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Title

Motivations and Intentions: The moderated mediating effect of volunteering meaningfulness

Abstract

Volunteering can be defined as giving time or skills during a planned activity for a volunteer group or organization (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011; Rodell, 2013a). These volunteering activities involve education, medical care, community service and other fields, which have had a broad positive impact on society. Volunteering is believed to be helpful for individuals’ leadership skills, enhance self-confidence and learn to get along with others. It is also beneficial for enterprises to establish stable and long-term relationship with consumers. Companies worldwide also have increasingly adopted such programs as an important form of corporate social responsibility (Hu, Jiang, Mo, et al., 2016). In China and other countries around the world, participation in voluntary activities has been widely encouraged (Hall, Hall, Cameron & Green, 2004; Wu, Tang & Yan, 2005; Yiu, Au & Tang, 2001), while the participation rate of volunteering is still low. Previous research are mainly focus on volunteerism motivations and their effects on volunteering behavior, few research notice the question about volunteering intention, especially why and how the intention change. In this article, based on the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1989, 2002), analyze the data of 189 MBA students who have voluntary experience and work experience, we collect two-stage data, before and after their volunteer activity. We firstly study the effect of volunteering motivation on volunteering intention. Secondly, we explore the impact of motivation on volunteering intention through volunteering practice. Third, we explore that volunteering meaningfulness moderating role on the relationship between motivation and intention through volunteering. We have the following findings: (1) autonomous motivation is positive related to volunteering intention. And controlled motivation is negative related to volunteering intention; (2) volunteering plays an intermediary role in the relationship between motivation and volunteering intentions; (3) the positive indirect relationship between autonomous motivation and intention
through volunteering will be moderated by volunteering meaningfulness, such that the relationship is positively stronger when volunteering meaningfulness are high than when they are low. And the negative indirect relationship between controlled motivation and intention through volunteering will be moderated by volunteering meaningfulness, such that the relationship is weaker when the volunteering work is less meaningful than when they are high. This research provides theoretical and empirical accounts of why do some employees take part in volunteering actively while others do not. The key contribution lies in extending the theory and literature of volunteerism. The second contribution is that we found the volunteering meaningfulness plays a moderating role influence ones future volunteering intention. If people feel more meaningful through volunteering, they will be more willing to involve in volunteer activities. Those findings are insightful for practitioners to design the volunteering job as well as motivate volunteers.

**Keyword**

Volunteers; Motivation; Volunteering Meaningfulness; Volunteering Intention