



“Just” blood donors? A study on the multi-affiliations of blood donors



Sara Alfieri^{a,*}, Maura Pozzi^a, Elena Marta^a, Vincenzo Saturni^b, Giovanni Aresi^a, Paolo Guidi^a

^a Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Italy

^b AVIS (Associazione dei Volontari Italiani di Sangue – Italian Association of Blood Donors), Italy

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 19 May 2017

Received in revised form 12 July 2017

Accepted 17 July 2017

Keywords:

Blood donors

Motivation

Volunteerisms

Multi-affiliations

Reconciliation

ABSTRACT

Background: The present work proposes to explore a phenomenon well known in the world of blood donation, but little explored by literature: multi-affiliations. By that term, in this paper we mean blood donors' engagement in multiple associations of various natures (donation, recreation, sports, etc.) simultaneously.

The first objective proposes to explore the phenomenon of multi-affiliations in descriptive terms; the second is to look into the differences—in terms of motivations, family-work-volunteerism reconciliation, life satisfaction, and membership satisfaction—between those who “only” carry out blood donation activity and those who instead participate in multiple associative realities concurrently.

Method: Participating in the research were 2674 donors from the Italian Association of Blood Donors (AVIS) (age range 18–65; 66.6% male) to which a self-report questionnaire was administered in the waiting rooms of numerous blood donation centers.

Results: Regarding the first objective, it emerged that only 35.9% of the participants “only” donate blood, while a good 64.1% is engaged also in other associations. Regarding the second objective, statistically significant differences emerge regarding many of the variables considered: social, values, ego-protection, and career motivation; capacity to reconcile family-volunteering and work-volunteering; life satisfaction; and membership satisfaction.

Conclusions: The study offers precious information to the agencies that handle recruiting and retaining of donors. The agencies in fact can take away information on how to improve the multi-affiliations of their donors, an aspect that can facilitate their long-term retention.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The media often projects the image of society that is not comforting: it is enough to think of the devastating effects of the economic crisis or the recent waves of ideological terrorism. Distrust, powerlessness and fear seem to be the common denominators of a society in which people often lose faith, and toward which they feel resentment, because it is perceived to be too far from their own needs. However, besides this sad scenario, there is a more comforting one that is less advertised in the media: the engagement of those who strive for others through non-profit organizations. The world of volunteerism, despite the multiple challenges that society presents, is a sector in which people still can experience feelings of self-esteem, self-efficacy [1–3], feeling of community and civic solidarity [4–6] that today, more than ever, one struggles to find elsewhere [7]. Altered economic conditions

not only create a challenge to adapt to the new job market (contracts with little or no guarantees, required prolonging of hours or higher schedule flexibility, fear of losing work if absent, etc.) and thus also to reconcile family and work spheres, but they also make it hard to be able to consistently dedicate oneself to activities outside of the workplace, such as volunteering. Blood donation is a kind of volunteerism as well, since instead of volunteering their time, blood donors are giving a part of themselves [8–10]; besides that donors who wish to, may carry out further activities for the association, engaging in roles like promoting the association's activities, recruiting new volunteers, support for first time donations, etc. For these reasons, blood donation can contribute to bringing about previously mentioned benefits similar to those in other types of volunteerism. In a social context in which it is difficult to find time and energy to dedicate to others, blood donation can also make up a real opportunity to optimize the time dedicated to engagement with the chance to carry out an act of benevolence and altruism in a small amount of time [11]. We may consider this donation a form of “capitalization”, relational pattern stressed by the recent literature [12]. On the other hand, supporting this type of engagement is fundamental in Italy, the country in which this study was carried out,

* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychology, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, L.go Gemelli 1, 20123 Milan, Italy.
E-mail address: sara.alfieri@unicatt.it (S. Alfieri).

just as in most European countries: blood available in hospitals is guaranteed by donors that donate voluntarily. Supporting and promoting the continuity of this gesture over time is an aim that the organizations tend toward, which by law they are responsible for recruiting and retaining donors. In this sense, in order to meet those goals, understanding the donor's characteristics and requirements is important for making their experience more satisfying and thus more long lasting.

1.1. *The multiple-affiliations*

To the detriment of the aforementioned difficulties and characteristic of our times, a phenomenon worthwhile of our interest is that of “multiple associative affiliations” (multi-affiliations now on), or rather, those people who actively participate in different associative realities. We are talking about a phenomenon little noted in literature, but very important to the agencies that are involved in recruiting and retaining donors. In 1986, Knoke [13] stated that “At any time, perhaps a third of US adults belong to no formal voluntary organization, and only a third hold membership in more than one association, not counting churches” (page 3).

