


2016

Predictive Factors of Organizational Support Communication in Volunteer Mentor Retention

Jennifer Kristin Stucky
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Jennifer Stucky

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Predictive Factors of Organizational Support Communication in Volunteer Mentor

Retention

by

Jennifer K. Stukey

MBA, Southeastern University, 2007

BS, Southeastern University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services Administration

Walden University

December 2015

Abstract

Research has shown that long-term volunteer retention is critical for sustaining the viability of youth mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). Data from recent studies have indicated that volunteers must continue their service for at least 1 year in to have a sustainable effect on the mentee. Results from prior studies have indicated that the support provided by the agency to the volunteer can predict volunteer retention. However, a gap in current literature exists regarding the effect of support communication on volunteer retention. Therefore, the purpose of this quantitative study was to assess the relationship between organizational support, communication, and retention of volunteers in the BBBS agency. The VPM was developed to explain the life cycle of volunteerism and was the theoretical framework for this study. The primary research question examined how well the variables related to organizational support communication predict the likelihood of volunteer retention. This study used secondary data collected by BBBS as part of the support communication process they provide to their volunteers. Results from a logistic regression analysis revealed that the amount of face-to-face contact and the number of match support specialists positively predicted volunteer retention of at least 1 year. Results from this study can contribute to social change by informing best practices on the types of support communication for long-term volunteer retention. Specifically, leaders and managers of volunteer agencies should develop policies and procedures that maximize the amount of face-to-face communication provided to volunteers from the agency.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the volunteers and staff who selflessly spend their time serving others. Their work takes many forms. They may mentor children, bring food to the elderly, provide clothes to the homeless, or counsel men and women struggling with addiction. Whatever noble form their volunteer work takes, they leave this world a better place.

Acknowledgments

To my husband: Mike, I would never have walked down this road if not for your gentle encouragement. Thank you for spending countless hours proofreading every word that I wrote in this program. You have been an amazing source of strength and support on this journey.

To my children: Aryanna and Micah, you are too young to remember a time when your mommy didn't constantly have school work and deadlines. As we enter a new season, one of the things I am looking forward to the most is spending time with the two of you without having to quit playing with you in order to finish a paper. I hope that through this process, you have learned to value education and will make it lifelong pursuit for yourselves.

To my Dad: Dad, you took my children to your place to play almost every night when you go home, even after working a full day, so that I could complete my coursework. You gave up a lot of your free time and sometimes even your sleeping time. Thank you for always being willing to help so that I had the opportunity to finish my education.

To my Mom and Tom: Thank you for being a source of support when I was discouraged and for being a place I could go to actually relax. Mom, thank you for spending long hours teaching me to write while I was growing up, it was my most-used skill going through this program.

To Joe and Minnie (AKA Mom and Dad): You are the most precious and generous in-laws I could possibly imagine. Thank you for always being willing to welcome Aryanna and Micah with open arms so that I had the hours I needed to work.

To my Grandma Margaret: You instilled a real value for education in our family. I wish with all of my heart that you were here to see me finish. Your gentle guidance and wisdom is missed more than words can say.

To my brother: Ryan, in many ways losing you was the catalyst for this journey. I can only imagine the teasing I would get about my new title if you were still here. There is not a day that goes by when you are not missed.

To Aunt Carrie, Robin, Jean, Darrell, and Chasity: You were all willing to take my children and give them a fun place to go while their mommy had to work on homework. It truly takes a village to raise children while their mother completes a PhD. Thank you for being a wonderful part of their village.

To Dr. Lyle Bowlin: Thank you for encouraging me to pursue advanced degrees. I only thought "Lyle got me into this" a few times during this program (mostly when I was dealing with screaming babies and explosions of cheerios while I tried to write papers). I am not sure I would have ever pursued higher education without your encouragement and guidance. Thank you for believing in me and pushing me to do more than I thought I could.

To my colleagues at Southeastern University: Thank you for being willing to take a few minutes out of your schedule to help answer my questions as I went through this

process. Having access to your bountiful knowledge made this process so much easier and less stressful.

To my committee: Thank you Dr. Harris, Dr. Phillips, and Dr. Hickman for helping me to refine this dissertation to a document I can be proud of. You have provided invaluable suggestions and wisdom. I will be incorporating what I have learned from the three of you into my academic writing throughout the rest of my career.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Nonprofit organizations provide services to the most vulnerable members of society, such as children who have been abandoned or abused, or children who are at-risk for negative outcomes such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and teen pregnancy (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2014). Many of the programs that serve these vulnerable members rely heavily on volunteer labor to meet their program objectives (Wilson, 2012). Thus, volunteer retention, the topic of this study, is critically important to the success of these programs (Wilson, 2012). This study focused on analyzing the relationship between organizational support communication and volunteer retention in youth mentoring organizations. The results from this study can be used to inform leaders of nonprofit organizations of communication practices that are related to retention of volunteers. Leaders and managers could adopt those communication practices, processes, and procedures to provide better communication to their volunteers. The communication could translate into long-term retention of volunteers, which could result in improved outcomes for the children mentored by those volunteers. This chapter contains information on the following: background of the issue at hand, problem statement, theoretical framework, scope of the research, nature of the study, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Background

People who volunteer for nonprofit organizations provide critical services to vulnerable populations (BLS, 2014; Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2005). Some of the services include collecting, preparing, and serving food; mentoring,

coaching, and tutoring children; serving as a board member; providing emergency services; and fundraising (BLS, 2014). Many organizations use volunteer labor to enact social change for their clients and constituents (BLS, 2014).

Volunteer labor is a valuable commodity to nonprofit organizations (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon, Sokolowski, & Haddock, 2011). The BLS (2014) estimated that between September 2012 and September of 2013, more than 62 million Americans volunteered with nonprofit organizations. Despite the fact that agencies do not provide salaries to the people who volunteer, nonprofit agencies do incur costs associated with using volunteer labor (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010). The costs associated with volunteers includes the costs associated with recruiting volunteers, processing paper work, performing background checks, providing training, and supporting the volunteers (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Hustinx et al., 2010). Research has shown that volunteer labor has a substantial annual economic effect (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011). The annual economic impact of volunteer labor is approximately \$116 million to \$153 million within the United States and approximately \$1.34 trillion worldwide (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011). When people stop serving as volunteers with a nonprofit organization, the organization loses the investment it made into those volunteers (Jamison, 2003; Hustinx et al., 2010; Miller, Powel, & Seltzer, 1990).

Current literature has indicated that the organizational support provided by the agency to the volunteer may affect volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003;

Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011; Wilson, 2012). Agencies such as Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) consider the support communication provided by the agency as a critical part of organizational support (BBBS, 2013; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Felman, McMaken, 2007). Some qualitative literature has supported the importance of organizational support communication (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011). However, I was unable to find studies that empirically tested the effect of organizational support communication on volunteer retention. A gap exists in knowledge regarding how the experiences that occur while volunteering affect volunteer retention. This study is needed to provide better information about how support communication received by the volunteer during the experience affects volunteer retention

Problem Statement

Premature volunteer dropout is problematic for nonprofit agencies due to the costs associated with recruiting, processing, placing, and training new volunteers when existing volunteers leave (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Hustinx et al., 2010). The BLS (2013a) estimated that 25.4% of people 16 years and older volunteered in some capacity between September 2012 and September 2013. The data showed that the volunteers provided a median of 50 hours of service during that time. However, despite the number of volunteers and volunteer hours donated each year, the data indicated that fewer people are volunteering each year (BLS, 2013a). The problem associated with volunteer retention is that a decrease in the supply of volunteers creates increased competition for volunteers who continue to donate their time (Wilson, 2012). The

increased demand for volunteers causes retention of existing volunteers to be even more crucial for the success of a human service agency (Wilson, 2012).

In addition, even though agencies do not pay volunteers, agencies must expend time and money to recruit, train, and place volunteers (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004). When volunteers stop donating their time, the resources invested in the volunteer are lost (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Wilson, 2012). According to data from the BBBS agency, the organization spends approximately \$1,000 per year to create and support each volunteer mentoring relationship (Grossman & Tierney, 2000; Herrera et al., 2007). Consequently, premature volunteer dropout is also problematic for nonprofit agencies due to the costs associated with recruiting, processing, placing, and training new volunteers (DHHS 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Hustinx et al., 2010).

In addition to the lost monetary investments associated with loss of volunteers, agencies lose the expertise that the volunteer had developed on how to best perform the volunteer work (Jamison, 2003; Miller et al., 1990; Wilson, 2012). In addition, the agency loses the benefit of the relationships the volunteer has established with clients (Jamison, 2003; Miller et al., 1990; Wilson, 2012). Such losses are especially problematic for nonprofit agencies in which volunteers work closely with clients (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). For example, BBBS is an agency that specializes in one-on-one mentoring of at-risk children (BBBS, 2013). Data from the BBBS indicated that volunteers must remain matched with the children for at least 1 year for the children to sustain any positive gains as a result of the mentoring relationship (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). Results from internal studies by the BBBS revealed that when

a volunteer quits prematurely, the child does not sustain the gains made during the mentoring process (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). Further, studies have linked premature termination of BBBS mentoring relationships to decreased school performance in the children (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008).

Despite the importance of volunteers, limited information exists on how the communication between the volunteer and the agency affects volunteer retention (Wilson, 2012). Because managers have a great deal of control over the communication between the organization and the volunteer, it is critical that managers understand the effect their actions have on volunteer retention (Omoto & Snyder, 2005; Wilson, 2012). The current study was necessary because it addressed this critical gap in knowledge regarding how communication between the agency and the volunteer affect volunteer retention.

The concept of volunteer retention has received a substantial attention from scholars in recent years. One area of focus has been the experience stage of volunteerism (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). This phase includes all of the events that happen while a person serves as a volunteer (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). In the original seminal article published by Omoto and Snyder, the authors theorized that the support that volunteers receive during their experience affects the retention of the volunteers. The hypothesized link between organizational support and volunteer retention has been tested extensively since it was proposed (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011;

Wilson, 2012). Many studies have indicated a correlation exists between organization support and volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh, et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011; Wilson, 2012).

Qualitative studies have found that organizational support communication is important in the participant's decision to continue volunteering (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011). I was unable to find quantitative studies that tested for a predictive relationship between organizational support communication and volunteer retention. However, several quantitative studies have indicated a link between organizational support and volunteer retention (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). Other studies have produced contrasting results (Garner & Garner, 2010; Jamison, 2003). One potential reason for the discrepancies is that some studies used a survey question that asked the volunteers to predict the likelihood they would continue volunteering (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivilian, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2012; Hyunth et al., 2011). Several researchers have suggested that using a scaled item to measure a predicted retention rate was less accurate than measuring the actual retention of the volunteer (Mollol, Holtom, & Lee, 2007; Miller et al., 1992; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). Findings from studies in both volunteer retention literature and employee retention literature indicated that using a predicted retention rate instead of measuring actual retention could have affected the significance of the results (Mollol et al., 2007; Miller et al., 1992; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). In addition, the wording of the question(s) regarding

the likelihood of continued volunteer service was inconsistent among the studies, which further complicated the comparison of results across studies of volunteer retention (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivlian, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2012; Hyunth et al., 2011).

In addition, the studies I located used scaled measures of organizational support by asking volunteers to rate their satisfaction with the support they received from the agency (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx et al., 2010; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010). I did not locate any studies which objectively examined factors of organizational support communication that best predicted volunteer retention. This study was necessary because it examined how the support communication that occurred between BBBS and volunteers affects volunteer retention. Findings from the study also contribute to the literature by providing information on the relationship between organizational support communication and volunteer retention. Leaders and managers could adopt those communication practices, processes, and procedures to provide better communication to their volunteers. The communication could translate into long-term retention of volunteers, which could result in improved outcomes for the children mentored by those volunteers.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationship between organizational support communication and the likelihood of retention of volunteers in the BBBS agency for at least 1 year. The five independent

variables (IV) address aspects of the support communication that occurred between the agency and the volunteers. A logistic regression analysis was used to assess how well the IVs (frequency of communication; number of mentor managers; and amount of face to face, telephone, and email communication) predict the likelihood of the dependent variable (DV), which was the likelihood that a BBS volunteer will be retained for at least 1 year.

The first IV was the frequency of communication with the volunteers per month. Skoglund (2006) conducted a study in which volunteers indicated that they desired more frequent communication with their supervisors and fellow volunteers. In addition, the results from a number of studies have indicated a link between frequency of organizational communication and retention of individuals in other settings (Achilles, Byrd, Felder-Strauss, Franklin, & Janowich, 2011; Braxton, Brier, & Steele, 2007; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Cross, 1998; Moeller, Harvey, & Williams, 2010; Porter, Hartman, & Johnson, 2011; Stephenson & Yeager, 2014). The second IV was the number of match support specialists who communicated with the volunteer during a 1-year time frame. The match support specialists are the primary organizational links between volunteers and the BBBS (BBBS, 2013; Herrera et al., 2007). Multiple studies have shown strong links between individuals and organizations were related to higher retention of those individuals (Mitchell et al., 2001; Qiu, Haobin Ye, Hung, & York, 2014; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Other studies have indicated that poor links between organizations and individuals can lead to lower retention of individual (Susskind, 2007; Travaglione & Cross, 2006)

The final three IV's pertain to the methods used to communicate with the volunteer. Those methods are amount of face-to-face communication per month, amount of telephone communication per month, and amount of written communication per month. I was not able to find research that tested for a link between communication medium and retention. However, multiple researchers have indicated that organizational support can effect volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011; Wilson, 2012). Additional studies have indicated that participants who received support through richer communication channels perceived greater levels of support than those who received support through lean channels (Lewandowski, Rosenberg, Jordan Parks, & Siegel, 2011; Schiffrin, Edelman, Falkerstern, & Stewart, 2010; Wright, Rosenberg, Egber, & Bernard, 2013).

The DV was volunteer retention. Volunteer retention of at least 1 year was critical to the success of the BBBS program because premature volunteer dropout can harm the child's academic progress and social development (BBBS, 2013; Herrera et al., 2007). The DV was volunteer retention. The DV was a dichotomous variable measured as (0) the volunteer did not continue service for at least 1 year or (1) the volunteer did continue service for 1 year or more.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

RQ: How well do variables related to organizational support communication predict the likelihood of volunteer retention of at least 1 year?

H_0 : The organizational communication support variables of amount of communication between volunteer and agency relative to the number of months in the program, number of assigned match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers, amount of face-to-face communication relative to the number of months in the program, amount of telephone communication relative to the number of months in the program, and ratio of written communication relative to the number of months in the program are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention for at least 1 year.

