Bifkovics Bettina

The Role of Communication in Shaping Volunteer Behavior: The Influence of Word-of-Mouth, Motivations and Inhibiting Factors

CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Supervisor:

Dr. Malota Erzsébet

Copyright © Bifkovics Bettina

CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN SHAPING VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOR: THE INFLUENCE OF WORD-OF-MOUTH, MOTIVATIONS AND INHIBITING FACTORS

Doctoral Dissertation

Bifkovics Bettina

Budapest, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES 8

LIST OF FIGURES 9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 10

1. INTRODUCTION 11

1.1. My research career and reasons for the choice of topic 11

1.2. The relevance of the chosen topic 11

1.3. Content of the dissertation 15

1.4. Theoretical frameworks used in the dissertation 18

1.5. Summary of methodologies 23

2. ARTICLE I. CUSTOMER-TO-CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION: REFERRAL OF HIGH AND LOW INVOLVEMENT PRODUCTS THROUGH STIMULATED WORD-OF-MOUTH 25

2.1. Abstract 25

2.2. Introduction 26

2.3. Literature review and hypotheses 28

2.3.1. Word-of-mouth and referral reward programs (RRPs) 28

2.3.2. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) 30

2.3.3. The consumer decision-making journey 32

2.4. Method 34

2.4.1. Sample 34

2.4.2. Measures 35

2.5. Results 38

2.6. Discussion and implications 44

2.6.1. Managerial implications 46

2.7. Limitations and future research 47

2.8. Ethical approval 48

2.8. Disclosure statement 48

2.9. Funding 48
2.10. References 49
3. ARTICLE II. VOLUNTEERING THROUGH WORD-OF-MOUTH AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION: INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSED RESEARCH DIRECTIONS 57
3.1. Abstract 57
3.2. Introduction 58
3.3. Research methodology 59
3.4. Literature review 60
3.4.1. Volunteering 60
3.4.2. Individual characteristics that influence volunteering 61
3.4.3. The impact of volunteering 64
3.4.4. Organizational aspects of volunteering 66
3.4.5. The role of communication in volunteering 68
3.5. Possible research directions 71
3.6. Summary 75
3.7. References 76
4. ARTICLE III. WHY DO WE REFRAIN FROM VOLUNTEERING? A TEST OF INHIBITING FACTORS 91
4.1. Abstract 91
4.2. Introduction 91
4.3. Literature review 93
4.3.1. Volunteering 93
4.3.2. Factors hindering volunteering 94
4.4. Method 99
4.4.1. Measures 100
4.4.2. Sample 102
4.5. Results 103

4.6. Summary and recommendations 108
4.7. References 110
5. ARTICLE IV. UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS AND INFORMATION SOURCES DURING EMERGENCY CRISIS SITUATIONS: VOLUNTEERING WITH UKRAINIAN REFUGEES 121
5.1. Abstract 121
5.2. Introduction 122
5.3. Theoretical background 124
5.3.1. Volunteering during crises 124
5.3.2. Volunteer motivations during crisis 125
5.3.3. Sources of information regarding volunteering opportunities 126
5.4. The specific context of the current study - Hungary 129
5.5. Method 131
5.5.1 Sample and data collection 131
5.5.2. Analysis and coding categories 132
5.5.3. Sample characteristics 134
5.6. Findings 135
5.6.1. Motivations for helping the Ukrainian refugees 135
5.6.2. Sources of information about volunteering opportunities 138
5.7. Discussion 142
5.7.1. Motivations for helping the Ukrainian refugees 143
5.7.2. Sources of volunteer information 144
5.7.3. Theoretical contribution 146
5.7.4. Managerial implications 147
5.7.5. Limitations and future research directions 148
5.8. Conclusion 149
5.9. References 150
6. CONCLUSION 158

6.1. Summary of results 158
6.2. Answers to the research questions 160
6.3. Theoretical contributions 162
6.4. Managerial implications 166
6.5. Limitations 168
6.6. Future research directions 169
7. LIST OF INCLUDED PUBLICATIONS 172
8. RELATED WORKS AND RECOGNITIONS 173
9. REFERENCES IN THE DISSERTATION BEYOND THE ARTICLES 175

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of research questions of the dissertation and related articles 15
Table 2. Overview of the included papers and the journals' rankings 17
Table 3. Summary table of research aims and questions 22
Table 4. Summary of research methodologies 23
Table 5. Instruments used to analyze TPB 37
Table 6. Statements used to analyze consumer journey conformity 38
Table 7. Correlation between variables 39
Table 8. Coefficients Table for Behavioral Intention for RRP 40
Table 9. Wilcoxon signed ranks test: effects of a referral 41
Table 10. Wilcoxon signed ranks test: difference among product types 42
Table 11. Descriptions of variables without and with the influence of a referral code 42
Table 12. The six motivations for volunteering based on Clary and Snyder (1999) - literature summary 62
Table 13. Proposed research directions 75
Table 14. Hungarian statements on factors hindering volunteering 100
Table 15. Factor weights of statements related to the factors 103
Table 16. Composite reliability values of the factors 104
Table 17. Average variance extracted (AVE) values of the factors 105

Table 18. HTMT values for the factors 105
Table 19. Summary of the hypotheses' evaluation 109
Table 20. Interviewee profiles: gender, age, type of activity and motivations 134
Table 21. Summary of the articles' main theoretical contributions 162
Table 22. Summary of future research directions 169

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The positioning of the 4 included articles 16
Figure 2. Possible research model to study the impact of word-of-mouth advertising 73
Figure 3. Possible research model to study the impact of recruitment communication 74
Figure 4. Conceptual model of reasons for not volunteering based on the three-fold classification of Brady et al. (1995) and Willems and Dury (2017) 94
Figure 5. Thematic map of volunteer motivations 138
Figure 6. Thematic map of volunteer information sources 142

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Erzsébet Malota, for her continuous support, guidance and encouragement throughout my PhD journey. Zsóka, thank you for introducing me to the world of research – I will be eternally grateful for this.

I am sincerely grateful to my colleagues whom I have not only collaborated academically but also formed lasting friendships: Nóra Kisfürjesi, Dóra Horváth, Tamás Csordás and Ariel Mitev. Thank you for the inspiring projects, shared experiences and your unwavering support.

Furthermore, I am thankful to the colleagues in the institute for making space for inspiring conversations. I would like to thank Anna Török and Attila Mucsi, for their collaboration and helping in starting my academic journey.

A special thanks goes to Andrea Béla-Csovcsics, for our close collaboration in volunteering research, and for the shared ideas and enthusiasm that shaped this work.

I am deeply thankful to my family for their continuous support, to my wonderful partner for always encouraging me, and to my friends and colleagues for their support and understanding – I could not have done this without you.

Finally, I am grateful to everyone who contributed to my academic journey in any way.

Thank you.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. My research career and reasons for the choice of topic

My scientific journey started during my Master's studies in marketing, where I had the opportunity to join the research group of my supervisor, Erzsébet Malota. It was the first time I had been involved in scientific research, and it had such a strong influence on me that I decided to pursue a PhD in this field.

At the beginning of my PhD studies, I was invited to join a research group focused on word-of-mouth (WOM) research, where the aim was to find out the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on participation in referral reward programs (RRPs), which led to the publication of Article 1. While researching communication and WOM, I found communication research particularly intriguing, therefore, I decided to further explore this field.

Later in my studies, a major geopolitical event occurred, the war between Russia and Ukraine, which led me to research communication in the context of volunteering. I have always had a special connection with volunteering and have been involved in both charity and sports volunteering. The research on communication in volunteering led to Article 2, which is a literature review. Besides motivations, to be able to provide insights on volunteer participation, it is important to investigate what inhibits individuals from volunteering, which led to the publication of Article 3. To further investigate the communication aspects in the context of volunteering, interviews were conducted with volunteers aiding Ukrainian refugees, which was found to be a promising research direction and is therefore included as a manuscript of Article 4.

1.2. The relevance of the chosen topic

Communication plays an important role in impacting individual attitudes and behaviors, as behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). It is considered even more essential in contexts where decisions are shaped by interpersonal relations (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955, Hughes et al., 2025; Maxmudova, 2026). Among the different forms of

communication, word-of-mouth (WOM) has gained increasing importance as a promotional and informational mechanism (Roy et al., 2024). This includes encouraging consumers to communicate about a product or service to their friends and acquaintances, resulting in a chain of information exchange (Mason, 2008) that can be considered effective (López & Sicilia, 2014).

Traditional WOM has transformed into electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) due to the rise of digital technologies (Sun et al., 2006). These emerging digital platforms enable the rapid flow of information to a larger audience (Adila et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2020; Hendrickx & Vázquez-Herrero, 2024). Digital platforms help communication among strong-tied individuals and make it easier for strangers to talk to each other, which broadens the opportunities for interpersonal communication (Sen & Lerman, 2007). As a result, WOM and eWOM have become important sources of information influencing modern decision-making in various contexts (e.g., Nilashi et al., 2022; Al-Dmour et al., 2024; Perez-Aranda et al., 2026).

Communication has become increasingly important for nonprofit organizations and activities as well, where volunteers are crucial for ensuring the smooth operation (Alfes et al., 2017; Windon et al., 2024) in many areas such as in relation to refugees (Sengupta et al., 2023). Volunteering is defined as an activity performed voluntarily, without monetary remuneration, and intended to serve the public good (Güntert et al., 2022). Contemporary social changes and recurring crises have further intensified the need for civic engagement and community support (Fényes & Kiss, 2011), as pandemics, armed conflicts, and economic instability have further increased reliance on volunteer-driven organizations (e.g., United Nations Volunteers, 2022; Sengupta et al., 2023). Due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, the number of Ukrainian refugees worldwide rose to above 5 million, with 65 450 residing in Hungary (UNHCR, 2025), highlighting the need to investigate volunteer behavior, including the role of communication processes in a crisis situation.

There are over 2.1 billion people worldwide who engage in volunteering over the course of a year (United Nations Volunteers, 2026), and nearly 2.2 million people took part in volunteer activities in Hungary (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2023). This underlines the magnitude of societal impact that volunteering can have when effectively managed and supported. Investigating volunteering in Hungary is relevant

as patterns of civic engagement may differ from other countries due to differences in cultural norms and institutional environments (Grönlund et al., 2011; Grönlund, 2013). Previous research (Plagnol & Huppert, 2010) has concentrated on the major gaps in volunteering throughout Europe, revealing a positive correlation between formal and informal volunteering. It has also been shown that previously identified influencing factors of volunteering (e.g., cultural characteristics) fail to account for these differences, underscoring the necessity to explore potential variances related to historical context, institutional frameworks, and national circumstances (Plagnol & Huppert, 2010). The research by Bocsi and Fényes (2012) indicated that socio-demographic characteristics exhibit a weak influence, whereas value preferences significantly impact volunteering, suggesting that differences in volunteering are likely rooted in cultural value systems. It was also found that religiosity positively influences volunteering, whereas individuals' core values affect their participation in modern, traditional, or hybrid types of volunteerism (Bocsi & Fényes, 2012).

Despite the increasing importance of volunteering, one of the main challenges faced by nonprofit organizations is the recruitment and retention of volunteers (Warburton et al., 2018). Previous research indicates that the content and source of communication, along with motivational aspects, are critical for increasing participation in volunteer activities (Clary et al., 1994; Bennett & Kottasz, 2001; Jablin, 2001). Communication is an essential element of the volunteering process, involving recruiting, experience, and post-participation advocacy, which includes peer recommendations and word-of-mouth interactions (Bifkovics & Malota, 2024). While WOM is not motivation, it can act as an external influence on shaping motivations and behavioral intentions (e.g., Pourjahanshahi et al., 2023). These findings emphasize that communication is not a supporting function, but a fundamental aspect of volunteering.

Existing literature primarily focused on volunteer motivations (e.g., Dunn et al., 2016; Molnar et al., 2025) while less attention has been paid to the factors that hinder volunteer participation. However, understanding these inhibiting factors is equally important, as the presence of these constraints (e.g., lack of opportunities) can limit individuals' engagement in volunteer activities (Bifkovics & Béla-Csovcsics, 2025). In particular, the lack of awareness about volunteering opportunities suggests that communication-related factors may play a decisive role not only in encouraging but in hindering participation.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) shows the influence of communication on behaviors by demonstrating the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intentions. Communication, including word-of-mouth (WOM), can influence all three components, making it a relevant concept for understanding volunteer engagement. Extending the application of the framework to another context provides insights into how communication shapes behavioral intentions.

Despite extensive study on communication, volunteering, and motivation, there is limited research that integrates these aspects to examine both communication—particularly word-of-mouth—and motivating and inhibiting factors across different contexts. Investigating this gap helps in developing more effective communication strategies to support volunteer recruitment and retention.

Based on these considerations, the article-based dissertation aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of communication in influencing individuals?
2. What are the main research areas related to volunteering?
3. How can the importance of communication be described in the context of volunteering?
4. What factors inhibit individuals from participating in voluntary activities?
5. What are the primary motivations for individuals to engage in volunteer opportunities?
6. From what information sources do individuals access information about volunteer opportunities?

An overview of research questions, including their relation to the publications and the associated article that addresses each issue, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of research questions of the dissertation and related articles

Research question	**Related article**
What is the role of communication in influencing individuals?	Article 1
What are the main research areas related to volunteering?	Article 2
How can the importance of communication be described in the context of volunteering?	Article 2
What factors inhibit individuals from participating in voluntary activities?	Article 3
What are the primary motivations for individuals to engage in volunteer opportunities?	Article 4
From what information sources do individuals access information about volunteer opportunities?	Article 4

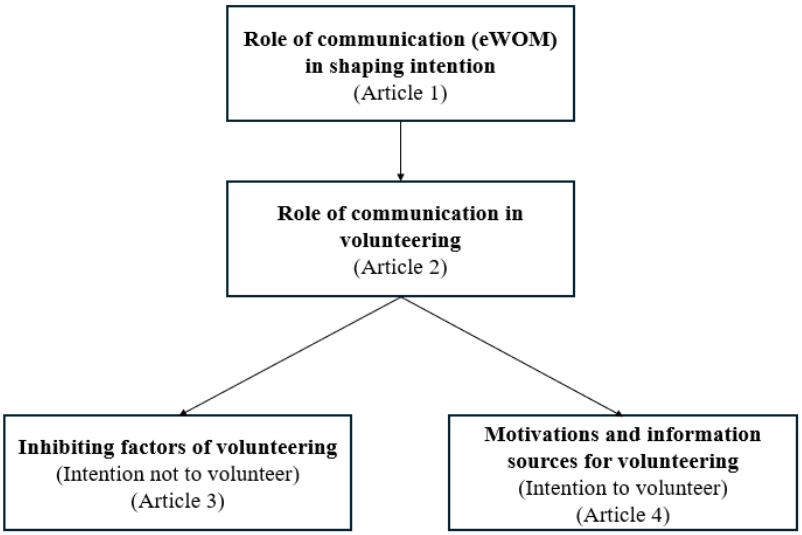
Source: own editing

1.3. Content of the dissertation

The outcome of my doctoral studies is my article-based dissertation, which includes a collection of articles. The article-based thesis consists of an introduction, four articles, and a conclusion. In addition to presenting the included articles, the introduction proposes the main theoretical frameworks and methodologies used.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the dissertation, highlighting the relationships between the four articles.

Figure 1. The positioning of the 4 included articles



Source: own editing

In the first article, the investigation of the role of communication, in particular the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on the behavioral intention was the focus. This importance of communication in shaping intention was the driver to examine its role in a different context, which led to our integrative literature review on volunteering. Based on the literature review, motivation was found to be a key concept in volunteering which was later analyzed along with communicational aspects highlighting the research directions of Articles 3 and 4. These studies identified key barriers to participation, particularly lack of opportunities which relate to ineffective communication, and incorporated empirical insights into what motivates individuals and how they access information about volunteering opportunities in a specific context.

Article 1 focused on the role of electronic word-of-mouth (e.g., recommending a product to a friend or acquaintance) in influencing customer decision-making and its role in shaping behavioral intention. Article 2 focused on providing literature synthesis and further research directions on the relationship between volunteering and communication. As motivations and communicational aspects were found to be a central phenomenon, Article 3 focuses on the factors that inhibit engaging in volunteer

opportunities. Article 4 is built on the centrality of motivational aspects, the volunteer-related communicational findings of Articles 2 and 3, also on the dominant role of electronic word-of-mouth found in Article 1 in a new context of emergency crisis situations. Details of the above-mentioned articles can be found in Table 2 with the journals' rankings.

Table 2. Overview of the included papers and the journals' rankings

Article	Details of the articles	Rank
Article 1	**Bifkovics, B.,** Malota, E., Faria, L. N., & Martinez, L. F. (2024). Customer-to-customer communication: Referral of high and low involvement products through stimulated word-of-mouth. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *30*(2), 204–226.	SJR Q2
Article 2	**Bifkovics, B.,** & Malota, E. (2024). Volunteering through word-of-mouth and organizational communication: Integrative literature review and proposed research directions. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *55*(4), 63–76.	MTA A
Article 3	**Bifkovics, B.,** & Béla-Csovcsics, A. (2025). Why do we refrain from volunteering? A test of inhibiting factors. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *56*(11), 28–40.	MTA A
Article 4 (Under review)	**Bifkovics, B.** & Malota, E. Understanding volunteer motivations and information sources during emergency crisis situations: Volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. *Voluntas.* [Under review]	SJR Q1

Source: own editing

The first article investigated the effect of electronic word-of-mouth on behavioral intention and the consumer decision-making journey via conducting quantitative research. The findings highlight the importance of word-of-mouth communication and its influence on consumer behavior.

After discovering the fascinating context of volunteering, we have decided to investigate research areas of volunteering and the role of communication in the process of volunteering, which is included in Article 2. Along with identifying the main research themes in volunteering, the findings of our literature review provided multiple insights and research directions for further research into the role of

communication in volunteering. Based on the literature review concerning volunteering, motivations and communications, the research ideas of Article 3 and Article 4 were formulated.

The third article was in cooperation with Andrea Béla-Csovcsics. We started our cooperation at an EMOK Workshop in 2024, and we have continued collaborating ever since then. A total of 3 manuscripts have been created in this collaboration along with 2 published articles of our research conducted on why individuals refrain from voluntary activities. Based on our findings, among those who do not participate in volunteering, the lack of opportunities appears as a significantly more prominent barrier compared to volunteers. This also highlights the need to establish effective communication to support and promote volunteering.

Building on the findings of Article 3, Article 4 examines volunteer motivations and how volunteers access information in a specific crisis context. The fourth article is currently under review at Voluntas and is therefore included as a manuscript. To further explore motivations and the sources of information about volunteering opportunities in a crisis situation, specifically in the context of volunteering with Ukrainian refugees, we conducted qualitative research. Based on the findings, the most dominant motivations were values and protective, while motivations related to self-development were less salient in this crisis context. In terms of communication, weak ties as information sources were particularly present and appear to play a crucial role in the rapid flow of information, especially in situations requiring immediate aid.

1.4. Theoretical frameworks used in the dissertation

This dissertation integrates multiple theoretical frameworks throughout the four articles. Although each article addresses separate themes, their investigation provides a deeper understanding of how communication may affect volunteering behavior via social influence, personal motivations, inhibiting factors and information sources.

Article 1 includes various concepts such as word-of-mouth (WOM), tie strength, product involvement, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the consumer decision-making journey. WOM can be considered one of the most effective forms of advertising (López & Sicilia, 2014) and occurs through communication between

individuals about a particular product, service, or brand. As socially close people may know more about the preferences of others in their circle (Liviatan et al., 2008), tie strength can be considered an important factor when analyzing word-of-mouth. Tie strength measures the frequency of interaction and the closeness of individuals (Marsden & Campbell, 1984). The likelihood of WOM about a product can be related to the product's personal relevance to an individual (e.g., Zaichkowsky, 1994; Sundram et al., 1998), which also highlights the importance of product involvement. Although WOM and its digital form, eWOM, have similar underlying mechanisms of sharing information with individuals, they have differences in reach, availability, anonymity, tie strength, and in motivations (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), eWOM can target a broader audience across various platforms, and eWOM communication is more persistent over time as WOM often refers to direct face-to-face interactions. Based on their study, eWOM is often anonymous, originates from weak ties, and facilitates quick information dissemination, whereas WOM occurs between individuals with strong interpersonal relationships (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). The effectiveness of WOM and eWOM vary across contexts because of such factors as digital divide (Ireland & Lestari, 2025) and cultural aspects (Dang & Raska, 2022). As digitalization determines the extent to which individuals can access the channels, cultural factors shape how individuals share information, create eWOM and use it in their decision-making processes (Dang & Raska, 2022). Luo et al. (2014) show that the individualism-collectivism dimension of culture influences how consumers evaluate eWOM: individualists tend to rely on the content-related cues (e.g., argumentation and two-sided information), while collectivists' judgments are more strongly shaped by social approval cues such as consistency and ratings. This difference highlights the opportunity for investigating eWOM in various contexts. However, aspects such as argument quality and the source credibility of eWOM were found to influence individuals despite their cultural orientation (Luo et al., 2014). Extending these findings to the Hungarian context, prior research characterizes Hungary as a highly individualistic country (Balawi & Wachira, 2021), where tie strength does not have significant effect on eWOM whereas the trust, social norms and informational influence play a significant role in shaping eWOM effectiveness (Tompos & Abu Krair, 2023). Overall, these findings suggest that Hungary's individualistic culture may reduce the role of tie strength in eWOM, the influence of the communication still depends on contextual factors.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) provides a useful framework for understanding behavioral intention, and was used in the research of the dissertation. However, the weight of its components may vary across cultural and contextual settings (Hagger et al., 2007; Morren & Grinstein, 2021). TPB connects behavioral intention with attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms, and these components have a significant impact on behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Lastly, the circular decision-making model of Court et al. (2009) was built on examining nearly 20 000 consumers worldwide in different industries, and it has four phases: initial consideration, active evaluation, moment of purchase and the individual's experience after purchase. There are various factors that can influence the consumer decision-making process such as WOM (Ngarmwongnoi et al., 2020), and product involvement (Melumad et al., 2019). These concepts provide the theoretical foundation for the analysis of how communication, especially eWOM, influences individual decision-making and behavioral intentions.

Based on the behavioral and communication themes presented in Article 1, Article 2 shifts attention to the context of volunteering. Article 2 is an integrative literature review on volunteering and communication, providing a summary of the literature and research articles on volunteering which led to the definition of novel research directions. Among the individual characteristics that influence volunteering, the role of motivations, age, gender, and cultural background were identified. The most dominant research theme was motivations, highlighting Clary and Snyder's (1999) six types of individual and social motivations for volunteering, with particular emphasis on Volunteer Functions Inventory, originating from functional theory (e.g., Katz, 1960; Smith et al., 1956). In terms of communication, recruitment communication and communication about volunteering were found to be important. Among the defined research directions based on previous research, the use of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the concept of word-of-mouth is also listed.

While previous studies were mainly focused on motivational factors (e.g., Dunn et al., 2016; Molnar et al., 2025), Article 3 examines the less investigated domain of why individuals refrain from taking part in voluntary activities. According to Brady et al. (1995), there are 3 main aspects what keeps individuals from volunteering: they cannot, they do not want to, or no one asked them. Willems and Dury (2017) identified a detailed framework for investigating various reasons for not volunteering: social

boundaries, physical boundaries, stress from volunteering, non-accountable, lack of skills, lack of opportunities, lack of time, among others. Building on these theoretical approaches, the article applies and empirically tests an internationally recognized framework in the Hungarian context, highlighting the potential context-dependency of the inhibiting factors.

Article 4 builds on the previously defined frameworks by analyzing volunteering within a crisis context by incorporating motivational factors with communication aspects such as WOM, eWOM, and information sources. Article 4 is a research article focusing on motivational and communication aspects of volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. In terms of volunteers' motivations, Clary and Snyder's (1999) Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) includes the six individual or social motivations for volunteering: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social and protective motivation. Article 4 applies concepts from Article 1 such as word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth and tie strength. Based on Tezcan (2025), strong ties create a homogeneous information bubble, thus the weak ties are the ones that facilitate access to new and diverse information, which is notably important in crisis situations. Previous studies emphasized that social ties serve as bridges to new opportunities (Bian et al., 2015; Song et al., 2026), hence underscoring their relevance in accessing volunteer opportunities during crises.

