
enable me to give something back to society	4.29	4.30	4.52	4.68
be enjoyable for me	3.95	4.01	4.27	4.38
enable me to support a cause that is important to me	4.25	4.01	4.44	4.65
enable me to socialise and meet new people	4.02	4.11	4.49 *	4.59 *
enable me to help those less fortunate than myself	4.36	4.51	4.57	4.76
enable me to take my mind off by own problems	3.45	3.35	3.47	3.62
enable me to assist my family/friends involved with the organisation	2.88	3.14	2.88	3.82 *
enable me to broaden my perspective on life	4.18	4.34	4.60 *	4.50
enable me to help my own ethnic background	3.05	3.34	2.52	3.21
make me feel like I am valued	3.99	3.78	4.34	4.03
enable me to help improve the natural environment	3.68	3.70	4.17 *	3.91
enable me to learn new skills	4.07	4.11	4.60 *	4.29
Evaluation of Consequences				
For me to give something back to society is...	2.69	2.75	2.74	3.03 *
For me to enjoy myself is...	3.19	3.11	3.14	3.32
For me to support a cause that is important to me is...	2.85	2.93	2.96	3.18 *
For me to socialise and meet new people is...	2.62	2.66	2.74	2.94
For me to help those less fortunate than myself is...	2.75	2.71	2.86	2.97
For me to take my mind off by own problems is...	2.63	2.58	2.57	2.53
For me to assist an org. with which my family/friends are involved is...	2.49	2.34	2.26	2.74
For me to broaden my perspective on life is...	3.03	3.07	3.16	3.09
For me to help people from my own ethnic background is...	2.35	2.42	2.08 *	2.56
For me to feel like I am valued is...	2.95	2.85	2.90	2.85
For me to help improve the natural environment is...	2.64	2.52	2.84	2.97 *
For me to learn new skills is...	3.04	3.07	3.14	3.29
SOCIAL NORM				
Normative Beliefs				
Family	0.61	0.55	0.44	3.65
Friends	0.49	0.41	0.48	3.44
Ethnic group	0.56	0.32 *	0.31	3.71
Motivation to Comply				
Family	5.06	5.22	4.95	5.35
Friends	4.30	4.47	3.87	4.15
Ethnic group	2.93	3.44 *	2.52	2.74
PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL				
Control Factor Facilitation				
Family	2.51	2.10 *	2.45	2.32
Paid work	2.65	2.59	2.53	2.76
Car transport	3.59	2.96 *	3.42	3.65 *
English	3.67	2.98 *	3.26 *	3.65
Health	1.81	1.75	1.82	1.53
Public transport	2.45	3.01 *	2.69	3.09 *
Control Factor Saliency				
Family	0.12	0.14	0.30	-0.59
Paid work	0.71	1.11	0.66	0.53
Car transport	-1.51	-0.30 *	-1.40	-1.32
English	-2.23	-1.57 *	-2.14	-2.18
Health	-0.88	-1.10	-1.09	-1.41
Public transport	0.36	-0.12	-0.19	-0.62 *

Attitude

The Chinese group did not differ significantly from the Australian group on any of the behavioral beliefs or evaluations of beliefs. However the German and North American groups both displayed numerous significant differences in these constructs.

The German group believed more strongly than the Australian group that volunteering would enable them to socialize and meet new people (mean 4.49 compared to 4.02), broaden their perspective in life (mean 4.60 compared to 4.18), help improve the natural environment (mean 4.17 compared to 3.68) and learn new skills (mean 4.60 compared to 4.07). In their evaluations of beliefs, the German group indicated that it was less important to them to help people from their own ethnic background than the Australian group (mean 2.98 compared to 2.35).

The North American group were more likely to believe that by volunteering they could socialize and meet new people (mean 4.59 compared to 4.02) and assist their family and friends who were also involved with the organization (mean 3.82 compared to 2.88). In terms of the importance of the behavioral beliefs, North Americans indicated it was more important to them than the Australian group to give something back to society (mean 3.03 compared to 2.69), support a cause important to them (mean 3.18 compared to 2.85) and help improve the natural environment (mean 2.97 compared to 2.64).