The equation that expresses the null hypothesis for this research question can be presented as: $H_0: \beta_1\chi_{(cpm)1} + \beta_2\chi_{(mss)2} + \beta_3\chi_{(ff)3} + \beta_4\chi_{(tel)2} + \beta_5\chi_{(wrt)5} = 0$. According to this equation, the null hypothesis posits that in the population, the odds of the IVs increasing the likelihood of the DV, retention of BBBS volunteers at 1 year is 0.

H_a : The organizational communication support variables of amount of communication between volunteer and agency relative to the number of months in the program, number of assigned match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers, amount of face-to-face communication relative to the number of months in the program, amount of telephone communication relative to the number of months in the program, and ratio of written communication relative to the number of months in the program are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention for at least 1 year.

A logistic regression was used to analyze the alternative hypothesis. The equation for the alternate hypothesis can be presented as: $H_0: \beta_1\chi_{(cpm)1} + \beta_2\chi_{(mss)2} + \beta_3\chi_{(ff)3} + \beta_4\chi_{(tel)2} + \beta_5\chi_{(wrt)5}$

$H_1: \beta_5 \neq 0$ In the population, the odds of the IVs increasing the likelihood of the DV retention among BBBS volunteers does not equal 0.

The data were analyzed using SPSS. A logistic regression was used to test the null hypothesis. A logistic regression analysis allowed me to determine whether any of the IVs predict the likelihood of volunteer retention of at least 1 year. The statistics that are reported include the significance level, the odds ratio, the classification accuracy of the regression model, and the reduction in errors due to the regression model. Two bits of information are reported for the significance level. First, the significance of the overall model was assessed to determine which combination of DVs significantly predicted the outcome, the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The overall fit of the model was assessed using the goodness-of-fit statistics. The chi-square statistic will reveal the degree to which the regression model predicts the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The Cox & Snell was another statistic that indicated how much of the variability in the occurrence of the DV was accounted for by the predictor variables (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The classification table was used as another measure of the accuracy of the regression model (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The classification table indicated the total number of cases accurately predicted by a regression model (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The overall fit of the model was also addressed by the reduction in errors due to the regression model (Field, 2009).

The significance level for each IV was also reported based on the Wald statistic. The Wald statistic indicated which IVs were significant in predicting the DV (Field, 2009; Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The odds ratio was reported using the $\text{Exp}(B)$ statistic

(Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The $\text{Exp}(B)$ was included because it indicated how the much the DV changed for every one unit increase in the IVs (Field, 2009). The mean and standard deviation was also given for each IV (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Demographic information on the sample was reported as descriptive statistics of the sample.

Conceptual Framework

Omoto and Snyder (1995) conducted seminal work in the study of volunteerism. They developed the volunteer process model (VPM) to provide a comprehensive explanation for the volunteerism. The VPM consists of the following three phases: antecedents, experiences, and consequence (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The antecedents phase refers to the factors that lead volunteers to the decision to donate their time (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The functional approach is a theory used to explain the effects antecedents on the decision to volunteer (Clary et al., 1996; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Wilson, 2012). Functional theory posits that a volunteer's initial motivation for volunteering effects the volunteer's retention (Clary et al., 1996; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Wilson, 2012). Some studies have linked a volunteer's initial motivation for volunteering to their subsequent retention (Clary et al., 1996, Clary & Snyder, 1999; Wilson, 2012). However, Davis, Hall, and Meyer (2003) found that the initial motivation for volunteering did not affect volunteer retention after four months. Therefore, understanding initial motivation for volunteering has limited utility for understanding long term retention.

The experiences phase is the second phase in the VPM. The experience phase addresses experiences that occur during an individual's volunteer service with an organization (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Research articles positioned within the experience phase of the VPM have focused on the relationships formed between the organization and the volunteer as well as the client and the volunteer (Snyder & Omoto, 2008; Wilson, 2012). One aspect of this relationship has been the organizational support given to volunteers (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Snyder & Omoto, 2008; Wilson, 2012). Several authors found that volunteers who received adequate organizational support were more likely to remain with an organization (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011).

The third phase of the VPM is the consequences phase, which focused on volunteer retention and the overall effect of volunteerism (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The most important aspect of the consequences phase for this study was volunteer retention, which was the DV for this study. The consequences phase also emphasizes the effect of volunteerism on the volunteer and the effect of volunteerism on society in general (Wilson, 2012). Studies have shown that volunteering positively affected the volunteer's physical health (Jenkinson et al., 2013; Okun, Yeung, & Brown, 2013). Other studies have revealed the volunteering can also have a positive effect on the volunteer's mental health (Choi & Bohman, 2007; Wilson, 2012). Volunteerism has a substantial, economic effect on society in general. Volunteer work was valued at millions of dollars for the US economy and over one trillion dollars for the worldwide economy (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011).

This study was positioned within phases two and three of the VPM. The IVs addressed the organizational support communication which occurred during the experience phase (phase two) of the VPM (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The DV was volunteer retention which was emphasized in the consequences phase (phase three) of the VPM (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The IVs were objective measures of organizational support communication provided by the BBBS to the volunteers.

This study is unique because most studies of organizational support used questionnaires with scaled data collected with Likert-type measures to assess volunteer feelings or perceptions of organizational support (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010). Very few studies directly addressed organizational support communication at all (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011). However, I was not able to find a quantitative study that tested factors of the organizational support communication on volunteer retention. Therefore, this study tested objective measures of organizational support communication given to the volunteers to determine if those variables predicted the likelihood of volunteer retention of at least 1 year. This information could be used to inform volunteer managers of which variables of organizational support communication are significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention. This information could allow volunteer managers to develop practices that will provide better organizational support to volunteers. A more in-depth analysis of the current literature can be found in Chapter 2.

Nature of Study

This study used a quantitative research design because the primary purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationship between organizational support communication and the likelihood of retention of volunteers in the BBBS Agency for at least 1 year. Five IVs were included in this study. The first variable was the frequency of communication per month between the volunteer and the agency. The second was the number of match support specialists assigned who communicated with each volunteer during the volunteer's first year of service. The third IV was the amount of face-to-face communication per month between volunteers and the Tampa Bay BBBS. The fourth variable was the amount of telephone communication per month between volunteers and the Tampa Bay BBBS. The fifth and final IV were the amount of written communication per month between volunteers and the Tampa Bay BBBS. The DV, retention, was measured as a dichotomous outcome based on whether a volunteer remained at the agency at the end of 1 year. Data for volunteers who did not serve with the Tampa Bay BBBS for at least 1 year were recorded as (0). Volunteers who served the Tampa Bay BBBS for at least 1 year were coded with a (1).

The study relied on secondary data extracted from records maintained by BBBS (2013). The data were recorded in the BBBS database program by match support specialists as they provided support through communication to the volunteers in the BBBS youth mentoring program. BBBS (2013) uses that data to assess the quality of their programs. The data were entered during a support communication or shortly after a support communications occurred. The timeliness of the data entry was important

because the communication records were much less subject to participant recall bias since they were recorded shortly after the organization support communication occurred (Jones & Johnston, 2011; Schwarz, 2007; Shiffman, Hufford, Hickcox, Paty, Gnys, & Kassel, 1997).

The records provided precise data on when the volunteer service began and when it stopped, which allowed actual retention of each volunteer as the DV. Actual retention was important as the various studies have found significant differences between the actual retention rates and predicted retention rates (Miller et al., 1992; Mollol et al., 2007; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The use of actual retention as the DV allowed greater confidence in the results of the study.

Definitions

Some terms used within this study have interchangeable meanings. Some of the terms used are unique to BBBS, which was the study site for the research. The following terms are defined as presented below for the purposes of the study:

Amount of communication per month: The number of support communications that BBBS provided to the volunteer each month they were actively serving in the program (BBBS, 2013).

Match support specialist: The person within BBBS who bears the primary responsibility for supporting the volunteer (BBBS, 2013). They serve as the primary organizational link between the BBBS agency and the volunteers.

Amount of face-to-face communication per month: The number of support communications that BBBS provided to the volunteer each month that were completed having an in-person conversation (BBBS, 2013).

Amount of telephone communication per month: The number of support communications that BBBS provided to the volunteer each month that were completed by having conversation over the telephone (BBBS, 2013).

Amount of written communications per month: The number of support communications that BBBS provided to the volunteer each month that were completed having a written conversation such as by email or letter (BBBS, 2013).

Volunteer retention: Successful volunteer retention was defined as 1 year or more. The 1 year timeframe was selected because BBBS asks their new volunteers to commit for a minimum of 1 year (BBBS, 2013).

Volunteers: Individuals who work without substantial compensation and choose to donate their time of their own free will (Handy, Cnaan, Brudney, Ascoli, Meijs, & Ranade, 2000).

Support Communication: Substantial, two way communication that occurs between the volunteer and the agency (BBBS, 2013). The primary purpose of the support communication was to communicate with the volunteer regarding the match relationship and to provide support to the volunteer. The support communication can occur over the phone, in person, or in writing via email or letter (BBBS, 2013).

Support Communication Record: The data that was recorded in the BBBS database for each instance of support communication that was provided to the volunteer by BBBS.

Match support specialist: The person within BBBS who bears the primary responsibility for supporting the volunteer (BBBS, 2013). They served as the primary organizational links between the BBBS agency and the volunteers.

Big Brothers or Big Sisters: The volunteer mentors who donate their time through BBBS to mentor at-risk children (BBBS, 2013).

Match: A formal mentoring relationship between a volunteer and child that was established through BBBS (BBBS, 2013).

Assumptions

One of the primary assumptions associated with using this data is that the data is accurate (Jones, 2010). BBBS of Tampa Bay does have specific guidelines for their staff regarding data entry into the database to ensure its accuracy (J.G Libby, *personal communication*, April 2, 2015). For instance, BBBS staff are encouraged to enter support communications into the system as soon as they occur so they clearly remember the details of the conversation (J.G Libby, *personal communication*, April 2, 2015). Staff are encouraged to activate a match before midnight on the date it began. When the match was activated, the start date of the volunteer service was automatically stamped on the record which helps to ensure the data is accurate (J.G Libby, *personal communication*, April 2, 2015). (BBBS, 2013). Supervisors are also required to finalize the end date of matches that support specialists marked for closure within a timely fashion which helps to ensure

the accuracy of the closure date (J.G Libby, *personal communication*, April 2, 2015). However, there was no way to further verify the accuracy of the information within the system. Therefore, I had to assume that the data were accurate.

One important assumption of the logistic regression analysis I performed is that the variables are related (Mertler & Vanetta, 2006). There is substantial evidence that organizational support is linked to volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh, et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011; Wilson, 2012). Some qualitative studies found that the communication provided by the agency was important to volunteer retention (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011). However, I could not find literature that empirically tested the effect of organizational support communication on volunteer retention. Therefore, I had to assume that the variables were related.

Scope and Delimitations

This study assessed the relationship between five measures of organizational support communication and volunteer retention of at least 1 year. To accomplish this objective, all data for this study came from records kept by BBBS of Tampa Bay as part of their program requirements. Therefore, all records pertained to participants who volunteered in service areas of Central Florida. All records pertained to people who volunteered to mentor at-risk children who were between the ages of 5 and 15. Thus, caution should be used when attempting to generalize results from this study to people

who volunteer in other geographical areas as well as for people who volunteer in other capacities.

Limitations

One limitation when using archival data is that researchers have no control over the methodology used to collect the data (Jones, 2010). BBBS has some clear guidelines for their staff regarding entering data into the archival system that was used for this study. Agency staff designed these guidelines to help ensure the accuracy of their database since they rely on it for many of their own organizational metrics (BBBS, 2013; Jones, 2010). However, the guidelines do not guarantee that all agencies or employees follow all of the guidelines, which could affect the accuracy of some of the data (Herrera et al., 2007; Jones, 2010).

This study used nonexperimental methods. I was not able to control for additional factors that could have influenced the DV, which was volunteer retention. Therefore, I will not establish a cause and effect relationship among the variables.

Significance

The primary purpose of BBBS is to provide mentors who positively affect the lives of the children they serve (BBBS, 2013). Managers and leaders at BBBS could use the data from this study to design programs that provide better organizational support communication to volunteers. Providing better organizational support communication to volunteers could increase volunteer retention which could improve the outcomes for the children served by BBBS. BBBS of America services several hundred thousand children each year, which means that improved volunteer mentor retention would present a

substantial opportunity to affect social change for the at risk children they serve (BBBS, 2013).

Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the study. The study addressed the problem of volunteer retention. When an agency loses a volunteer, a fairly substantial cost is incurred to replace the volunteer. Additionally, the loss of a volunteer could have a negative effect on the academic outcomes of the agency's clients (Herrera et al., 2007).

The study utilized principles found in the experience and consequence phases of the VPM. The five IVs are related to organizational support communication which was found within the experience stage of the VPM. The five IVs in the study were all objective factors of organizational support communication. The DV was volunteer retention which comes from the consequences phase of the VPM.

This quantitative study used an archival research design. A logistic regression analysis was conducted to assess how well the measures of organizational communication predict volunteer retention. All of the data was archival data that was collected from BBBS of Tampa Bay. The IVs were the amount of communication per month, number of match support specialists, amount of face-to-face communication per month, amount of telephone communication per month, and amount of written communication per month between the BBBS and volunteers. The DV was volunteer retention, which was measured as a dichotomous outcome based on the length of service.

Chapter 2 of this proposal contains an in-depth literature review that will discuss the foundations of the current study. Chapter 2 will also provide justification for the

variables included in the study. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology that was utilized to analyze the data collected for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Premature volunteer dropout is problematic for nonprofit agencies due to the costs associated with recruiting, processing, placing, and training new volunteers when existing volunteers leave (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Hustinx et al., 2010). In addition to the lost monetary investments, agencies lose the on the job training and expertise the volunteer has developed as well as the relationships the volunteer has established with clients (Jamison, 2003; Miller et al., 1990). Such losses are especially problematic for nonprofit agencies where volunteers work closely with clients (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). For example, BBBS is an agency that specializes in one-on-one mentoring of at-risk children (BBBS, 2013). Data from the BBBS indicated that volunteers must remain matched with the children for at least 1 year for the children to sustain any positive gains they make as a result of the mentoring relationship (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). The BBBS internal studies have revealed that when a volunteer quits prematurely, the child does not sustain the gains that were made during the mentoring process (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). Further, studies have linked premature termination of BBBS mentoring relationships to decreased school performance in the children (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008).