The theoretical frameworks employed across the four articles provide a broader understanding of the motivations behind volunteerism. WOM and tie strength are two concepts that indicate the mechanisms of information dissemination and its effect on individuals. The Theory of Planned Behavior is a structured framework that helps in understanding behavioral intention, while motivational frameworks and inhibiting factors explain the reasons behind individuals' decisions to volunteer or refrain from volunteering. These approaches provide a stable theoretical foundation for examining the impact of communication on volunteering. Based on the identified research gaps, each article formulated research objectives and research questions, which are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary table of research aims and questions

	Research aims	**Research questions**
Article 1	The aim of the research is to add to the existing knowledge of referral marketing by analyzing the impact of an RRP on customer behavior, and the consumer journey for high- and low-involvement products.	**RQ1:** Can the Theory of Planned Behavior model be used to indicate a person's behavior intention to participate in referral reward programs? **RQ2:** What are the effects of using a referral reward program on the Consumer Decision-Making Journey in case of high- and low-involvement products?
Article 2	The aim of this paper is to review the complex and diverse literature on volunteering and volunteer communication, to summarize the results of international research, and to provide a basis for future research on the topic.	**RQ1:** What are the main themes of research on volunteering? **RQ2:** How has the relationship between volunteering and communication been defined in the literature?
Article 3	The aim of the research is to examine how volunteering is perceived among the subjects studied and what factors inhibit their participation in voluntary work.	**RQ1:** What factors inhibit the Hungarians from participating in voluntary activities?
Article 4	The aim is to identify the information sources for volunteering to help Ukrainian refugees, and to understand the motivations of volunteers.	**RQ1:** What are the primary motivations for individuals to engage in immediate crisis response volunteering during war-related emergencies regarding Ukrainian refugees in Hungary? **RQ2:** What were the main sources of recruitment information for immediate crisis response volunteering in support of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary?

Source: own editing

1.5. Summary of methodologies

Table 4 provides a summary of the research methodologies, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and data analyses applied in the four articles.

Table 4. Summary of research methodologies

	Data collection	**Sampling**	**Data analysis**
Article 1	**Quantitative methodology:** online survey	218 respondents from convenience, voluntary, and planned snowball sampling techniques	SPSS program was used for data analysis (e.g., correlation, regression)
Article 2	**Qualitative methodology:** integrative literature review. Google Scholar and ScienceDirect were used.	English-language journal articles focusing on volunteering and communication (complemented with Hungarian articles)	Literature review analysis by identifying the main themes after categorization.
Article 3	**Quantitative methodology**: online survey	264 respondents, convenience sampling	Confirmatory factor analysis was performed in ADANCO, further data analysis in SPSS.
Article 4	**Qualitative methodology:** semi-structured in-depth interviews	Purposive sampling: 25 individuals who were taking part in any volunteering activity in Hungary in the context of Ukrainian refugees	Thematic analysis to investigate the main patterns of information sources and motivations.

Source: own editing

In Article 1, data were collected through an online survey administered via Qualtrics and distributed online through social media platforms (Instagram and WhatsApp), applying convenience, voluntary response, and planned snowball sampling techniques. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (e.g., correlation, regression).

Bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationships between the variables of the TPB. Multiple linear regression analyses were performed to examine the effects of the independent variables (attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control). The Wilcoxon signed ranks test was performed to highlight the effects of a referral on the consumer decision-making journey in the case of low- and high-involvement products.

Article 2 applied an integrative literature review with the aim of gaining deeper understanding of volunteering and communication strategies (Snyder, 2019), to synthesize previous findings and to identify future research directions. Google Scholar and ScienceDirect were used for literature searching beginning with the search terms "volunteer" and "volunteering" to identify the topics studied in volunteering, which were then used to identify the most relevant areas of the literature. The included articles were selected according to the following criteria: English-language journal articles with a focus on volunteering and communication. We identified the main topics (e.g., motivations) and later targeted Hungarian and international articles on these topics. The search term "volunteer communication" was used to investigate the literature regarding volunteering and communication in more detail.

Article 3 used quantitative research design, employing an online questionnaire distributed by convenience sampling. A total of 264 responses were obtained. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using ADANCO, followed by additional statistical analyses (e.g., descriptive statistics, crosstabs) performed in SPSS. The study aimed to identify and evaluate the key factors inhibiting participation in volunteering.

In Article 4, a qualitative methodology was applied to explore volunteering experiences, the sources of volunteer information, and motivations related to volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. Twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted using purposive sampling. The sample consisted of volunteers who were engaged in activities aiding Ukrainian refugees in Hungary. The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify the dominant themes, motivations, information sources, and post-participation perceptions in the case of the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

2. ARTICLE I. CUSTOMER-TO-CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION: REFERRAL OF HIGH AND LOW INVOLVEMENT PRODUCTS THROUGH STIMULATED WORD-OF-MOUTH

Authors: Bettina BIFKOVICS, Erzsébet MALOTA, Luciana N. FARIA, Luis F. MARTINEZ

Citation: Bifkovics, B., Malota, E., Faria, L. N., & Martinez, L. F. (2024). Customer-to-customer communication: Referral of high and low involvement products through stimulated word-of-mouth. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *30*(2), 204–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2023.2253235

2.1. Abstract

Referral reward programs (RRPs), considered as a form of stimulated word-of-mouth (WOM), provide incentives to existing customers to bring in new customers. The research here adds to previous knowledge by exploring the usage of referral codes for high and low-involvement products in three stages of the consumer decision journey, on a sample of 218 consumers analyzed by regression analysis. Results show that components of the Theory of Planned Behavior influence the behavioral intention toward participating in an RRP, with perceived behavioral control having the strongest effect, followed by subjective norm and Attitude. Referral codes have a significant effect on respondents' behavior; high conformity of high-involvement products and low conformity of low-involvement products was found, with referral programs having a weaker effect on high-involvement products. Customers tend to follow all steps of the traditional consumer journey when buying a high-involvement product; in the case of low involvement products, low conformity was even lower when using a referral code. Low-involvement products at the need recognition stage, and high-involvement products at the active research stage, are the least affected by the RRP. Results provide insights for companies to optimize their marketing strategy through stimulated WOM, and with the usage of RRPs.

Keywords: customer-to-customer communication; referral reward programs; consumer decision journey; product involvement; word-of-mouth

2.2. Introduction

Accelerating the spread of information exchange and access to more information has also changed the way consumers make purchase decisions. Tie strength plays an essential role in making more informed and accurate purchasing decisions, as it relates to the interaction frequency and closeness of a relationship. Tie strength also plays a crucial role in marketing strategy and customer acquisition, for example, through referral reward programs (RRPs), that are a form of stimulated word-of-mouth (WOM), providing incentives to existing customers to bring in new customers (P. Schmitt et al., 2011).

Results show that people are four times more likely to buy a product when referred to it by a friend—or in this study—a strong tie; plus, referral leads are believed to be 25% more valuable in comparison to a lead coming from traditional marketing sources (Berman, 2016). RRPs are a cost-effective strategy for gaining new customers with superior profitability to the firm as referred customers are also known for staying longer with the company, with lower acquisition costs while generating 16% more profits. Customers acquired through RRPs (who remained customers after the first purchase) are 13% less likely to leave the company than non-referred customers (P. Schmitt et al., 2011).

Referral Marketing has been studied in many different research areas, focusing on referral likelihood, analyzing factors that can influence the referrer to take part in an RRP, like tie-strength, motivations, brand strength and size of the incentive associated with the program, which is the most dominant research area in the field (Orsingher & Wirtz, 2018; Ryu & Feick, 2007; Wang & Chen, 2022; Wirtz & Chew, 2002; Xu et al., 2023). Azmat et al. (2022) investigated the impact of personality traits on consumer WOM and found that openness to experience, and agreeableness have an indirect impact on WOM through knowledge-sharing behavior and figurative language.

As a majority of the research conducted in referral marketing focused on the incentive structures of the RRPs, the focus of our research is on a less researched area of

customer behavior relating to RRPs. With this research, our aim is to extend the existing knowledge in referral marketing by analyzing the effects of an RRP on customer's behavior, and the consumer journey in the case of high and low-involvement products. No study has previously analyzed the actual usage of a referral code by the customer in the context of a decision-making journey, nor if their purchasing behavior would be different depending on the product type. In our study, the effects of the reward program on the customers' behavior will be analyzed in the context of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and of the Consumer journey scheme presented by Court et al. (2009).

The current research addresses important research gaps in referral marketing as our study seeks to answer the following research questions:

> RQ1: Can the Theory of Planned Behavior model be used to indicate a person's behavior intention to participate in referral reward programs?
>
> RQ2: What are the effects of using a referral reward program on the Consumer Decision-Making Journey in case of high- and low-involvement products?

Research Question 1 addresses the research question with a focus on behavior intention. According to previous studies, referrals have a significant effect on buying behavior (e.g., Podnar & Javernik, 2012; Rejón-Guardia & Martínez-López, 2014), but RRPs' effect on behavior intention has not been studied before. The research question aims to show that attitude, social norms and perceived behavioral control (PBC) indicate behavior intention (Ajzen, 1991) in the context of RRPs. Through the TPB, we investigate the customers' relationships and perceptions toward an RRP, trying to predict behavioral intention of participation in a rewarded referral program.

Research Question 2 defines the relationship between the effect of RRPs and the Consumer Decision-Making Journey. If customers are willing to use a code in one of their purchases, it is interesting to understand how it could affect each step of their decision-making process, as marketing actions are aiming to influence customers in the right moment (Court et al., 2009). Guo (2012) also suggested that the perspective of the referred customer toward RRPs should be further analyzed and also, studying how their journey would look like while participating in such program needs more research. In our research we expected that the introduction of an RRP influences the referred customer's consumer journey stages as strong ties who know their preferences

(Granovetter, 1973; Chen, 2022), and thus, may lead to changes in it. Also, the importance of involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1994) is introduced along with the high and low-involvement products, which has been used in the research of advertising (e.g., Xue & Muralidharan, 2015; Han & Kim, 2017; S. Kim et al., 2017; Mainardes et al., 2023).

The most important concepts, the review of literature on WOM and RRPs are discussed in the following section, along with the introduction of the TPB and the Consumer Decision-Making Journey. Along with the introduction of the constructs, the hypotheses are formulated in the following section, which is followed by a section where the methods applied in the current research are described. The section after covers the results of the study, which is followed by the discussion and implications. The final section describes the limitations of the research and proposes future research directions. Results and conclusions of this study will allow marketers to better understand if creating an RRP is the right strategy to acquire more customers, based on the type of product they offer.

2.3. Literature review and hypotheses

2.3.1. Word-of-mouth and referral reward programs (RRPs)

The concept of WOM can be summarized as one of the most effective forms of advertising that happen through natural customer-to-customer communication about a product, service, or firm (Brown et al., 2007; Plummer, 2007; López & Sicilia, 2014).

WOM has an unremitting impact on consumer attitudes and how they behave (Wirtz & Chew, 2002), it provides psychological benefits to customers, like relieving anxiety in the decision-making process (Furrer et al., 2021) and reducing cognitive dissonance (Wangenheim & Bayón, 2007), as the referred person may rely on the peer's previous experiences and information research. Podnar and Javernik (2012) investigated the effects of WOM on consumers' attitudes toward purchase probability and found that negative WOM has an impact on consumers' attitudes and purchase probability, while the influence of positive WOM was not significant.

As a form of stimulated WOM, existing customers are used as brand advocates to further expand the company's customer base (Guo, 2012).

People tend to have more knowledge about other people who are socially close to them (Liviatan et al., 2008) which means they have a strong tie. As knowledge is often informal, and diffused by WOM, consumers might get information from non-experts, thus identity and credibility becomes a key issue (X. Lin & Spence, 2018).

Tie strength ranges from weak to strong and relates to the interaction frequency and closeness of a relationship (Marsden & Campbell, 1984). WOM was found to be more common between strong ties than between weak ties (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993), as people know more about the preferences of the ones close to them (Granovetter, 1973). Because of their accessibility and predisposition to be helpful, strong ties lead to perceived efficiency (Levin & Cross, 2004), and referred people are more likely to buy the recommended product. Customers are motivated by the referral program to seek new potential clients (Berman, 2016), which is likely to be a strong tie (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993; Ryu & Feick, 2007). Ryu and Feick (2007) reinforce the altruist aspect of strong tie relationships, where one cares about the welfare of the other without the need to reciprocate. Contrary to that, weak ties have exchange-like interactions, driven primarily by self-interest, seeking to maximize their outcomes and minimize their costs regardless of the other (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Ryu and Feick (2007) discovered that the referral likelihood is greater with strong ties.

As the costs and benefits of taking part in a referral program are evaluated by the customer, the reward has been identified as an important driver in participation (Wirtz & Chew, 2002; Ryu & Feick, 2007; Wirtz et al., 2013). The compensation is not necessarily monetary: loyalty points, vouchers, free goods, cash, and charitable donations are all included in what could be earned through the program (Berman, 2016). Referral likelihood is influenced by reward sizes and schemes, and connected to the type of referrer-referred relationship. In the case of weak and strong ties, the referral likelihood without a reward is much smaller than when a reward is offered (Ryu & Feick, 2007).

Contradictory results have been presented about the reward in the RRP, as the incentive shows a significantly positive effect on referral likelihood (Ryu & Feick, 2007), but a negative one toward the referred person's perception of the program

(Verlegh et al., 2013). In cases when the referrer's objective is to be seen as knowledgeable and the referral effectiveness is sufficiently high, it is advised not to provide a reward and rely solely on organic WOM (Xiao et al., 2011). These tradeoffs are inherent to RRPs, and its worth must be decided based on internal customer knowledge (Orsingher & Wirtz, 2018).

Studies were conducted on the perception of ulterior motives by customers that might be suspicious about the real driver of a recommendation by the referrer (Tuk et al., 2009; Jin & Huang, 2014; Verlegh et al., 2013). According to Verlegh et al. (2013), it is less likely to happen if the successful recommendations are not rewarded, or if the referred requests the recommendation. A less negative response was found when the program rewarded both parties with a symbolic reward (e.g., a donation to a charity institution). Tie strength was also connected to the ulterior motives' perception in case of a weak relationship between the referrer and referred customers (Verlegh et al., 2013).

The relation between RRPs and product involvement is defined based on the personal relevance of a product to the customer (Sundaram et al., 1998; Zaichkowsky, 1994). In their study, Wirtz et al. (2019) rejected that the referrer's likelihood of making a successful referral was positively related to the referrer's involvement in the product. This means that the likelihood of a successful referral could be dependent on the referred customer instead. Fan et al. (2014) have shown that for high-involvement products, rewarding only either the referrer or the referred will create a higher purchase intention than rewarding both parties. The highest purchase intention for low-involvement products came from rewarding the referred customer instead of rewarding the referrer, or even both parties (Fan et al., 2014). Based on previous studies, benefits that come from RRPs are more significant than the possible harm created by opportunistic customers (P. Schmitt et al., 2011)

2.3.2. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

TPB (Ajzen, 1991) establishes a connection between intention and behavior through analyzing attitude, subjective norms, and PBC. As consumers tend to lack cognitive ability to integrate eventualities into the process of anticipating behaviors (Chandon et al., 2005), respondents provide inaccurate predictions when asked about their future behaviors.

These three components have a significant impact on behavioral intention. Attitude relates to the perception of carrying out specific behavior (Cheng & Huang, 2013), either positive, neutral, or negative, and is connected to the result of performing an action (Ajzen, 1991).

Subjective norm is related to meta perception, which refers to the process of determining what third parties might form of them and the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991). As people strive to be seen in a socially positive light (Schlenker & Leary, 1982), they might not take an unfavorably assessed action. Social pressure to engage in eWOM is also created by subjective norms (Park, 2000; Gunawan & Huarng, 2015) as the norms play a critical role in shaping behaviors (Shan & King, 2015).

PBC refers to the certainty of being able to execute an action required to reach a specific goal. Believing that they have the capacity, knowledge, and tools needed to do it, they are more likely to perform an action, concluding that PBC is positively correlated with behavioral intention. This intention is believed to be the best predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and represents the effort one is willing to put into performing the indicated behavior: if it is high, it is expected that one will complete the action.

RRP, as a form of eWOM (Guo, 2012) influences consumer behavior (Wirtz & Chew, 2002), and the TPB has been successfully applied in different advertising areas as an indicator to behavior intention (e.g., Sanne & Wiese, 2018; Raza et al., 2019; E. Kim & Park, 2023). It is important to investigate not only one's perception of taking part in an RRP though their attitude, but also the subjective norm which includes the influence of reference groups. The perceptions of the norm can be selective in their social environment (Prentice & Miller, 1993) and their norms and behaviors represent the group's where they want to belong to (Leung & Morris, 2015). These reference groups have an impact on one's behavior (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2009; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) which can result in taking part in an RRP. One's ability to join an RRP may be limited or even be out of reach depending on the characteristics of the program (e.g., need for invitation), which emphasizes the importance of investigating the PBC which represents self-efficacy and controllability (Ajzen, 2002).

By using TPB, we seek answer to the following hypotheses, where the behavior in question is the intention to participate in a RRP.

> H1a: The attitude of the referred towards RRPs positively influences the Behavior Intention to participate in a RRP ceteris paribus.
>
> H1b: The subjective norm relating to RRPs positively influences the Behavior Intention to participate in a RRP ceteris paribus.
>
> H1c: The perceived behavioral control while taking part in a RRP positively influences the Behavior Intention to participate in a RRP ceteris paribus.

2.3.3. The consumer decision-making journey

The consumer journey is the customer's process before purchasing a product or service: from need recognition until the final decision. Howard and Sheth (1969) renowned model, that decomposes customer's information to analyze motives, inhibitors, predispositions, and decision mediators that lead to purchase behavior, was applied in multiple pieces of research recently (e.g., Sivakumar, 2021; S.-C. Lin et al., 2022).

Customer experience tracking grants a deeper understanding of customer touchpoints (B. Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). In this research, the focus is on the brand-owned touchpoints designed and managed by the company to influence customer attitudes and preferences (Hanssens et al., 2014). RRPs built on that can induce the customer to establish higher initial confidence levels in a brand, build an emotional bond (Van den Bulte & Wuyts, 2007) and become a brand advocate (Leboff, 2014).

The consumer decision-making model (Court et al., 2009) was constructed after examining almost 20,000 consumers across five industries and three continents. They present the decision-making process as a circular journey with four phases: initial consideration, active evaluation, moment of purchase and post-purchase experience. Customers first consider an initial set of brands based on brand perceptions and exposure to recent touchpoints, then add or subtract brands as they evaluate them. Finally, the consumer selects a brand at the moment of purchase to create their judgment based on their own experience to inform the next decision journey.

Due to the research's reliability, the model created by Court et al. (2009) will be used as the basis of the analyses of this study, with the addition of need recognition before the initial consideration of brands. The same standard consumer journey will be used for low and high-involvement products, and the results will show if there is a difference in how the products approach the standard journey and if there is one type that takes a more considerable distance from it. The strength and importance of each stage can vary, influencing a decisive part of the journey, according to the product, the customer's individual journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) and the presence of unexpected factors in the standard journey.

The tendency to comply with group norms which may result in changes in consumption behavior is referred to as consumer conformity (Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999). Two levels of conformity were defined by Bearden et al. (1989): a higher level of conformity and a lower level of conformity. A higher level of conformity means a tendency to take actions which conform to expectations; in our case, being aligned to the classic consumer decision journey. In our research, we expected that the introduction of an RRP influences the referred customer's consumer journey stages, as strong ties who know their preferences may lead to changes in it.

The WOM was found to influence the consumer journey (Ngarmwongnoi et al., 2020), in which case, the consumer journey conformity (Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999) can be higher or lower (Bearden et al., 1989). In advertising research, product involvement was found to be a relevant differentiator (Xue & Muralidharan, 2015; Han & Kim, 2017; S. Kim et al., 2017; Mainardes et al., 2023). Investigating the effect of involvement is highly relevant in case of consumers journeys, as the usage of a complex product may require higher cognitive effort (Melumad et al., 2019) to proceed through subsequent stages of the consumer decision-making journey (Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997), which results in spending more effort and time in information seeking and research (Tong et al., 2020). In the case of low-involvement products, consumers do not exert great effort to process information (Chung & Zhao, 2003) which shortens their decision-making journey. These differences in the stages of the consumer journey justified the usage of low and high-involvement products in our research conducted in the context of RRPs. With those insights, two final hypotheses were created to understand better the effects of product type and RRPs in the classic consumer journey once the customer has shown the behavioral intention to participate.

H2: Consumer journey conformity is lower with than without a referral code in both involvement scenarios in all three (need, consideration, and evaluation) stages.

H3: Consumer journey conformity is lower for low-involvement products than high-involvement products when a RRP is introduced.

2.4. Method

2.4.1. Sample

This study investigates consumers' relationship with referral codes, for two different product types and in 3 different stages of the consumer journey.

A qualtrics survey was distributed online via social media (Instagram and WhatsApp), using convenience, voluntary response, and planned snowball sampling techniques, and the respondents' consent was obtained when answering the survey. Although non-probability sampling has a higher risk of bringing biased respondents and more limited conclusions (McCombes, 2019), sample size (n = 218) and diversity of answers (28 countries) contributes to the representation of the population. The SPSS program was used for data analysis.

In the sample, the age mean was 31.96 years old, with a standard deviation of 12.85. Forty-two point two percent of respondents are men, ranging from 21 to 64 years old; 57.8% are women, ranging from 17 to 70 years old. Country diversity was high: people from Brazil contributed 47.7% of the answers, followed by Portuguese at 16.1%, and Germans at 14.7%. The remaining 21.5% of the respondents came from 25 different countries.

Sixty-one percent of the respondents work full-time; others study full-time (12.8%), study and work (14.7%), or work part-time/intern (2.3%), are retired (4.1%) or unemployed (5%).

2.4.2. Measures

Behavioral intention

The behavioral intention study aimed at understanding the relationship and perception of respondents toward RRPs and analyzing consumer behavior when a referral code is present. The behavior in question, defined according to the elements and guidelines of Terry and O'Leary (1995), was whether the person would participate in an RRP when presented with the opportunity. Through four different sets of statements, the questionnaire investigated the interaction using the components of the TPB (attitude, subjective norm, PBC, behavioral intention) and aspects of decision-making and purchase incentive. To ensure mutual understanding, the referral code's definition was presented, using the RRP of Airbnb as a tangible example. Built on Davis et al.'s (2002) instruments for TPB Questionnaire Construction, 18 affirmations evaluated these aspects using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree.

Consumer journey conformity (CJC)

This measurement evaluates if the consumer behavior is aligned to the standard journey throughout the three first stages of the process, both for low and high-involvement products. It was used to measure and analyze the differences expected and pointed out in the hypotheses. To ensure the understanding of product types, a brief definition and examples were presented, the same used by Fan et al. (2014), before a set of three affirmations that would measure the consumer behavior for each product type, during each phase of the journey. In the survey, high-involvement products were defined as typically complex in functions or content (e.g., smart phones, cars, and tourism) and low-involvement products were described as usually inexpensive products which possess single functions or simple content (e.g., books, consumer goods, and Uber rides). We have chosen typical examples of generally low and high-involvement products, so there was no need for a manipulation check later. The phases of the journey addressed are: recognizing the need for the product, initial consideration, and active evaluation. These measurements were also made using the same seven-point Likert scale and classified as high conformity (4–7) or low conformity (1–3).

This last part replicated the same affirmations of the second part, with one single difference: the consumer's possession of a referral code before entering the purchasing journey. The definition of referral codes was presented again, and respondents were asked to answer each affirmation considering they now had a referral code before making the purchase. For the presented example, characteristics of a well-developed RRP were used to maximize the program's effects on the consumer journey. "Best friend" was used as the referrer since customers are more likely to use a referral code given by a strong tie rather than by a weak tie (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Having a strong tie as a referrer also makes it less likely for the referred customer to perceive ulterior motives in the recommendation (Verlegh et al., 2013). In terms of reward size and type, since there were multiple examples of low and high-involvement products, and the evaluation of incentive attractiveness is subjective and personal (Orsingher & Wirtz, 2018), the term used was "attractive reward." Every respondent could think what an attractive reward in their perception would be for the product they chose to use as the guide to their survey decisions.

As the goal was to maximize the chances of the customer engaging with the RRP, this higher reward attractiveness and meta perception would simulate an optimal program and increase the likelihood of the referrer being successful in it (Wirtz et al., 2019). This second part is considered as a new measurement of the same participants, just under a different condition (presence of a referral code), that will be used for comparison purposes.