Social Norm

The German and North American groups did not differ significantly from the Australian group for any of the normative beliefs or the extent to which they want to comply with important others. The Chinese group, however, indicated that when compared to the Australian group, people from their background were more likely to think they should not

volunteer (mean 0.31 compared to 0.56). In addition, they were more likely to indicate that they cared what people from their own background thought (mean 3.44 compared to 2.93).

Perceived Behavioral Control

All three groups differed significantly from the Australian group in the items comprising the control factor facilitation and/or control factor salience constructs. For control factor salience the bipolar scale was deliberately placed at the negative end of the answer scale to neutralise answer bias. Therefore, higher values actually indicate lower control factor salience, and lower values indicating higher control factor salience.

The Chinese group indicated that family placed fewer demands on their time (mean 2.10 compared to 2.51) and that they were less confident speaking English to people they don't know (mean 2.98 compared to 3.67). In relation to transport, for the Chinese group car transport was less often available (mean 2.96 compared to 3.59) and public transport was more often available (mean 3.01 compared to 2.45). In terms of salience, both car transport and English speaking skills made it more difficult to volunteer than the Australian group (means -0.30 compared to -1.51, and -1.57 compared to -2.23 respectively).

For the German group, only one significant difference was found when compared with the Australian group. This was their confidence in speaking English to people they don't know, and they indicated they were less confident (mean 3.26 compared to 3.67).

The North American group indicated that they had greater access to both car transport (mean 3.65 compared to 3.59) and public transport (mean 3.09 compared to 2.45) than the Australian group. They also indicated that their situation in terms of public transport made it easier for them to volunteer (mean -0.62 compared to 0.36).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study used the Theory of Planned Behavior to investigate volunteering in a multicultural society. The belief-based measures of attitude, social norm and perceived behavioral control were used to measure each construct with the aim of providing detailed profiles of each group and pinpoint areas of difference.

The fact that numerous significant differences were found between the Australian group and the non-Australian groups has important implications for managers trying to attract members from each background. The three groups investigated provide three very different cases in terms of the factors which influence their volunteering behavior and the types of marketing campaigns which would be meaningful and motivating for them.

The Chinese group displayed no significant differences in the two attitude constructs of behavioral beliefs or evaluations of consequences. However, on the other two constructs of social norm and perceived behavioral control a number of significant differences were found. The fact that the Chinese group was more likely to be influenced by others within their ethnic group, and that they were also more likely to have negative views about volunteering, indicates that marketing strategies attempting to appeal to this group would have to be aimed not only at individuals but at the Chinese community as a whole. This could be done, for example, by approaching community leaders to gain their support for the particular volunteering initiative and then using their support to influence others within the community.

The Chinese group also differed significantly from the Australian group in the control factors which influenced their involvement in volunteering activities. This group felt more restricted in terms of their English-speaking skills and their access to car transport. However public transport was seen by this group to be more available than the Australian group. For volunteering organizations, this may mean that getting this group involved would need to

include either communication of the public transport facilities available around the location of their particular volunteering efforts. Alternatively and depending on economic viability, it could also mean they provide transport (through a community or volunteer-provided bus service) to and from their volunteering activities for Chinese community members. Not having to rely on their own transport clearly makes it easier in the minds of the Chinese group to become involved in volunteering activities.

Similarly in relation to their English-speaking skills, designing recruitment campaigns to attract groups of Chinese-speakers rather than individuals would make them feel more at ease if they felt less confident speaking English to people they don't know. This could be done by marketing the activity as an opportunity to socialise with others from their own background. The Chinese group was most different from the Australian group in the perceived behavioral control construct. Therefore developing volunteering opportunities and marketing messages which overcome these barriers to involvement is fundamental to attracting this group.