Literature has suggested that the organizational support provided to the volunteers is linked to volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011; Wilson, 2012). However,

the majority of the studies that have provided evidence of a link between organizational support and volunteer retention used a predicted retention rate rather than the actual retention of volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivilian, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2012; Huynh, Winefield, Xanthopolou, & Metzger, 2011). In addition, studies have used scaled inventories to assess how supported the volunteers felt (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010). However, I did not find any studies that directly addressed the effect of supportive communication on volunteer retention. The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationship between organizational support communication and the likelihood of retention of volunteers in the BBBS Agency for at least 1 year.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth literature review related to the variables of interest in the proposed study. The first section contains the literature search strategy. The second section contains a discussion of the VPM, which includes the following three phases: antecedents to volunteering, experiences in volunteering, and consequences of volunteering. The third section contains a detailed discussion of the literature pertaining to volunteer support and retention. The fourth section describes the literature related to each of the IVs. The chapter concludes with a summary of the current literature that pertains to organizational support provided to volunteers and volunteer retention as well as a discussion on the importance of volunteer retention in enacting social change.

Literature Search

A substantial amount of literature regarding volunteerism has been published (Lio-troth, 2008; Musick & Wilson, Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; 2008; Wilson, 2012). Research has been conducted across multiple disciplines such as business, psychology, social work, medicine, ecology, and nonprofit (Lio-troth, 2008; Musick & Wilson, Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013; 2008; Wilson, 2012). Therefore, the literature search strategy for this study was multidisciplinary and encompassed databases from multiple fields of study.

Scholarly articles contained in this review were located by searching databases at Walden University and Southeastern University. Those databases included ProQuest, EBSCOhost, SAGE, Wiley, Google Scholar, and JSTOR. Keywords used for the search included *volunteer*, *volunteer management*, *volunteer retention*, *volunteer satisfaction*, *volunteer and organizational support*, *volunteer burnout*, *volunteer motivation*, *volunteer and human resources*, and finally *volunteer and organizational commitment*. As I read through articles, I noted citations to additional studies if they addressed any of the variables in my study. Then, I found full text articles for those additional studies to include in my literature review. I also looked over several comprehensive literature reviews on volunteer retention and volunteer management in order to identify other articles that were appropriate for inclusion in the literature review.

I found it was necessary to search for articles in employee and volunteer retention literature to identify measures related to organizational support communication since they were not delineated in the volunteer retention literature. The five variables that I

identified based on the literature review serve as the IVs for the study are as follows: frequency of communication, number of match support specialists, frequency of face-to-face communication, frequency of telephone communication, and frequency of written communication.

The key terms used to search for information regarding frequency of communication between the volunteer and the agency were *frequent communication*, *organizational identity*, *organizational identity AND frequent communications*, *frequent communication AND student retention*, *frequent communication AND employee retention*, *organizational identity AND volunteer retention*, *frequent communication AND retention*, *communication frequency AND retention*, and *social support theory AND antecedents*. The key terms used to search for information regarding the number of match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers were *job embeddedness theory*, *Job Embeddedness and links*, *downsizing survivor network*, *links*, *supervisor turnover AND employee turnover*, and *manager turnover AND employee turnover*. Finally, I conducted additional searches to locate articles on the two variables that address the potential link between type of communication and retention. The key terms used to conduct the search were *communication richness theory*, *communication richness AND retention*, *communication richness AND social support*, *computer mediated communication*, and *computer mediated communication AND social support*.

In addition, I obtained a copy of the BBBS of Tampa Bay's (BBBS) service delivery model that outlined their policies for volunteer support. Finally, studies that specifically addressed outcomes and volunteer retention within the BBBS program were

also included in this literature review. Key terms used to search for studies that related to BBBS mentoring outcomes included *BBBS* and *mentoring outcomes*.

Definition of *Volunteerism*

Volunteers have played an active part in the delivery of social, religious, and medical services in the United States since settlers began arriving from Europe (Ellis & Campbell, 2005). Historically, volunteers have fulfilled critical social service needs (Ellis & Campbell, 2005). To this day, the social service sector of America still depends upon volunteer labor in order to provide services to the most vulnerable populations (Ellis & Campbell, 2005).

The word volunteer has varying definitions. However, two key concepts associated with the definition have emerged from the literature. The first concept is that a volunteer is a person who freely and willingly performs work without coercion from other parties (Cnaan & Amroffell, 1994; Musick & Wilson, 2008). There are cases where an individual could be required to do volunteer work such as when the volunteering was required as part of a court sentencing (Cnaan & Amroffell, 1994; Musick & Wilson, 2008). However, because such volunteer work would be a form of coercion from the courts, it would not fit the pure definition of volunteerism (Cnaan & Amroffell, 1994; Musick & Wilson, 2008). The second concept associated with volunteerism is that individuals who complete the work receive little to no compensation for their time and effort (Handy, Cnaan, Brudney, Ascoli, Meijs, & Ranade, 2000; Musick & Wilson, 2008).

For the purposes of this paper, volunteers is defined as individuals who choose to give their time within the setting of a formal, nonprofit organization. They also should receive little to no compensation for their efforts. Studies that involved volunteers who did not volunteer willingly or received more than minimal compensation were excluded from the literature review.

Theoretical Foundation

The VPM serves as the theoretical framework for this study. The VPM was developed by Omoto and Snyder (1995) to provide a framework for explaining the entire process of volunteering. The model includes the following three phases: antecedents, experience, and consequences (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The antecedent phase addresses the decision making process that occurs before a person decides to volunteer (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The experience stage occurs while a person performs the actual volunteer work (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The final stage is the consequences stage, and a key measure in this stage is the length of service for the volunteer (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). For this review, I will briefly overview literature pertaining to the VPM. Next, I give will give on in depth overview of the literature that pertains to organizational support and volunteer retention. Finally, I will discuss the literature that supports each of the IVs. The five IVs are amount of communication per month, number of support specialists who communicated with the volunteer, the amount of face-to-face communication per month, the amount of telephone communication per month, and the amount of written communication per month.

Antecedent Phase of Volunteerism

The first phase of volunteerism, the antecedent phase, primarily addresses the factors that motivate people to volunteer (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). Many studies have focused on addressing the underlying motivators that cause people to volunteer their time (Chen & Chen, 2011; Clary et al., 1996; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Lo & Lee, 2011; Miller, 1985; Peachy, Lyras, Cohen, Bruening, & Cunningham, 2013). Results from some studies (Clary et al., 1996, Clary & Snyder, 1999) have indicated that volunteers' initial motivation for donating their time influences their retention with the agency. Volunteers who are most likely to be retained for the longest periods are those who are motivated to volunteer by altruistic reasons rather than more self-centered reasons (Clary et al., 1996; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Wilson, 2012). However, Davis, Hall, and Meyer (2003) found that the initial motivation for volunteering did not affect volunteer retention after four months. Therefore, understanding initial motivation for volunteering has limited utility for understanding long term retention.

Additionally, the results from some studies indicated that an appropriate match between the job duties and the volunteer's motivation could increase volunteer retention (Bussell & Forbes, 2001; Peachy, 2013; Stukas et al., 2009). However, it can be impractical for many agencies to tailor the job of each volunteer to match their motives because it is very time consuming and requires a substantial amount of flexibility in job duties (Stukas et al., 2009). Additionally, Stukas, and colleagues (2009) conducted a study that revealed organizational factors may serve to moderate the relationship between initial motivation to volunteer and volunteer retention. Their results indicated that a good

match between motivations for volunteering and job duties did not have as great of an effect on retention in organizations when more structured support was provided to the volunteers (Stukas et al., 2009). One example of structured support was the ongoing communication between the volunteer and a volunteer coordinator (Stukas et al., 2009). These results indicate that the organizational support communication that occur during the experience stage of volunteering are also critical to retention (Stukas et al., 2009).

Experiences Phase of Volunteerism

The experience stage of volunteerism encompasses events that occur while a volunteer serves within an organization (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). These events include training, performing the work, as well as interacting with agency staff, other volunteers, and clients (Wilson, 2012). The experience stage of volunteerism was of particular interest to this study because the IVs occurred during the experience stage. Scholarly works positioned within the experience stage addressed the events that occur during the actual volunteer experience. Extensive information regarding the role of organizational support within the volunteer experience is given within the Organizational Support and Retention section of this proposal.

Consequences

The final phase of the VPM is the consequences phase, which has two basic components (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). The first component is volunteer retention (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). The second component refers to the larger effect of volunteerism on society (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012).

Volunteer Retention. For the purpose of this study, successful volunteer retention was defined as retention with an organization for 1 year or more. The 1 year timeframe was selected because BBBS asks their new volunteers to commit for a minimum of 1 year (BBBS, 2013). Volunteer retention is important for the BBBS in order to make efficient use of resources, efficiently serve clientele, and promote social change (Wilson, 2012). Researchers have linked the organizational support provided the volunteers to volunteer retention. Volunteer retention was the DV in this study (Wilson, 2012). Volunteer retention is discussed at length in the Key Concepts: Organizational Support and Retention section of this proposal.

Effect of volunteerism. The other critical element of the consequences phase is the long-term effect of the volunteer service. Though the material contained in this section does not directly related to the study variables, the material has been included because it is part of the VPM which serves as the theoretical foundation for the study. The material also describes the positive benefits that volunteerism has for the individuals, society, and economy.

Individual health. The literature has indicated that volunteerism can result in substantial health benefits for volunteers (Jenkinson et al., 2013; Okun, Yeung, & Brown, 2013). Volunteering has been associated with lower levels of depression and higher levels of quality of life (Okun et al., 2013). Jenkinson, and colleagues also found that volunteerism may delay mortality among older adult volunteers. However, in meta-analysis of 29 papers, Jenkinson, and colleagues did not find volunteerism to be associated with high levels of physical health. Jenkinson, and colleagues did suggest that

some of the hypothesized health benefits of volunteering may have been mediated by the amount of hours served by the volunteers and the initial motivation for the volunteer service.

Economic value. Volunteers contribute a substantial amount of time and energy to human service organizations. The BLS (2014a) estimated that from September 2012 to September 2013, 25.4% of people 16 years and older volunteered. The median amount of time donated during the study year was 50 hours (BLS, 2014a). Other researchers have estimated that on a global scale, approximately one billion people volunteer each year (Salamon et al., 2011). Several scholars have indicated that volunteer labor contributes a substantial amount of economic value to the US economy as well as to the rest of the world (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011). However, a substantial amount of controversy exists over which method is the best way to estimate the value of volunteer service (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011).

The basic methods for calculating the value of volunteer service are the replacement method, the opportunity cost method, and the social impact method (Bowman, 2009; Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011). The replacement and opportunity cost methods measure inputs whereas the impact method measures outputs (Bowman, 2009; Salamon et al., 2011). The replacement cost tends to be the most used method of assigning value to volunteer service (Pho, 2008; Salamon et al., 2011). However, Bowman (2009) argued that this method was inadequate because volunteers and their hypothetical replacement employees are not perfect substitutes for each other and valuing volunteer work using this method tends to overvalue the contribution.

Pho (2008) found that the value of US volunteer work ranged from between \$116 million when valued using the replacement cost method and \$153 million when valued using the opportunity cost method. Additionally, Salamon et al. (2011) estimated the annual worldwide economic value of volunteer work to be around 1.34 trillion dollars. Even the lowest annual estimates place the value of volunteer work at a higher value than the gross domestic product (GPD) of all but six countries (Salamon et al., 2011).

Social impact of volunteer mentors. Tierney, and colleagues (1995) conducted seminal work on the effectiveness of mentoring for the BBBS programs. The researchers found that youth who received a mentor through BBBS were less likely to engage in negative behavior such as using drugs and alcohol, hitting someone, skipping school, and lying to a parent. The youth were more likely to report positive relationships with their parents, improved scholastic performance, and that they received emotional support.

Herrera et al. (2007) conducted a follow up study of a BBBS school based mentoring program that utilized information from BBBS agencies across the US. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact that site-based mentoring had on the mentees quality of life. The participants were 1,139 student enrolled in 4th through 9th grade. Participants were randomly assigned to either the control group or the treatment group. The treatment group contained 565 participants who were eligible to receive a mentor during the study timeframe. All students who received a mentor met with their mentor at an approved BBBS site, such as a school. The control group contained 574 participants who were not eligible to receive a mentor until after the study concluded. Results measured at the end of the first school year showed that participants who received

a volunteer mentor through BBBS showed gains in academic indicators such as scholastic efficacy, high grades in science and language, higher quality of class work, more classwork turned in, and less serious school infractions. However, children who were mentored in a site-based program for one school year or less showed declines in school performance and classroom behavior compared to the control group when they were retested during the next school year. In contrast, youth whose volunteer mentor continued the mentoring relationship into the next school year sustained some of the academic advantages made during their first year of mentoring (Herrera et al., 2007). It is also worth noting that unlike Tierney, and colleagues (1995), Herrera et al. (2007) did not find any statistically significant improvement in indicators outside the classroom for any of the children who were mentored.

Rhodes and DeBoise (2008) found a similar trend to Herrera, and colleagues (2007) regarding the length of mentoring relationships when they reviewed literature related to the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs. Their conclusions were based on a literature review (Rhodes & DeBoise, 2008). Rhodes and DeBoise (2008) reported that mentees who were paired in mentoring relationships which lasted at least 1 year produced the largest improvements in academic grades, emotional well-being, and behavioral issues. Rhodes and DuBois (2008) also reported that mentoring relationships that lasted less than 1 year were positively correlated with increased alcohol abuse in the mentee.

Berstein, Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, and Levin (2009) conducted a large quantitative study of programs that participated in the US Department of Education Site

based mentoring program. There were 2,573 students that participated in the study. Participants were randomly assigned to receive a mentor or to stay on the waiting list. The primary purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of a youth mentoring program. They measured outcomes related to social behavior, academic performance, high risk behaviors, and personal responsibility. Results from the study revealed few gains for the group that was mentored when compared to the control group (Berstein et al., 2009). None of the outcome variables were significant for the entire population (Berstein et al., 2009). However, an analysis based on the effects for subgroups indicated that mentoring affected various groups in different ways (Berstein et al., 2009). For instance, mentoring was positively associated with future orientation for boys, whereas it was positively associated with scholastic efficacy and social bonding for girls (Berstein et al., 2009).