Finally, demographics were asked about age, gender, nationality, and occupation, which helped to gather more information and context about the sample.

Considering that the four items in the study of behavioral intention part are relatively abstract, one method commonly used to analyze these types of results is grouping items into one unique scale using the mean or sum of the Likert scale values. Since one single item is less capable of making quality inferences about behavior (Rickards et al., 2012), the following analyses will be done based on four new scales created for each variable using the mean of the items.

Measure validation

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of all the constructs in the model as the responses were categorized. The method used to

assess scale reliability was Cronbach's Alpha (α) calculation, which measures the internal consistency and correlation of the items (Rickards et al., 2012). Since there is no clear consensus on the correct way of interpreting the values of α due to a wide range of scholars with different labels (Taber, 2018), K.S Taber's approach was used, which represents a collective of all that has been used in the literature. Each category of the TPB (attitude, subjective norm, PBC, RRP behavioral intention) had an acceptable level of reliability ranging from .834 to .924. Please see Table 5 for the list of instruments used to analyze TPB.

Table 5. Instruments used to analyze TPB

Instruments used to analyze TPB		
Determinant	Item	Statement
Attitude	A1	I believe participating in a Referral Reward Program is beneficial.
	A2	I believe participating in a Referral Reward Program is positive.
	A3	I believe participating in a Referral Reward Program is valuable.
	A4	I believe participating in a Referral Reward Program is enjoyable.
Subjective norm	SN1	People who are important to me think I should participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	SN2	People who influence my behavior think I participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	SN3	It is expected of me to participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	SN4	People who are important to me would participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	SN5	People would like me to participate in a Referral Reward Program.
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	Participating in a Referral Reward Program is entirely in my control.
	PBC2	I can choose whether or not to participate in a Referral Reward Program
	PBC3	I am free to participate in a Referral Reward Program as I want to.
	PBC4	I have the knowledge and ability to participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	PBC5	I have the resources needed to participate in a Referral Reward Program.

Behavioral Intention	BI1	I have the intention to participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	BI2	If I find it interesting, I will participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	BI3	I want to participate in a Referral Reward Program.
	BI4	I would participate in a Referral Reward Program again.

Source: Davis et al. (2002)

Note: Constructs were measured using seven-point Likert-type scales anchored in 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

2.5. Results

The Bivariate Pearson Correlation test was used to investigate the correlation between the computed variables. Based on the correlation matrix of measures displayed in Table 6, there is a statistically significant linear relationship between all the pairs of variables. Only the correlations between PBC and RRP behavioral intention are of a high degree; all others are of a low degree, or almost a non-existent degree of correlation. That said, they all follow the same positive direction, as the analyzed variables tend to increase together.

Table 6. Statements used to analyze consumer journey conformity

Product type	**Phase**	**Statement**
High-involvement	Need	I only purchase products/services of this type if there is a real need.
	Knowledge	When I buy products or services of this type, I consider an initial pool of brands based on my brand perceptions and market knowledge.
	Research	I usually research to gather information about the options available in the market that would attend my needs for this type of product or service before buying it.

Low-involvement	Need	I only purchase products/services of this type if there is a real need.
	Knowledge	When I buy products or services of this type, I consider an initial pool of brands based on my brand perceptions and market knowledge.
	Research	I usually research to gather information about the options available in the market that would attend my needs for this type of product or service before buying it.

Source: Fan et al. (2014)

Note: Constructs were measured using seven-point Likert-type scales anchored in 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

We employed multiple linear regression analyses to verify the relationship between the independent variables—attitude, subjective norm and PBC—and the dependent variable, behavioral intention, for participating in an RRP. To guarantee the validity of the results, some pre-requisites, like homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, sample size and linearity and normality of residuals, were studied and met numerically or graphically.

The three independent variables of the TPB are significant (Table 7) when explaining the dependent variable ($p<.05$), with their variance contributing to explain 42.1% of the BI_RRP variance (R2).

Table 7. Correlation between variables

	Attitude	Subjective Norm	PBC	RRP BI
Attitude	1	--	--	--
Subjective norm	.182**	1	--	--
Perceived behavioral control	.239**	.097	1	--
RRP behavioral intention	.161*	.146*	.531**	1

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

Source: own editing

With these results, H1a, H1b and H1c are supported, concluding that TPB components influence the behavioral intention toward participating in an RRP. Based on the analysis, the variable that has the most substantial effect on our results is PBC (β = 0.619), followed by subjective norm (β = 0.565) and then attitude (β = 0.416) (see Table 8).

Table 8. Coefficients Table for Behavioral Intention for RRP

	β	t	Sig.
Constant	1.905	4.011	.000
Attitude	.416	5.342	.000
Subjective norm	.565	6.566	.000
PBC	.619	8.703	.000

Source: own editing

The standard consumer journey was investigated in the case of low and high-involvement products, without the influence of an RRP. For each stage of the journey, the closer the answers got to the "7—Strongly agree", the closer the customer would be from acting as expected in the standard consumer journey (high conformity). Answers closer to the "1—Strongly disagree" represent a slight shift in the expected consumer behavior toward purchasing a product or a service, indicating low conformity. With the ordinal nature of data, it is possible to see by the modes of the sample that buyers react differently when purchasing high and low-involvement products.

Due to the presence of multiple factors, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was conducted to determine the significance of the changes in the consumer journey model. Firstly, the conditions of normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity between the two groups were studied, and all of them were violated—meaning the Cronbach's Alpha Test could also not validate the reliability of the scale as a continuous variable. Secondly, the nature of the data is not interval or ratio, it is ordinal, which suggests the

usage of a non-parametrical test; and lastly, the dependence of the samples considering that the two measurements were done with the sample participants.

Introducing an RRP scenario in the consumer journey has proven itself significant for both product types in all three stages of the journey, as $p<.05$ in all cases (Table 9). This confirms H2, supporting that the customer would be closer to the standard decision-making process going through all the decision steps in the scenario without a referral code in case of both types of products.

Table 9. Wilcoxon signed ranks test: effects of a referral

Effects of a referral code		
Pair	Z	Asym. Sig. (2-tailed)
C_Need_H – Need_H	-10.867	.000
C_Knowledge_H – Knowledge_H	-10.579	.000
C_Research_H – Research_H	-5.596	.000
C_Need_L – Need_L	-2.254	.024
C_Knowledge_L – Knowledge_L	-10.693	.000
C_Research_L – Research_L	-10.310	.000

Source: own editing

Also, Table 10 shows that customers behave differently toward the different product types, regardless of the introduction of the RRP in the scenario, as $p<.05$ in all scenarios.

Table 10. Wilcoxon signed ranks test: difference among product types

Effects on different product types		
Pair	Z	Asym. Sig. (2-tailed)
Need_H – Need_L	-11.705	.000
Knowledge_H – Knowledge_L	-9.906	.000
Research_H – Research_L	-8.877	.000
C_Need_H – C_Need_L	-8.819	.000
C_Knowledge_H – C_Knowledge_L	-10.722	.000
C_Research_H – C_Research_L	-11.400	.000

Source: own editing

This descriptive statistic (Table 11) shows that customers tend to follow all the steps of the traditional consumer journey when buying a high-involvement product, but this will not necessarily be the case in the case of their counterpart.

Table 11. Descriptions of variables without and with the influence of a referral code

Without the influence of a referral code				
Product Inv.	**Variable Name**	**Consumer journey Stage**	**Mode**	**CJ Conformity**
High	Need	Stage 0 – Need creation	6	High Conformity
High	Knowledge	Stage 1 – Initial consideration	7	High Conformity
High	Research	Stage 2 – Active evaluation	7	High Conformity
Low	Need	Stage 0 – Need creation	3	Low Conformity
Low	Knowledge	Stage 1 – Initial consideration	5	High Conformity

Low	Research	Stage 2 – Active evaluation	5	High Conformity
With the influence of a referral code				
High	C_Need	Stage 0 – Need creation	5	High Conformity
High	C_Knowledge	Stage 1 – Initial consideration	6	High Conformity
High	C_Research	Stage 2 – Active evaluation	5	High Conformity
Low	C_Need	Stage 0 – Need creation	2	Low Conformity
Low	C_Knowledge	Stage 1 – Initial consideration	3	Low Conformity
Low	C_Research	Stage 2 – Active evaluation	3	Low Conformity

Source: own editing

Note: The consumer journey conformity is indicated by the mode in the examined 3 stages of consumer journey, with or without the introduction of a referral code in both low- and high-involvement product scenarios. Low conformity: mode values 1-3, high conformity: mode values 4-7.

Changes can be seen after introducing the referral code for both product types. Regarding product type, customers still seem to have different buying procedures for the different types, being less careful with the low-involvement one. As to the journey steps, they all seem to be more distant from the traditional journey, with the numbers going further from "7= Strongly agree." This confirms H3, as after introducing a referral code in case of both types of products, the consumer journey conformity became lower. The results also imply that involving a referral code can decrease the consumer journey conformity more in case of low-involvement products in opposition to high-involvement products.

2.6. Discussion and implications

In our research, the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) was applied in the context of Referral Marketing, and the effects of RRPs on the Consumer journey model (Court et al., 2009) were evaluated for two product types.

The examination of the first hypothesis confirmed the belief that the TPB is an adequate instrument to evaluate the behavioral intention to participate in an RRP, as the attitude, subjective norm, and PBC components showed a positive correlation to the behavioral intention. This also supports previous findings in other fields (e.g., Sanne & Wiese, 2018; Raza et al., 2019); and answers our RQ1 by indicating the possibility to use the TPB model to indicate the intention to participate in an RRP. Regression analysis shows that the variable that best explains the behavioral intention is the PBC, meaning that if a person believes they have complete control of the process of participating in an RRP, they are more likely to do so. This also supports Perceived Behavior Control being the dominant factor, proposed by Ajzen (1991).

For the second and third hypotheses, focusing on consumer journey conformity with an RRP and different product types, results also went in the same direction, as expected. While answering our RQ2, we found that the consumer journey is not identical for low and high-involvement products, and has its differences to the traditional journey when the customer chooses to participate in a referral program. The consumers' decision-making journey's conformity was found to be high in case of high-involvement products, and low for low-involvement products. The fact that referral programs had a weaker effect on high-involvement products descriptively resonates with the study of Wirtz et al. (2019), in which they rejected that this factor would increase the likelihood of a successful referral.

In this study, the effects of two variables on the consumer journey were evaluated, and they already added a lot of complexity to how customers are willing to engage with RRPs and how they approach the decision-making process. This research adds value to the literature and provides insights for companies on building and targeting RRPs to have a more decisive influence in their customer's decision journey.

The application of the TPB to the context of RRPs makes contributions to existing literature, mainly because the PBC was the strongest predictor to the behavioral intention, while it was often found to be the weakest in previous studies (Pelling &

White, 2009; Sanne & Wiese, 2018), which calls for further investigation. The classifications created for consumer journey conformity can also add to what has been researched in the literature before. Differentiation between low and high-involvement products was not made in previous studies in the Referral Marketing context, therefore this aspect can also add to the referral marketing literature. The CJC shows that the journey of high-involvement products is more consistent to the standard process, meaning customers go through all the pre-defined steps before making a purchase, while the journey of low-involvement products tends to be simpler when taking part in an RRP.

With the presence of a Referral Rewards Program, customers buying low-involvement products tend to give less importance to the initial knowledge and active research phases, since they assume that the referrer already took care of these steps before referring it to them (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Our findings highlight that RRPs are more effective in the case of low-involvement products. For high-involvement products, the weight of these two phases is not as dominant as before but are still considered an essential part of their decision-making process.

The non-parametric tests provided statistically significant results about the existing differences between the pairs of product types. When comparing the two products, it is descriptively shown that without an RRP, the most prominent behavioral difference between them is in the first stage of the decision journey—need recognition, and when the RRP is in place, the most significant impact occurs in the last phase of the journey: research.

These findings expand the scope of the literature on product involvement, presenting a new connection between the RRP and consumer journey. Similar inferences can be made about the statistically significant differences between the standard journey and the journey with the introduction of an RRP. The need for differentiation between low and high-involvement products is also supported, as there are significant differences in customer behavior while using an RRP. With the results from the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, which stages are the least affected by the RPP can be determined: in the case of low-involvement products, the need recognition stage; in the case of high-involvement products, the stage of doing further research about the products.

This interpretation has not appeared in previous literature, and it can indicate further research directions in this area.

2.6.1. Managerial implications

These results emphasize how challenging it is for companies to understand the way their customers think through the consumer journey; many particularities challenge creating advertisement tools based on generalized personas. Based on the results of the TPB analysis, firms need to take the importance of creating a referral program that is easily accessible into consideration, giving the consumers the idea that they have control over this action of participating in RRPs—so that the likelihood of them doing so increases. It is important to highlight that the PBC can be influenced by external (e.g., price, availability) and internal factors, such as beliefs (Ajzen, 1991; Magnusson et al., 2001), which indicates the need for marketing practitioners to focus on both external and internal elements in the planning stage of promotion strategies. Nonetheless, attitude and subjective norm also impact the intention, so companies are advised to make sure that the communication of the RRP gives the customer a positive perception of the behavior, both from their own perspective, and others' points of view.

Consumer journey conformity represents an opportunity for companies with mainly low-involvement products, given that the consumer journey seemed to react well to the influence of a referral code. This means that when using a referral code, customers may skip initial steps in the consumer journeys, leading to shorter customer journeys and prompter sales. Based on our findings, we can say that RRPs are most effective in the case of low-involvement products, which can provide insight for marketing managers. For high-involvement ones, even though they were still in the high conformity classification, their conformity to the standard journey also diminished as a response to the incentivized program. That means companies should see RRPs in general as a potential marketing strategy to be used to get new customers into their funnel.

Regarding RRPs, firms are advised to customize it for their target audience whenever possible (Wirtz et al., 2019). Product involvement should be a factor that is considered while planning, so for low-involvement products, the reward scheme should reward both customers (Fan et al., 2014) to have a bigger impact on consumer journey conformity. This perceived fairness will encourage customers to overlook their

tendencies of going through the standard decision-making journey, stepping right into the program with the respective firm, as represented by the low conformity value modes.

Increasing the flexibility of the customer's choice is an alternative to enhance the effectiveness of RRP in the case of high-involvement products (Fan et al., 2014). As purchasing these products involves risks, it is more difficult to find sufficient rewards for different customers, providing options regarding the rewarding scheme and the reward type could be beneficial. Based on our results, when buying high-involvement products, if the reward is perceived as attractive enough, consumers could be willing to give less importance to the research phase than before, which may shorten their customer journeys and may have an impact on sales' timing.

2.7. Limitations and future research

Regarding the variables of the TPB that affect behavioral intention, future studies could try to understand why, in the context of an RRP, PBC was the strongest predictor when in past studies, and attitude and subject norm were the ones that best related to the intention (Pelling & White, 2009; Sanne & Wiese, 2018). This research suggests that this happens because of lower costs—e.g., time invested in the action—that are involved in the behavior if the individual perceives having complete control of it, instead of having to build a skill to perform it. In future research, the deviating effect of RRP on consumer decision journeys may be further examined.

Studying the post-purchase stage of the consumer journey, and focusing on the loyalty loop, can also contribute to previous knowledge. It would be relevant to understand if any factors within an RRP could influence customers to choose that brand, stay with it, and eventually become a loyal customer.

Carmack and Heiss (2018) state that additional research is needed to reveal the interaction effects among past behaviors, behavioral control, and intentions, validating the TPB scale in this respect, and comparing findings across TPB studies could be important contributions for this field.

Limitations of the study were present since a non-parametric test was conducted to examine the consumer journey conformity. There were also data violations that

happened with the ordinal collected in the survey, which are proven to be less statistically accurate than parametric tests. It would be interesting to conduct the study while using a continuous response variable Y, taking as an example the "referral likelihood" variable used by Ryu and Feick (2007). Furthermore, the non-probability sampling method could have brought more biased answers into the study, limiting the generalization of the obtained results. Future studies should then try to use a less biased and more random sampling technique in an attempt to gather more reliable data.

In conclusion, RRPs has been previously explored, but this unprecedented connection with the consumer journey adds value to the field. This study reinforced the theoretical importance of adding the PBC as a variable in the Theory of Reasoned Action, then called TPB, as it was seen to be the best predictor of actual behavior. This finding is valuable for companies when creating their referral programs—making sure that it will be easy to understand, use, and share with friends. Moreover, companies need to focus on making their programs as customizable as possible regarding reward type, reward scheme, messaging (to enhance strong tie interactions), and product type based on involvement.

2.8. Ethical approval

This work was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Corvinus University, KRH36/2023.

2.8. Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

2.9. Funding

This work was funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UIDB/00124/2020, UIDP/00124/2020 and Social Sciences DataLab—PINFRA/22209/2016), POR Lisboa and POR Norte (Social Sciences DataLab, PINFRA/22209/2016)

2.10. References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *50*(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Ajzen, I. (2002). Perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *32*(4), 665–683. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2002.tb00236.x

Azmat, A., Ul Haq, J., Hussain, S., Qadir, A., & Bukhari, S. (2022). OCEAN traits: Who shares more word-of-mouth? *Journal of Promotion Management*, *28*(6), 749–773. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.2015510

Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Teel, J. E. (1989). Measurement of consumer susceptibility to consumer influence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *15*(4), 473–481. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489543 https://doi.org/10.1086/209186

Berman, B. (2016). Referral marketing: Harnessing the power of your customers. *Business Horizons*, *59*(1), 19–28. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2015.08.001

Brown, J., Broderick, A. J., & Lee, N. (2007). Word-of-mouth communication within online communities: Conceptualizing the online social network. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *21*(3), 2–20. https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.20082

Browne, B. A., & Kaldenberg, D. O. (1997). Conceptualizing self-monitoring: Links to materialism and product involvement. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *14*(1), 31–44. https://doi.org/10.1108/07363769710155848

Carmack, H. J., & Heiss, S. N. (2018). Using the theory of planned behavior to predict college students' intent to use Linkedin for job searches and professional networking. *Communication Studies*, *69*(2), 145–160. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2018.1424003

Chandon, P., Morwitz, V. G., & Reinartz, W. J. (2005). Do intentions really predict behavior? Self-generated validity effects in survey research. *Journal of Marketing*, *69*(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.69.2.1.60755

Chen, Y. (2022). Identifying typology of tie strength: A latent class analysis. In Y. Chen (Ed.), *Causal effects of social capital* (pp. 347–377). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5912-7_11

Cheng, H. H., & Huang, S. W. (2013). Exploring antecedents and consequence of online group-buying intention: An extended perspective on theory of planned behavior. *International Journal of Information Management*, *33*(1), 185–198. https://doi.org/10.1016/j. ijinfomgt.2012.09.003

Chung, H., & Zhao, X. (2003). Humour effect on memory and attitude: Moderating role of product involvement. *International Journal of Advertising*, *22*(1), 117–144. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2003.11072842

Court, D., Elzinga, D., Mulder, S., Vetvik, O. J. (2009). *The consumer decision journey*. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-consumer-decision-journey

Davis, L. E., Ajzen, I., Saunders, J., & Williams, T. (2002). *Theory of planned behavior questionnaire.* APA PsycTests. https://doi.org/10.1037/t15482-000

Fan, C. L., Su, Y. L., Chang, S. T., & Liu, D. Y. Y. (2014). Exploring how referral reward program design affects consumer intent to purchase from a recipient perspective. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *9*(11), 21–30. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v9n11p21

Frenzen, J., & Nakamoto, K. (1993). Structure, cooperation, and the flow of market information. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *20*(3), 360–375. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489353 https://doi.org/10.1086/209355

Furrer, O., Kerguignas, J. Y., & Landry, M. (2021). Customer captivity, negative word-ofmouth and well-being: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Services Marketing*, *35*(6), 755–773. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07-2020-0311

Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, *78*(6), 1360–1380. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2776392 https://doi.org/10.1086/225469

Gunawan, D. D., & Huarng, K. (2015). Viral effects of social network and media on consumers' purchase intention. *Journal of Business Research*, *68*(11), 2237–2241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.06.004

Guo, Z. (2012). Optimal decision making for online referral marketing. *Decision Support Systems*, *52*(2), 373–383. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2011.09.004

Han, M. C., & Kim, Y. (2017). Why consumers hesitate to shop online: Perceived risk and product involvement on Taobao.com. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *23*(1), 24–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2016.1251530

Hanssens, D. M., Pauwels, K. H., Srinivasan, S., Vanhuele, M., & Yildirim, G. (2014). Consumer attitude metrics for guiding marketing mix decisions. *Marketing Science*, *33*(4), 534–550. https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2013.0841

Howard, J. A., & Sheth, J. N. (1969). *The theory of buyer behavior*. Wiley.

Jin, L., & Huang, Y. (2014). When money does not work: The differential effects of monetary versus in-kind rewards in referral reward programs. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *31*(1), 107–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2013.08.005

Kim, S., Kim, J., & Kim, E. (2017). Metaphor as visual thinking in advertising and its effects: Focus on brand familiarity and product involvement. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *23*(5), 654–672. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2017.1297982

Kim, E., & Park, F. S. (2023). Do Facebook friends make me donate? Factors involved in online donations via SNS. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *29*(6), 849–872. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2023.2165210

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2012). *Principles of marketing* (14th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2009). *Marketing management* (13th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall

Lascu, D. N., & Zinkhan, G. (1999). Consumer conformity: Review and applications for marketing theory and practice. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *7*(3), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.1999.11501836

Leboff, G. (2014). *Stickier marketing* (2nd ed.). Kogan Page.

Lemon, K., & Verhoef, P. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the consumer journey. *Journal of Marketing*, *80*(6), 69–96. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420

Leung, K., & Morris, M. W. (2015). Values, schemas, and norms in the culture-behavior nexus: A situated dynamics framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *46*(9), 1028–1050. https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2014.66

Levin, D. Z., & Cross, R. (2004). The strength of weak ties you can trust: The mediating role of trust in effective knowledge transfer. *Management Science*, *50*(11), 1477–1490. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1030.0136

Lin, S.-C., Tseng, H.-T., & Shirazi, F. (2022). Consumer decision journey for online group buying: Psychological and intentional procedure perspectives. *British Food Journal*, *124*(12), 4387–4405. https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-12-2021-1277

Lin, X., & Spence, P. R. (2018). Identity on social networks as a cue: Identity, retweets, and credibility. *Communication Studies*, *69*(5), 461–482. https://doi.org/10.1080/105109 74.2018.1489295

Liviatan, I., Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2008). Interpersonal similarity as a social distance dimension: Implications for perception of others' actions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *44*(5), 1256–1269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.04.007

López, L., & Sicilia, M. (2014). eWOM as source of influence: The impact of participation in eWOM and perceived source trustworthiness on decision making. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *14*(2), 86–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2014.944288

Magnusson, M. K., Arvola, A., Koivisto Hursti, U., Aberg, L., & Sjödén, P. (2001). Attitudes towards organic foods among Swedish consumers. *British Food Journal*, *103*(3), 209–227. https://doi.org/10.1108/00070700110386755

Mainardes, E. W., Portelada, P. H. M., & Damasceno, F. S. (2023). The influence on cosmetics purchase intention of electronic word-of-mouth on Instagram. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *29*(7), 961–991. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2023.2167897

Marsden, P., & Campbell, K. (1984). Measuring tie strength. *Social Forces*, *63*(2), 482–501. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579058

McCombes, S. (2019). *An introduction to sampling methods*. https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/sampling-methods/

Melumad, S., Inman, J. J., & Pham, M. T. (2019). Selectively emotional: How smartphone use changes user-generated content. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *56*(2), 259–275. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243718815429

Ngarmwongnoi, C., Oliveira, J. S., AbedRabbo, M., & Mousavi, S. (2020). The implications of eWOM adoption on the customer journey. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *37*(7), 749–759. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-10-2019-3450

Orsingher, C., & Wirtz, J. (2018). Psychological drivers of referral reward program effectiveness. *Journal of Services Marketing*, *32*(3), 256–268. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07- 2017-0247

Park, H. S. (2000). Relationships among attitudes and subjective norms: Testing the theory of reasoned action across cultures. *Communication Studies*, *51*(2), 162–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510970009388516

Pelling, E. L., & White, K. M. (2009). The theory of planned behavior applied to young people' s use of social networking web sites. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior: The Impact of the Internet, Multimedia and Virtual Reality on Behavior and Society*, *12*(6), 755–759. https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2009.0109

Plummer, J. T. (2007). Editorial: Word-of-mouth—A new advertising discipline? *Journal of Advertising Research*, *47*(4), 385–386. https://doi.org/10.2501/S0021849907070390

Podnar, K., & Javernik, P. (2012). The effect of word-of-mouth on consumers' attitudes toward products and their purchase probability. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *18*(2), 145–168. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2012.668426

Prentice, D. A., & Miller, D. T. (1993). Pluralistic ignorance and alcohol use on campus: Some consequences of misperceiving the social norm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *64*(2), 243–256. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.2.243

Raza, S. H., Abu Bakar, H., & Mohamad, B. (2019). The effects of advertising appeals on consumers' behavioral intention towards global brands: The mediating role of attitude and the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *11*(2), 440–460. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-11-2017-0134

Rejón-Guardia, F., & Martínez-López, F. J. (2014). The pervasive influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on today's social consumer. In F. Martínez-López (Ed*.), Handbook of strategic e-business management* (pp. 821–839). Progress in IS. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-39747-9_34

Rickards, G., Magee, C., & Artino, A. R. (2012). You can't fix by analysis what you've spoiled by design: Developing survey instruments and collecting validity evidence. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *4*(4), 407–410. https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-12-00239.1

Ryu, G., & Feick, L. (2007). A penny for your thoughts: Referral reward programs and referral likelihood. *Journal of Marketing*, *71*(1), 84–94. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.71.1.84

Sanne, P. N. C., & Wiese, M. (2018). The theory of planned behavior and user engagement applied to Facebook advertising. *South African Journal of Information Management*, *20*(1), a915. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v20i1.915

Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2008). *Consumer behavior* (7th ed.). Index.

