The Act of Giving: Involvement, Habitual Giving, and Motives of Volunteerism

Gary Gregory, University of New South Wales

The question of how and why people give is crucial in helping non-profit organizations attract and retain donors and volunteers. The purpose of this study is to explore the ability of reasoned influences (e.g., attitudes, values, involvement and motives), unreasoned influences (e.g., habitual giving), and situational influences (e.g., income, education, etc.) to predict volunteer and donating behavior. The results show that attitudes and personal values were poor predictors in discriminating between volunteers and non-volunteers. Further evidence suggests that there may be a trade-off in how contributors decide on what they are going to give (time vs. money). Involvement, habitual giving tendencies, and motives to volunteer appear to serve as important predictors in volunteer versus donating behavior. Future research investigating such trade-offs in a repeated behavior framework is encouraged.

Charitable organizations are under constant pressure to increase both financial and non-financial contributions. The question of how and why people give is crucial in helping non-profit organizations attract and retain donors and volunteers. Although the literature is rich in studies on helping behavior (c.f. Bendapudi, Singh and Bendapudi, 1996), research in consumer behavior provides little guidance in helping us understand motives of volunteerism (Fisher and Ackerman, 1998). Given that the number of voluntary organizations has increased in recent years, marketing techniques are playing an ever more important role in helping organizations recruit and retain volunteers (Bussell and Forbes, 2002). Understanding the psychological and behavioral aspects of volunteerism helps charities to identify characteristics of those most likely to volunteer, as well as target volunteer recruiting campaigns more effectively.

The purpose of this study is to explore relations between various psychological and behavioral aspects and volunteerism. Specifically, reasoned influences (e.g., attitudes, values, involvement and motives), unreasoned influences (e.g., habitual giving), and situational influences (e.g., income, education, etc.) are used to predict volunteer behavior. Extending existing theory in social psychology, Ronis et al.’s (1989) repeated behavior model is adapted to the study of volunteer behavior. The adapted model allows for measuring the effects of reasoned processes, unreasoned processes, and situational factors on volunteer behavior. Ouellette and Wood (1998) were able to demonstrate that repetitive past-behavior (habits) directly affects future behavior, independently of cognitions (attitudes, subjective norms, intentions, and perceived control). Although recent research has shown the influence of social norms on volunteerism (Fisher and Ackerman, 1998), there is evidence to indicate that there may be additional functions (or motives) served by volunteering (Clary et al., 1998).