Schwartz, Rhodes, Chan, and Herrera (2011) conducted a quantitative study of 1,139 youth in the 4th through 9th grades. The participants were randomly assigned to receive a mentor or be placed in the control group where participants did not receive a mentor. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether the quality of the youths' pre-intervention relationships before they were mentored were associated with gains from the mentoring relationship. The researcher's collected data three times during the study period. Data were collected via a baseline survey given to the youth, and a report from the youths' teachers. Schwartz, and colleagues found that participants who had strong relationships before receiving a mentor did not benefit from having a mentor. Additionally, participants who had strongly negative relationships before receiving a

mentor showed positive outcomes on only one criteria, which was fewer unexcused absences (Schwartz et al., 2011). However, students whose pre-intervention relationships were neither strongly positive nor strongly negative received the most benefit from the mentoring relationship. The results indicated that students who had neutral pre-intervention relationships benefited from mentoring experienced increased academic performance, prosocial behavior, and self-perceptions of academic ability, and they put forth more effort in the classroom (Schwartz et al., 2011).

Results from a study by Kolar and McBride (2011) indicated that short term matches (1 year or less) produced positive social gains in participants. The observed gains included improved classroom behavior, attitudes toward school, and peer relationships. They conducted a quantitative study of a BBBS school based mentoring program in Virginia. The participants were 160 children between the ages of 7 and 12. The results indicated that students who received a mentor liked school better, behaved better in the classroom, and experienced improved relationships with their peers regardless of the length of the match. However, there were some methodological weaknesses in Kolar and McBride (2011) such as no control group to serve as a comparison for the outcomes of the mentoring. Results from the Kolar and McBride (2011) are important because they revealed that mentoring made a positive impact on the mentees in a relatively short period of time.

Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, and Rhodes (2012) conducted a quantitative study with 1,139 participants who were in fourth through ninth grade. The primary purpose of the study was to analyze the effect of mentoring relationships on academic outcomes

based on the length of the mentoring match. They also analyzed the effect of a rematch on student's performance. A rematch occurred when a student's initial mentor stopped meeting with them and the mentees were assigned a new mentor (Grossman et al., 2012). The students were randomly assigned to the experimental or control group (Grossman et al., 2012). Their results indicated that students who experienced matches that lasted the entire school year showed gains in their overall academic performance compared to the control group (Grossman et al., 2012). Participants in the treatment groups reported fewer unexcused absences (Grossman et al., 2012). Participants who were rematched experienced a decrease in their academic performance compared to the control group (Grossman et al., 2012). The results from participants who experienced a short term match, but were rematched, indicated no effect on academic performance compared to the control group (Grossman et al., 2012). The results indicated that longer matches produced more positive outcomes for the mentees.

The studies included in this review indicated that the effect of mentoring on academic and social behavior varies based on the number of mediation variables. Some studies reported a positive correlation between mentoring and positive changes in academic behaviors (DuBois et al., 2011; Herrera et al., 2007; Schwartz et al., 2011; Tierney et al., 1995). Others researchers indicated there was no correlation between mentoring and positive changes in academic behavior (Berstein et al., 2009; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2010). Several studies also indicated a correlation between mentoring and positive changes in social behavior (Kolar & McBride, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011). However, the research has consistently indicated that students who

experienced longer matches were more likely to experience positive gains (Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2012; Herrera et al., 2007). If the length of a match is a key factor in mentoring producing positive outcomes for BBBS mentees, then the retention of BBBS volunteers is critical to the success of mentoring programs. It is important to study factors, such as organization support communication, that may be related to volunteer retention.

Key Concepts: Organizational Support and Retention

Research has revealed that the organizational support given to volunteers is one variable which affects retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Huynh, et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011; Wilson, 2012).

Qualitative studies (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011) and quantitative studies (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010) have provided evidence regarding the relationship between organizational support and volunteer retention. The next section will present results from some of qualitative literature that indicates a link between organizational support communication and volunteer retention.

Qualitative Research on Organizational Support Communication and Volunteer Retention

Skoglund (2006) conducted a study to examine why volunteer retention was decreasing at a particular hospital. The participants were volunteers who donated their

time to provide support for people who had recently lost a loved one at the affiliated hospital (Skoglund, 2006). Data were collected from 42 participants through the use of one-on-one interviews (Skoglund, 2006). Participants frequently expressed the need for more supportive communication with their coordinators and fellow volunteers. The participants who discussed the desire for more communication disclosed that they felt it would help them deal with the emotionally challenging role of their volunteer work (Skoglund, 2006). One limitation of this study was that it was extremely short and provided very little information regarding the methodology used (Skoglund, 2006). However, this study did provide evidence of the importance of organization support communication to volunteer retention.

Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) conducted a two-year long ethnographic study that examined the stages that active volunteers go through during their volunteer experience from an organizational socialization perspective. The study sample was a group of Israeli volunteers who volunteered to help homeless youth. The researchers collected data from participants during 20 participant-observer sessions, 30 interviews, and a volunteer focus group. Data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008).

The concept of support repeatedly emerged as an important theme for successful volunteer retention throughout the stages of the volunteers' experiences (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). However, the reasons cited for the importance of support varied based on their stage in the volunteer experience. For instance, participants revealed that support from other members of the organization was important because the support helped new

volunteers integrate into the organization. The researchers did not specify what exact methods were used to give that support. However, several participants referred to supportive conversations (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). The results further revealed that successful integration was critical to retention because volunteers who did not integrate well were more likely to drop out prematurely compared to volunteers who did integrate well. Findings from the study further revealed that once new volunteers were more confident in their roles, encouragement and support from other members of the organization helped them set healthy boundaries with the youth they were serving, which delayed burnout (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008).

Support was also important for volunteers who experienced burnout (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). The researchers found that if the participants did not go through a renewal process following burnout, they often left the organization. Frequently, volunteers who went through the renewal process took a break from their volunteer assignments. During this break, participants indicated that the support provided by the organization in the form of continued communication was a critical variable that influenced their decision to return to their volunteer work. The Haski-Leventhal and Bargal study is important because it provides qualitative evidence regarding the relationship between organizational support given to volunteers at various stages of the volunteer's experience and volunteer retention.

In another qualitative study Weeks and MacQuarrie (2011) investigated the experiences of nine male hospice volunteers to gather suggestions on how hospice volunteer programs could better recruit, train, retain, and support their male volunteers.

Data were collected during an in-person interview with each participant. The authors used thematic content analysis to analyze the data. Two volunteers implied they might end their service due to lack of support. Other volunteers indicated that adequate support was crucial to them deciding to continue in their current assignments. Participants specifically stated that they desired supportive communication in the form of recognition, feedback, and ongoing interaction with other volunteers and their agency supervisors to share their experiences. This study provided further evidence that supportive communication is important to volunteer retention (Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011).

Quantitative Research on Organizational Support and Volunteer Retention

A plethora of quantitative studies have presented findings which showed that organizational support affects volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010). However, an early study by Jamison (2003) did not find a relationship between satisfaction with communication and volunteer retention. The purpose of the study was to analyze the role job satisfaction in a volunteer's decision to remain an active volunteer. The participants were 119 volunteers who donated their time to various agencies. Eighty six participants were active volunteers who had kept the same level of commitment for the past 12 months. The remaining 33 participants were inactive volunteers. Jamison (2003) collected data through surveys that were distributed and returned through the mail. The results indicated that the average level of satisfaction with communication was higher for inactive volunteers than for active volunteers (Jamison, 2003). However, the relationship between communication

and retention was not statistically significant (Jamison, 2003). It is important to note that Jamison (2003) only measured the satisfaction with communication by using a scaled inventory. Jamison (2003) did not measure the actual amount of communication that took place within the organization as I did in this study.

Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, and Darcy (2006) also found a link between organizational support and volunteer retention. They conducted a study to analyze the importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) techniques in volunteer management. The sample of participants were volunteer managers from an Australian sports league. The research was a mixed-methods study. The first phase was a qualitative approach that collected data during focus group sessions in order to gather information to create the measurement tools for subsequently collecting the quantitative. During the quantitative data analysis Cuskelly et al. (2006) analyzed the relationship between HRM practices in volunteer management (the IV) and the manager's perceptions of problems with volunteer retention (the DV). The results indicated that support received from the agency was significant in predicting volunteer retention for committee and board members of the sports league. In contrast, data from the study revealed that support received from the agency was not significant for predicting retention in other types of volunteers within the sports organization. It should be noted that Cuskelly et al. (2006) measured retention by asking managers if they perceived volunteer retention to be a problem for their agency. They did not measure actual retention. However, this study does provide evidence that showed a connection between organizational support and volunteer retention.

Hildago and Moreno (2009) analyzed the relationships between job design, organizational integration, and volunteer retention. The researchers collected data via questionnaires that were distributed and collected by volunteer coordinators at the participating organizations. Organizational support was measured by using a two-item Likert style scale where the participants rated the quality of support they received. Data were analyzed with a regression analysis. They found that job design factors, organizational support, social networks, and training were statistically significant predictor of the volunteer's intention to remain volunteering. However, the effect size for support provided by the organization was small, it only explained 2% of the variance in the volunteers' intent.

Hustinx (2010) conducted a mixed methods study of volunteers from the Belgian Red Cross that investigated the relationship between organizational support and volunteer retention. The answers from the group of 99 ex-volunteers were compared to a control group of 652 active volunteers. Data were collected via face-to-face interviews using both scaled items and open ended questions. Additionally, volunteers were asked to identify their reasons for quitting and were given a list of potential reason to help with recall. Hustinx (2010) used NVivo to code and analyze the qualitative data. The majority of volunteers who quit cited both personal and organizational reasons for their decision. The most common reasons cited for quitting included poor job design (or matching) and poor or inadequate support from the organization.

In another study of volunteer retention, Garner and Garner (2010) conducted a study on organizational voice and volunteer retention using a sample of 383 volunteers.

Their purpose was to analyze the relationships between organizational voice, organizational satisfaction, and volunteer retention. Organizational support was included as part of an overall measure of organizational satisfaction. Organizational support was measured using a Likert style scale. Participants responded to the item based on how supported they felt. Retention was measured using an 8 item scale that was specifically developed for the study. The items asked volunteers to predict their future volunteer involvement with their current agency.

Garner and Garner (2010) found that organizational support predicted the type of organizational voice that volunteers used. In turn, the type of organizational voice expressed by volunteers predicted volunteer retention. However, organizational support did not directly predict volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010).

Hyunth et al (2011) conducted a quantitative study that tested how volunteers responded to demands of their responsibilities based on the resources available to them. The participants were 211 palliative care volunteers. The main job of the volunteers was to provide support to patients who were dying and their families. The work the volunteers performed was an emotionally draining process for them. Support from supervisors and support for the organization were looked at as two separate variables. Hyunth, and colleagues collected data via mailed surveys. All variables were measured using scaled inventories. The results indicated that volunteers who reported higher levels of supervisor support and organizational support also reported that they were more likely to continue volunteering. This study is important because one of the key resources identified as important to volunteer retention was organizational support.

The results from multiple studies indicated that there is a link between organizational support and volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). However, the quantitative studies reported in this literature review all used scaled inventories when they tested the link between volunteer support and retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010). The Likert style inventories addressed the volunteer's feelings regarding the support they received (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010). However, I did not locate any studies that directly addressed the effect of organizational support communication on volunteer retention.

Measures of retention. Most studies that addressed volunteer retention measured predicted retention rather than actual retention of volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivilian, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2012; Huynh et al., 2011). Those studies utilized different methods to obtain the predicted retention results. For instance, Hildago and Moreno (2012) asked participants if they planned to continue volunteering for many years (p. 598). In contrast, Cuskelly, and colleagues (2006) used a scaled inventory which assessed if the volunteer managers perceived volunteer retention to be a problem for their agency. Garner and Garner (2010) used an 8-item Likert style scale that asked volunteers to predict how likely they were to volunteer in the future. Additionally, in some cases, retention was measured using only one item (Hildago &

Moreno, 2012). In other cases predicted retention was measured using a multi-item scale (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivilian, 2000; Hyunth et al., 2011). The differences in how retention was measured across multiple studies made it difficult compare the results of the relationship between organizational support and retention across the various studies.

Ultimately, it is the actual retention of the volunteer that is the more important indicator for agencies. The use of an actual retention rate avoids the issue of lack of reliability that can occur with a predicted retention rate (Mallol et al., 2007). Thus, a key difference in this study versus most previous studies is the use of an actual retention rate instead of a predicted retention rate.

Organizational Support Communication

The events that occur in the experience phase of volunteerism have a large impact on volunteer retention (Davis, et al., 2003; Gazley, 2012). Several studies have indicated a link between organizational support and volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). However, I did not find any studies that addressed the relationship between the types of communication, frequency of communication, and volunteer retention. Many people who have researched in the field of volunteer retention have used theories and concepts from other sources of retention literature (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivilian, 2000; Jamison, 2003; Wilson, 2012). Most of these researchers cited the lack of retention theories developed specifically for volunteerism as a justification for using other sources of retention literature (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube

& Pivilian, 2000; Jamison, 2003; Wilson, 2012). Therefore, I used concepts found in employee retention literature, financial donor retention literature, and student retention literature in order to conceptualize the IVs for this study.

Frequency of Communication

In a qualitative study, Skoglund (2006) found that volunteer participants in a program that provided support to bereaved family members desired more frequent communication with the staff who ran the program. The results also showed that the volunteers' desire for more frequent communication was related to the volunteers' intention to continue volunteering. Unfortunately, I was unable to find quantitative literature regarding the relationship between frequency of communication of agency communication with volunteers and volunteer retention is noticeably lacking in the literature. Therefore, literature that pertains to retention of students, financial donors, and employees is discussed in this section.

Moeller et al. (2010) conducted a literature review of factors that affect retention of in-patriate managers. This review indicated that frequency of communication with corporate officials in both their home country, and their new host country was related to retention of managers. The researchers noted that if support was not extended to both the manager and their family, the new manager was less likely to be retained in that position (Moeller et al, 2010). This study showed a link between frequency of communication with corporate officials and employee retention.

The importance of the frequent communication with faculty and staff is a frequent theme the literature related to student retention (Achilles et al., 2011; Braxton et al.,

2007; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Cross, 1998). Several authors have conducted in depth literature reviews of best teaching practices for university professors (Braxton et al., 2007; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Cross, 1998). In these reviews, the authors found that the frequency of communication between students and their teachers was linked to student retention (Braxton et al., 2007; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Cross, 1998).

Additionally, in a quantitative study of online retention Achilles, and colleagues (2011) found that frequent organizational communication was related to the success and retention of online students. The participants were online students enrolled in a 10 week Accounting I class. There were three groups of students in the study. The first group took the class before the University instituted formal communication guidelines for the instructors and were known as the “pre-outreach group.” The second group took the class in 2009 after the university initiated a policy that prescribed outreach to students whose average fell below a 70%. The final group also took the class in 2009 with a professor who maintained a regiment of frequent communication with students. The results indicated that students in the third, frequent communication group had a higher retention and course pass rate than students in the other classes. This study was of short duration and there were several methodological weaknesses. These weaknesses included not disclosing the number of participants and not discussing the method of data collection. However, despite the methodological weaknesses, results from the study provided evidence that frequency of instructor communication had an impact on student retention.