Schlenker, B. R., & Leary, M. R. (1982). Social anxiety and self-presentation: A conceptualization model. *Psychological Bulletin, 92*(3), 641–669. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033- 2909.92.3.641

Schmitt, B., & Zarantonello, L. (2013). Consumer experience and experiential marketing: A critical review. In N. K. Malhotra (Ed.), *Review of marketing research* (Vol. 10, pp. 25–61). https://doi.org/10.1108/S1548-6435(2013)0000010006

Schmitt, P., Skiera, B., & Van den Bulte, C. (2011). Referral programs and customer value. *Journal of Marketing*, *75*(1), 46–59. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.75.1.46

Shan, Y., & King, K. W. (2015). The effects of interpersonal tie strength and subjective norms on consumers' brand-related eWOM referral intentions. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *15*(1), 16–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2015.1016636

Sivakumar, S. (2021). Application of Howard Sheth model of consumer decision making for the purchase of a television. *SSRN Electronic Journal. Emerald Group Publishing Limited*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3899873

Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C. (1998). Word-of-mouth communications: A motivational analysis, In NA. In J. W. Alba & J. W. Hutchinson (Eds.), *Advances in consumer research* (Vol. 25, pp. 527–531) Association for Consumer Research.

Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education*, *48*(6), 1273–1296. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2

Terry, D. J., & O'Leary, J. E. (1995). The theory of planned behavior: The effects of perceived behavioral control and self-efficacy. *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, *34*(2), 199–220. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1995.tb01058.x

Tong, S., Luo, X., & Xu, B. (2020). Personalized mobile marketing strategies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *48*(1), 64–78. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019- 00693-3

Tuk, M. A., Verlegh, P. W. J., Smidts, A., & Wigboldus, D. H. J. (2009). Sales and sincerity: The role of relational framing in word-of-mouth marketing. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *19*(1), 38–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2008.12.007

Van den Bulte, C., & Wuyts, S. H. K. (2007). *Social networks in marketing* (MSI Relevant Knowledge Series), Marketing Science Institute.

Verlegh, P. W. J., Ryu, G., Tuk, M. A., & Feick, L. (2013). Receiver responses to rewarded referrals: The motive inferences framework. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *41*(6), 669–682. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-013-0327-8

Wang, L., & Chen, Z. (2022). The effect of incentive structure on referral: The determining role of self-construal. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *50*(5), 1091–1110. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-022-00852-z

Wangenheim, F. V., & Bayón, T. (2007). The chain from customer satisfaction via word-of-mouth referrals to new customer acquisition. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *35*(2), 233–249. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-007-0037-1

Wirtz, J., & Chew, P. (2002). The effects of incentives, deal proneness, satisfaction and tie strength on word-of-mouth behavior. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, *13*(2), 141–162. https://doi.org/10.1108/09564230210425340

Wirtz, J., Orsingher, C., Chew, P., & Tambyah, S. (2013). The role of metaperception on the effectiveness of referral reward programs. *Journal of Service Research*, *16*(1), 82–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670512462138

Wirtz, J., Tang, C., & Georgi, D. (2019). Successful referral behavior in referral reward programs. *Journal of Service Management*, *30*(1), 48–74. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-04-2018-0111

Xiao, P., Tang, C. S., & Wirtz, J. (2011). Optimizing referral reward programs under impression management considerations. *European Journal of Operational Research*, *215*(3), 730–739. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2011.05.042

Xu, M., Yu, Z., & Tu, Y. (2023). I will get a reward, too: When disclosing the referrer reward increases referring. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *60*(2), 355–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/00222437221117113

Xue, F., & Muralidharan, S. (2015). A green picture is worth a thousand words?: Effects of visual and textual environmental appeals in advertising and the moderating role of product involvement. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *21*(1), 82–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2014.971209

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1994). The personal involvement inventory: Reduction, revision, and application to advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *23*(4), 59–70. https://doi.org/10.1080 /00913367.1943.10673459

3. ARTICLE II. VOLUNTEERING THROUGH WORD-OF-MOUTH AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION: INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSED RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Authors: Bettina BIFKOVICS, Erzsébet MALOTA

Citation: Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. (2024). Volunteering through word-of-mouth and organizational communication: Integrative literature review and proposed research directions. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *55*(4), 63–76. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2024.04.05

3.1. Abstract

Due to nowadays frequent crises, the role of volunteer organizations is more important than ever, and to help efficiently, organizations need volunteers. Volunteering as a phenomenon has been studied from the angle of individual characteristics (motivation, gender, age, cultural aspects etc.), the effects of volunteering (for example subjective well-being and satisfaction) and organizational aspects (psychological contract, employee volunteering, reliability, and contribution). The role of communication has also been identified, with the dominant themes being recruitment and communication about volunteer activity. The aim of this study is to summarize the results of previous research on volunteering through an integrative literature review and to outline possible directions for further research. Among several research directions identified, one of the most important is the complex investigation of the intention to volunteer using the theory of planned behavior in terms of the content of recruitment messages and the moderating effect of word-of-mouth advertising.

Keywords: volunteering, organizational communication, WOM, nonprofit marketing

3.2. Introduction

Volunteers are an important part of the day-to-day operations of organizations (Alfes et al., 2017). Volunteering can take place in different fields and contexts, for example in relation to refugees (Sengupta et al., 2023), in health- and social care (Söderhamn et al., 2012), in education (Thompson & Russel, 2017) or in sports (Farkas et al., 2012; Griszbacher et al., 2022). Volunteering can be done individually, through non-profit organizations (Lee & Brudney, 2019), or indirectly through another organization, such as a company in the case of employee volunteering (Dempsey-Brench & Shantz, 2022).

The crisis in society and changes in lifestyle have also contributed to the growing role of volunteering (Fényes & Kiss, 2011). With more than 1 billion volunteers worldwide (Teamstage.io, 2023), their impact on society can be significant if mobilized effectively. Across Europe, millions of people volunteer on an occasional basis, for events or special situations, or on a long-term basis (Pater, 2021). In Hungary, there are more than 60,000 non-profit organizations (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2021), which have worked with an estimated 311,000 volunteers in 2020 and the value of their work was estimated at 83 billion HUF (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2020).

Organizations and volunteers can face many challenges. Volunteers have their own motivations and individual characteristics that influence their volunteering behavior (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011) and seek to meet their individual needs in their activities (Finkelstein, 2008a). Non-profit organizations are dependent on the work of volunteers due to financial constraints (Pearce, 1993), but in many cases they encounter volunteers who are not committed or who do an inadequate job, resulting in trust issues that can have negative effects on the image and operation of the organization (Pearce, 1993). This is why the study of volunteer commitment, motivation and satisfaction is important (Bussel & Forbes, 2002), as the biggest challenge in this area is recruiting and retaining volunteers. Omoto and Snyder's (2002) volunteer process model includes several factors that are important from a communication perspective (e.g., social network), highlighting the role of marketing communication in the volunteer process at the antecedent (e.g., recruitment communication), experiential (e.g., inter-volunteer communication) and consequential (e.g., referral) levels. Planned communication throughout the volunteering process can

help to support recruitment and retention (Kramer, 2011), and can be made even more effective based on empirical research.

The aim of this paper is to review the complex and diverse literature on volunteering, to summarize the results of international research and to provide a basis for future research on the topic. In addition to a broad discussion of the phenomenon of volunteering, the main factors influencing volunteering, the impact of volunteering and its organizational aspects are presented. The paper will describe the individual and organizational forms of communication related to volunteering and based on the literature review, identify future research directions, including the methodological use of the theory of planned behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) examines the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intention. Attitude refers to an individual's perception of the performance of a particular behavior, his or her beliefs about the positive and negative outcomes associated with voluntary action and their importance (Cuskelly et al., 2004), while subjective norms examine the perception of the performance of the action by others (Ajzen, 1991). The final component of the model is perceived behavioral control, which refers to the certainty of the ability to perform the behavior and is the most predictive of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

3.3. Research methodology

The results of the research related to volunteering were examined using an integrative literature review methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the field under analysis (Snyder, 2019). The literature review was conducted by reviewing a wide range of research relevant to volunteering and communication strategy. The aim of our study is to provide a thorough understanding of the theoretical background of research on volunteering, to present the main areas of research in multiple contexts, to summarize the research findings and to identify the role of volunteering communication in individual and organizational contexts, and to identify potential areas for future research. The integrative literature review approach allows for a combined examination of a wide range of research methods (Whittemore & Knafl,

2005). By examining the issue through an integrative literature review, new insights were generated (Torraco, 2016), which can provide a basis for further research on concepts that cut across the theoretical areas under investigation. The review was based on the principles and framework of Torraco (2016). In order to establish a foundation for further research in the marketing communication discipline, the research questions related to our literature synthesis were as follows:

- What are the main themes of research on volunteering?
- How has the relationship between volunteering and communication been defined in the literature?

The literature review was conducted using Google Scholar and Science Direct. The search was initiated with the search terms "volunteer", "volunteering" to identify the topics studied in the field of volunteering and then used to identify the most relevant areas of literature. The selection criteria for the articles were defined as: an English-language journal article focusing on volunteering and communication. After reviewing the literature, we identified the main themes (e.g., motivation) and targeted Hungarian and international articles on these themes. Volunteering was typically addressed in several topics in the articles reviewed, and our review aimed to provide a general picture, so we did not thematize the studies by their context. Three themes emerge from the categorization and synthesis of the articles on volunteering: 1) individual characteristics influencing volunteering, 2) studies on the impact of volunteering, and 3) articles on organizational aspects of volunteering.

In the context of volunteering and communication, the search term "volunteer communication" was used to explore in more detail the specific areas presented.

3.4. Literature review

3.4.1. Volunteering

According to Wilson (2000), volunteering can be defined as an activity in which a volunteer freely gives his or her time for the benefit of another person, group or cause (Meijs, 1997). It can also be defined as uncompensated work for another party to whom the volunteer has no contractual, family or friendly obligation (Penner, 2002).

Volunteering can be either formal or informal (Lee & Brudney, 2012). In addition to the personal characteristics of volunteers (e.g., motivation, values, commitment), the goals of volunteering activities may also differ (Wilson, 2000; Dovidio et al., 2017). Smith et al. (2016) suggest that volunteer organizations can be classified into eleven different categories, which include charitable and health, activist, community development, occupational support, religious, youth, sports, arts, social and other organizations. Wymer (1997a) identified six groups to segment volunteer activities: human services, arts and culture, religion, health, youth development and education.

Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) identified eight key mechanisms that drive giving as a charitable activity, these are need-consciousness, appeal, costs and benefits, altruism, reputation, psychological benefits, values, and effectiveness. The identification of a sense of need comes from beneficiaries and organizations communicating material, social or psychological needs to volunteers. Volunteering is not only a local phenomenon but also an international one, often taking the form of volunteer tourism, a trend that has built on the growing emphasis in recent decades on helping those in need (Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014). Voluntourism can take the form of international internships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011), study trips (Heron, 2005), gap years before university (Lyons et al., 2012), student exchange programs (Lyons & Wearing, 2008), charity work, and career breaks (Creane, 2006). Voluntourism has recently become the focus of several research studies (An et al., 2022; Kılıç et al., 2023) Voluntourism contributes to volunteering satisfaction through volunteering activities and has a positive impact on the beneficiaries of volunteering activities, which may include local communities (Lo & Lee, 2011).

3.4.2. Individual characteristics that influence volunteering

Much of the literature has examined individual characteristics that influence volunteering, with a focus on motivation, age and gender, and cultural background.

Motivations

In order to recruit and retain volunteers, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of volunteers' motivations (Kim & Cuskelly, 2017) and to use this information to personalize their experience (Cho et al., 2023). Motivation is defined by Atkinson (1964) as the influence on the direction, momentum and persistence of

action, and motivation, together with values and expectations, encourages volunteers to devote their time to a particular activity (Agostinho & Paco, 2012).

Clary and Snyder (1999) identified six types of individual or social motivations for volunteering, which they called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), and which have since been widely used to define volunteer motivation. The six motivations for volunteering according to Clary and Snyder (1999) are: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social and protective motives, whose meanings, and associated literature are explained in the following table.

Table 12. The six motivations for volunteering based on Clary and Snyder (1999) - literature summary

Motivation	Related literature	Meaning
Values	Anderson and Moore (1978) Allen and Rushton (1983) Clary et al. (1994) Wang (2004) Shantz et al. (2014)	Values mean that the volunteer does the activity to act according to important values such as humanitarianism and altruism.
Understanding	Gidron (1978) Clary and Snyder (1999)	Understanding motivation means that the volunteer is open to learning new things about the world.
Enhancement	Anderson and Moore (1978) Clary and Snyder (1999) Czike and Bartal (2005) Fényes (2015)	The need for development of the volunteer is reflected in the enhancement motivation.
Career	Katz (1960) Jenner (1982) Clary and Snyder (1999)	Career motivation refers to the need to gain career-related experience.
Social	Smith et al. (1956) Rosenhan (1970) Clary and Snyder (1999)	Social motivation involves the possibility of strengthening the volunteer's peer relationships.
Protective	Smith et al. (1956) Katz (1960) Clary and Snyder (1999)	Protective motivation is about reducing the volunteer's negative feelings, such as guilt.

Source: own editing

Finkelstein (2009) found that the six motives identified by Clary and Snyder (1999) can be categorized as extrinsic and intrinsic ones: only the career motive was classified as extrinsic, and all other identified motives as intrinsic. Research in the field of volunteering has also identified motivation as one of the key factors influencing participation in volunteering activities.

Age

Characteristics that determine volunteering (e.g., marital status, work) are life stage specific, so age can be a central factor when considering volunteering (Oesterle et al., 2004). People over 50 are more likely to volunteer than younger people (Wymer, 1998), and young people tend to volunteer more if their parents have volunteered before (Shure, 1998).

Finkelstein's (2007) findings supported the motivational approach among older volunteers, which is the more satisfied they were with their volunteering, the more committed they were to be continuing volunteering if they were able to engage in activities that matched their motivation during their experience. Older volunteers tend to place greater emphasis on helping others than younger volunteers, who are more motivated by learning and development (Tschirhart, 1998), supporting the idea that the focus of motivation changes with age (Kragt & Holtrop, 2019). This is confirmed by the study of Frisch and Gerrald (1981), who found that younger volunteers were less motivated by altruistic behavior than older volunteers. According to Okun and Schultz (2003), there is a relationship between age and volunteer motivation: as volunteers age, career and understanding motivation decreases and social motivation increases, which is supported by the research of Dávila and Díaz-Morales (2009). The results suggest that age has an impact on intention and motivation to volunteer.

Gender

One of the main reasons for the gender difference in volunteering is related to values (e.g., empathy) that are important to individuals (Davis et al., 1999; Oswald, 2000). A number of studies have addressed the relationship between gender and volunteering behavior (e.g., Wymer & Samu, 2002; Danielsson & Eriksson, 2021). Studies (Kaminski, 1996; Wymer, 1998) suggest that the females tend to dominate volunteering, but some domestic research (Czike & Kuti, 2006) suggests that more men than women volunteer. Although previous research suggests that female

volunteers tend to be more numerous than male volunteers, Oswald (2000) suggests that men are expected to volunteer more hours than women. This is supported by the findings of Wymer and Samu (2002) that men on average spend more time volunteering than women and undertake more activities.

Cultural background

In their study, Randle and Dolnicar (2009a) investigated how cultural background influences volunteering behavior and by using the Theory of Planned Behavior they found that there are many differences between cultural groups in terms of attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control over volunteering. Randle and Dolnicar (2009a), for example, found that in terms of social norms, the Southern European group was more influenced by members of their group than the Australian and Anglo-Celtic groups.

Grönlund and colleagues (2011) identified different motivations for countries with different cultural values. For subjects from cultures with higher levels of individualism, career-related motivations were more prevalent than those with lower levels of individualism, and where egalitarianism dominates, a stronger altruistic motivation was seen (Grönlund et al., 2011). In summary, the cultural background of the individual has an impact on volunteering (Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Randle & Dolnicar, 2009a; Grönlund et al., 2011) and there may be differences between cultural groups in their volunteering (Grönlund et al., 2011).

3.4.3. The impact of volunteering

Besides the individual aspects influencing volunteering, the second central theme identified relates to the positive effects of volunteering. It is important to highlight that although most research has focused on the positive effects of volunteering, negative effects have also been reported by researchers (e.g., Trent & Allen, 2019).

Subjective well-being

The phenomenon of volunteering in relation to subjective well-being has been extensively studied in research (e.g., Wilson, 2000; Meier & Stutzer, 2008; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Choi & Kim, 2011) and found that charitable giving and volunteering increase subjective well-being. The relationship between well-being and charitable giving among older adults was the focus of Choi and Kim's (2011) research, which

demonstrated that volunteering and charitable giving have a positive effect on psychological well-being among adults aged 55 and over, and the finding is also supported by Ho et al. (2012). Finkelstein investigated the relationships between volunteering and different aspects of the volunteering experience (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2005; Finkelstein & Brannick, 2007, Finkelstein, 2008a; Finkelstein, 2008b). It is important to highlight that, regardless of the motivations for volunteering, volunteers reported better health, greater satisfaction with their lives (Pólya & Martos, 2012), higher life expectancy and lower levels of depression (Haski-Leventhal, 2008). These research findings suggest that volunteering has a positive impact on psychological well-being (László, 2013), health (Owen & Celik, 2018), life satisfaction (Pólya & Martos, 2012), life expectancy and lower levels of depression (Haski-Leventhal, 2008). Meier and Stutzer (2008) found that volunteering increases an individual's subjective well-being, and that individuals who volunteer frequently are more likely to report higher life satisfaction than those who do not volunteer.

Satisfaction

According to Finkelstein (2008a), volunteers who were able to satisfy their motivation during volunteering reported higher levels of satisfaction, and satisfaction can also be a predictor of the time spent volunteering. In another study, Finkelstein (2008b) analyzed the relationship between motivation fulfilment and volunteer role identity, which varies according to time spent volunteering. In the third month of volunteering, volunteers' role identity was positively influenced by values, understanding and enhancement, while in the twelfth month, understanding and enhancement motivations positively influenced their role identity (Finkelstein, 2008b). Bang and Ross (2008) focused their research on the relationship between volunteer motivations and satisfaction in the context of volunteering at a sports event: the most significant predictors of volunteers' satisfaction levels were motivational factors, expressing values, career orientation and love of sport. It can be concluded that the satisfaction of volunteers' motivation and overall satisfaction with volunteering contributes to individuals' next participation in similar volunteering activities (Vecina et al., 2012; Ashfaq et al., 2021).

3.4.4. Organizational aspects of volunteering

In addition to the individual factors of volunteering, the organizational aspects are also worth highlighting, and below we present research on the presence of a psychological contract, employee volunteering and volunteer contribution.

Psychological contract

An individual's belief in his or her obligations and expectations towards another party is called a psychological contract (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998), which can also be investigated in the context of volunteering, e.g., in the relationship between the volunteer and the volunteer organization. Although most of the time there is no contractual relationship between organizations and their volunteers, several researchers have investigated the existence of a psychological contract: motivations and personal characteristics (Liao-Troth, 2005), the impact of violating psychological contract on behavior (Kim et al., 2009) and the use of psychological contracts to optimize volunteers' contributions (Gaston & Alexander, 2001; Taylor et al., 2006). In an international context, Barrett and colleagues (2017) investigated how international volunteers' psychological contracts are developed. They found that the psychological contracts of international volunteers, like those of domestic volunteers, contain relational, transactional, and value-based elements, and that experienced volunteers have minimal psychological contracts, and they also have higher expectations of appropriately trained colleagues and physical safety than inexperienced volunteers (Barrett et al., 2017). Overall, it can be concluded that the psychological contracts that exist during volunteering influence the behavior of volunteers when carrying out volunteering activities.

Employee volunteering

Some companies allow their employees to participate in volunteer activities, which increases the volunteer pool of people who would like to volunteer besides working (Nichols & King, 1998). Rodell and co-authors (2016) defined employee volunteering as "employed individuals giving time during a planned activity for an external nonprofit or charitable group or organization" (p. 3) and suggested potential research directions focusing on company-level aspects, impact on colleagues, individual outcomes, and company performance. Dempsey-Brench and Shantz (2022) provided a literature review on employee volunteering and skills-based volunteering and

identified five key themes: program characteristics, employee-volunteer characteristics, non-profit benefits, firm benefits, and context. For program characteristics, the fit of volunteering into corporate strategy, the role of development and knowledge exchange were highlighted, and for employee-volunteer characteristics, existing knowledge, motivation, and the resulting tension were highlighted (Dempsey-Brench & Shantz, 2022). Non-profit benefits included access to knowledge, sustainable impact, partner network building and future volunteering, while firm benefits included company and employee performance, importation of new knowledge and employee attitudes. (Dempsey-Brench & Shantz, 2022). The context aspect refers to the support of managers, co-workers, and nonprofit organizations (Brench & Shantz, 2022). Employee volunteering motivation was strongly characterized by altruism, while career-type motivation was found to be weaker (Breitsohl & Ehrig, 2017). For larger companies, employee volunteering is often integrated in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy of the company (Garai-Fodor et al., 2021; Molnár & Vida, 2021).

Contribution

In their work, Randle and Dolnicar (2009b) segmented the volunteer 'market' by contributions and found that high contributors have a wider range of motivations, can be described by distinctive sociodemographic characteristics, and engage in different ways than low contributors, which can help organizations identify the right volunteers for them. Volunteers' contributions and performance were the focus of Farmer and Fedor's (2001) research, where they analyzed the relationship between contributions (the relationship between expected and desired contribution), social interactions (the influence of social context on behavior), role investment (commitment to the organization) and volunteers' motivations for joining (altruistic and instrumental motivations). When the volunteer organization's requests were not compatible with the volunteer's family life or work, the volunteer spent less time volunteering each month, donated less, and his or her contribution was rated low by managers (Farmer & Fedor, 2001). From an organizational perspective, it is very important to recruit individuals with the highest possible contribution to volunteer activities, so segmenting the volunteer population along with this factor is also necessary.

Reliability

The problem of trustworthiness (also caused by the dependence on volunteers' help) due to volunteers' financial independence from the organization (Pearce, 1993) is often analyzed in the context of volunteers' relationship with the organization (e.g., Wilson, 2000; Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Bozeman & Ellemers, 2007). Resolving this problem is not easy because reward systems to motivate and retain company employees are not available in volunteer organizations (Bozeman & Ellemers, 2007). Organizational commitment is also relevant to volunteering (Dailey, 1986), as it is a form of psychological attachment to the organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) and is related to the volunteer's intention to stay or leave (Jenner, 1981; Miller et al., 1990).