Survey data were collected from members belonging to The Cancer Council Australia (TCCA), Australia’s national non-government cancer control organization. Surveys were mailed to 1000 randomly selected members in the TCCA database, with 418 completed surveys returned (42% response rate). TCCA members include those that have contributed either time through volunteering and/or made financial contributions to the organization in the past. The first step was to determine if existing scales measuring attitudes towards helping others (AHO) and attitudes towards charitable organizations (ACO) (Webb, Green and Brashear, 2000), and volunteer motives (Clary et al., 1998) could be replicated in Australia. Consistent with Webb et al., (2000), the four items measuring AHO and the five items measuring ACO loaded on two factors, respectively. Similarly, the factor analysis on the 30 items in the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was consistent with prior scale development by Clary et al. (1998). The results produced six factors representing various functions served by volunteering (protective, values, career, social, understanding...
and enhancement). Based on the ability of these scales to capture the dimensions intended, composite measures were developed for each of the two attitude scales (AHO and ACO) (Webb et al., 2000), as well as for each of the six volunteer functions (protective, values, career, social, understanding and enhancement) (Terrell et al., 2004). In order to test the adapted repeated behavior model, additional independent measures were gathered: involvement (number of activities supported, type of support provided (financial/non-financial), degree of support to other non-profits); habits (length of time supporting specific events, degree of habitual support of charity days, volitional/automatic support of charities in general); values (Schwartz’s 27 universal values (1992): altruism, equality, etc.); and, situational/enabling factors (employer involvement with TCCA (2 items), age, income, education). To identify significant predictors of volunteer behavior, stepwise multiple discriminant analysis (SMDA) was performed using a model consisting of 46 variables: attitude (2), volunteer motives (6), involvement (3), habitual giving behavior (3), values (27), and situational variables (5). Two groups were created, based on whether members volunteered for the organization or gave monetary donations or other financial contributions (e.g., purchased merchandise). The SMDA resulted in an 11-step model. Based on minimum Mahalanobis D2 and Wilks’ Lambda values, the 11 variables included in the final discriminant model, based on their loading order, were: Total number of activities involved in with TCCA (involvement), Employer involvement with charity (situational/enabler), Length of time supported special charity event (habit), Support provided to other non-profits (involvement), Employer matches donation (situational/enabler), Values (motive to volunteer), Social (motive to volunteer), Routine involvement in special charity events (habit), Enhancement (motive to volunteer), Age (situational), and INCOME (situational). Together, these 11 variables made up a discriminant function that was able to correctly classify just over 74% of TCCA members. A summary of the findings suggests that attitudes (AHO, ACO) were poor predictors in discriminating between volunteers and non-volunteers. Similarly, personal values (e.g., altruism, helping, etc) were not able to explain variation between volunteers and non-volunteers. One of the best predictors of volunteerism was involvement. Those that consistently showed prior support to TCCA through greater number of activities (breadth of support) were volunteers. Interestingly, those that showed greater involvement in other non-profit organizations were non-volunteers, suggesting volunteers were loyal to TCCA. Habits were also a significant predictor of volunteerism. The amount of prior time supporting TCCA’s special charity events significantly predicted tendency towards volunteering. Similarly, routinely supporting the special charity event through financial means also was a significant predictor of volunteerism. Consistent with past research (Clary et al., 1998), three of the six volunteer motives (values, social, and enhancement functions) were able to significantly predict volunteer tendencies. Although personal values (Schwartz’s values) were not able to directly predict tendencies towards volunteering, they appear to manifest themselves in one’s specific motives to volunteer. Factors that were able to predict non-volunteers are also meaningful. Non-volunteers were significantly influenced by their employer’s involvement with TCCA, suggesting that situational enablers help facilitate and encourage donation behavior. Furthermore, donors tended to be younger and have a higher income, perhaps influencing their decision to donate money versus time. And as expected, donors tended to make greater financial contributions to other non-profit organizations than did volunteers. These findings suggest that there may be a trade-off in how members of non-profit organizations decide on what they are going to give. Involvement, habitual giving tendencies, and motives to volunteer appear to serve as important predictors of why members tend to volunteer versus donate. Future research investigating such trade-offs in a repeated behavior framework are encouraged.

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utilisation without purchase, initially linked to the “experiential products” in the field of consumer studies (Holbrook, 1980; Evrard et al., 2001; Pine II and Gilmore, 1999 etc.).

However, few studies have been done regarding on the situation where both “possession” and “access” -as two possible available means to “consume” the wanted goods- can occur depending on the consumers’ desires and choices.

From the literature, we find that 1) there is a lack of research that takes into account the two kinds of consumption behaviours concerning the same products and makes a comparison between them; 2) previous work puts emphasis on the objective of the consumption experience, but rarely focused on “what consumers desire” vis à vis these two consumption modes. This paper will contribute to the comparison of consumer desires between two modes of consumption -access and possession- by developing scales measuring consumer desires.

In our study, we are interested in two questions:

1) Are consumer desires for “access” different for “possessors” and “non possessors”?
2) Are consumer desires for “possession” different for “possessors” and “non possessors”?

Proposed Methodology:

Field chosen:
The field of contemporary art has been chosen due to the pre-existing consumption modes -notably art museum visits and the purchases- as well as due to the continual new creation of artworks. Therefore, the access and possession situations in this study refer to visits and purchases; possessors correspond to the collectors and non possessors correspond to the visitors.

The qualitative part:
The part of qualitative study, based on more than 30 depth interviews, shows that the desires of visitors to contemporary art exhibitions include discovery; curiosity; emotion; pleasure; passion; understanding; cultural broadening; inspiration; the enjoyment of beauty; escape; meeting friends; pastime; social representation; stimulus; social obligation; extended-self; and freedom of imagination. The desires of collectors of contemporary art are found to be emotional; aesthetic; intellectual; social; utilitarian (decorative); symbolic; philanthropic; ostentatious, and financial.