The relationship between frequency of organizational communication has been linked to the retention of alumni donors (Porter, Hartman, & Johnson, 2011; Stephenson

& Yeager, 2014). Porter, and colleagues conducted a quantitative study of 114 alumni who represented 74 colleges. They collected data via scaled inventories that were administered via an online. The researchers found that frequency of organizational communication between the alumni and the university positively predicted organizational identification. One potential weakness in this study is that that authors used attendance at university events as the measure for frequency of communication. However, many other forms of communication could exist. An additional limitation to the study was that frequency of communication was tied only to stronger organizational identification. The results did indicate that organizational identification predicted better donor retention. However, the author's did not test a direct link between frequency of communication and donor retention. This study provided some empirical evidence of the link between frequency of communication with the university and retention of alumni donors.

Stephenson and Yeager (2014) provided further evidence of the link between frequency of organizational communication and retention of alumni financial donors. They conducted a quantitative study of 2,763 alumni from a mid-size University in the Atlantic region. Perspective participants were contacted via email and those who were willing to participate in the study completed an online survey. Stephenson and Yeager found that frequency of communication between the participants and the university was positively linked to the retention of the participants as donors for the university (Stephenson & Yeager, 2014).

Number of Match Support Specialists

Once a volunteer begins their service, their assigned match support specialist will provide nearly all of the organizational support communication. Therefore, match support specialists are a primary organizational link between the BBBS agency and the volunteers. Organizational links are formal and information relationships that people develop within an organization. The strength of the link between people who provide organization support communication and volunteer retention has received little empirical research. However, the relationship between organizational links and retention has been studied extensively in employee retention literature.

Mitchell, and colleagues (2001) hypothesized that employees who had strong organizational links were more likely to be retained by their companies. Organizational links were defined as formal or informal relationships that people develop within the organization. The strength of the organizational links was measured using a scaled inventory. They conducted a study using two different samples. The first sample contained 177 participants who were all employees of a grocery store chain. The second sample contained 208 hospital employees. They collected data from both groups via Likert style questionnaires that were sent to participants via the mail. Responses from participants were also collected via the mail. Data regarding employee retention was collected directly from the employers 12 months after the initial data collection period. The employers provided a list of people who had ceased their employment with the organization. The employees who left involuntarily were removed from the sample. The results indicated that people with strong organization links were less likely to intend to

leave. However, there was not a significant correlation between the reported strength of organizational links and actual voluntary turnover. This study is important because it laid the theoretical groundwork for the study of organizational links and retention.

Susskind (2007) conducted a quantitative study to analyze the effect of the loss of organizational links on retention. Data were collected from employees from an international hotel company that had planned to downsize their workforce. Data were collected 60 days before the scheduled downsizing, as well as 60 days and 120 days after the downsizing occurred. Susskind (2007) used a Likert style inventory to assess the strength of the participant's organizational links. There were 97 participants who survived the layoffs. Retention was measured using a scaled inventory that assessed the employee's intention to leave the organization (Susskind, 2007). The results indicated the loss of organizational links contributed to an increase in intention to quit (Susskind, 2007).

Ramesh and Gelfand (2010) also found a correlation between organizational links and employee retention. They conducted a cross-national study with 323 US employees and 629 Indian employees to further test the relationship between organizational links and retention (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). They found that organizational links were significantly correlated with actual retention in call center employees from India. In the American group of employees, organizational links were significantly correlated with intention to quit, but not with actual retention (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010).

Qiu et al. (2014) provided further support for the effect of organizational links on employee retention. They conducted a qualitative study to examine the reasons for low

retention among Chinese hospitality workers. Thirteen employees of a hotel in China participated in the study. Qiu, and colleagues collected data using focus groups. The researchers transcribed and coded the data using NVIVO. One key theme which emerged from the data were that participants indicated they were less likely to leave their job if they had a strong network of colleagues (Qiu et al., 2014). This study provided further evidence that organizational links are related to retention.

In the case of BBBS, after volunteers are matched with a child, their primary organization link to BBBS is the match support specialist (BBBS, 2013). The match support specialist will provide nearly all of the organizational support communication provided to the volunteer by BBBS. Based on the evidence presented in employee retention literature (Susskind, 2007; Sojka, 2012) the loss of the primary organizational link could impact volunteer retention.

Method of Communication

I have not found literature that discussed the effects of the medium used to communicate with volunteers on volunteer retention. However, research does indicate that organizational support of volunteers is important to retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). Many researchers have tested the effects of communication mediums on participant's perceptions of the support they provide (Bower & Pulford, 2013; Lewandowski et al, 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2010; Vilhauer, 2014; Wright et al., 2013). Therefore, the studies discussed in this section all discussed the effect of the delivery

method used to provide support communication on the participant's perception of support. However, none directly addresses volunteerism or volunteer retention.

Schiffirin, and colleagues (2010) conducted a quantitative study with a sample of 99 college students to compare the effects of online communication and face to face communication in the overall well-being of the study participants (Schiffirin et al, 2010). The results indicated that participants who used the internet more frequently reported lower levels of well-being. Schiffirin, and colleagues also analyzed the perceived social support to see if differences existed between the online environment and the face-to-face environment. Participants reported that in the face-to-face environment they were "more likely to feel that someone would care what happens to them" and would be more likely to receive help "if they were sick in bed" (Schiffirin et al., 2010, p 302). The data also indicated that other types of support, such as the ability to talk about problems, occurred frequently in both environments. This study provided evidence that face-to-face communication provided a higher level of support than online communication. However, it also indicated that certain types of support communication can effectively occur in an online environment.

Lewandowski et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study to analyze the effect of social support after a disruptive life event. They hypothesized that support received in the face-to-face environment would be more helpful than support that was received online. Lewandowski et al. administered surveys to active military personnel using snowball sampling. They were able to collect 116 usable responses (Lewandowski et al., 2011). The results indicated that participants who reported higher levels of support were

impacted less by the disruptive life event. Additionally, participants who reported receiving the majority of their support via face-to-face communication were also less impacted by the disruptive life event.

Wright, and colleagues (2013) hypothesized that an individual's competency with the communication medium used for support would affect the usefulness of that medium for the individual. To test that hypotheses, they conducted a study to test the support received through communication delivered two formats, face-to-face and online. They also tested the effect of competency, both in communication and with technology, to see if either moderated the effect of the communication channel on the support received. The study participants were a group of 361 college students who received extra credit for their participation. The data were collected via surveys. As predicted, communication competency positively predicted the amount of social support the participants perceived in a face-to-face environment (Wright et al., 2013). Additionally, competency with computer-mediated communication positively predicted the amount of support students perceived in the computer-mediated environment (Wright et al., 2013). Though the face-to-face group did perceive more support overall, it was clear the competency of the participants did influence the results as well (Wright et al., 2013). This study is important because it indicates that the participants felt more supported when they reported greater levels of face-to-face communication.

Vilhauer (2014) conducted a phenomenological study to examine the impact of the support that was provided in a face-to-face medium and a text-based computer-mediated format. Participants were 18 women with metastatic cancer who had previously

been a part of a face-to-face support group. Participants were actively involved in a computer-mediated support group (Vilhauer, 2014). Data were collected via telephone interviews (Vilhauer, 2014). One important theme that emerged from the members of the computer-mediated support group was that it was more convenient than the face-to-face group, which allowed participation from women who would not have been able to participate in a face-to-face group (Vilhauer, 2014). Participants who felt more supported in the computer mediated group discussed benefits such as the ability to connect with others at odd times of the day and an increased number of communications between group members (Vilhauer, 2014). However, some women indicated they did not feel as supported because they felt difficult issues could not be brought up as well in the computer-mediated group as in a face-to-face environment (Vilhauer, 2014). This study is important because it discussed benefits and disadvantages to support communication in both the face-to-face and online.

BBBS performs communications using three methods which are: face-to-face, telephone, and written. Therefore, three variables in this study were amount of face-to-face communication per month, amount of telephone communication per month, and amount of written communication per month.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature presented in this chapter has revealed that retaining volunteers is important to agencies such as the BBBS (DHHS, 2005; Handy & Srinivasan, 2004; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). The results from several studies indicated that mentoring is most likely to improve the outcomes of the mentees when the mentoring

relationship lasts at least 1 year (Grossman et al., 2012; Herrera et al., 2007). In order for the relationship to last at least 1 year, the volunteer's services must be retained by the agency for that time period.

The theoretical foundation for this study was the VPM. The three phases of the VPM are antecedents, experiences, and consequences (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). One primary area of research in the antecedent phase is volunteer motivation. Volunteer motivation has been linked to retention by multiple studies (Bussell & Forbes, 2001; Peachy, 2013; Stukas et al., 2009; Wilson, 2012). However, some studies have indicated that the motivation to volunteer has no significant impact on long term volunteer retention (Davis et al., 2003; Stukas et al., 2009).

Other studies have found that the events that occur in the experience stage of volunteerism are also crucial to volunteer retention (Davis et al., 2003; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Stukas et al., 2009; Wilson, 2012). The literature revealed a link between organizational support and volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). Qualitative studies also indicated the importance of organizational support communication in volunteer retention (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011). However, I did not find quantitative studies that directly tested the effect of organization support communication practices on volunteer retention.

This study addressed the gap in the literature by analyzing five possible factors or organizational support communication to find out if any of them can predict the likelihood of volunteer retention of at least 1 year. The first IV was the amount of

communication per month. The results from several qualitative studies indicated that the frequency of communication between the agency and the volunteers was important in volunteer retention (Haski-Leventhal & Bar-Gal, 2008; Skoglund, 2006; Weeks & MacQuarrie, 2011). In addition, frequency of communication is important in the retention of employees, financial donors, and students (Achilles et al., 2011; Braxton et al., 2007; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Cross, 1998; Moeller et al., 2010; Stephenson & Yeager, 2014).

The second IV was the number of match support specialists who perform support communications with the volunteer. These support specialists initiate the majority of the organizational support communication that was provided to the volunteer by BBBS (BBBS, 2013). Therefore, they are a primary organizational link between the volunteer and BBBS (BBBS, 2013). Many studies have indicated that strong organizational links are important to employee retention (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010; Qiu et al., 2014; Susskind, 2007). Conversely, losing organizational links can reduce retention in employees (Susskind, 2007; Sojka, 2012).

The final three IVs were the amount of face-to-face communication per month, the amount of telephone communication per month, and the amount of written communication per month. Studies have indicated that the medium used to provide the support affects the participant's perception of the effectiveness of the support (Bower & Pulford, 2013; Lewandowski et al., 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2013). Additional studies have indicated that more effective support is correlated to better volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno,

2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). Chapter three will provide a more in depth discussion of the research design and methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationship between organizational support communication and the likelihood of retention of volunteers in the BBBS agency for at least 1 year. This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. The topics addressed in this chapter include the research design, sources of data, the sampling frame, the independent and DVs, the data analysis plan, and ethical implications.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was a quantitative, nonexperimental design because the primary purpose was to assess how well the IVs predict the likelihood of the DV occurring. It was not possible to manipulate the IVs when using archived data, and therefore the nonexperimental design was the most appropriate for this study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009). The study was cross-sectional because I did not establish cause and effects relationships, I only collected data once, and I did not take into account other possible variables that could affect volunteer retention (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

The study relied on secondary data. A database of archived data is maintained by the BBBS as part of its ongoing quality control and program evaluation efforts. These archival data provide a unique opportunity to assess the impact of organizational communication support on volunteer retention for at least 1 year. Previous studies that addressed the relationship between organizational support and volunteer retention used

scaled data in the form of Likert-style surveys administered to volunteers (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Huynh et al., 2011; Jamison, 2003; Moreno-Jiménez & Villodres, 2010). In addition, many of those studies used a scaled item or inventory to predict retention (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Pivilian, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2012; Huynh et al., 2011). Predicted retention is not as accurate a measure of retention as the actual retention of volunteers (Mallol et al., 2007; Miller et al., 1990; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). Using secondary data allowed me to use the actual retention of volunteers as the DV.

Five IV's were included in this study. The first was the frequency of communication per month between the match support specialist and the volunteer. The second IV was the number of mentor managers that communicated with the volunteer within the first year of the match. The third IV was the amount of face-to-face communication per month that occurred during the first year of the match. The fourth IV was the amount of telephone communication per month that occurred during the first year of the match. The final IV was the amount of written communication per month that occurred between the match support specialist and the volunteer during the first year of the match. All of the IVs were measured using interval or ratio level data. The dependent variable was the 1-year retention of the volunteer.

Methodology

Population

The target population was mentors who volunteered with BBBS of Tampa Bay during the 2013 calendar year. BBBS of Tampa Bay operates in Central Florida and

covers Hillsborough, Polk, Pasco, Citrus, Hernando, and Sumter counties. Demographic information that was pulled for the sample included gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, and education level. These demographic variables were selected because they aligned with the national data collected annually on volunteers by the BLS (BLS, 2015). The demographic data were used only to describe the sample; there were not any statistical comparisons using demographic data. There were approximately 1,149 volunteers in the targeted population during the specified period of interest (J. G. Libby, personal communication, May 5, 2013).

Sampling Procedures

An appropriate sample size was important to obtain adequate power without unnecessarily increasing rejecting the null hypothesis when it was actually true (Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). I used the G*Power statistical tool to calculate the minimum sample size needed to achieve adequate power for the study (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The results indicated the minimum sample size to be 198 when using logistic regression as the analytical procedure. I calculated the sample size using the following settings: assuming a two-tailed analysis, odds ratio (0.6), alpha (.05), and power (.80). According to the BBS (2013), 1,149 records were in the data base for the year 2013; consequently, obtaining the calculated minimum sample size was easily achieved. The obtained sample size provided more than adequate power for the analysis. A two-tailed analysis was selected for determining the minimum sample size because a two-tailed test was less biased than a one-tailed analysis because it did not assume directionality (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). An alpha of .05 and a

power of .80 were selected for the sample size analysis because they are conventional standards used in research (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Marshall, 2007).

I obtained from BBBS of Tampa Bay a list of the names for all volunteers who began their service with the agency during 2013. The year 2013 was used because it was the most recent year for which complete data were available. Only records for volunteers who began to serve from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2013, were used within this study. Data regarding the communication support records and volunteer retention were collected from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2014.