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that in the context of volunteering activities, it is important from the organizational side to investigate the psychological contract (Liao-Troth, 2005), the integration of volunteering in the CSR strategy (Molnár & Vida, 2021), the extent of the volunteers' contribution to the organization's work (Randle & Dolnicar, 2009b) and the exposure to the volunteers' work (Bozeman & Ellemers, 2007), and to build on these when planning communication towards volunteers.

3.4.5. The role of communication in volunteering

Volunteering has been studied in several disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, management), but only a few studies have included communication as a central construct. Although Omoto and Snyder's (2002) volunteering process model includes elements such as volunteer recruitment, social climates, and volunteer's social network, which are highly relevant to communication, the role of communication is not highlighted in the model. According to McComb (1995), volunteers need to learn how to perform their tasks, develop communication channels for information exchange, socialize with others and become immersed in the culture of the organization to work effectively together.

For prospective members, three types of communication are important: role development communication, recruitment communication and reconnaissance communication (Kramer, 2011). Role development communication is the communication and experience that indicates that an individual can participate in

activities and has the skills and attitude to do so (Kramer, 2011). Reconnaissance communication refers to the processing of information about the organization by the individual, which can range from actively seeking information to passively hearing about the organization's activities from current members or from the media (Kramer, 2011). Recruitment communication refers to the actions taken to influence individuals to join the organization (Kramer, 2011), from website advertisements to word-of-mouth (when a member asks someone to join).

Wisner et al. (2005) described the word-of-mouth communication of volunteers as the willingness of volunteers to recommend the organization (and the activity) to other individuals. If the organization effectively strengthens the connection between volunteers through peer interactions, this has a positive impact on their willingness to continue volunteering and spread positive word-of-mouth about the volunteer activity (Lee et al., 2016).

Recruiting new volunteers

Through role development communication, individuals can learn about the qualities, skills and attitudes that are necessary for volunteering, which are mostly non-occupational (Kramer, 2011). Attitudes and motivations for volunteering can be separated from the development of the necessary skills, and volunteering intentions can be lost if any of these are lacking. Recruitment and retention are important for organizations that employ volunteers. The volunteer market can be segmented (e.g., by socio-demographic criteria) so that the desired group can be effectively targeted. If this segment is too small, the lack of volunteers may lead the organization to recruit candidates with lower criteria to recruit from a wider pool (Nichols & King, 1998).

According to Clary et al. (1998), the more the recruitment communication focuses on the specific motivational functions held by volunteers, the more successful the recruitment attempt will be. The means and content of communication also proved to be important in volunteer advertising and recruitment, as individuals with highly altruistic motives preferred recruitment advertisements that listed the self-centered benefits of volunteering, such as socialization, gaining experience and training, meeting new people, and self-identity (Bennett & Kottasz, 2001). Volunteers who encountered an advertisement that emphasized a message relevant to their

motivational approach had higher levels of persuasion and were more likely to intend to volunteer than those who received other messages (Clary et al., 1994).

Volunteer recruitment can occur through formal channels, such as advertising at volunteer fairs, or through more informal channels, such as word-of-mouth, which can occur between individuals in close and distant relationships (Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993). According to Jablin (2001), sources of communication influence volunteer participation, but Kramer (2011) argues that the list of these sources should be expanded. Family, educational institutions, friends, and the media also influence role development by encouraging individuals to focus on the attitudes and skills needed to volunteer (Kramer, 2011). These sources can be complemented by new ones, such as social media and the power of electronic word-of-mouth.

The sharing of information, opinions, and recommendations through word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth can be seen as an altruistic act, as people are willing to help others without tangible rewards (Killian et al., 2016), a behavior that is in sync with the basic paradigm of volunteering. Word-of-mouth advertising is considered an effective communication tool for recruiting volunteers (Hibbert et al., 2003). Those who are already volunteering can be motivated by the organization to engage in word-of-mouth advertising and more effective recruitment through word-of-mouth advertising by introducing referral programs and developing a symbolic reward system (Cicognani et al., 2023). Using the theory of planned behavior, it is also possible to study the effectiveness of referral program and the willingness to refer (Shan & King, 2015).

Communicating about volunteering

The communication between the volunteer and the organization or other individuals, depending on the type of volunteering activity, can be implicit and explicit (Gasiorek & Giles, 2013). In the case of volunteering with an organization, the object of communication towards society is the value created by the organization (Gasiorek & Giles, 2013). If an organization is involved in volunteering, it is possible to communicate to society about what happened during volunteering and their mission, which may include the activities of volunteers (Gasiorek & Giles, 2013). Volunteer organizations must also be perceived as desirable by volunteers, and therefore a brand

strategy needs to be developed. Research has shown that brand image has an impact on volunteer intentions (Febriani & Selamet, 2019), which supports the need for conscious planning.

The primary purpose of social media communication to the outside world is to inform the organization's external stakeholders, which plays an important role in strengthening the bond between the organization and its volunteers. It is also worth pointing out that organizations need to communicate not only to the outside world but also to volunteers in a targeted way, who will thus get to know the organization better and become more attached to it (Bauer & Lim, 2019), and communication also reduces uncertainty (Miller & Jablin, 1991), which contributes to the involvement of volunteers in future activities (Kramer et al., 2013).

When a volunteer helps an individual, communication also involves interactions and conversations with the recipient of the activity (Gasiorek & Giles, 2013). In addition to communicating with the recipient of the activity, volunteers often communicate with each other during volunteering. It is important to highlight that one of the reasons for participating in volunteering activities is that people can communicate with more people and strengthen their social relationships (Clary & Snyder, 1999). According to Okun and Schultz's (2003) research, this communication and social aspect is even more important for older people, as social volunteering motivation increases with age. From an organizational perspective, facilitating social interaction among volunteers can be an effective way to recruit and retain volunteers (Lee et al., 2016). Volunteering provides valuable experiences for volunteers, which are often shared with other known and unknown individuals (Gasiorek & Giles, 2013).

3.5. Possible research directions

Based on the literature review, the most important phenomena related to volunteering - individual characteristics, the effects of volunteering, and organizational factors - are presented. This study also identified the essential and multifaceted role of communication in relation to volunteering. After a review of the literature, the emerging ideas identify possible research directions by defining four themes in

relation to linking individual and organizational factors with communication opportunities.

Getting to know volunteers in a cultural context

Several studies have investigated the cultural factors influencing volunteering (Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Wymer, 1997b; Randle & Dolnicar, 2009a), and it may also be interesting to examine the cultural elements involved in volunteering, especially when it is a cross-cultural issue (or organization), such as volunteering with refugees. In addition to exploring cultural elements qualitatively, it may also be worth investigating whether the motivations constructed by Clary and Snyder (1999) or Butt et al. (2017) appear in the motivations of volunteers. Further research could explore the sources of information for those involved in intercultural volunteering in order to identify which platforms for volunteer organizations to reach volunteers who are open to learning about other cultures and helping people from other cultures. The encounter of cultures in volunteering activities can also challenge volunteers (Follman et al., 2016), which makes it worth exploring the role of culture shock, stereotypes, and cultural differences.

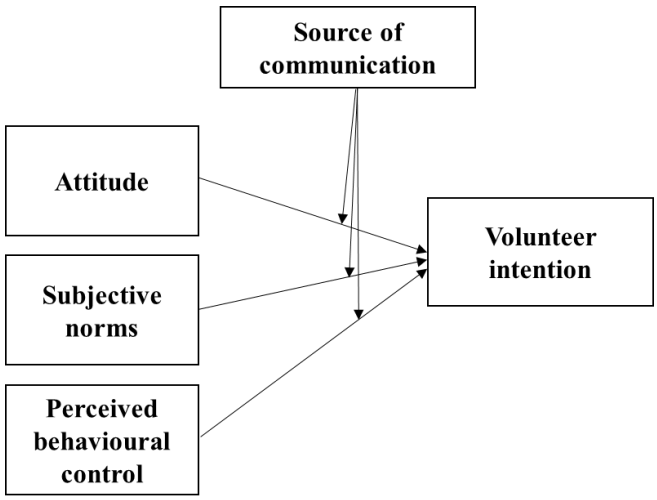
The impact of word-of-mouth recommendation

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been used in research on volunteering (Randle & Dolnicar, 2009a) and other fields (Pelsőci et al., 2021) and it is worth using it as a framework for further research.

According to Jablin (2001), the source of volunteer recruitment communication influences volunteer participation, the exact effect of which might be worth investigating by looking at the tie strength, the strength of which ranges from weak to strong and is related to the frequency and closeness of the interaction (Marsden & Campbell, 1984). Using the theory of planned behavior in further research, we can also investigate recommendation effectiveness and willingness to recommend (Shan & King, 2015). By placing the source of communication in the model of the theory of planned behavior (Figure 2), we can explore the moderating effect of the source of communication in case of volunteer intention and learn about the relationships that volunteer organizations need to target to more successfully recruit individuals to volunteer activities. By using the framework, important information can be uncovered

for organizations to build on to increase both recruitment efficiency and recruitment effectiveness (Hubert et al., 2012) in terms of marketing measurement opportunities.

Figure 2. Possible research model to study the impact of word-of-mouth advertising



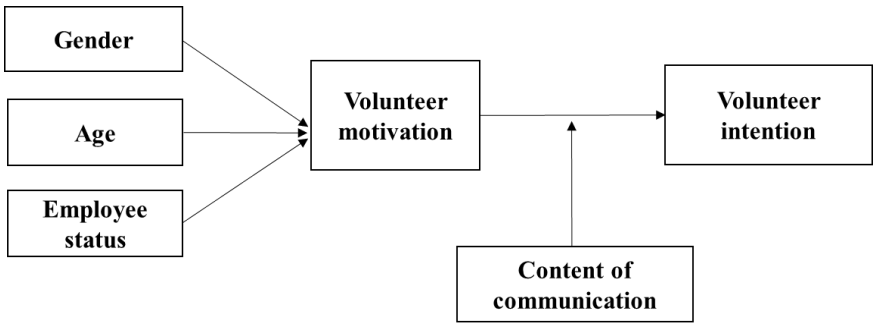
Source: own editing

Examining recruitment communication

When investigating the personal characteristics associated with volunteering, research has shown that one of the central factors has been motivation, which is still relevant today. To investigate this, the framework of Clary and Snyder (1999) or Butt et al. (2017) is suggested. Previous research has analyzed the relationship between age and motivation (Okun & Schultz, 2003; Tschirhart, 1998), gender and motivation (Ibrahim & Brannen, 1997; Davis et al., 1999); and the influential role of employee status (Wymer & Samu, 2002). From a communication perspective, the content of recruitment appeals has also been the subject of several studies (Clary et al., 1994; Clary et al., 1998; Bennett & Kottasz, 2001), with a focus on the persuasive power of messages. It may be worthwhile in the future to combine research on these previous topics with an investigation of a holistic model (Figure 3), the results of which, by narrowing the communication platform, will enable voluntary organizations to recruit volunteers more effectively. By putting the previously identified elements into a

model, an accurate picture of potential volunteers can be obtained, and information to effectively target the desired target group.

Figure 3. Possible research model to study the impact of recruitment communication



Source: own editing

Analysis of communication from voluntary organizations

As brand image has an impact on the intention to volunteer (Febriani & Selamet, 2019), it is important how is the image of the volunteer organization and how, what and where it communicates. In order to develop an effective communication plan, it is worth conducting a content analysis on the communications of larger volunteer organizations, even international ones. In the case of communication, its purpose, message, tonality, visual content may also be of interest in addition to determining the target group of the communication. To complement this, it may also be relevant to conduct expert interviews with the communication officer of volunteer organizations to identify best practices in communication, both from external and internal sources. On this basis, useful set of recommendations can be developed and published for voluntary organizations to improve the effectiveness of future communication.

In the field of brand image, another important direction can be the examination of the differences between the image of the organization and the self-image of the volunteer (Gyulavári & Malota 2014). In the case of the self-consistency motive, the individual intends to follow a behavior that fits his/her own self-image, and by volunteering (and

choosing an organization) he/she wants to show the world his/her own individuality and values, and this motive is worth targeting by organizations during communication.

Based on previous research, new research directions have been identified with the proposed frameworks, which are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13. Proposed research directions

Name	Focus of the research
Getting to know volunteers in a cultural context	• Cultural elements (e.g., cultural differences, culture shock, stereotypes) • Volunteer motivations • Source of information • Intercultural incidents
Examining the impact of word-of-mouth recommendation	• Source of information • Tie strength • Intention to volunteer
Examining recruitment communication	• Demographic factors • Volunteer motivations • Content of recruitment communication • Intention to volunteer
Communication analysis of voluntary organizations	• Image of organizations • Communication (content, purpose, target group, tonality) • Best practices

Source: own editing

3.6. Summary

Today, with the succession of unforeseen events, war, and disasters, it is crucial for voluntary organizations to mobilize volunteers quickly to help society around the world.

The literature review presented research on the individual characteristics of volunteering. The area of individual characteristics that has been most thoroughly investigated is volunteer motivation, where the validity of volunteer motivation frameworks can be tested on a domestic sample. In addition to motivation, the female dominance of volunteering, the impact of age and cross-cultural interactions were also

of considerable interest. Among the effects of volunteering, the positive effects have been the main focus of research, but it is important to highlight that it can also have negative effects. For the organizational aspects, the exposure of voluntary organizations to volunteers and contribution-based segmentation were found to be dominant.

Organizational and individual forms of communication related to volunteering were also identified, focusing on content related to recruitment and volunteering. The organization's recruitment message has a key role to play, and it is important that it is in synergy with volunteer motivation, and word-of-mouth is also crucial as an effective recruitment method. Voluntary organizations need to communicate not only to the outside world, but also to volunteers to reinforce their commitment to them.

The areas identified along the literature review offer a number of research opportunities from a marketing communication, organizational behavioral or intercultural perspective on volunteering, which can be interpreted across a wide range of volunteering fields (e.g., health, sport, charity). The exploration of the specificities of volunteering in Hungary could provide valuable and useful information for both the academic community researching non-profit marketing and volunteer organizations.

3.7. References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *50*(3), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Alfes, K., Antunes, B., & Shantz, A. (2017). The management of volunteers – what can human resources do? A review and research agenda. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *28*(1), 62–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1242508

Allen, N., & Rushton, J. P. (1983). Personality characteristics of community mental health volunteers. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *12*(1), 36–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/089976408301200106

An, S., Jiang, L., Woosnam, K. M., & Eck, T. (2022). Volunteer tourists' revisit intentions explained through emotional solidarity and on-site experience. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 53*, 70–80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.08.011

Anderson, J. C, & Moore, L. (1978). The motivation to volunteer. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *7*(3-4), 51–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/089976407800700312

Ashfaq, F., Butt, M., & Ilyas, S. (2021). Volunteering: what drives and retains it? An analysis of motivational needs together with organizational policies and practices. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *21*(2), 189–205. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-04-2020-0024

Atkinson, J.W. (1964). *Introduction to Motivation*. Van Nostrand, Princeton, NJ

Bang, H., & Ross, S.D. (2009). *Volunteer Motivation and Satisfaction*.

Barrett, M., Cox, A., & Woodward, B. (2017). The psychological contract of international volunteers: an exploratory study. *Journal of Global Mobility: The home of Expatriate Management Research, 5*(2), 123–145. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-03-2017-0009

Bauer, S., & Lim, D. (2019). Effect of communication practices on volunteer organization identification and retention. *Sustainability, 11*(9), 2467. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11092467

Bekkers, R., & Wiepking, P. (2011). A literature review of empirical studies of philanthropy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 40*(5), 924–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010380927

Bennett, R., & Kottasz, R. (2001). Advertisement style and the recruitment of charity volunteers. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketi*ng, *8*(2), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1300/J054v08n02_05

Boezeman, E. J., & Ellemers, N. (2007). Volunteering for charity: pride, respect, and commitment of volunteers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(3), 771–785. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.3.771

Breitsohl, H., & Ehrig, N. (2017). Commitment through employee volunteering: accounting for the motives of inter-organisational volunteers. *Applied Psychology. 66*(2), 260–289. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12092

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2011). International service learning. In R. G. Bringle, J. A. Hatcher, & S. G. Jones (Eds.), I*nternational Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research*. Virginia: Stylus Publishing

Bussel, H., & Forbes, D. (2002). Understanding the volunteer market: the what, where, who and why of volunteering. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing, 7*(3), 244–257. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.183

Butt, M. U., Hou, Y., Soomro, K. A., & Acquadro Maran, D. (2017). The ABCE model of volunteer motivation. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *43*(5), 593–608. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2017.1355867

Cicognani, S., Stein, S., Tonin, M., & Vlassopoulos, M. (2023). Symbolic incentives and the recruitment of volunteers for citizen science projects. *Oxford Economic Papers*, *75*(4), 923–940. https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpad031

Cho, H., Chen, M.Y.K., & Li, C. (2023). Compulsory volunteer experience in Singapore: personality, volunteer motivation, and continuance intention to volunteer. *Voluntas, 34*, 276–288. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00461-y

Choi, N. G., & Kim, J. (2011). The effect of time volunteering and charitable donations in later life on psychological wellbeing. *Ageing and Society*, *31*(4), 590–610. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X10001224

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Miene, P., & Haugen, J. (1994). Matching messages to motives in persuasion: A functional approach to promoting volunteerism. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *24*, 1129–1149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1994.tb01548.x

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A. A., Haugen, J., & Miene, P. (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1516–1530. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1516

Clary E. G., & Snyder, M. (1999). The motivations to volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 8*(5), 156–159. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00037

Creane, P. (2006). The science of volunteering. *IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Magazine, 25*(3), 20–22. https://doi.org/10.1109/MEMB.2006.1636344

Cuskelly, G., Auld, C., Harrington, M., & Coleman, D. (2004). Predicting the behavioural dependability of sport event volunteers. *Event Management*. *9*(1/2), 73–89. https://doi.org/10.3727/1525995042781011

Czike, K., & Bartal, A. M. (2005). *Önkéntesek és nonprofit szervezetek: az önkéntes tevékenységet végzők motivációi és szervezeti típusok az önkéntesek foglalkoztatásában*. Budapest: Civitalis Egyesület.

Czike, K., & Kuti, É. (2006). *Önkéntesség, jótékonyság, társadalmi integráció.* Budapest: Nonprofit Kutató-csoport és Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány.

Dailey, R. C. (1986). Understanding organizational commitment for volunteers: Empirical and managerial implications. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *15*, 19–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/089976408601500102

Danielsson, E., & Eriksson, K. (2021). Women's invisible work in disaster contexts: gender norms in speech on women's work after a forest fire in Sweden. *Disasters*, *46*(1), 141–161. https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12464

Davis, M. H., Mitchell, K. V., & Hall, J. A. (1999). Empathy, expectations, and situational preferences: Personality influences on decision to participate in volunteer helping behaviors. *Journal of Personality*, *67*(3), 469–503. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6494.00062

Dávila, M. C., & Díaz-Morales, J. F. (2009). Age and motives for volunteering: Further evidence. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, *5*(2), 82–95. https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v5i2.268

Dempsey-Brench, K., & Shantz, A. (2022). Skills-based volunteering: A systematic literature review of the intersection of skills and employee volunteering. *Human Resource Management Review*, *32*(4), 100874. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100874

Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., Schroeder, D. A., & Penner, L. A. (2017). *The social psychology of prosocial behavior.* UK: Psychology Press.

Farkas, K., Hegedűs, A., Katona, B., Máhl, Zs., Mátyus, A., & Molár, Á. K. (2012). Előtérben a háttér – az önkéntesség Magyarországon. *Vezetéstudomány, 43*(4), 62–67. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2012.04.06

Farmer, S. M., & Fedor, D. B. (1999). Volunteer participation and withdrawal: A psychological contract perspective on the role of expectations and organizational support. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *9*(4), 349–367. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.9402

Farmer, S. M., & Fedor, D. B. (2001). Changing the focus on volunteering: An investigation of volunteers' multiple contributions to a charitable organization. *Journal of Management*, *27*, 191–211. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630102700204

Febriani, D. M., & Selamet, J. (2019): College students' intention to volunteer for non-profit organizations: Does brand image make a difference?. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, 32*(2), 166–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2019.1656136

Fényes, H., & Kiss, G. (2011). Az önkéntesség szociológiája. *Kultúra és Közösség*, *2*(1), 35–47.

Fényes, H., (2015) *Önkéntesség és új típusú önkéntesség a felsőoktatási hallgatók körében*. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó.

Frenzen, J., & Nakamoto, K. (1993). Structure, cooperation, and the flow of market information. *Journal of Consumer Research, 20*(3), 360–375. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489353

Finkelstein, M. A., Penner, L. A., & Brannick, M. T. (2005). Motive, role identity, and prosocial personality as predictors of volunteer activity. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, *33*, 403–418. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2005.33.4.403

Finkelstein, M. A. (2007). Correlates of satisfaction in older volunteers: A motivational perspective. *The Journal of Volunteer Administration, 24*, 5.

Finkelstein, M. A. (2008a). Volunteer satisfaction and volunteer action: A functional approach. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, *36*, 9–18. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2008.36.1.9

Finkelstein, M. A. (2008b). Predictors of volunteer time: the changing contributions of motive fulfilment and role identity. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal,* *36*(10), 1353–1364. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2008.36.10.1353

Finkelstein, M. A., & Brannick, M. T. (2007). Applying theories of institutional helping to informal volunteering: Motives, role identity, and prosocial personality. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, *35*, 101–114. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2007.35.1.101

Finkelstein, M. A. (2009). Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivational orientations and the volunteer process. *Personality and Individual Differences, 46*(5-6), 653–658. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.01.010

Follman, J., Cseh, M., & Brudney, J. L. (2016). Structures, challenges, and successes of volunteer programs co-managed by nonprofit and public organizations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 26*(4), 453–470. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21206

Frisch, M. B., & Gerrard, M. (1981). Natural helping systems: A survey of Red Cross volunteers. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *9*, 567–579.

Garai-Fodor, M., Csiszárik-Kocsir, Á., & Varga, J. (2021). Az önkéntesség motivációs ereje értékrendalapú megközelítés a Z generációs fiatalok körében. *Vezetéstudomány, 52*(10), 42–56. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2021.10.04

Gasiorek, J., & Giles, H. (2013). Communication, volunteering, and aging: A research agenda. *International Journal of Communication, 7*, 2659–2677.

Gaston, K., & Alexander, J.A. (2001). Effective organization and management of public sector volunteer workers: Police special constables. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *14*(1), 59–74. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550110387075

Gidron, B. (1978). Volunteer work and its rewards. *Volunteer Administration*, *11*(3), 18–32.

Gillespie, D. F., & King, A. E. O. (1985). Demographic Understanding of Volunteerism. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 12*(4), 798–816.

Griszbacher, N., Varga, Á., & Kemény, I. (2022). Sport, megaesemények, önkéntesek és az egyedi élmény faktor: Az önkéntesek szerepe az arénaélmény létrehozásában a megasportesemények során. *Vezetéstudomány, 53*(1), 15–28. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2022.01.02

Grönlund, H., Holmes, K., Kang, C. *et al*. (2011). Cultural values and volunteering: A cross-cultural comparison of students' motivation to volunteer in 13 countries. *Journal of Academic Ethics, 9*, 87–106. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-011-9131-6

Gyulavári, T., & Malota, E. (2014). Az énképilleszkedés-elmélet szerepe a fogyasztók turisztikai desztinációértékelésében, *Marketing és Menedzsment*, *48*(3), 5–14.

Haski-Leventhal, D. (2009). Elderly volunteering and well-being: A cross-European comparison based on SHARE data. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *20*, 388–404. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-009-9096-x

Heron, B. A. (2005). Changes and challenges: Preparing social work students for practicums in today's sub-Saharan African context. *Journal of International Social Work*, *48*(6), 782–793. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872805057088

Hibbert, S., Piacentini, M., & Dajani, H. A. (2003). Understanding volunteer motivation for participation in a community-based food cooperative. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *8*, 30–42. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.199

Ho, Y. W., You, J., & Fung, H. H. (2012). The moderating role of age in the relationship between volunteering motives and well-being. *European Journal of Ageing, 9*, 319–327. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-012-0245-5

Hubert, J., Gyulavári, T., & Malota, E. (2012). *Marketingmérés. Coopetiton - Verseny és együttműködés a marketingben - MOK 18. országos konferenciája.* 2012. augusztus 30-31., Miskolc

Ibrahim, N. A., & Brannen, D. E. (1997). Implications of gender differences on the motivations to volunteer in hospitals. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *22*(4), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1300/J079v22n04_01

Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin, & J. Putnam (Eds.), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory*, Research and Methods (pp. 732-818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jenner, J. R. (1981). Volunteerism as an aspect of women's work lives. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *19*, 302–314. https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(81)90065-8

Jenner, J. R. (1982). Participation, leadership, and the role of volunteerism among selected women volunteers. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *11*(4), 27–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/089976408201100404

Kaminski, A. (1996). A national network for men as volunteers?. *Women's Philanthropy, 4*, 8–11.