The quantitative part:
A questionnaire containing 273 items, developed on the basis of the results of the qualitative study, was sent to 1000 people on the occasion of the FIAC (International Fair of Contemporary Art) and GMAC (Grand Marché d’Art Contemporain) in Paris. One hundred and ninety six complete responses ( 98 from collectors and 98 from visitors) were received and allowed us to obtain preliminary empirical results. The responses to the items were subjected to a principal components analysis. The items were divided into 7 different factors (consumer desires in access experience, those in possession experience, etc.) and the analyses are effected respectively by these categories. The empirical results of the final study will be presented in this paper.

Analysis of data:
Analysis of principal components (APC) and Structural equation modelling (AMOS) were used in this study.

We have followed logical steps to analyse the data:

1. Item purification (APC)
2. Scale validation (AMOS)
3. The test for invariant factorial structure (AMOS)-the application involving multiple samples. The central concern is whether or not components of the measurement model and/or the structural model are invariant across the multiple groups.

In our study, we use this method to first confirm the stability of the measurement model and then learn about the similarities or differences of the desires for “access” and for “possession” of visitors and collectors.

Empirical Results:

Results in this study show that consumers have some contradictory desires vis à vis their behaviours: regarding the desire for possession, collectors have a weaker possessive desire; desire for accomplishment; desire for keeping family traditions. and desire for intellectual enrichment than visitors, while having a stronger philanthropic desire and desire for sociality. Regarding the desire for access, visitors have a stronger desire for sociality and desire for freedom, and a weaker desire for a simple visit than collectors.

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A summary of the findings suggests that attitudes (AHO, ACO) were poor predictors in discriminating between volunteers and non-volunteers. Similarly, personal values (e.g., altruism, helping, etc) were not able to explain variation between volunteers and non-volunteers. One of the best predictors of volunteerism was involvement. Those that consistently showed prior support to TCCA through greater number of activities (breadth of support) were volunteers. Interestingly, those that showed greater involvement in other non-profit organizations were non-volunteers, suggesting volunteers were loyal to TCCA. Habits were also a significant predictor of volunteerism. The amount of prior time supporting TCCA’s special charity events significantly predicted tendency towards volunteering. Similarly, routinely supporting the special charity event was also a significant predictor of volunteerism. Consistent with past research (Clary et al., 1998), three of the six volunteer motives (values, social, and enhancement functions) were able to significantly predict volunteer tendencies. Although personal values (Schwartz’s values) were not able to directly predict tendencies towards volunteering, they appear to manifest themselves in one’s specific motives to volunteer. Factors that were able to predict non-volunteers are also meaningful. Non-volunteers were significantly influenced by their employer’s involvement with TCCA, suggesting that situational enablers help facilitate and encourage donation behavior. Furthermore, donors tended to be younger and have a higher income, perhaps influencing their decision to donate money versus time. And as expected, donors tended to make greater financial contributions to other non-profit organizations than did volunteers. These findings suggest that there may be a trade-off in how members of non-profit organizations decide on what they are going to give. Involvement, habitual giving tendencies, and motives to volunteer appear to serve as important predictors of why members tend to volunteer versus donate. Future research investigating such trade-offs in a repeated behavior framework are encouraged.

References


An Examination of a Strategic Household Purchase: Consumer Home Buying Behavior
Mateja Kos Koklic, University of Ljubljana
Irena Vida, University of Ljubljana

In the past few years, a criticism has been directed towards publication in the consumer behavior field, claiming that it is biased toward a marketing perspective and that it neglects consumer well-being and difficulties consumers face when making buying decisions for a strategic product. Existing literature lacks empirical studies of consumer decision making for “big” or “strategic decisions” (Bazerman, 2001; Gronhaug, Kleppe, and Haukedal 1987). According to Wells (1993), investigating purchasing decisions that can change lives of consumers, such as car or a house purchase, can make an essential contribution to consumer behavior knowledge.