To draw the sample, I used Microsoft Excel's random number generator to assign a random number between 0 and 1 to each name identified by BBBS or Tampa Bay. Next, I copied and paste the values of the random numbers into a new column so they do not change. Then, I sorted the database based on the value of the randomly assigned number. I used the 198 names that were randomly assigned the lowers lowest numbers as the sample. I collected data regarding the communication support records and volunteer retention from all records identified.

I did not contact the volunteers in any way for this study. All data came from the BBBS archival records. To gain access to those records, I underwent the typical screening procedures used for BBBS of Tampa Bay employees. The agency conducted a national background check on me, and I signed a statement of confidentiality. The vice president of programs as well as the president and chief executive officer gave permission for me to access these databases.

Reliability of BBBS Database

The concept of reliability refers to the accuracy of data that was collected (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The BBBS of Tampa Bay has specific guidelines for enhancing the accuracy and reliability of data entered in the records (J.G Libby, personal communication, April 2, 2015). For instance, BBBS staff are required to document support communications into the system as the contact occurs so the staff can remember and accurately document the details of the communication (J.G Libby, personal communication, April 2, 2015). Staff are also required to formally document the start date of the volunteer's service before midnight on the date it began to ensure the accuracy of the recorded start date (J.G Libby, personal communication, April 2, 2015). When volunteers leave the organization, supervisors are required to quickly annotate the termination of the volunteer service (J.G Libby, personal communication, April 2, 2015). After a supervisor has reviewed the file to ensure that closing the file was warranted, the supervisor finalizes the closure by selecting the appropriate options within the electronic database. When the supervisor closed the volunteer records in the database, the closure date was automatically stamped onto the electronic records (J.G Libby, personal communication, April 2, 2015). The supervisory oversight of the record documentation process helps to ensure that records of active volunteers are not accidentally closed in the system. The process of quickly finalizing closure dates for volunteers also helps to ensure that the closure dates are accurate. However, there was no way to further verify the accuracy of the information within the system. Therefore, assumed that the data in the database was accurate.

Validity of BBBS Record Keeping Process

The validity of a process used for measurement must be established in order for a researcher to ensure the results of a study are due to some variations in the data and not simply due to errors produced by the measurement instrument or process (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). One method for establishing validity is expert opinion (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The BBBS are nationally respected experts on mentoring and have been actively facilitating mentoring relationships for over 110 years (BBBS, 2015). The BBBS has also been widely recognized for innovative and successful approaches to youth mentoring (BBBS, 2015). As experts in mentoring youth programs, the BBBS considers the documentation of mentoring processes to be a critical aspect of monitoring the effectiveness of their mentoring program, which sets them apart from other programs (BBBS, 2013). The BBBS organization was the expert for establishing the validity of the communication processes used to communicate with their volunteer mentors and for the processes associated with documenting that communication. The national BBBS organization created the methods used by BBBS of Tampa Bay to capture the data that was used for this study. The BBBS national organization also created the guidelines that are used to help ensure that valid and reliable data was collected and entered into its database (BBBS, 2013). The BBBS relies on the same data for their own metrics and internal control processes both on a local level and a national level. I therefore assumed that the data from the BBBS database were valid measures of communication between the agency and its volunteers.

Instrumentation

A specific instrument was not utilized to collect data for this study. All data for the study was archival data collected from BBBS of Tampa Bay. This raw data was recorded as the agency staff provided communication support to the volunteers (BBBS, 2013). Some of the data was exported directly into an Excel spreadsheet by the Vice President (VP) of programs for the agency. The data that was exported and delivered to me via an Excel spreadsheet included the name of the volunteer, date the volunteer began mentoring, date the volunteer ceased mentoring, age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and education level. The names of the participants had to be included because the data for the IVs could not be pulled into a report due to limitations within the database system. I manually collected the data for the IVs from the database by looking at each participant's record. The process for collecting the data for the IVs from the BBBS database was a time intensive process. BBBS did not have the ability to devote staff time to compile to IVs; therefore, I collected data for the IVs myself (J.G Libby, *personal communication*, April 2, 2015).

I manually collected the data for the IVs by looking at each record within the BBBS database for the 198 records identified by random selection. The data that was manually collected from the BBBS database included the number of communications that occurred between the match support specialist and the volunteer, the number of match support specialists who communicated with the volunteer, the number of face-to-face communications that occurred between the match support specialist and the volunteer, the number of telephone communications that occurred between the match support specialist

and the volunteer, and the number of written communications that occurred between the match support specialist and the volunteer. The data regarding the IVs was entered onto the Excel spreadsheet. After I collected the data for the IVs, I deleted all personally identifying information from the electronic file. The data was then be imported into SPSS for analysis.

Variables

The DV was volunteer retention. Volunteer retention was measured as a dichotomous outcome, which was nominal level data. The date the volunteer began the volunteer service was the date the volunteer's first match was activated in the database system. The date the volunteer ceased volunteering service was the date that the volunteer's profile was marked as "closed" within the database system. If there was no closure date for a given record, then I assumed the volunteer was still active. The information regarding closure dates was downloaded from the database by the VP of programs for BBBS. If the date the match ended was less than 1 year from the date the match began, the record was coded as a "0." The record was coded as a "1" if the closure date was 1 year or more from the date the volunteer service began. Records that were still active in the BBBS database system were coded as a "1."

The first IV was frequency of communication between the BBBS and volunteer each month. The BBBS (2013) standard for support was at least one communication with the volunteer per month for the first year of the volunteer service. However, the actual amount of communication an individual volunteer received varied greatly (Herrera et al., 2007). I counted the number of support communications with the volunteer during their

first year of service and divided by the number of months that the volunteer remained in active service. For volunteer service that lasted at least 1 year or longer, the number of months in the program was 12. For volunteer service that did not last at least 1 year, the number of months was determined by calculating the difference between the date the volunteer service ended and the date it began.

The second IV was the number of match support specialists who communicated with the volunteer during the first year of the match. When a volunteer was matched with a child, the volunteer was assigned a match support specialist. When the agency made communication with a volunteer through a match specialist, the name of the person who made the communication with the volunteer was recorded within the communication log. In order to measure this IV, I counted the number of different people who made communication with the volunteer during the first year. The variable was recorded as interval level data.

The third IV was the number of face-to-face communications BBBS provided to the volunteer per month. BBBS tracked the method of communication for each organization support communication in the communication log found within the AIM database. I counted the number of face to face communications within their first year of service and divided by the total number of months the volunteer remained in the program. This IV was measured as ratio level data.

The fourth IV was the number of telephone communications provided by BBBS to the volunteer per month. I counted the number of telephone communications made to the volunteer during their first year of service. The total number of telephone contacts

was divided by the total of months the volunteer remained in the program, up to 12. The fourth IV was measured with ratio level data.

The final IV was the number of written communications that the BBBS sent to each volunteer each month. Written communications included communication via emails and written letters. I counted the number of written support communications provided by BBBS to each volunteer during the first year of service. The total number of written communications was divided by the total number months the volunteer was active in the program, up to 12. This IV was measured using ratio level data. Please see Table 1 for a list of the acronyms associated with each IV.

Table 1

Acronyms for Independent Variables

Variable name	Acronym
Amount of contact per month	CPM
Number of match support specialists	MSS
Amount of face-to-face contact per month	FTF
Amount of telephone contact per month	TEL
Amount of written contact per month	WRT

Data Analysis Plan

All data was analyzed with a logistic regression using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software package version 21. In order to make sure the data was appropriate for statistical analysis using logistic regression, I checked for the assumptions for regression analysis such as outliers, independence of errors, and

multicollinearity (Field, 2009; Lin, Foster, & Ungar, 2011; Mertler & Venetta, 2005; Osborne & Overbay, 2004). I also assessed the data set for missing data. The database restrictions required all data that I compiled for the IVs to be entered into each communication record in order to save the record (BBBS, 2013). Therefore, missing data in the spreadsheet I compiled indicated an error in compiling the data from the BBBS database. If data was missing from the records I compiled, they were rechecked for accuracy against the original records in the BBBS database. In the unexpected event that data for one of the study variables was actually missing from the communication record in AIM, I would have deleted the effected records.

The logistic regression analysis is sensitive to outliers. Therefore, all of the IVs were checked for outliers using a box plot generated by SPSS (Mertler & Venetta, 2005). This method was appropriate to check for univariate outliers. The DV was not tested for outliers since it was a categorical variable with a dichotomous outcome. For the IVs, any data points that existed below the below 1.3 and or above 3 box lengths were identified as a potential outlier (Mertler & Venetta, 2005). When outliers were found, the outlying data was rechecked against the data within the BBBS database to ensure it was transcribed to the spreadsheet correctly (Mertler & Venetta, 2005; Osborne & Overbay, 2004). Any errors I made in data entry were corrected. If the data point identified by the box plot analysis as a potential outlier was based upon correct data, it was retained in the study.

One basic assumption for regression analysis was the absence of multicollinearity among the variables (Lin, Foster, & Ungar, 2011). All variables were analyzed for multicollinearity using the VIF score created by the SPSS analysis (Field, 2009; Lin et

al., 2011). A correlation analysis will also be conducted to assess the magnitude of the correlations. Values at or above $r=.8$ were considered evidence of multicollinearity (Field, 2009). Due to multicollinearity, one of the correlated variables was excluded in the final analysis.

In logistic regression, the variables do not have to be normally distributed (Hair et al., 2010; Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). Additionally, the variables do not have to be linearly related to the DV (Hair et al., 2010; Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). Therefore, the IV's will not be screened for linearity.

Research question and hypotheses. The research question and hypotheses for the study are as follows.

RQ: How well do variables related to organizational support communication predict the likelihood of volunteer retention for at least 1 year?

H₀: The organizational communication support variables of amount of communication between volunteer and agency relative to the number of months in the program, number of assigned match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers, amount of face-to-face communication relative to the number of months in the program, amount of telephone communication relative to the number of months in the program, and ratio of written communication relative to the number of months in the program are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year.

A logistic regression analyses was used to test the null hypothesis. The equation for this null hypothesis can be presented as:

H₀: $\beta_1\chi_{(cpm)1} + \beta_2\chi_{(mss)2} + \beta_3\chi_{(ff)3} + \beta_4\chi_{(tel)2} + \beta_5\chi_{(wrt)5} = 0$ In the population, the odds of the IVs increasing the likelihood of the DV retention among BBBS volunteers was zero.

H_A: The organizational communication support variables of amount of communication between volunteer and agency relative to the number of months in the program, number of assigned match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers, amount of face-to-face communication relative to the number of months in the program, amount of telephone communication relative to the number of months in the program, and ratio of written communication relative to the number of months in the program are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year.

A logistic regression was used to analyze the alternative hypothesis. The equation for the alternative hypothesis can be presented as:

H₀: $\beta_1\chi_{(cpm)1} + \beta_2\chi_{(mss)2} + \beta_3\chi_{(ff)3} + \beta_4\chi_{(tel)2} + \beta_5\chi_{(wrt)5} \neq 0$ In the population, the odds of the IVs increasing the likelihood of the DV retention among BBBS volunteers does not equal zero.

Statistical tests. A single logistic regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The forced-entry method was used to enter all of the variables into the logistic regression equation at once. The forced-entry method is frequently used in exploratory studies such as this one because there was no basis in the literature to establish order the variables should be entered since this was an exploratory study (Field, 2009).

The statistics that were reported include the significance level, the odds ratio, the classification accuracy of the regression model, and the reduction in errors due to the regression model. Two bits of information were reported for the significance level. First,

the significance of the overall model was assessed to determine which combination of DVs significantly predicted the outcome, the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The overall fit of the model was assessed using the goodness-of-fit statistics. The -2 Log likelihood indicated how well the data fit the model. The chi-square statistic revealed the degree to which the regression model predicts the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The Cox & Snell was another statistic that indicated how much of the variability in the occurrence of the DV was accounted for by the predictor variables (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The classification table was used as another measure of the accuracy of the regression model (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The classification table indicated the total number of cases accurately predicted by a regression model (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). The overall fit of the model was addressed by the reduction in errors due to the regression model (Field, 2009).

The significance level for each IV was reported based on the Wald statistic. The Wald statistic indicated which IVs were significant in predicting the DV (Field, 2009). The odds ratio was reported using the $\text{Exp}(B)$ statistic (Hair et al., 2010). The $\text{Exp}(B)$ was included because it indicates how change for the occurrence of the DV for every one unit increase in the IVs (Hair et al., 2010). The mean and standard deviation will also be given for each IV (Mertler & Vanetta, 2005). Demographic information on the sample was reported as descriptive statistics of the sample.

Threats to Validity

Validity is an extremely important concept in research. This section will discuss three different types of threats to validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009).

The first is external validity which affects how well the results of the study can be generalized to other populations (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009). The next section will discuss internal validity. Internal validity was important because otherwise a cause and effect relationship between the independent and DVs cannot be established (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009). Conclusion validity was also discussed. Conclusion validity pertains to the reliability of the data used in the study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009).

External Validity

External validity is the ability to assume that the research findings will apply in other settings (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The primary concern the external validity is the ability to generalize the results of the study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). All of the data that was used in this study was collected by one agency, BBBS of Tampa Bay. Additionally, all of the volunteers in the dataset lived in central Florida at the time the data was collected by BBBS of Tampa Bay. There was no reason to assume that an interaction with the agency or the location biased the results. However, caution should be used when generalizing the results to volunteers from other agencies and locations since they may have different characteristics from the one that was used in this study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). However, the power analysis was included to determine the effect size of the IVs which will indicate how much the IVs predicted the DVs. Larger effect sizes are more likely to be accurately generalized to other populations (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Internal Validity

Internal validity is the ability to determine that a cause and effect relationship exists between the independent and DVs (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009). This study was a non-experimental design and did not attempt to prove a cause and effect relationship between the variables. Additionally, there was not a pre- or post-test that might bias participants. Since only archival data was used, the volunteers were not aware that the study was being conducted, so there was little risk of an interaction with selection effect. BBBS has maintained consistent data entry procedures throughout the period they collected the data (J.G Libby, *personal communication*, April 2, 2015). Consistent data collection procedures helped to offset the threat of changes in the instrumentation affecting the results (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The data collection procedures used by BBBS are outlined in the Validity of the BBBS Recording Keeping Process section.