Katz, D. (1960). The functional approach to the study of attitudes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *24*(2), 163–204. https://doi.org/10.1086/266945

Kidd, A. H., & Kidd, R. M. (1997). Characteristics and motives of adolescent volunteers in wildlife education. *Psychological Report*s, *80*, 747–753. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1997.80.3.747

Kılıç, I., Seçilmiş, C., & Özdemir, C. (2023) The role of travel influencers in volunteer tourism: an application of the cognitive response theory, *Current Issues in Tourism*, https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2174087

Killian, M., Fahy, J., & O'Loughlin, D. (2016). The case for altruism in eWoM motivations. In: Plewa, C., & Conduit, J. (eds) *Making a Difference Through Marketing*. Springer, Singapore.

Kim, E., & Cuskelly, G. (2017). A systematic quantitative review of volunteer management in events. *Event Management*, *21*, 83–100. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599517X14809630271195

Kim, M., Trail, G. T., Lim, J., & Kim, Y. K. (2009). The role of psychological contract in intention to continue volunteering. *Journal of Sport Management*, *23*(5), 549–573. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.23.5.549

Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2021). *A nonprofit szervezetek száma és bevételei bevételnagyság szerint.* https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/gsz/hu/gsz0015.html

Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2020). *A nonprofit szektor legfontosabb jellemzői 2020-ban.* https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/stattukor/nonprofit/2020/index.html

Kragt, D., & Holtrop. D. (2019). Volunteering research in Australia: A narrative review. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *71*(4), 342–360. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12251

Kramer, M. W. (2011). Toward a communication model for the socialization of voluntary members. *Communication Monographs, 78*(2), 233–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2011.564640

Kramer, M. W., Meisenbach, R. J. & Hansen, G. J. (2013). Communication, uncertainty, and volunteer membership. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *41*(1), 18–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2012.750002

László, D. (2013). Az önkéntesség pszichológiai vonatkozásainak szakirodalmi áttekintése. *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle*, *68*(2), 329–355. https://doi.org/10.1556/MPSzle.68.2013.2.8

Lee, Y. J., & Brudney, J. L. (2012). Participation in formal and informal volunteering: Implications for volunteer recruitment. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *23*(2), 159–180. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21060

Lee, Y., Kim, M., & Koo, J. (2016). The impact of social interaction and team member exchange on sport event volunteer management. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(5), 550–562. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.04.005

Liao-Troth, M. A. (2005). Are they here for the long haul? The effects of functional motives and personality factors on the psychological contracts of volunteers*, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *34*(4), 510–530. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764005279513

Lo, A. S., & Lee, C. Y. S. (2011). Motivations and perceived value of volunteer tourists from Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, *32*, 326–334. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.03.002

Lyons, K., Hanley, J., Wearing, S., & Neil, J. (2012). Gap year volunteer tourism: Myths of global citizenship?. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(1), 361–378. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.04.016

Lyons, K. D., & Wearing, S. (Eds.) (2008). *Journeys of discovery in volunteer tourism.* UK: CABI.

Marsden, P., & Campbell, K. (1984). Measuring tie strength. *Social Forces*, *63*(2), 482–501. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579058

McComb, M. (1995). Becoming a travelers aid volunteer: Communication in socialization and training. *Communication Studies*, *46*, 297–316. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510979509368458

Meier, S., & Stutzer, A. (2008). Is volunteering rewarding in itself?. *Economica. 75* (297), 39–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0335.2007.00597.x

Meijs, L. C. P. M. (1997). *Management van vrijwilligersorganisaties* [Management of volunteer organizations]. Utrecht, the Netherlands: NOV Publikaties

Merrilees, B., Miller, D., & Yakimova, R. (2019). Volunteer retention motives and determinants across the volunteer lifecycle. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, 32*(1), 25–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2019.1689220

Miller, L. E., Powell, G. N., & Seltzer, J. (1990). Determinants of turnover among volunteers. *Human Relations*, *43*(9), 901–917. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679004300906

Molnár, K., & Vida, V. (2021): Vállalati önkéntesség a gyakorlatban. *Önkéntes Szemle. 1*(4), 76–93. https://doi.org/10.53585/OnkSzem.2021.4.76-93

Nichols, G. (2012). The psychological contract of volunteers: A new research agenda. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 24*, 986–1005. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-012-9294-9

Nichols, G., & King, L. (1998). Volunteers in the guide association: problems and solutions. *Voluntary Action*, *1*(1), 21–32.

Oesterle, S., Kirpatrick, M., & Mortimer, J. T. (2004). Volunteerism during the transition to adulthood: A life course perspective. *Social Forces*, *82*(3), 1123–1149. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2004.0049

Okun, M. A., & Schultz, A. (2003). Age and motives for volunteering: testing hypotheses derived from socioemotional selectivity theory. *Psychology and Aging*, *18*(2), 231–239. https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.18.2.231

Omoto, A. M., & Snyder, M. (2002). Considerations of community: The context and process of volunteerism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *45*, 846–867. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202045005007

O'Reilly, C. A., & Chatman, J. (1986). Organizational commitment and psychological attachment: The effects of compliance, identification, and internalization on prosocial behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *71*, 492–499. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.71.3.492

Oswald, P. A. (2000). Subtle sex bias in empathy and helping behavior. *Psychological Reports*, *87*(2), 545–551. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.2000.87.2.545

Otoo, F. E., & Amuquandoh, F. E. (2014). An exploration of the motivations for volunteering: A study of international volunteer tourists to Ghana. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *11*, 51–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.04.001

Owen, F. K., & Celik N. D. (2018). Lifelong healthy life-style and wellness. *Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, *10*(4), 440–453. https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.364108

Pater, K. (2021). *Volunteers—Citizens building the future of Europe presented at Civil Society Day, 2021*. Brussels: European Economic and Social Committee.

Pearce, J. L. (1993). *Volunteers: The organisational behaviour of unpaid workers.* London/New York: Routledge

Pelsőci, B. L., Nagy, Á., & Gáti, M. (2021). Az értékesítés digitális átalakulása. Az egyéni és szervezeti technológiaelfogadást meghatározó tényezők empirikus elemzése. *Vezetéstudomány,* *52*(10), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2021.10.02

Penner, L. A. (2002). Dispositional and organizational influences on sustained volunteerism: An interactionist perspective. *The Journal of Social Issues*, *58*(3), 447–467. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00270

Pólya, B., & Martos, T. (2012). Miért jó önkéntes munkát vállalni? Az önkéntesség és az élettel való elégedettség kapcsolata öndeterminációelméleti megközelítésben.

Mentálhigiéné és Pszichoszomatika, *13*(3), 255–271. https://doi.org/10.1556/Mental.13.2012.3.1

Randle, M., & Dolnicar, S. (2009a). Does cultural background affect volunteering behavior?. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketin*g, *21*(2), 225–247. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495140802529649

Randle, M., & Dolnicar, S. (2009b). Not just any volunteers: Segmenting the market to attract the high contributors. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, *21*(3), 271–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495140802644513

Rodell, J. B., Breitsohl, H., Schröder, M., & Keating, D. J. (2016). Employee volunteering: A review and framework for future research. *Journal of Management, 42*(1), 55–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315614374

Rosenhan, D. L. (1970). The natural socialization of altruistic autonomy. In J. Macauley & L. Berkowitz (Eds.), *Altruism and helping behavior* (pp. 251–268). New York: Academic.

Rousseau, D. & Tijoriwala, S. (1998). Assessing psychological contracts: issues, alternatives and measures. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, *19*, 679–696. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(1998)19:1+<679::AID-JOB971>3.0.CO;2-N

Sengupta, D., Verghese, A. K., & Rys, M. (2023). Motivations of volunteering during crises—Perspectives of Polish youths during the Ukrainian refugee crisis. *Administrative Sciences 13*(2), 53. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13020053

Shan, Y., & King, K. W. (2015). The effects of interpersonal tie strength and subjective norms on consumers' brand-related eWOM referral intentions. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *15*(1), 16–27, https://doi.org./10.1080/15252019.2015.1016636

Shantz, A., Saksida, T., & Alfes, K. (2014). Dedicating time to volunteering: Values, engagement, and commitment to beneficiaries. *Applied Psychology, 63*(4), 671–697. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12010

Shure, R. S. (1998). The identification of those most likely to volunteer: Characteristics of male volunteers in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. (dissertation) University of Illinois at Chicago In Wymer, W. W. (1998). Youth

development volunteers: Their motives, how they differ from other volunteers and correlates of involvement intensity. *Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 3*(4), 321–336.

Smith, M., Bruner, J., & White, R. (1956). *Opinions and personality*. New York: Wiley.

Smith, D. H., Stebbins, R. A., Grotz, J., Kumar, P., Nga J. L. H., & Puyvelde, S. V. (2016). Typologies of Associations and Volunteering. In Smith, D. H., Stebbins, R. A., & Grotz, J. (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation, and Nonprofit Associations* (pp. 90–125). Palgrave Macmillan.

Söderhamn, U., Landmark, B, Aasgaard, L., Eide, H. & Söderhamn, O. (2012). Volunteering in dementia care – a Norwegian phenomenological study. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*, *5*, 61–67. https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S28240

Starnes, B. J., & Wymer, W. W., Jr. (2001). Conceptual foundations and practical guidelines for retaining volunteers who serve in local nonprofit organizations: Part II. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, *9*(1–2), 97–118. https://doi.org/10.1300/J054v09n01_06

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guideline. *Journal of Business Research*, *104*, 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Taylor, T., Darcy, S., Hoye, R., & Cuskelly, G. (2006). Using psychological contract theory to explore issues in effective volunteer management. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *6*(2), 123–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184740600954122

Teamsage.io (2023). Volunteering statistics for 2022: How charitable are we? Downloaded: https://teamstage.io/volunteering-statistics/ 2023.01.02.

Thompson, R., & Russell, L. (2017). Trainee teachers in unpaid teaching posts: volunteering, risk and vulnerability, *Journal of Vocational Education & Training. 69*(4), 637–654. https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2017.1322129

Torraco, R. J. (2016). Writing integrative literature reviews. *Human Resource Development Review*, *15*(4), 404–428. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484316671606

Trent, S. B., & Allen, J. A: (2019). Resilience only gets you so far: Volunteer incivility and burnout. *Organization Management Journal*, *16*(2), 69–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/15416518.2019.1604199

Tschirhart, M. (1998). Understanding the older stipended volunteer. *Public Productivity and Management Review*, *22*, 35–48. https://doi.org/10.2307/3380588

Vecina, M. L., Chacón, F., Sueiro, M., & Barrón, A. (2012). Volunteer engagement: Does engagement predict the degree of satisfaction among new volunteers and the commitment of those who have been Active Longer? *Applied Psychology, 61*(1), 130–148. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2011.00460.x

Wang, P. Z. (2004). Assessing motivations for sports volunteerism. *North American Advances in Consumer Research, 31*, 420–425.

Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 52*(5), 546–553. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03621.x

Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*(1), 215–240. http://www.jstor.org/stable/223443

Wilson, J., & Janoski, T. (1995). The contribution of religion to volunteer work. *Sociology of Religion*, *56*(2), 137–152. https://doi.org/10.2307/3711760

Wisner, P. S., Stringfellow, A., Youngdahl, W. E., & Parker, L. (2005). The service volunteer–loyalty chain: An exploratory study of charitable not-for-profit service organizations. *Journal of Operations Management*, *23*, 143–161. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2004.07.003

Wymer, W. W. (1997a). Segmenting volunteers using values, self-esteem, empathy and facilitation as determinant variables. *Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *5*(2), 3–28. https://doi.org/10.1300/J054v05n02_02

Wymer, W. W. (1997b). A religious motivation to volunteer? Exploring the linkage between volunteering and religious values. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, *5*(3), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1300/J054v05n03_02

Wymer, W. W. (1998). Youth development volunteers: Their motives, how they differ from other volunteers and correlates of involvement intensity. *Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *3*(4), 321–336. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.6090030406

Wymer, W. W., & Samu, S. (2002). Volunteer service as symbolic consumption: Gender and occupational differences in volunteering. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *18*(9-10), 971–989. https://doi.org/10.1362/0267257012930358

4. ARTICLE III. WHY DO WE REFRAIN FROM VOLUNTEERING? A TEST OF INHIBITING FACTORS

Authors: Bettina BIFKOVICS, Andrea BÉLA-CSOVCSICS

Citation: Bifkovics, B., & Béla-Csovcsics, A. (2025). Why do we refrain from volunteering? A test of inhibiting factors. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *56*(11), 28–40. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2025.11.03

4.1. Abstract

In light of Hungary's changing socio-economic landscape and the crisis situations of recent years, voluntary organizations are experiencing increasing pressure, highlighting the need to engage a growing number of volunteers. While the number of volunteers has risen, understanding the reasons behind non-participation remains essential for effective recruitment. This study explores barriers to volunteering in Hungary by applying an internationally recognized framework. A quantitative empirical investigation was conducted, in which the original statements of the framework were adapted into the Hungarian language and tested through a questionnaire. The results show that the adapted version is fully applicable for three factors (lack of skill, lack of accountability, lack of opportunity), while three others (lack of time, physical boundaries, and stress associated with volunteering) are only partially transferable. For the remaining two factors (lack of benefit, social boundaries), the measures did not prove to be valid in the Hungarian context.

Keywords: volunteering, barriers, framework, factor analysis

4.2. Introduction

Volunteering is gaining increasing attention around the world, thanks to the recognition of its social, economic and individual significance (OECD, 2024). Volunteering has numerous benefits for both volunteers and the target groups of

voluntary activities (Fairley et al., 2013), as well as for other stakeholders. As volunteering represents significant social value at the community level (Dean, 2022) and contributes greatly to social and cultural well-being (Gil-Lacruz et al., 2019; Mekonen & Adarkwah, 2022; Nichol et al., 2024), the maintenance of well-being, and at the individual level, it can be linked to a higher quality of life (Lawton et al., 2021), the literature primarily focuses on exploring the motivational factors underlying volunteering (Newton et al., 2014; Lachance et al., 2021; Thoits, 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Naqshbandi et al., 2022; Neely et al., 2022; Zhou & Muscente, 2023; Miao et al., 2024; Tsai et al., 2024; Muñoz-Llerena et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the analysis of variables that affect individuals and decreases volunteering or leads to its avoidance is inadequately represented in both national and international literature. Volunteering is often hindered by obstacles such as lack of time, lack of information and knowledge about volunteering opportunities, lack of mobility, or health conditions (Normah & Lukman, 2020; Townsend et al., 2021; Müller, 2024). Identifying these barriers is critical because removing them can contribute to the successful recruitment of volunteers. It is also worthwhile to rely on volunteers because they can be seen not only as a social value but also as a cornerstone of sustainable development strategies (Farkas et al., 2012).

In our research, we examined the following question: what factors inhibit the Hungarians from participating in voluntary activities? We examined how volunteering is perceived among the people surveyed and what personal barriers exist to their participation in voluntary work. By barrier, we mean any factor or combination of factors that deters an individual from contributing to volunteering at an individual, organizational or structural level. In this way, individuals have limited choices regarding participation in volunteer programs that they would like to take part in. The aim of our research was to examine the results of the framework developed by Willems and Dury (2017), used for investigating the reasons for rejecting volunteer work, in the Hungarian context. Furthermore, we considered it important to examine the differences between volunteers and non-volunteers, considering sociodemographic data. The study begins with a presentation of volunteering and an overview and classification of the factors that inhibit voluntary activity, then we describe the context and methodology of our empirical research and finally present our results. We conclude our study with a summary. Our choice of topic was justified by the fact that

the Hungarian literature does not deal in depth with the factors that hinder voluntary work, even though it would be necessary to eliminate these hindering factors in order to promote social participation.

4.3. Literature review

4.3.1. Volunteering

Volunteering refers to helping society, a group within society, or a member of society by devoting time and effort without expecting anything in return, of one's own free will (Wilson, 2000; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Work carried out with the intention of improving social welfare therefore focuses on activities that go beyond personal and family needs (Smith et al., 2016). Volunteering can be seen as a kind of renewable resource created by humans (Brudney & Meijs, 2009), which also plays an important role in initiatives promoting sustainable development (Bauer & Lim, 2019). Volunteering activities can take place within formal or informal frameworks (Silva et al., 2018). More informal initiatives do not follow fixed rules and are less hierarchical in structure. Informal volunteering refers to individually organized voluntary activities and the work of self-organized groups, while formal volunteering is an unpaid contribution of time for the benefit of others, which takes place under the direction of an organization (Wang et al., 2017).

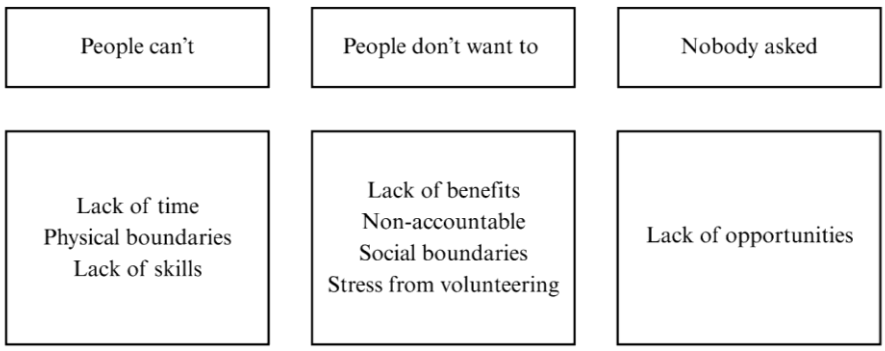
The prevalence of volunteering varies significantly between countries (Southby et al., 2019), which may be due to differences in institutional and cultural contexts (Wilson, 2012; Gil-Lacruz et al., 2017) but can also be explained by religious beliefs (Voicu & Voicu, 2009; Vermeer et al., 2016; Damian, 2019). Across Europe, for example, there is a nearly tenfold difference in the number of people who engage in formal volunteering (Huppert et al., 2009). While 67% of the population in Norway engages in organized volunteering, at the other end of the spectrum, only 7% of the population in Bulgaria undertook at least one voluntary activity in the year preceding the survey (Plagnol & Huppert, 2010). The study by Voicu and Voicu (2009) supports the observation that the proportion of volunteers is much higher in Northern European countries than among citizens of Mediterranean and Eastern European countries. According to data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), 2,229,745

people in Hungary performed volunteer work (both formal and informal) in 2020. Of these, the number of people performing formal volunteer work still accounts for only 8.2 per cent of volunteers (KSH, 2020). Gyorgyovich et al. (2020) examined the sociodemographic characteristics of Hungarian volunteers based on a representative survey conducted in 2018. According to the results, women and people with secondary and higher education are overrepresented among Hungarian volunteers. In addition, young people aged 18–29 and people over 60 were found to be particularly active (Gyorgyovich et al., 2020).

4.3.2. Factors hindering volunteering

The complexity of the factors hindering volunteering has been confirmed by several studies (Ganzevoort & van den Born, 2023; Othman & Bartók, 2024). According to Brady et al. (1995), the lack of volunteering can be attributed to three main factors: firstly, people (1) can't to do voluntary work, secondly, (2) they do not want to be volunteers, and thirdly, (3) nobody has asked them. Willems and Dury (2017) used this categorization as the basis for their work and further developed it to create their own conceptual framework classifying the reasons for not volunteering (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Conceptual model of reasons for not volunteering based on the three-fold classification of Brady et al. (1995) and Willems and Dury (2017)



Source: own editing based on Willems & Dury (2017)

People can't

Although the proportion of people participating in voluntary activities is increasing, the number of people undertaking regular, time-consuming voluntary activities is declining (Kelle et al., 2024), which may endanger the future operation of voluntary organizations. This shows that one of the main factors deterring people from volunteering is lack of time (Sundeen et al., 2007; Alsuwaidi et al., 2022; NCVO, 2023; Kraja et al., 2025), at least according to non-volunteers, who often mention this as the reason for their lack of commitment (Potluka & Schnurbein, 2025), even though they face similar time constraints as active volunteers (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2018). According to the findings of Southby et al. (2019), this is true for both older and younger generations. In addition to work, family and other commitments, many people find it difficult to find time for volunteering (Lancee & Radl, 2014). A negative correlation between family responsibilities, increased work demands and volunteering can be observed, particularly among women (Taniguchi, 2006). Flexible scheduling and occasional, ad hoc volunteer activities may therefore be particularly attractive to people and encourage them to participate in volunteer work (Cho et al., 2020). This is supported by Chambré (2020), who argues that the current trend is towards episodic forms of volunteering. Members of the younger generation are keen to try out voluntary work in order to develop their skills and gain experience, but there is a high turnover among them due to lack of time (Warburton et al., 2018).

Other obstacles include a lack of personal or family resources, as well as other physical limitations, such as when a potential volunteer is unable to arrange childcare for their young children, cannot afford the costs associated with volunteering (e.g., transport costs) (Innes et al., 2024), or is unable to travel to the place of volunteering. Another reason for not volunteering may be a relative lack of the skills required for volunteering, which may stem from an individual's disability (Young & Passmore, 2007) or changed life circumstances (e.g., in the case of pregnant women at risk). In these cases, the reason for the decline in volunteering is not due to the organization, but to the fact that volunteering is less important or impractical for the individual in their current life, so they choose not to volunteer (Pótó & Sipos, 2022).

People don't want to

The next group of factors hindering volunteering focuses on those aspects that suggest that volunteering opportunities are available to the individual, but the individual still does not feel compelled to volunteer. This dimension identifies the lack of perceived benefits as the primary barrier, i.e. individuals refrain from volunteering because they believe that they will not gain any benefits or advantages from volunteering. The benefits of volunteering can emerge in many ways, such as personal development, gaining experience, expanding one's network of contacts, or social recognition. In any case, many volunteers only continue their voluntary activities as long as they consider their work to be effective, useful and satisfying (Ganzevoort & van den Born, 2023), or if they perceive the organization's appreciation (Skoglund, 2006) and recognition (Kim et al., 2014). If individuals perceive that their work is not rewarding, either on an individual or community level, they are more likely to refrain from volunteering (Bartal & Kmetty, 2011), especially those for whom tangible feedback is crucial. The findings of Liu et al. (2024) also support the idea that if volunteers do not perceive personal or professional benefits from participating in an activity, their motivation to participate decreases significantly. Shields (2009) points out that if young volunteers do not develop a sense of commitment to the organization and the tasks they undertake, they tend to lose interest quickly, which often leads to them discontinuing their voluntary activities.

The second barrier within the group discussed is lack of accountability. Some studies have found that individuals who do not volunteer show fewer signs of altruism (Penner, 2002; Wilson, 2012) and have a lower sense of community responsibility. This behavior may stem from the individual's belief that solving community problems is more of an institutional and governmental task than an individual one. This also suggests that a lower sense of responsibility and accountability may consciously contribute to some people avoiding voluntary tasks.

Another obstacle identified within this dimension is social boundaries, which suggest that people may be increasingly sensitive to how they are judged by those around them. It follows that their social status and the expectations associated with it may deter them from participating in voluntary activities. According to Einolf (2010), individuals with higher social status may in some cases not commit to volunteering because they fear

that it is incompatible with their social identity. In addition, the fact that an individual is unable to connect properly with other volunteers in the organization or with the organization itself can also be a social barrier and a hindering factor, complicating integration (Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009) and even causing the individual to feel excluded. The feeling of exclusion that develops in volunteers and the lack of acceptance on the part of the organization (Holtrop et al., 2024) can lead to a distancing from volunteering, which can result in the loss of a potentially valuable workforce for the organization.

Some studies report on the stress-reducing effects of volunteering (Chen et al., 2020; Han et al., 2020; Duncan et al., 2023) and its positive impact on mental well-being (Jenkinson et al., 2013; Serrat-Graboleda et al., 2021; Nichol et al., 2023), but in some cases volunteering can become a source of stress. Excessive expectations can lead to overload (Cattan et al., 2011), while emotionally demanding situations (e.g., working with homeless people or war refugees) can cause burnout and increased stress for volunteers (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2016; Roberts et al., 2021). Furthermore, uncertainty can arise and become a stress factor if volunteers do not have a clear understanding of their tasks and responsibilities. Volunteering can also be stressful if it is carried out under external pressure, such as social pressure (Ghose & Kassam, 2014). In this case, volunteering stems from a compulsion to conform, which mitigates the positive effects of the volunteer experience and may increase the risk of dropout (Clary et al., 1998).