Unlike the Chinese group, most differences between the German and Australian groups were found in the attitude constructs, particularly behavioral beliefs. Interestingly, three of the four behavioral beliefs in which differences were found were egoistic in nature. Rehberg (2005) refers to these types of motivations as a "new" volunteering, whereby individuals have specific expectations of some personal benefit to themselves (see also Hustinx, 2001). This is compared to those who are involved primarily for altruistic reasons or to provide benefits to others. The German group were more likely to believe that volunteering would enable them to socialize and meet new people, broaden their perspective on life and learn new skills. Clearly, in this instance Germans see volunteering as an activity which will provide them with a number of personal benefits rather than only being a way of helping others. It is interesting to note that the latter two beliefs are also the two which are most important to the

German group as indicated by their evaluations of the consequences, which indicates to marketers that these are key messages which would resonate and be meaningful to this group.

The North American group also displayed a number of significant differences in both their behavioral beliefs and evaluations of the consequences. They are more likely to see volunteering as a way of socializing and meeting new people, and also of helping their family and friends who are involved with the organization. However these beliefs about their involvement do not correspond with consequences they rate as more important than the Australian group. These are to give something back to society, to support an important cause, and to help improve the natural environment. This suggests that the issue with this group is actually a communication issue rather than a product issue. In other words, to motivate this group to action, the perceived consequences of being involved need to be aligned with those aspects of importance. Where possible, volunteering should be promoted as being an opportunity to make a contribution to society by supporting a cause that is of fundamental importance to preserving the democratic and social values commonly held by the community as a whole. Depending on the cause, the positive impact on the natural environment would also be a motivating message for this group.

The North American group felt less restricted by control factors than the Australian group – for example access to both car and public transport were not an issue. Therefore these types of messages or modifying the product, for example by providing access to free transport facilities, would be a wasted effort on this group. Marketing efforts would be far more valuably spent on addressing the attitudinal and message issues in this case.

The findings have important implications for volunteer organizations seeking to attract volunteers from communities which are characterized by large and numerous multicultural populations. They clearly show that mass communications with generic messages are likely to have limited success in attracting individuals from these populations and they need to be

considered as unique markets when developing marketing strategies. Results also emphasise the importance and value of marketing expertise for volunteering organizations and how insight into specific populations can be used to inform evidence-based recruitment campaigns, essentially reducing the guess-work associated with volunteer recruitment.

Contributions to Theory

Theoretically, results are important because they provide empirical evidence that volunteers in multicultural societies cannot be treated as a homogeneous group. Besides the normal individual variations (in preferences, benefits sought, etc.), there are clear group-wise differences in the antecedents of behavior. This means that if volunteering agencies were to develop marketing strategies aimed at mainstream Australia only they would have limited success in attracting individuals from other cultural backgrounds.

Contributions to Practice

Practically, the results provide volunteer managers with detailed insight into each cultural group and the specific factors within each construct which influence their volunteering behavior. This information can be used by managers of volunteering agencies to customize their marketing strategies to ensure more efficient use of their often limited marketing budgets. For example, groups which display significant differences in the attitude constructs (such as the North American and German groups) indicate that different messages are required to convey the appropriate consequences of being involved and aligning these with those which are most important to them. Alternatively, those group are significantly different in their perceive behavioral control (such as the Chinese group) require product changes to overcome these barriers, for example creating groups of volunteers from the one cultural background or providing transport facilities to coincide with volunteering events.

In a particularly multicultural society such as Australia, where over 45 percent of people have at least one parent who was born in another country, the ability to create customized marketing campaigns to tap into the large, but underutilized, consumer base of volunteers from different cultural backgrounds is critical. Only by doing this will the long term sustainability of many volunteering organizations be ensured which is important in providing many important social services which strengthen the fabric of modern multicultural society.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this study is that data was collected online and in English. The result of this could be a sample skewed towards those who are more proficient English-speakers and perhaps more integrated into Australian culture. In addition, critics of the Theory of Planned Behaviour argue that it can overlook emotional factors contributing to individual's behaviour and instead try to rationalise the behavioural decision process. Emotions are likely to play a role in volunteer behaviour which more often than not includes an altruistic component. Further insight and more specific practical recommendations could be produced through research which tests the effectiveness of communications messages customized for specific groups within the one community. Also of interest is whether communications messages for the one cultural group actually need to be different depending on the specific volunteer organization or cause trying to attract them.

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