This study used non-experimental methods since the IVs were not manipulated (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Internal validity is weak in non-experimental designs because the IV cannot be controlled and participants cannot be randomly assigned to their level of exposure to the IV (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The inability to randomly assign participants to groups means that the groups may not be equivalent (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). There could be many other factors that affected the study participants besides the support communication provided by BBBS (Campbell & Stanley, 1963;

Creswell, 2009; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Therefore, the internal validity of this study may be weak because it was a non-experimental design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Trochim, 2006).

Conclusion Validity

Conclusion validity refers to the degree to which the accuracy of results obtained in a given study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2009). The primary threat to conclusion validity for this study pertained to the reliability of data obtained from the BBBS database. If the files contained errors in the communication records, or if there was missing or inaccurate information within the BBBS database system, these conditions could affect the accuracy of the results obtained from the data analyses. However, the record keeping process of the BBBS was one tool for minimizing the threat to conclusion validity for this study.

Ethical Procedures

I have obtained Letter of Cooperation from the President and CEO of BBBS of Tampa Bay. The letter of cooperation indicated that BBBS granted permission for me to access their data after I obtained IRB approval to complete this study. They were willing to give this permission because I am a former employee of the agency, and I had a good understanding of how to use the database. Additionally, they were willing to allow me to access their database records because the results from my research could help them develop practices to improve their volunteer retention. In order to limit the potential for bias, I only used records pertaining to volunteers who began their service after I ended

my employment relationship with BBBS. Additionally, all data was reported at the aggregate level only.

In order to ensure the ethical treatment of the records which I used for the study, I underwent a national background check and signed a statement of confidentiality before the data was accessed. The background check and confidentiality agreement are the same procedures an employee would go through before they were hired by the agency and given access to the database. The background check was to ensure that I did not have a criminal background. The confidentiality agreement was signed so that I formally agree not to disclose any confidential regarding BBBS volunteers to other people or organizations. Appendix B contains a signed copy of the confidentiality agreement. Additionally, I obtained IRB approval from Walden University before any data was collected.

The only ethical concern related to this study was a possible breach of privacy for the participants. In order to protect against this, I was the only one who saw any personally identifying information, and I am bound by the confidentiality statement not to disclose any of the information. After the data was compiled onto an Excel spreadsheet, the names of the participants was removed. The data was analyzed and reported on the aggregate level only.

Furthermore, the spreadsheet containing the compiled data with personally identifying information was stored on a flash hard drive. The flash hard drive was stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office at Southeastern University. The data containing personally identifying information was only accessed on the computer when the

computer was not connected to the internet. Additionally, both the computer and the file were password protected. I was the only person who has access to the password for the file. In order to help prevent loss or corruption of data, I maintained a backup copy of the spreadsheet on a separate flash hard drive under the same security conditions as the working copy. After a seven year period, I will destroy both copies of the data by reformatting the flash hard drives which store the data. The flash hard drives will be reformatted by using a software platform such as Active@ Kill Disk which securely erases hard drive. The program I use will conform to Department of Defense standards (DoD 5220.22) for erasing data.

Summary

This quantitative study analyzed secondary data originally collected by BBBS related to factors of organizational support given to the volunteer by the organization. A logistic regression was used to see if any of those objective factors of support could predict the likelihood of volunteer retention of at least 1 year. The results of this study could be valuable to BBBS and other youth mentoring organizations as they work to increase their volunteer retention.

The population was mentors who began volunteering with BBBS during the calendar year 2013. The volunteers were not contacted in any way for this study. All of the data necessary has already been collected by BBBS of Tampa Bay. For each record, I collected demographic information, frequency of communication, frequencies of use for each type of communication medium, the number of match support specialists that performed the contacts, the beginning dates of volunteer service, and the end dates of

volunteer service. The data that I collected from BBBS of Tampa Bay will span a two year period from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2014.

In order to protect the human rights of the participants, I did not collect data from BBBS until I had obtained approval from Walden's IRB. I also signed a statement of confidentiality for BBBS that formally states that I will not disclose confidential information to other parties. After a period of seven years, I will delete all of the files that contain the data I collected from BBBS of Tampa Bay.

The next two chapters will discuss the results of the study and provide a discussion regarding how those results fit into the current literature. Specifically, the fourth section contains a discussion regarding the actual data collection process, the demographics of the participants, and the results of the data analysis. The final section discusses how the results of the data analysis connect to current literature. The final section also contains recommendations for future research for practitioners. Additionally, it discusses how the results of this study can contribute to social change.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationships between organizational support communication and the likelihood of volunteer retention in the BBBS Agency for at least 1 year. There were five IVs included in this study. Table 1 presented in chapter 3 presents the acronyms used for each IV.

All data were analyzed with a logistic regression using the SPSS software package version 21. A Logistic regression was used to test the null hypothesis. The research question and associated hypotheses are presented below:

Research Question: How well do variables related to organizational support communication predict the likelihood of volunteer retention for at least 1 year?

Null Hypothesis (H_0): The organizational communication support variables of amount of communication between volunteer and agency relative to the number of months in the program, number of assigned match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers, amount of face-to-face communication relative to the number of months in the program, amount of telephone communication relative to the number of months in the program, and ratio of written communication relative to the number of months in the program are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The null hypothesis indicates that in the population, the odds that changes in the IVs would lead to an increase the likelihood of the DV, retention among BBBS volunteers, is zero. The equation for the null hypothesis is expressed as presented below:

$$H_0: \beta_1\chi_{(cpm)1} + \beta_2\chi_{(mss)2} + \beta_3\chi_{(ff)3} + \beta_4\chi_{(tel)2} + \beta_5\chi_{(wrt)5} = 0,$$

Alternate Hypothesis (H_A): The organizational communication support variables of amount of communication between volunteer and agency relative to the number of months in the program, number of assigned match support specialists who communicated with the volunteers, amount of face-to-face communication relative to the number of months in the program, amount of telephone communication relative to the number of months in the program, and ratio of written communication relative to the number of months in the program are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The alternate hypothesis indicates that in the population, the odds that changes in the IVs would lead to an increase in the likelihood of the DV, retention among BBBS volunteers, is not zero. The equation for the alternate hypothesis is expressed as presented below:

$$H_A: \beta_1\chi_{(cpm)1} + \beta_2\chi_{(mss)2} + \beta_3\chi_{(ff)3} + \beta_4\chi_{(tel)2} + \beta_5\chi_{(wrt)5} \neq 0$$

This chapter presents results from the data analysis. The first part of this chapter addresses the data collection process. The second part of this chapter provides results of the data analysis. The last part of the chapter, the discussion of results, includes an evaluation of the statistical assumptions and the results of the statistical analysis.

Data Collection

This study utilized data that was provided by BBBS of Tampa Bay. BBBS provided me with an Excel spreadsheet that contained the following information: volunteer names, demographic information, starting dates of volunteer service, and

closing dates for volunteer service that ended on Friday, September 25, 2015. On the same day, BBBS also provided me with a user name and password to their database so that I could collect the data for the IVs. I collected the rest of the initial data necessary for this study on September 25, 2015 through September 26, 2015. I tested the data for outliers on September 28. Then, I accessed the BBBS database again to verify the accuracy of any data points identified as outliers to ensure that errors were not transcription errors.

Discrepancies in Data

The only discrepancy between the original data collection plan and the actual data collection process was that a few of the contacts that the agency provided to the volunteers were marked with “other” as the contact type. I had originally expected to have the contact type marked only as face-to-face, telephone, or written. The number of “other” contacts was extremely small compared to overall contacts. Only 6 contacts out of 1,526 were marked as “other.” I did note the “other” contents on the records where they occurred. However, data for the records marked other were not included in any statistical analysis.

Demographics

I ran a frequency count to get descriptive statistics for the demographic data. Table 2 presents a summary of the results. Within the sample, there were more female volunteers ($n = 129$) than male volunteers ($n = 69$). The ethnicity of the majority of the participants was Caucasian (62.2%), and the smallest number of participants by ethnicity

was Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.2%). The ages of the volunteers ranged from 15 to 76 years. The average age was 34.69 years ($SD = 14.35$).

The majority of participants worked in either a business setting (26.5%, $n = 53$) or were students (23.2%, $n = 45$). The career areas that accounted for the smallest percentages (less than 2% each) were the entertainment industry, child care workers, consultants, construction, government, law, hotel, homemakers, insurance, real estate, restaurant, technology, and unemployed. The majority of participants had an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (42%), while participants who obtained a high school diploma were the smallest group (2.5%).

I compared the demographic characteristic composition of my sample drawn from Tampa Bay BBBS mentors to the demographic characteristics of volunteer mentors nationwide. The national mentoring demographics were collected by the BLS as part of their annual volunteerism study. Table 2 provides a summary of the demographic data for BBBS volunteer data included in the study sample and the national sample of volunteer mentors. The BBBS sample contained a slightly higher percentage of women (65%) than the national volunteer sample (57%). The BBBS sample also contained a greater percentage of volunteers who were less than 34 years of age than the national volunteer sample. The percentage of white volunteers was slightly lower in the BBBS sample (62%) compared to the national sample (82%). The percentage of black volunteers was slightly higher in the BBBS sample (16%) compared to the national sample (12%). Finally, the percentages of Asian and Hispanic volunteers represented on the BBBS sample were the same as the national sample. The BBBS volunteers contained a higher

percentage of people who had not graduated from high school and who had some college or an associate's degree. The BBBS sample contained a lesser percentage of people who had graduated from high school or obtained a bachelor's degree.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Volunteer Mentors

	<i>n</i>	BBBS of Tampa Bay percentage	National percentage of all volunteers*
Gender			
Men	69	35%	44%
Women	129	65%	57%
Age in years			
< 15	2	1%	-
16–24	53	27%	19%
25–34	69	35%	19%
35–44	23	12%	23%
45–54	19	15%	21%
55–64	19	8%	13%
>65	6	3%	7%
Race			
White	123	62%	82%*
Black	32	16%	12%*
Asian	5	3%	3%*
Hispanic	20	10%	10%*
All other races	18	9%	
Education			
Some high school	22	11%	2%
High school graduate, no college	5	3%	11%
Some college or associate's degree	59	30%	23%
Bachelor's degree or higher	83	42%	45%
Missing	29	15%	

Note. *Results do not sum to 100 because not all categories are included and people who identified their ethnicity as Hispanic may be of any race. The National Percentage was adapted from *Volunteering in the United States, 2014* by Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.htm>.

Testing Statistical Assumptions

In order to make sure the data was appropriate for statistical analysis using logistic regression, I checked for the assumptions for regression analysis. The data was analyzed for missing data, outliers, and multicollinearity before I conducted the logistic regression analysis (Field, 2009; Lin, Foster, & Ungar, 2011; Mertler & Venetta, 2005; Osborne & Overbay, 2004). I also assessed the data set for missing data.

Missing data. I checked the records for missing data by running a frequency count for each variable. One record was missing data in the face-to-face contact field due to a data entry error. I rechecked the record on the BBBS database and entered the correct information. There were no missing data fields when the logistic regression analysis was conducted. Therefore, this assumption was met.

Outliers. I checked for outliers by using a boxplot generated by SPSS. For the IVs, any data points that existed below 1.3 box lengths or above 3 box lengths were identified as a potential outlier (Mertler & Venetta, 2005). Some outliers were identified for each IV. Each of these outliers was rechecked for accuracy against the original records in the BBBS database. In order to check the accuracy of the records, I pulled up the communication record for that participant and recounted the number of contacts in each category as well as the number of match support specialists. The data points that contained incorrect data were corrected and the remaining outliers were left within the dataset since they contained accurate information based on the BBBS database records. Table 3 provides the number of outliers associated with each variable when the logistic regression was conducted.

Table 3

Outliers that remained in the Independent Variables after rechecking for accuracy

Variable	Number of Outliers
Contact Per Month	3
Match Support Specialists	4
Face-to-face Contact per month	14
Telephone contact per month	3
Written contact per month	13

Multi-collinearity. I used the bivariate correlation procedure to assess the data for multicollinearity among the IVs. When the bivariate analysis was run to check for correlations, there was a correlation of .88 between CPM and TEL. Table 4 presents a complete summary of the correlation analysis. Three of the variables, face-to-face contact, telephone contact, and written contact were an index of contacts per month. All three variables were significantly correlated to CPM. Therefore, CPM was excluded from the final analysis to reduce the issue of multicollinearity. Additionally, face-to-face contact and telephone contact were correlated ($P < .001$). However, the correlation was .483. Since the correlation was below .8, I left it in the final analysis (Field, 2009). The other variables did not exhibit multicollinearity as evidenced by significant levels greater than .05 and in bivariate correlations that were below the $r = .8$ level. Therefore, number of match support specialists, amount of face-to-face contact per month, amount of telephone contact per month, and amount of written contact per month were all included in the final analysis.

Table 4

Bivariate Correlation Matrix of Independent Variables

		CPM	MSS	FTF	TEL	WRT
CPM	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
MSS	Pearson Correlation	.011	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.882				
FTF	Pearson Correlation	-.178*	.030	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.682			
TEL	Pearson Correlation	.888***	.036	.483***	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.610	.000		
WRT	Pearson Correlation	.431***	-.032*	-.082	.103	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.650	.252	.150	

Note: CPM=Contacts per month; MSS=Number of match support specialists; FTF=Amount of face-to-face contact per month; TEL=Amount of telephone contacts per month; WRT=Amount of written contact per month.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The means and standard deviations of each of the IV's is presented in Table 5.

The DV was volunteer retention at 1 year. Volunteers who did not serve with the Tampa Bay BBBS for at least 1 year were coded as (0). Volunteers who served the Tampa Bay BBBS for at least 1 year were coded with a (1).

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviation of Independent Variables

	Mean	SD
Number of Match Support Specialists	1.73	.835
Amount of face-to-face contact per month	.058	.106
Amount of Telephone Contact per month	.672	.311
Amount of Written Contact per month	.055	.104

Results

The logistic regression indicated that the overall model was significant in predicting volunteer retention of at least 1 year as indicated by the significance of the Chi-Square value ($X^2=20.948$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). Additionally, the Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 indicated that the model accounted for 13.6% of the variance in the DV. The Cox and Snell R^2 further indicated that the model accounted for 10% of the variance in the DV. The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test was not significant ($p = 0.136$) which indicated that the model was a good fit for the data.

Table 6 presents a summary of the results from the logistic regression analysis. The results revealed that two of the IV's (number of match support specialists and amount of face-to-face contact) were significant in predicting the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year based on the significant level of their coefficient. Results revealed that the odds ratio for the number of match support specialists was 2.003. The results further indicated that the odds ratio for the number of face-to-face contacts was 159.486.