Nobody asked

The third group of reasons for rejecting volunteering focuses on the lack of volunteering opportunities and communication about them. The willingness to participate is greatly reduced if there is insufficient information about volunteering positions or if there are no targeted, personalized calls for volunteers (NCVO, 2023). It is often the case that organizations that rely on volunteers share only limited information about volunteering opportunities, despite the fact that a lack of detailed, advance information can reduce volunteer engagement, as volunteers' willingness to participate is greatly influenced by clear communication of tasks, expectations and responsibilities (Krajňáková et al., 2018; Faletehan et al., 2021). It is not only communication by organizations that can encourage individuals to volunteer, but also

information flowing through informal channels from volunteers (Lee & Brudney, 2009). Volunteers' experience-based accounts and word-of-mouth advertising can serve as a persuasive source of information and have a significant impact on the willingness of prospective volunteers to participate (Einolf, 2018; Black et al., 2023; Behrens & Colombelli-Négrel, 2024). However, if there is no one in the volunteer's environment who is actively involved in volunteering, word-of-mouth cannot function as an effective informal recruitment method, thus reducing the likelihood of joining a volunteer program.

Volunteering is fundamentally a form of social interaction, one of the reasons for its emergence being that volunteers participating can communicate with one another and build relationships (Nichol et al., 2023; Bifkovics & Malota, 2024; Reed & Hagen, 2025). In the absence of this, not only interest in volunteering may decline, but a sense of belonging to the community may also fail to develop.

Based on the factors previously described by Brady et al. (1995), Willems and Dury (2017) created a new framework in which they grouped the factors hindering volunteering into eight themes, supplemented by other factors that could not be categorized: social barriers, physical barriers, stress from volunteering, lack of responsibility, lack of skills, lack of opportunities, lack of benefits, and lack of time. In our primary research, we focused on these factors and sought to empirically test the applicability of the measurement scale created by Willems and Dury (2017) in the Hungarian context. Based on this, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of time in the domestic environment.

H2: The previously examined statements adequately measure the physical boundaries of volunteering in a domestic environment.

H3: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of skills for volunteering in the domestic environment.

H4: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of benefits in the domestic environment.

H5: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of accountability in the domestic environment.

H6: The previously examined statements adequately measure the social boundaries on volunteering in the domestic environment.

H7: The previously examined statements adequately measure the stress caused by volunteering in the domestic environment.

H8: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of volunteering opportunities in the domestic environment.

4.4. Method

The aim of the research was to explore the reasons why people do not participate in voluntary activities. In order to obtain more generalizable results, we used a quantitative approach in our research and collected data using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed using scales validated by Willems and Dury (2017), which ensured the reliability and validity of the measurement.

The target group was not narrowed down, as anyone who was available on online platforms could participate in the research. Data collection was carried out using Google Forms, and respondents were reached through various online channels (e.g., Facebook, e-mail). The data collection period lasted three months.

To motivate respondents, we raffled off two 5,000 HUF shopping vouchers, which encouraged participation. In this way, we tried to increase the number of respondents and their willingness to respond.

The questionnaire was pilot tested with 10 participants to ensure clarity of the questions and the reliability of the questionnaire. The modifications made during the testing helped to refine the questions so that they better reflected the purpose of the research while maintaining the clarity of the questions.

From an ethical standpoint, the data was anonymized to ensure the protection of respondents' personal data. By completing the questionnaire, respondents consented to participate in the research and to the processing of their data. After anonymization, data processing and analysis were performed using SPSS and Adanco software. During the analysis, we used various statistical methods (scale testing, variance

analysis, confirmatory factor analysis) to understand the respondents' motivations and attitudes towards volunteering.

For the sake of common understanding, we defined volunteering at the beginning of the questionnaire, then asked respondents about factors hindering volunteering using the framework developed by Willems and Dury (2017). The questionnaire revealed the respondents' intentions regarding future volunteering and their motivations for participating in voluntary activities. For those who had previously participated in voluntary activities, their previous experiences were also explored, and the questionnaire was concluded with demographic questions.

4.4.1. Measures

To examine the factors inhibiting volunteering, we used Willems and Dury's (2017) framework consisting of 44 statements, where the statements of the previous scales were translated into Hungarian. The statements were grouped into 8 categories, and statements outside these categories are referred to as other influencing factors. These uncategorized factors were not addressed during the testing of the framework. We repeatedly translated the original English statements from English into Hungarian and then from Hungarian into English, after which we compared the meaning of the Hungarian version with the original statement and, if it did not match, we iterated further. Our Hungarian statements examining the factors hindering volunteering can be found in Table 14.

Table 14. Hungarian statements on factors hindering volunteering

Social boundaries (SOC)	**Lack of skills (LOS)**
SOC1: Ha önkénteskednék, elveszteném a barátaimat.	LOS1: Mások nem tartanának jó önkéntesnek.
SOC2: Nem szeretem azokat az ismerőseimet, akik önkénteskednek.	LOS2: Nem rendelkezem a megfelelő készségekkel az önkéntes munkához.
SOC3: Szerintem azok a szervezetek, ahol önkénteskedni lehet, rossz célokat szolgálnak.	LOS3: Nem rendelkezem a jó készségekkel az önkéntességhez.
SOC4: Az önkéntesség csökkentené az esélyeimet a sikerre.	**Lack of opportunities (LOO)**

SOC5: Nem érezném biztonságban magam önkénteskedés közben.	LOO1: Eddig még nem volt lehetőségem önkéntesnek lenni.
SOC6: Nem akarom, hogy azzal a képpel hozzanak összefüggésbe, amit mások az önkéntes munkáról alkotnak.	LOO2: Nem ismerek számomra érdekes szervezeteket, ahol önkénteskedhetnék.
SOC7: Az önkéntességtől rossz lenne a megítélésem.	LOO3: Nem kaptam semmilyen információt arról, hogy hol tudnék önkénteskedni.
SOC8: Akikkel általában együtt töltöm az időt, nem tetszene, ha önkénteskednék.	LOO4: Soha nem hívtak önkénteskedni.
Physical boundaries (PHY)	**Lack of benefits (LOB)**
PHY1: Túl sok személyes problémám van ahhoz, hogy önkéntes legyek.	LOB1: Úgy gondolom, hogy az önkéntesség nem hasznos számomra.
PHY2: Az önkéntes munka pszichésen túl nehéz számomra.	LOB2: Az önkéntességet időpocsékolásnak tartom.
PHY3: Több energiára van szükségem ahhoz, hogy önkéntes munkát végezhessek.	LOB3: Nem tanulhatok semmit az önkéntességből.
PHY4: Túl kimerítő lenne számomra önkéntesnek lenni.	**Lack of time (LOT)**
Stress from volunteering (STR)	LOT1: Az önkéntesség csökkenti a szakmai lehetőségeimet.
STR1: Nem érezném komfortosan magam önkéntesség közben.	LOT2: A munkámmal már így is túlságosan elfoglalt vagyok ahhoz, hogy másoknak segítsek.
STR2: Tartok attól, hogy túl sok felelősséget kíván tőlem az önkéntesség.	LOT3: Vannak fontosabb dolgaim is, mint az önkéntes munka végzése.
STR3: Az önkéntesség túl sok gondot okozna nekem.	**Other**
STR4: Állandóan aggódnék, ha önkénteskedni kezdenék.	Az önkéntesség olyan lehangoló foglalkoztatási státusznak tűnik.
STR5: Amikor önkéntesnek jelentkeznék, olyan felelősséget vállalnék, amit nem szeretnék.	Az önkéntesség kevés betekintést nyújt az új kihívásokba.
STR6: Nem tetszene az önkéntességből fakadó társadalmi kötelezettségek vállalása.	Az önkéntesség boldogtalanná tenne.
STR7: Nem tetszene az interakció más emberekkel, akik szintén önkénteskednek.	Ha önkéntes munkát végeznék, a végén csalódott lennék.
Lack of accountability (ACC)	Nem hiszem, hogy az önkéntesség a megfelelő módja annak, hogy változtassunk a világ problémáin.

ACC1: Az önkéntes munka a nálam szerencsésebb embereknek való.	Az önkéntesség veszélyes lehet számomra.
ACC2: Az önkéntesség nem adja meg az embereknek azt az elismerést, amit megérdemelnének.	Nem ismerek olyan embereket, akikkel együtt tudnék önkénteskedni.
ACC3: Szerintem a kormányoknak fizetniük kellene az embereknek azért, hogy elvégezzék azt a munkát, amit most önkéntesek végeznek.	Az önkéntesség túl sok kockázattal jár számomra.
ACC4: Nem önkénteskedem, mert amikor az emberek erőfeszítéseket tesznek, meg kellene jutalmazni őket érte.	

Source: own editing

When examining the factors that inhibit volunteering, respondents rated the statements in Table 13. on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 was "strongly disagree" and 7 was "strongly agree".

4.4.2. Sample

Of the 264 respondents, 76 were male and 188 were female. Of the respondents, 176 had a secondary school or vocational school education and 88 had a higher education degree. In terms of occupation, the largest proportion of respondents, 58%, were full-time students/university students, 27.3 per cent were full-time employees or self-employed, 1.5 per cent were retired, and 13.2 per cent fell into other occupational categories. The majority of respondents (58%) considered their standard of living to be average, and nearly 35% considered it to be above average. One of the characteristics of the sample is that, compared to the total population, the younger generation was significantly overrepresented, as the average age was 26. Forty-three per cent of respondents live in county seats, 36 per cent in other towns, 11 per cent in the capital, and 10 per cent in other areas.

Fifty-four per cent of those who completed the questionnaire already had previous experience of voluntary work. Our questionnaire survey also examined whether respondents were willing to volunteer in the future. Ninety respondents said they would rather not or definitely not volunteer in the future, while 174 were open to volunteering. Our primary research, in line with the sample research used to test the

framework (Willems & Dury, 2017), focused on individuals who refrain from volunteering.

4.5. Results

In order to examine the validity of the Hungarian scales and answer the hypotheses, we performed confirmatory factor analysis on the individual factors using Adanco software. The factors were set as latent variables in the system.

In the first step, we examined the factor weights of the statements associated with the factors, which can be found in Table 15.

Table 15. Factor weights of statements related to the factors

Variable	Factor weight	Variable	Factor weight	Variable	Factor weight
SOC1	0,5602	**STR1**	0,7361	**LOS1**	0,6270
SOC2	0,6169	**STR2**	0,6228	**LOS2**	0,7511
SOC3	0,5954	**STR3**	0,7370	**LOS3**	0,7636
SOC4	0,4925	**STR4**	0,5793	**LOO1**	0,6960
SOC5	0,5864	**STR5**	0,7837	**LOO2**	0,7155
SOC6	0,6272	**STR6**	0,7954	**LOO3**	0,8057
SOC7	0,6254	**STR7**	0,5748	**LOO4**	0,7858
SOC8	0,6499	**ACC1**	0,6125	**LOB1**	0,6737
PHY1	0,7464	**ACC2**	0,9046	**LOB2**	0,6609
PHY2	0,5890	**ACC3**	0,6855	**LOB3**	0,6659
PHY3	0,8003	**ACC4**	0,7121	**LOT1**	0,6210
PHY4	0,9279			**LOT2**	0,7213
				LOT3	0,7479

Source: own editing

Statements for which the factor weights did not reach a value of 0.6 were excluded from further analysis (Hair et al., 2009). In this step, we removed SOC1, SOC3, SOC4, SOC5, SOC6, PHY2, STR4, and STR7 variables, leaving factor weights above 0.6 for all scales.

After examining the factor weights, the CR (composite reliability) and AVE (average variance extracted) values became the focus of the analysis. The composite reliability factors in Table 16 are all above 0.6, which is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2009), meaning that the reliability associated with the factors can be considered adequate.

Table 16. Composite reliability values of the factors

Factors	**Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A)**	**Jöreskog's rho (ρ_c)**	**Cronbach's alpha(α)**
SOC	0,7291	0,7286	0,7280
PHY	0,8950	0,8913	0,8875
STR	0,8715	0,8669	0,8638
ACC	0,8423	0,8228	0,8053
LOS	0,7653	0,7586	0,7510
LOO	0,8417	0,8385	0,8359
LOB	0,7061	0,7061	0,7060
LOT	0,7455	0,7400	0,7337

Source: own editing

When examining convergent validity, we examined the AVE value (average variance extracted) (>0.5). When examining the AVE indicator, the criterion is that the value must be at least 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). In our case, the AVE value did not meet the criterion for the SOC (0.4724), LOB (0.4447) and LOT (0.4884) factors, so the statements associated with them were reviewed. In the case of the SOC and LOB factors, it was not possible to increase the AVE value by excluding the statements, so it can be concluded that the SOC and LOB factors cannot be measured with the Hungarian elements of Willems and Dury (2017), thus rejecting hypotheses H4 and

H6, according to which the previously examined factors adequately measure the lack of benefit and social constraints in the domestic environment. In the case of the LOT factor, omitting the LOT1 statement resulted in an AVE value of 0.6210 for the factor, which meets the criterion of averaged extracted variances. The final AVE values of the factors are shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Average variance extracted (AVE) values of the factors

Factor	Average variance extracted (AVE)
PHY	0,7328
STR	0,5673
ACC	0,5426
LOS	0,5134
LOO	0,5658
LOT	0,6210

Source: own editing

Finally, we checked the discriminant validity of the factors using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Hair et al., 2017), the results of which are shown in Table 18. The HTMT values for the factors were all below the threshold value of 0.85, which indicates adequate discriminant validity, thus supporting the separability of the factors.

Table 18. HTMT values for the factors

Factors	PHY	STR	ACC	LOS	LOO	LOT
PHY						
STR	0,7428					
ACC	0,5041	0,6015				
LOS	0,5162	0,7799	0,6315			
LOO	0,4221	0,5454	0,4025	0,4212		
LOT	0,7945	0,7332	0,5264	0,3940	0,5043	

Source: own editing

Based on the studies conducted, the hypotheses were also evaluated.

Hypothesis H1, according to which the previously examined factors adequately measure lack of time in the domestic environment, was partially accepted. The factor could not be measured with the original three statements, but after excluding the LOT1 statement, the statements adequately measure the factor based on the reliability of the composition, the AVE and the HTMT values.

Similar conclusions can be drawn for hypothesis H2. According to hypothesis H2, the previously examined factors adequately measure the physical boundaries of volunteering in the domestic environment. During the examination, the PHY2 statement was excluded due to the factor weight criterion, after which the factor met the criteria, so the hypothesis was partially accepted: after the modifications, the factor is suitable for examination in the domestic environment.

Based on hypothesis H3, the previously examined factors adequately measure the lack of skills for volunteering in the domestic environment. Based on the factor weights and further examinations, it can be said that the factor statements adequately measure this, i.e. we accept hypothesis H3.

With hypothesis H4, we examined whether the previously tested statements adequately measure the lack of benefits in the domestic environment. During the examination, we found that the factor weights and composite reliability values associated with the factor were appropriate, but in the analysis of the average variance extracted (AVE), the factor value (0.4447) did not reach the 0.5 criterion, so it had to be re-examined. Even after excluding the statements, the factor did not reach the criterion value, so the statements associated with the factor are not suitable for measuring the lack of benefits as a factor in the domestic environment, and we therefore reject our H4 hypothesis.

We examined whether the previously examined factors adequately measure the lack of accountability in the domestic environment with hypothesis H5. Based on the factor weights and the results of the additional tests performed, it can be concluded that the statements related to the lack of accountability factor reliably measure this dimension. Accordingly, we accept hypothesis H5.

Hypothesis H6 examined whether the previous factors adequately measure the social boundaries of volunteering in the domestic environment. After observing the factor weight, five statements from the social constraints factor were excluded. Subsequently, when examining the AVE value, the variable had a value below 0.5 (0.4724), which we were unable to raise above the 0.5 threshold even by excluding further statements. Thus, we did not find the statements related to the social constraints factor suitable for the proper examination of the factor, i.e. we rejected hypothesis H6.

Hypothesis H7 aimed to investigate whether the previously examined factors adequately measure the stress caused by volunteering in a domestic environment. To test this, we excluded two statements (STR4 and STR7) while assessing the factor weight criteria, after which the factor weights AVE (0.5673) and HTMT values associated with the factor were appropriate. This means that with the exclusion of two statements, the other statements adequately measure the stress arising from volunteering as an obstacle, so we partially accept hypothesis H7.

With our last hypothesis, H8, we examined whether the previously used statements adequately measure the lack of volunteer opportunities as a barrier to volunteering in the domestic environment. In the case of the statements related to this factor, the factor weight was above the 0.6 criterion in all cases, and the composite reliability value, AVE (0.5658) and HTMT values were also adequate, so we accept hypothesis H8, and we can adequately measure the lack of volunteering opportunities as a barrier using the statements associated with this factor.

Based on our research, further conclusions can be drawn about the relevance of factors hindering volunteering in relation to individuals who are not open to volunteering, taking demographic variables into account. The results revealed a relationship between several factors. A significant relationship was found between volunteers and non-volunteers in the case of two hindering factors: lack of opportunities and lack of time. Those who do not participate in volunteering are significantly more likely to mention lack of opportunities and lack of time as hindering factors than volunteers. The difference between women and men was significant in the case of only one barrier, namely that lack of time is a more dominant factor for men. We also examined the barriers based on work experience and found that lack of skills is significantly more prevalent among full-time students than among those who work part-time or full-time.

Standard of living as a demographic factor was compared with the average values of the individual inhibiting factors, and in some cases a significant relationship was found. Individuals who perceived social constraints as less of an inhibiting factor rated their living conditions significantly more positively. A similar trend can be observed in relation to the dimension of lack of accountability, as respondents reported a higher standard of living where this factor had a lower level. It is important to note that, based on the results of our research, there was no significant relationship between the age of individuals and the various inhibiting factors, i.e. age does not determine the nature of the constraints present.

4.6. Summary and recommendations

In our primary research, we sought to identify the factors that discourage people from volunteering. Exploring these factors is particularly important because volunteering represents crucial social, cultural and economic value and is also a key component in maintaining well-being. Despite this, there are numerous obstacles that can hinder participation in voluntary activities. The limitation of the research presented is that the sample size is relatively low, and the research results reflect only the opinions of those who completed the questionnaire, so their evaluation applies to the sample under study. The main relationships identified in our study on the factors hindering volunteering may provide a basis for further empirical research, but to achieve better generalizability, it would be appropriate to expand and diversify the sample in future research.

In our quantitative research, we used a Hungarian adaptation of the 44-item scale originally developed by Willems and colleagues (2017), which was previously used in the United States. When testing our hypotheses, we evaluated the measurability of each factor using factor analysis and reliability indicators (HTMT, AVE, factor weights). Overall, three of our hypotheses were confirmed (H3: lack of skills, H5: lack of accountability, H8: lack of opportunities), while three others were partially accepted (H1: lack of time, H2: physical boundaries, H7: stress caused by volunteering), while two hypotheses were rejected (H4: lack of benefits, H6: social boundaries) because the AVE values did not reach the required threshold, even after multiple modifications of the factor structure. The decisions made about the hypotheses are presented in Table 19.

Table 19. Summary of the hypotheses' evaluation

Hypotheses	Evaluation
H1: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of time in a domestic environment.	Partially accepted
H2: The previously examined statements adequately measure the physical boundaries of volunteering in a domestic environment.	Partially accepted
H3: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of skills for volunteering in the domestic environment.	Accepted
H4: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of benefits in the domestic environment.	Accepted
H5: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of accountability in the domestic environment.	Accepted
H6: The previously examined statements adequately measure the social boundaries on volunteering in the domestic environment.	Rejected
H7: The previously examined statements adequately measure the stress caused by volunteering in the domestic environment.	Partially accepted
H8: The previously examined statements adequately measure the lack of volunteering opportunities in the domestic environment.	Accepted

Source: own editing

Based on the results of confirmatory factor analysis, it can be stated that certain elements of the original factor structure of the scale cannot be applied in their original form to the Hungarian environment. Therefore, we find it necessary to rethink the scale in the next phase of the research: removing items that do not fit properly or developing new items that can be used in context; and including new variables in the study that would complement the current analytical framework, thus creating a more comprehensive measurement scale. We consider it relevant to measure additional variables, as including these factors in the study would provide a better understanding of the underlying barriers that hinder volunteering. Such factors may include negative experiences surrounding previous voluntary work, the phenomenon of burnout experienced during volunteering, a lack of motivation behind volunteering, or shortcomings in the marketing communication of organizations managing voluntary work. As a next step in scale development, before integrating the new variables into the framework, it is worth examining the previous and newly emerging factors using qualitative methods (e.g., in-depth interviews or focus groups). This examination will

promote a deeper understanding of the factors, a more accurate exploration of contextual characteristics, and the development of a more reliable measurement tool.

In addition, we consider it advisable to perform cluster analysis in the future. Clustering volunteers and non-volunteers would allow us to identify volunteers according to their motivations, level of commitment, and preferences related to volunteering. It would also enable us to identify the factors that discourage non-volunteers, as well as to recognize and address the reasons behind their perceptions and lack of interest. Based on all this, we can find answers to questions such as what types of marketing communication messages resonate most with people in each cluster, or what visual and narrative elements could be used to effectively encourage individuals to volunteer and motivate volunteers to engage in long-term volunteer work. Practical application of these findings might enhance the volunteer management procedures of organizations that engage with volunteers, particularly regarding recruiting and retention, hence optimizing the utilization of resources offered by volunteers.

4.7. References

Alsuwaidi, L., Powell, L., Alhashmi, D., Hassan Khamis, A., & Zary, N. (2022). Volunteering among pre-clinical medical students: Study of its association with academic performance using institutional data. *MedEdPublish, 12*(24). https://doi.org/10.12688/mep.19105.2

Bakker, A. B., & Oerlemans, W. G. M. (2016). Momentary work happiness as a function of enduring burnout and work engagement. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, *150*(6), 755–778. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2016.1182888

Bartal A. M., & Kmetty Z. (2011). A magyar önkéntesek motivációi - a Magyar Önkéntes Motivációs Kérdőív sztenderdizálásának eredményei alapján. *Civil Szemle*, *8*(4), 7–30.

Bauer S., & Lim, D. (2019). Effect of communication practices on volunteer organization identification and retention. *Sustainability*, *11*(9), 2467. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11092467

Behrens, J., & Colombelli-Négrel, D. (2024). Can inclusion of different levels of participation effort improve volunteer diversity and retainment in a citizen science project?. *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia*, *148*(2), 207–219. https://doi.org/10.1080/03721426.2024.2376779

Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. (2024). Önkéntesség a szájreklám és a szervezetek kommunikációjának tükrében - integratív szakirodalmi szintézis és javasolt kutatási irányok. *Vezetéstudomány*, *55*(4), 63–76. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2024.04.0

Black, J., Michael, I., Roberts, D., Stigall, B., & Knijnenburg, B.P. (2023). Retiree volunteerism: automating "word of mouth" communication. *Third Workshop on Social and Cultural Integration With Personalized Interfaces*, Sydney, Australia.