In view of the dearth of literature exploring consumer decision making when purchasing high-involvement and emotionally charged products, the purpose of this research was twofold: a) to develop a conceptual model of consumer decision-making process for a prefabricated house purchase; and b) to gain knowledge of factors impacting this process from the empirical standpoint. The product selected in this study was a custom-made prefabricated house. House is the most important durable good in the household and it requires high involvement as well as complex decision making. The strongest parallel can be made with a car purchase, and many studies of consumer decision making indicate there are similarities in the buying processes of different durable goods (Punj, 1987). Hence, the empirical literature in this area and the real estate literature provided a basis for conceptual and empirical work.

After a thorough review of the existing empirical work, a conceptual model of a consumer buying process in case of a home purchase was developed. This model consists of three main groups of variables: the buying process, the external and the internal factors. It suggests that an individual’s lifestyle and the meaning a person wants to derive from owning a house influence his/her needs and desires concerning the house. We posit that a house will reflect its owners’ individuality and personal style. For a complex product such as a house, the information stemming solely from a buyer’s memory is generally inadequate (Gibler and Nelson 2003). Therefore, consumers continuously gather new information and adapt their desires and goals accordingly. The buyer usually does not get to know all the alternatives simultaneously. Rather, new alternatives are gradually added.

The second stage of this research involved empirical testing of the presented conceptual model. A number of factors prompted us to utilize qualitative research methods, i.e., in-depth personal interviews with consumers: a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, a complicated nature of the buying process, and potential useful directions for further quantitative research. In this research, six semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out; three with recent owners of the prefabricated house, and another three with potential buyers of the same product. Due to a very limited population, the sample was selected on a non-random basis. Interviews were carried out in participants’ households. At least one decision maker in the household participated in the interview which lasted from 45 to 90 minutes and it was audio-taped. Topics of discussion followed the established interviewing protocol.

In the analytic stage of our research, we followed the procedure for analyzing qualitative data by Miles and Huberman (1984). These guidelines enable investigators to produce compelling analytic conclusions and enhance the internal validity of the study. The analyses involved three types of activities: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Audio tapes with interviews were transcribed and reviewed several times by the researchers. The conclusion drawing was based on the cross-case comparisons, reference to previously reviewed empirical studies and to the theoretical framework. Noting patterns, themes and regularities supported final conclusions.

One of the major contributions of this study was an extensive review of the literature dealing with consumer decision making processes and behavior in relation to strategic purchases. Using qualitative research design, we empirically examined the conceptual model and carefully compared the theoretical and empirical findings. Similar to Erasmus, Boshoff, and Rousseau (2001) and Loewenstein (2001) our results suggest that cognitive and rational factors alone do not offer a sufficient explanation of consumer behavior in the case of high-involvement products such as a prefabricated house. In addition to the idiosyncratic characteristics of the customer, his/her personal situation and environmental factors, the role of feelings, experience, subconscious factors, needs and goals should be taken into account. Along with the emotionally charged internal factors, other factors identified in our qualitative analysis include consumer’s experience with and prior knowledge of a house buying process. Significant external factors in this qualitative study included recommendations from people buyers trust, the seller/company’s behavior and marketing communication activities in the housing market.

As households may have serious problems in making wise strategic purchase decisions (Gronhaug, Kleppe, and Haukedal 1987), we offer several implications for consumers. Since house buying is a decision with long-term consequences, we recommend to consumers that they first explicitly define their needs and objectives concerning the purchase. Next, we propose consumers gain information about available alternatives and specific criteria relevant to them. Clearly, external information search is a way to increase knowledge, and reduce perceptions of risk and uncertainty (Dowling and Staelin 1994). Respondents in our study seem to have had limited knowledge about houses and the buying process itself. We emphasize that gaining additional knowledge about this topic is of critical importance. We recommend to the home buyers that they make attempts to experience the house independently of its producer. The findings of this study indicate that an individual’s experience with company’s representatives plays an important role in the consideration set formation and