Table 6

Logistic Regression: Predicting Volunteer Retention

Variables	Coefficient	Wald Statistic	P	Exp(B)
MSS	.695	11.037	.001***	2.003
FTF	5.075	6.705	.01**	159.486
TEL	.567	1.014	.314	1.764
WRT	-.895	0.388	.408	0.408

Note: MSS=Number of match support specialists; FTF=Amount of face-to-face contact per month; TEL=Amount of telephone contacts per month; WRT=Amount of written contact per month.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The results from the 2X2 classification table indicated that the model correctly classified 66.7% of all cases. The results from the 2X2 classification table can be found in Table 7. The baseline model correctly predicted 61.1% of the cases, so the logistic regression model correctly classified 5.6% more cases than the baseline model. The logistic regression model correctly classified 47.4% of volunteers who did not serve at least 1 year and 78.7% of volunteers who did serve at least 1 year. The errors in the model were reduced by 13% compared to the baseline model.

Table 7

Regression Classification Table

	Predicted		Percent Correct
	Served less than 1 year	Served 1 year or more	
Observed			
Served less than 1 year	36	40	47.4%
Served 1 year or more	26	96	78.7%
Overall Percent Correct			66.7%

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results from the study. The demographic information indicated that the sample of volunteers from BBBS were younger, more racially diverse, less educated, and contained more women than the national sample of volunteer mentors conducted by the BLS. Additionally, due to interactions between the variables violating the assumption of independence, the amount of contacts per month had to be removed from the final analysis.

Results from the logistic regression lead to me rejecting of the null hypothesis, which indicated that in the population, the odds that changes in the IVs increased the likelihood of the DV, retention of BBBS volunteers at 1 year. Results from the Chi-Square test indicated that the model did show differences in the probability of the DV occurring based on the occurrence of the IVs. Additionally, the model explained approximately 13.6% of the variance in the occurrence of the DV, volunteer retention of at least 1 year. Further analysis revealed that two of the variables, the number of match support specialists and the amount of face-to-face contact per month were significant predictors of volunteer retention at 1 year.

Overall, the results revealed that the types of support communication practices are important in terms of promoting the long term retention of volunteer mentors. Chapter 5 will discuss how these findings fit within the current literature on Volunteer Retention and the VPM. In addition, the social change implications of these findings and recommendations for future research will be outlined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationships between organizational support communication and the likelihood of retention of volunteers in the BBBS Agency for at least 1 year. Results from the logistic regression analysis indicated that the number of match support specialists who provided support communication to the volunteers and the number of face-to-face contacts per month were significant predictors of volunteer retention for at least 1 year. This chapter will discuss the interpretations of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications of the study.

Interpretation of Findings

There were two major findings in this study. The first was that the number of match support specialists positively predicted volunteer retention at 1 year. The MSS does serve as one of the primary organizational links between the volunteer and the BBBS. Organizational links have not been studied extensively in volunteer retention. I did not locate any studies which directly linked organizational links to volunteer retention. However, studies on employee retention are frequently used as the basis for studies in the volunteer retention. The findings from this study are consistent with research in employee retention literature which indicated a positive link between the number of organizational links and retention of personnel (Mitchell et al., 2001; Qiu et al., 2014; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Findings from my study suggest that the volunteer

mentors who have more organizational contact are more likely to be retained for at least 1 year.

The second significant finding from this study was the positive correlation between the amount of face-to-face contact and the likelihood of volunteer for at least 1 year. This finding fits well within existing literature which indicated that the face-to-face environment provides more support to individuals than other methods of communication (Lewandowski et al., 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2010; Wright et al., 2013).

Findings from the data analysis further revealed that the amount of telephone contact per month and the amount of written communication per month were not significant predictors of volunteer retention at 1 year. A body of literature has indicated that computer mediated contact, such as email, did not provide as much support as the face-to-face environment (Lewandowski et al., 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2010; Wright et al., 2013). Therefore, it was not surprising that no positive correlation existed.

The conceptual framework for this study was Omoto and Snyder's (1995) VPM. The IVs were related to events that occur during the experience phase of the VPM (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2012). Many studies based on the VPM hypothesized that a link exists between the organizational support that a volunteer received during their volunteer experiences and volunteer retention (Garner & Garner, 2010; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hildago & Moreno, 2009; Hustinx, 2010; Huynh et al., 2011). This study was unique because it measured the actual types and amount of support given and actual retention at 1 year.

Overall, these findings confirm that aspects of the organizational support communication that occurs in the experience stage of VPM are significant in predicting volunteer retention of at least 1 year. Specifically, the number of match support specialists who provide support and the amount of face-to-face contact per month predict the likelihood of volunteer retention at 1 year. The findings also extend the knowledge regarding the importance of support communication delivered in a face-to-face format to volunteer retention of at least 1 year.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study was that I used secondary data. Therefore, I had no control over the methodology used to collect the data (Jones, 2010). In this case, BBBS had some clear guidelines for their staff regarding entering data into the archival system that was used for this study. Agency staff designed these guidelines to help ensure the accuracy of their database since they rely on it for many of their own organizational metrics (BBBS, 2013; Jones, 2010). However, the guidelines do not guarantee that all agencies or that all employees follow all of the guidelines. Therefore, if any data was entered incorrectly by the BBBS staff, it could have affected the accuracy of the data used in the data analysis (Herrera et al., 2007; Jones, 2010). For instance, there were three records in which the contact with the volunteer had ceased months before the volunteer was officially closed out of the system. All of these records were coded as a “1” because the participant officially volunteered at least a year. However, in actuality, they likely volunteered for less than 1 year.

Limits to Generalizability of Results

It is important to note that there were outliers in each category even after rechecking the data points for accuracy. The results of the logistic regression analysis are sensitive to outliers (Field, 2009; Mertler & Venetta, 2005). Therefore, if other populations of volunteers do not exhibit the same outliers, they might not exhibit the same results (Field, 2009). Therefore, caution should be used when generalizing the results to similar populations of volunteers.

There were also some discrepancies in the demographic makeup of the volunteers in my study and the national averages for volunteers collected by the BLS. For instance, the data indicated that the sample of volunteers from BBBS were younger, more racially diverse, less educated, and contained more women than the national sample of volunteer mentors conducted by the BLS. Table 2 in chapter 4 highlighted the demographic characteristics of the two groups of volunteers. In light of these differences in demographic makeup, caution should be used when attempting to generalize the results of this study to other types of volunteers and to volunteers in other geographical locations.

In addition, BBBS volunteers have little contact with BBBS during the volunteer activities because their volunteer hours are spent providing one-on-one time with the child they mentor. Therefore, they have very little contact with BBBS other than the support contacts (BBBS, 2013). Volunteers who perform other types of services may have substantially more contact with the staff at the organization they work with while they perform their volunteer service. Therefore, these results should not be generalized to

populations of volunteers who perform substantially different services and whose volunteer work places them in greater face-to-face or other types of contact with the agencies where they volunteer.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study provided evidence that certain forms of organizational support communication were related to volunteer retention. Results from the data analysis revealed that the number of match support specialists and the amount of face-to-face contact per month during the first year predicted volunteer retention of at least 1 year. I recommended that additional studies be conducted to confirm these results.

This study should be repeated with volunteer mentors in different geographical locations and with mentors who serve in different youth mentoring organizations. The repetition of this study could provide additional confidence to generalize the results if they aligned. Additional studies could also highlight differences in other populations of volunteers if the results did not align.

Future studies could focus on analyzing various timeframes for volunteer retention as the DV. These future studies could be designed to find out when the IV's become significant in predicting the likelihood of volunteer retention. Additionally, as previously noted, some of the variables contained outliers from records in which the volunteer served for less than three months. Volunteers who served for three months or less frequently had higher levels of telephone and written communication per month than volunteers who served for longer periods of time. These could indicate that these results do not apply well for volunteers who serve shorter periods of time. It would be important

to know if these results did not apply well to very short term volunteers so that more effective interventions could be designed specifically for that group.

Future studies could also focus on identifying moderator variables that may help to better explain the effect of organizational support communication on the likelihood of volunteer retention of at least 1 year. For instance, it is not logical to assume that all volunteers cease their activities for the same reasons. Therefore, future studies could focus on determining whether the reason for discontinuing volunteer activity moderates the effect of the organizational support communication provided to the volunteers. Additionally, BBBS offers two types of mentoring opportunities that have very different time commitments for the volunteers. A future study could test to see if the type of mentoring the volunteer engaged in moderated the effect on volunteer support. If moderator variables exist, it is important to find them so that more effective interventions can be designed for specific groups of volunteers.

Implications for Practice

Findings from this study extend the literature on volunteer retention by providing evidence that the support communication that BBBS provides to volunteer mentors is an important element of volunteer retention. Additionally, the results revealed that providing face-to-face communication may substantially increase the likelihood of volunteer retention.

Leaders and managers of volunteers can use findings from this study to support the need for developing improved communication practices, processes, and procedures to provide better communication to their volunteers. These policies could improve

knowledge regarding best support communication practices for long-term volunteer retention.

Increased volunteer retention rates could result in substantially improved outcomes for the children who are mentored by those volunteers (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). Research has shown that mentoring results in academic and social improvement to the children who are mentored for at least 1 year (DuBois et al., 2011; Herrera et al., 2007; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011; Tierney et al., 1995). However, research has also shown that premature volunteer dropout can harm the child's academic progress and social development (BBBS, 2013; Herrera et al., 2007). Therefore, it is critically important that leaders and managers of mentoring programs find ways to maximize their long-term volunteer retention.

One practical suggestion that emerged from the results of this study indicated that youth mentoring organizations should focus on increasing the amount of face-to-face contact between BBBS and the volunteer. The suggestion for more face-to-face contact emerges because face-to-face contact was one of the IVs that successfully predicted volunteer retention at 1 year. If managers focused on facilitating at least one face-to-face contact with each of their volunteers every year, they could substantially improve volunteer retention of at least 1 year.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to assess the predictive relationship between organizational support communication and the likelihood of retention of volunteers in the BBBS Agency for at least 1 year. Five IVs were initially

included. These five IV's were the amount of contact per month, the number of match support specialists, the amount of face-to-face contact per month, the amount of telephone contact per month, and the amount of written contact per month. The amount of contact per month was excluded in the final analysis because the bivariate correlation analysis revealed that there was a correlation of .88 between contacts per month and amount of telephone contacts per month.

Nonprofit organizations provide services to the most vulnerable members of our society, such as children who have been abandoned, abused, or who are at-risk for negative outcomes such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and teen pregnancy (BLS, 2014). Many of the programs that serve these vulnerable members rely heavily on volunteer labor in order to meet their program objectives (Wilson, 2012). Thus, volunteer retention is critically important to the success of these programs (Wilson, 2012).

Increased volunteer retention provides financial benefits to the agency because the agencies do not have to incur costs to recruit, process, and train as many replacement volunteers. Additionally, volunteer retention is especially important for agencies such as BBBS that specialize in one-on-one mentoring of at-risk children (BBBS, 2013). Data from the BBBS indicates that volunteers must remain matched with the children for at least 1 year in order for the children to sustain any positive gains as a result of the mentoring relationship (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). Results from internal studies by the BBBS revealed that when a volunteer quits prematurely, the child does not sustain the gains made during the mentoring process (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008). Furthermore, studies have linked premature termination of

BBBS mentoring relationships to decreased school performance in the mentees (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhoades & DeBois, 2008).

Overall, the results from this study revealed that support communication practices are important to the long-term retention of volunteer mentors. Specifically, leaders and managers of volunteers should consider developing policies and procedures that maximize the amount of face-to-face communication that volunteers receive from the agency. These policies could improve knowledge regarding best support communication practices for long-term volunteer retention. Improving long term volunteer retention may contribute to stronger academic and social gains for the children who are mentored (DuBois et al., 2011; Herrera et al., 2007; Kolar & McBride, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011; Tierney et al., 1995).

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Appendix A: Confidentiality Statement

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Inc.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Access to confidential records

In order for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Inc. to provide a responsible and professional service to clients it is necessary for volunteers, clients and parents, or guardians of clients, to be asked to divulge extensive personal information (including social security number or school ID numbers) about themselves and their families. The agency respects the confidentiality of client and volunteer records and, with the exception of situations listed below, shares information about clients and volunteers only among the agency professional staff. The right to confidentiality applies not only to written records, but also to video, film, pictures or use of client or volunteer's name in agency publications.

Every effort will be made to reveal only the first name of a child when involved in publicity efforts.

All records are considered the property of the agency and not the agency workers or clients or volunteers themselves. In order to provide a service, which is in the best interest of the children served by the program, information from outside sources, including confidential references, must be assessed along with information gained from the clients or volunteers themselves. Records are not available for review by the clients or volunteers.

Files of volunteers and clients must be stored in a secure location under lock and key any time staff is not present.

Limits of confidentiality

There are limits of confidentiality:

1. Information will be released to other individuals or organizations only upon presentation of an authorized "consent to release information" form appropriately signed by the client or volunteer. The nature and extent of information given will be at the discretion of the CEO.
 2. Identifying information regarding clients and volunteers may be used in agency publications or promotional materials if the client or volunteer has given written permission.
 3. For purposes of program evaluation, audit, or accreditation, and with the prior approval of the Executive Committee of the county that receives such a request, certain outside bodies such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America may have access to client and volunteer records. These outside organizations shall be required to respect the volunteer records. These outside organizations shall be required to respect the agency policy on confidentiality. Outside parties shall be required to use information only for the purpose(s) stated in the approval section of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Known violations of agency confidentiality policy will be reported to the supervisor of the individual involved and appropriate disciplinary action will occur up to and including dismissal.
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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Inc.

4. Members of the Board of Directors have access to client files only upon authorization by formal motion of the Board of Directors. The motion shall state who shall be authorized to review records, the specific purpose for such review, and the period of time during which access shall be granted. Members shall be required to comply with the agency policies on confidentiality and may use the information only for purposes stated by the approved action of the Board of Directors. Known violations shall be reported to the Board President. A violation of the agency's confidentiality policy by a Board member shall constitute adequate cause for removal from office.
5. Information shall only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
6. Information shall be provided to an agency's legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the agency. Such information is considered privileged information.
7. State law mandates that suspected child abuse be reported to the appropriate authorities, namely the Department of Children and Families.
8. If an agency worker receives information indicating that a client or volunteer may be dangerous to himself or herself or to others, necessary steps may be taken to protect the appropriate party. This may include medical referral or a report to the local law enforcement authorities.

I Jennifer Stukey have read, understand and agree to comply with this confidentiality policy.

Signature redacted

4-23-2015
Date

Approved by the Regional Executive Board of Directors 9/6/01