The few researches that looked into this aspect have underlined how only the people who are members in multiple associations have the distinctive characteristic of being “spreaders of trust” [14–16] raising again the existence of a significant correlation between multi-affiliations and trust toward one's own context of belonging.

Other researches have cited the phenomenon of multi-affiliations only in descriptive terms, thus limiting themselves in the recording of data [13,17,18] and without questioning a traditional research construct on volunteerism researches: motivation.

This is therefore about a phenomenon yet unexplored, but of great importance for the world of associationism. In particular, an aspect that spontaneously comes into question in these times of crisis, regards the sustainability in terms of time, resources, and reconciliation between the world of family, the work sphere, and membership reality of the multiple affiliations. As we have previously presented, blood donation composes a sector of volunteerism that seems to reconcile well with the lack of time and resources of many people today, and thus we can hypothesize that those who engage in associations of donation are able to better reconcile the other spheres of their life compared with those who engage in associations which ask for “time.” We also have to examine what impact multi-affiliations can have on life and membership satisfaction, being that these variables are very important for sustaining the commitment over time [19].

The present work proposes looking into the multi-affiliations, the reconciliation between family, work, and volunteering, life and membership satisfaction (rather, than for the organization satisfaction in which they take part). Understanding, on the one hand, what are the motivations that drive the donors to actively participate in more than one association can help for a) better understanding an aspect of donors and b) to promote and retain that motivation; and on the other hand, understanding the sustainability in terms of reconciling family-work-volunteerism, life and membership satisfaction can, once again, provide key elements for those organizations who can draw precious information on how to be able to facilitate the multi-affiliations of their donors.

1.2. *The functionalist approach to motivations*

Although in the literature there are numerous approaches to study the underlying motivations to volunteerism and to blood donation, one of the most credited is the functionalist approach. According to this approach, which originates in the works of Smith et al. [20] and Katz [21], people can carry out the same action to

accomplish different psychological functions. It is evident therefore how the people are active subjects, oriented to reaching specific objectives that however can be modified in the course of time.

This approach has found fertile ground applied to the work of volunteerism, to which two fundamental points have been applied [22]: a) everyone engages in volunteer activity to satisfy personal needs and desires and b) everyone who engages in volunteer activity does not satisfy only one need or desire, but multiple ones simultaneously.

Clary et al. [24] identify six motivations for which the people can begin and continue to sustain volunteering:

- Values: regarding the opportunity that volunteering offers to volunteers to find a place where they can express and share their own altruistic and humanitarian values;
- Understanding: concerns the chance for new experiences of learning and the chance to practice skills, abilities, and knowledge that are not practiced in other sectors;
- Social: implies the opportunity to make new acquaintances, enlarge one's own circle of friendship or volunteer together with someone they know;
- Career: regards the chance to find a new job position through volunteering;
- Ego-Protective: refers to the defense of ego with particular reference to the fact that often people feel guilty to be more fortunate than others;
- Self-Enhancement: concerns the fact that volunteering improves mood and raises one's own self-esteem and self-concept.

Having more than one motivation to begin or sustain a voluntary activity may enhance satisfaction and fulfillment. Some researches demonstrate in fact that possessing more than one motivation positively correlates with satisfaction and duration of their engagement as a volunteer [3,23].

However, Kiviniemi et al. [22] show, through a longitudinal study, that those who engage in volunteering to satisfy various motivations at the same time experience more negative outcomes (more levels of stress and perception of costs, and less satisfaction for the activities carried out) compared to people driven by only one motivation.

The functionalist approach has been applied in different volunteering contexts, finding also some applications amongst blood donors [7,23]. It is clear how the underlining concerning the multiple motivations adapts well to the phenomenon of multi-affiliations: it is easy to hypothesize in fact that people who are actively dedicated to multiple associations concurrently experience more needs simultaneously, and thus found in the different contexts in which they are engaged, answers to different motivations [3].

1.3. *The present work*

The present work proposes two aims. The first is to explore, in descriptive terms, the phenomenon of multi-affiliations, or rather, how many donors also participate in other membership realities. This is in order to better understand the outcome of a phenomenon still little investigated in literature.

The second aim proposes looking into the differences—in terms of motivation, family-work-volunteering reconciliation, and life and membership satisfaction—between those who carry out only one activity of blood donation and those who instead participate in more membership realities concurrently. This aim intends to answer the following questions: a) which motivations drive donors to engage in multiple associations concurrently in this time of crisis? b) does the difficulty of reconciling the work sphere and the family sphere depend on the nature and quantity of associations

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5664546>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5664546>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)