Brady, H. E, Verba, S., & Schlozman, K. L. (1995). Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *The American Political Science Review*, *89*(2), 271–294. https://doi.org/10.2307/2082425

Brudney, J. L., & Meijs, L. C. P. M. (2009). It ain't natural: Toward a new (natural) resource conceptualization for volunteer management. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *38*(4), 564–581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764009333828

Cattan M., Hogg E., & Hardill I. (2011). Improving quality of life in ageing populations: what can volunteering do?. *Maturitas*, *70*(4), 328–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.maturitas.2011.08.010

Chambré, S. M. (2020). Has volunteering changed in the United States? Trends, styles, and motivations in historical perspective. *Social Service Review*, *94*(2), 373–421. https://doi.org/10.1086/708941

Chen, H. L., Chen, P., Zhang, Y., Xing, Y., Guan, Y. Y., Cheng, D. X., & Li, X. W. (2020). Retention of volunteers and factors influencing program performance of the Senior Care Volunteers Training Program in Jiangsu, China. *PLoS One*, *15*(8), e0237390. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237390

Chen, J., Wang, C., & Tang, Y. (2022). Knowledge mapping of volunteer motivation: A bibliometric analysis and cross-cultural comparative study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 883150. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883150

Cho, H., Wong, Z. E., & Chiu, W. (2020). The effect of volunteer management on intention to continue volunteering: A mediating role of job satisfaction of volunteers. *SAGE Open*, *10*(2), 2158244020920588. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020920588

Clary, E., Snyder, M., Ridge, R., Copeland, J., Stukas, A., Haugen, J., & Miene, P. (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1516–1530. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1516

Damian, E. (2019). Formal volunteering in Europe: Evidence across nations and time. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *53*(4), 385–409. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397118802228

Dean, J. (2022). Informal volunteering, inequality, and illegitimacy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *51*(3), 527–544. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640211034580

Duncan, S. A., Sperling, G. L., Moy, M. I., Hansen, R., Soudah, C. K., Rodriguez, P., Rego, A., Rojas, V. N., Paul, M., Robicheaux, J. A., Chen, C., Thang, C., & Agana, D. F. G. (2023). Investigating the impact of community volunteerism on the mental health of medical students. *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.1177/23821205231191903

Einolf, C. (2018). Evidence-based volunteer management: a review of the literature. *Voluntary Sector Review*, *9*(2), 153–176. https://doi.org/10.1332/204080518X15299334470348

Einolf, C. J. (2010). Gender and the civic engagement gap. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *40*(6), 1092–1112. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010385949

Fairley, S., Lee, Y., Green, B. C., & Kim, M. L. (2013). Considering cultural influences in volunteer satisfaction and commitment. *Event Management*, *17*(4), 337–348. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599513X13728763846492

Faletehan, A. F., van Burg, E., Thompson, N. A., & Wempe, J. (2021). Called to volunteer and stay longer: the significance of work calling for volunteering motivation and retention. *Voluntary Sector Review*, *12*(2), 235–255. https://doi.org/10.1332/204080520X15929332587023

Farkas, K., Hegedűs, A., Katona, B., Máhl, Zs., Mátyus, A., & Molnár, Á. K. (2012). The background in the foreground – Volunteering in Hungary. *Vezetéstudomány*, *43*(4), 62–67. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2012.04.06

Ganzevoort, W., & van den Born, R. J. G. (2023). The everyday reality of nature volunteering: an empirical exploration of reasons to stay and reasons to quit. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, *68*(1), 207–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2023.2240953

Ghose, T., & Kassam, M. (2014). Motivations to volunteer among college students in India. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *25*(1), 28–45. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-012-9327-4

Gil-Lacruz, A. I., Marcuello, C., & Saz-Gil, I. (2017). Individual and social factors in volunteering participation rates in Europe. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *51*(5), 464–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397117694135

Gil-Lacruz, M., Saz-Gil, M. I., & Gil-Lacruz, A. I. (2019). Benefits of older volunteering on wellbeing: An international comparison. *Frontiers in Psychology*. *10*, 2647. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02647

Gyorgyovich, M., Menich, D., Simon, N., Kollár, D., & Szadorai, D. (2020). *Önkéntesség Magyarországon 2018*. Századvég Kiadó, Budapest.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2009). *Multivariate data analysis*. 7th edition. Prentice Hall.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C., & Sarstedt, M. (2017*). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).* (2nd edition). SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Han, S. H., Kim, K., & Burr, J. A. (2020). Stress-buffering effects of volunteering on daily well-being: Evidence from the national study of daily experiences. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, *75*(8), 1731–1740. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbz052

Haski-Leventhal, D., Meijs, L. C. P. M., Lockstone-Binney, L., Holmes, K., & Oppenheimer, M. (2018). Measuring volunteerability and the capacity to volunteer among non-volunteers: Implications for social policy. *Social Policy & Administration*, *52*(5), 1139–1167. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12342

Hidalgo, M. C., & Moreno, P. (2009). Organizational socialization of volunteers: the effect on their intention to remain. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *37*(5), 594–601. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20317

Holtrop, D., Soo, C., Gagné, M., Kragt, D., Dunlop, P. D., & Luksyte, A. (2026). Exploring volunteer turnover reasons, intentions, and behavior. *Group & Organization Management*, *51*(2), 641–685. https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011241237841

Huppert, F. A., Marks, N., Clark, A., Siegrist, J., Stutzer, A., Vittersø, J., & Wahrendorf, M. (2009). Measuring well-being across Europe: Description of the ESS well-being module and preliminary findings. *Social Indicator Research*, *91*, 301–315. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-008-9346-0

Innes, P. A., Jefferies, G., & Gates, T. G. (2024). Volunteering behavioral declines amid personal and organizational upheaval: Recruitment, retention, and barriers in Australia. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2024.2396032

Jenkinson, C. E., Dickens, A. P., Jones, K., Thompson-Coon, J., Taylor, R. S., Rogers, M., Bambra, C. L., Lang, I., & Richards, S. H. (2013). Is volunteering a public health intervention? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the health and survival of volunteers. *BMC Public Health*, *13*, 773. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-773

Kelle, N., Kausmann, C., & Simonson, J. (2024). Time to volunteer: Changing determinants and correlates for time contributions to voluntary activities. *Voluntas*, 35, 1219–1233 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-024-00678-z

Kim, S., Andrew, D., Lee, C., & Lee, J. (2014). The Impact of perceived event prestige on volunteer satisfaction and commitment at a major international sporting event. *International Journal of Sport Management*, *15*(4), 438–461.

Kraja, J., Xhakollari, L., Marku, M., & Fresku, E. (2025). Student motivation for volunteering: Demographic factors, gender differences, and inclusion in study program curricula. *The Open Nursing Journal*, *19*(e18744346400359). http://doi.org/10.2174/0118744346400359250612112558

Krajňáková, E., Šimkus, A., Pilinkiene, V., & Grabowska, M. (2018). Analysis of barriers in sports volunteering. *Journal of International Studies*, *11*(4), 254–269. https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-8330.2018/11-4/18

KSH (2020). *Önkéntes munkát végző népesség demográfiai és egyéb jellemzők, illetve a végzett munka formális vagy informális volta szerint*, *2020. IV. negyedév.* https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_evkozi/e_onk_9_20_02.html

Lachance, E. L., Bakhsh, J. T., Thompson, A., & Parent, M. M. (2021). What predicts the sport event volunteer experience? Examining motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and sense of community. *Event Management*, *25*(6), 721–738. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599521X16106577965107

Lancee, B., & Radl, J. (2014). Volunteering over the life course. *Social Forces*, *93*, 833–862. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sou090

Lawton, R. N., Gramatki, I., Watt, W., & Fujiwara, D. (2021). Does volunteering make us happier, or are happier people more likely to volunteer? Addressing the problem of reverse causality when estimating the wellbeing impacts of volunteering. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *22*, 599–624. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-020-00242-8

Lee, Y., & Brudney, J. (2009). Rational volunteering: A benefit-cost approach. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *29*, 512–530. https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330910986298

Liu, X., Fan, W., Ge, S., Ling, M., Ping, Z., Zhang, Z., Mei, Y., Lin, B., Wang, J., & Li, H. (2024). Relationship between benefit finding and volunteer motivation among nursing students: The mediating role of perceived social support. *Nurse Education Today*, *139*, 106193. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2024.106193

Mekonen, Y., & Adarkwah, M. (2022). Volunteers in the COVID-19 pandemic era: intrinsic, extrinsic, or altruistic motivation? Postgraduate international students in China. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *48*(2), 147–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2021.1980482

Miao, Q., Huang, J., & Yin, H. (2024). Emotions matter: Understanding the relationship between drivers of volunteering and participation. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *51*(3), 678–692. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2024.2348533

Muñoz-Llerena, A., Angosto, S., Pérez-Campos, C., & Alcaraz-Rodríguez, V. (2025). A systematic review of volunteer motivation and satisfaction in disability sports organizations. *Disabilities*. *5*(2), 33. https://doi.org/10.3390/disabilities5020033

Müller, P. (2024). *The five forces that are changing volunteering in Queensland*. https://volunteeringqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Five-Forces-Barriers-to-Volunteering-Report.pdf Downloaded: 2025. 02. 24.

Naqshbandi, K. Z., Jeon, Y. H., & Ahmadpour, N. (2022). Exploring volunteer motivation, identity and meaning-making in digital science-based research volunteering. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, *39*(20), 4090–4111. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2109246

NCVO (2023). *Barriers and enablers to volunteering*. https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/time-well-spent-2023-volunteering-among-the-global-majority/barriers-and-enablers-to-volunteering/ Downloaded: 2025. 02. 24.

Neely, A. R., Lengnick-Hall, M., & Evans, M. D. (2022). A process model of volunteer motivation. *Human Resource Management Review*, *32*, 100879. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100879

Newton, C. J., Becker, K. L., & Bell, S. (2014). Learning and development opportunities as a tool for the retention of volunteers: a motivation perspective. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *24*(4), 514–530. http://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12040

Nichol, B., Wilson, R., Rodrigues, A., & Haighton, C. (2024). Exploring the effects of volunteering on the social, mental, and physical health and well-being of volunteers: An umbrella review. *Voluntas*, *35*, 97–128. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00573-z

Normah, A. N., & Lukman, Z. M. (2020). Volunteerism declined among university students: Why do they not volunteer?. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *4*(10), 276–280.

OECD (2024). *Unleashing the potential of volunteering for local development, An international comparison of trends and tools*. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/unleashing-the-potential-of-volunteering-for-local-development_deab71bd-en.html Downloaded: 2025. 03. 20.

Othman, N., & Bartók, I. J. (2024). Motivations and barriers for cross-cultural volunteering among international students: A study at the University of Sopron, Hungary. *Gazdaság & Társadalom Journal of Economy & Society*, *17*(3), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.21637/GT.2024.3.01

Penner, L. A. (2002). Dispositional and organizational influences on sustained volunteerism: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, *58*, 447–467. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00270

Plagnol, A. C., & Huppert, F. A. (2010). Happy to help? Exploring the factors associated with variations in rates of volunteering across Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, *97*(2), 157–176. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40649362

Potluka, O., & von Schnurbein, G. (2025). Middle-class formal volunteering over time: Case of Switzerland (2006–2020). *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *36*(4). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-025-00732-4

Pótó, J., & Sipos, N. (2022). Mi motiválja (újra) az önkénteseinket? Az önkéntesség motivációi, az önkéntesek kilépésének okai és visszacsatlakozásának lehetőségei. *Civil Szemle*, *12*(1), 25–40.

Reed, N. P., & Hagen, J. (2025). Making people meet: volunteers' contributions to social connection for the well-being of self and others. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, *20*(1), 2476215. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2025.2476215

Roberts, F., Teague, B., Lee, J., & Rushworth, I. (2021). The prevalence of burnout and secondary traumatic stress in professionals and volunteers working with forcibly displaced people: A systematic review and two meta-analyses. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *34*(4), 773–785. https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22659

Serrat-Graboleda, E., González-Carrasco, M., Casas Aznar, F., Malo Cerrato, S., Cámara Liebana, D., & Roqueta-Vall-Llosera, M. (2021). Factors favoring and hindering volunteering by older adults and their relationship with subjective well-being: A mixed-method approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(13), 6704. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18136704

Shields, P. O. (2009). Young adult volunteers: Recruitment appeals and other marketing considerations. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, *21*(2), 139–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495140802528658

Silva F., Proença, T., & Ferreira, M. R. (2018). Volunteers' perspective on online volunteering - a qualitative approach. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, *15*, 531–552. http://doi.org/10.1007/s12208-018-0212-8

Skoglund, A. G. (2006). Do not forget about your volunteers: A qualitative analysis of factors influencing volunteer turnover. *Health & Social Work*, *31*(1), 217–220. https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/31.3.217

Smith, D. H., Stebbins, R. A., & Grotz, J. (2016). The Palgrave handbook of volunteering, civic participation, and nonprofit associations. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-26317-9_21

Snyder, M., & Omoto, A. M. (2008). Volunteerism: Social issues perspectives and social policy implications: Social issues and policy review. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, *2*(1), 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-2409.2008.00009.x

Southby, K., South, J., & Bagnall, A. M. (2019). A rapid review of barriers to volunteering for potentially disadvantaged groups and implications for health inequalities. *Voluntas*, *30*, 907–920. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00119-2

Sundeen, R. A., Raskoff, S. A., & Garcia, M. C. (2007). Differences in perceived barriers to volunteering to formal organizations: Lack of time versus lack of interest. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *17*, 279–300. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.150

Taniguchi, H. (2006). Men's and women's volunteering: Gender differences in the effects of employment and family characteristics. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *35*, 83–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764005282481

Thoits, P. A. (2021). Motivations for peer-support volunteering: social identities and role-identities as sources of motivation. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *50*(4), 797–815. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764020983897

Townsend, B. G., Chen, J. T-H., & Wuthrich, V. M. (2021). Barriers and facilitators to social participation in older adults: A systematic literature review, *Clinical Gerontologist*, *44*(4), 359–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/07317115.2020.1863890

Tsai, A. C. Y., Newstead, T., Lewis, G., & Chuah, S. H. (2024). Leading volunteer motivation: How leader behaviour can trigger and fulfil volunteers' motivations. *Voluntas*, *35*, 266–276. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00588-6

Vermeer, P., Scheepers, P., & te Grotenhuis, M. (2016). Churches: Lasting sources of civic engagement? Effects of secularization and educational expansion on non-religious volunteering in the Netherlands, 1988 and 2006. *Voluntas*, *27*, 1361–1384. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9679-2

Voicu, B., & Voicu, M. (2009). Volunteers and volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe. *Sociológia - Slovak Sociological Review*, *41*(6), 539–563.

Wang, L., Mook, L., & Handy, F. (2017). An empirical examination of formal and informal volunteering in Canada. *Voluntas*, *28*, 139–161. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9725-0

Warburton, J., Moore, M., & Oppenheimer, M. (2018). Challenges to the recruitment and retention of volunteers in traditional nonprofit organizations: A case study of Australian Meals on Wheels. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *41*(16), 1361–1373. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2017.1390581

Willems, J., & Dury, S. (2017). Reasons for not volunteering: overcoming boundaries to attract volunteers. *The Service Industries Journal*, *37*(11–12), 726–745. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2017.1318381

Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*(1), 215–240. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.215

Wilson, J. (2012). Volunteerism research: A review essay. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *41*, 176–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011434558

Young, J., & Passmore, A. (2007). What is the occupational therapy role in enabling mental health consumer participation in volunteer work?. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, *54*, 66–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1630.2006.00613.x

Zhou, S., & Muscente, K. K. (2023). Meta-analysis of volunteer motives using the Volunteer Functions Inventory to predict volunteer satisfaction, commitment, and behavior. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *52(*5), 1331–1356. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640221129540

5. ARTICLE IV. UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS AND INFORMATION SOURCES DURING EMERGENCY CRISIS SITUATIONS: VOLUNTEERING WITH UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Authors: Bettina BIFKOVICS, Erzsébet MALOTA

Citation: Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. Understanding volunteer motivations and information sources during emergency crisis situations: Volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. [Under review]

5.1. Abstract

Nonprofit organizations have consistently contributed to dealing with humanitarian crisis; therefore, understanding volunteers' motivations and information sources can enhance their efforts.

This study draws on functional theory to explore volunteers' motivations. Additionally, word-of-mouth and tie strength frameworks are used regarding information sources through which volunteers learned about volunteering opportunities during the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary.

Data from 25 semi-structured interviews were analyzed by thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's methodology, utilizing both deductive and inductive methods.

Findings indicate that in emergency situations, values and protective motivations were most prevalent, with three subcategories identified for each. Among values motivations, helping as a core value, the urge to reduce others' trauma, and a sense of social responsibility were most prominent. Protective motivations included managing intense negative emotions (such as anxiety and despair), empathizing with refugees, and the aspiration to witness outcomes of helping. Career, social, and understanding motivations were also present. However, enhancement motivation was absent; motivations related to self-development, personal growth and feeling better about oneself were not prominent in this context.

Results demonstrate that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) was the primary source of information, with volunteers primarily obtaining information through weak ties (casual acquaintances or infrequent connections) rather than strong ties (close, high-frequency relationships). Information shared by weak ties was perceived as authentic and not subjected to scrutiny.

Our study highlights that during crises, values and protective motivations for volunteering become prominent, and weak ties play an important role for disseminating volunteer opportunities.

Keywords: volunteering, volunteer motivations, Ukrainian refugees, eWOM, nonprofit communication

5.2. Introduction

After the conflict between Russia and Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, millions crossed the Ukrainian border to escape the hostilities. The global number of Ukrainian refugees is 5,374,780, with 65,450 in Hungary (UNHCR, 2025). Refugees from Ukraine are experiencing both physical and psychological adversities associated with displacement (Moise et al., 2024). Humanitarian organizations responded immediately to their arrival, supporting social cohesion by linking refugees to local communities and activities (Kende et al., 2017; Carlsen et al., 2022; Meijeren et al., 2023; Meijeren et al., 2024). Effective communication in emergency crisis situations is crucial (e.g., Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Simsa et al., 2019; Maestri & Monforte, 2020; Nolte & Martin, 2021), therefore, it is important to investigate the motivations of potential volunteers and to determine where they seek information during emergency crisis situations.

Previous research suggests that addressing volunteers' motivations may increase involvement, and effective communication about the volunteering opportunities can play an important role in mobilizing volunteers (Clary et al., 1994; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Meijeren et al., 2024). However, in crisis contexts, it remains unclear whether these motivations relate to how volunteers obtain information about volunteering opportunities. Rather than assuming a relationship between primary volunteer motivations and sources of volunteering information, this study investigates

volunteer motivations and information sources as two related but distinct aspects of crisis volunteering.

Because information sources play a role in volunteer engagement (Omoto & Snyder, 2002), this study examines how volunteers learned about volunteering opportunities in an emergency situation, with particular attention to the role of tie strength (Marsden & Campbell, 1984) in crisis contexts. Tie strength indicates the closeness and frequency of relationships and can range from weak to strong (Marsden & Campbell, 1984). The examination of information sources focuses on their role in relation to tie strength, which has been identified as a research gap.

Qualitative research methodology was employed to conduct twenty-five in-depth interviews with Hungarian volunteers, both formal and informal, assisting Ukrainian refugees in Hungary, which were analyzed by thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Kentmen-Cin (2024), public support for refugees fluctuates over time, and views towards refugees are influenced by perceptions of the particular refugee crisis and the parties involved (Moise et al., 2024). Given the distinctiveness of the Hungarian context, characterized by limited immigration and governmental anti-migrant rhetoric that has cultivated adverse perceptions of refugees, examining volunteering offers valuable insights into how crisis situations shape volunteer motivations and information access patterns.

This study's novelty lies in addressing research gaps by offering insights into volunteers' motivations and information sources for volunteer opportunities during humanitarian crisis emergencies while emphasizing the importance of tie strength. This study is innovative as it illustrates the emergence of urgent crisis volunteering in contexts where assistance for refugees is influenced by conflict proximity, cultural connections, the urgency of conflict, and the unique position of Ukrainians in Hungarian public discourse.

Given that the motivations of volunteers in crisis are a critical aspect of research it is important to investigate a Hungarian sample in its specific context, so the main research questions guiding this study are as follows:

> RQ1: What are the primary motivations for individuals to engage in immediate crisis response volunteering during war-related emergencies regarding Ukrainian refugees in Hungary?

Given the multitude of sources via which volunteers can learn about participation opportunities, it is essential to identify the most prominent sources. Therefore, the second research question of our study is as follows:

> RQ2: What were the main sources of recruitment information for immediate crisis response volunteering in support of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary?

5.3. Theoretical background

5.3.1. Volunteering during crises

Volunteer work is generally understood as an activity carried out freely and without financial compensation, typically aimed at benefiting the common good (Güntert et al., 2022; Nichol et al., 2024). This includes formal volunteering (e.g., volunteering at an organization), as well as flexible and informal forms of engagement (e.g., individual helping activities). Research on volunteering, in crisis contexts, has grown significantly during the past decade. Studies have investigated various aspects of crisis volunteering, including organizational aspects, coordination, and volunteer experiences (e.g., Simsa et al., 2019; Carlsen et al., 2022; Domaradzki, 2022), but only a few studies focus on the recent Ukrainian refugee crisis (e.g., Chudzicka-Czupała et al., 2023; Sengupta et al., 2023; Nowakowska et al., 2024).

Prior research has highlighted the importance of understanding volunteer motivations in crisis contexts, as these motivations may differ from those observed in non-crisis situations (e.g., Grönlund, 2011; Sengupta et al., 2023; Meijeren et al., 2024). Engagement in crisis volunteering is often influenced by the importance of value- and identity-driven motivations (Grönlund, 2011), a strong moral and social justice orientation along with emotional factors (Meijeren et al., 2024), and a dominance of intrinsic, normative-focused involvement driven by the urgency of the crisis (Sengupta et al., 2023). Within the broader field of crisis volunteering, understanding individual volunteer motivations is particularly important.

5.3.2. Volunteer motivations during crisis

Volunteers possess personal motivations for engaging in volunteer activities that shape their participation (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Aslan & Tuncay, 2024; Meijeren et al., 2024). Drawing on functional theory (e.g., Smith et al., 1956; Katz, 1960), volunteering can be understood as serving multiple psychological functions, which have been conceptualized as six motivational dimensions (Clary et al., 1998). These motivational categories are values (volunteering to express personal values, such as altruism), understanding (volunteering to acquire new knowledge about the world), enhancement (volunteering to improve self-esteem and foster psychological growth), career (volunteering to obtain career-related experience), social (volunteering to strengthen social and peer relationships), and protective motivation (volunteering to reduce negative emotions, such as guilt).

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al., 1998) has been extensively utilized to assess volunteering motivations, and scholars are also adapting it for crisis-related scenarios, such as refugee assistance. Meijeren et al. (2024) assert that research still lacks a comprehensive overview providing a thorough examination of the motivations for helping refugees and whether they align with motivations previously recognized as pertinent to volunteering in general. They conducted focus groups in order to extend the VFI framework to include specific aspects of refugee-related volunteering, and their results indicated that volunteering was highly motivated by humanitarianism, social justice, alongside skill enhancement. They found support for the earlier suggested extension of the VFI; the inclusion of the social justice function (Jiranek et al., 2013). Their findings also expanded existing analysis on volunteer motivations by identifying other areas to explore; pragmatism, emotional factors, exposure to controversial media messages, and search for meaningful roles. In contrast to Meijeren et al. (2024), who concentrated on the motives of volunteers offering regular support and working under the auspices of involved organizations, our study examines spontaneous helpers, many of whom are unaffiliated with any organization, during a severe crisis.

There is a limited number of studies examining the motivations of volunteers aiding Ukrainian refugees (e.g., Domaradzki et al., 2022; Chudzicka-Czupała et al., 2023; Sengupta et al., 2023). Domaradzki et al. (2022) identified that altruistic motivations predominated among volunteers addressing the Ukrainian refugee crisis, characterized

by a desire to assist others, contribute to the community, and engage in a significant cause. The research conducted by Chudzicka-Czupała et al. (2023) revealed that the values, understanding, and enhancement motives received the highest ratings among Ukrainian and Polish volunteers helping Ukrainian refugees, with the values motive being the most prominent in both groups, despite notable differences between the nationalities of the volunteers. Sengupta et al. (2023) aimed to understand the motivators for young people volunteering for Ukrainian refugees in Poland, revealing a predominance of hedonic motivators (such as the joy of enriching personal experiences, ideological beliefs, achieving change, personal satisfaction, and self-actualization), followed by normative motivators (e.g., societal contribution, national pride), then eudaimonic motivators (leadership and networking opportunities, and the enhancement of personal capital), and finally personal motivators (volunteering due to connections with family and friends in Ukraine).

While understanding volunteer motivations is essential for explaining participation in crisis contexts, it is equally important to examine how individuals become aware of volunteering opportunities.

5.3.3. Sources of information regarding volunteering opportunities

Volunteering opportunities can be communicated through three primary channels: interpersonal networks (e.g., friends, family, social connections), organizational communication (e.g., nonprofit and volunteer organizations), and third-party intermediaries (e.g., employers or community institutions). As a form of interpersonal communication, word-of-mouth has been shown to enhance volunteer involvement (Hibbert et al., 2003). Wisner et al. (2005) defined volunteer word-of-mouth (WOM) as recommending the organization and volunteer activities to others. Word-of-mouth (WOM) and its digital form, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), exhibit strong influence, since individuals willingly disseminate information regarding opportunities to help without expecting anything in return (Killian et al., 2016). If the organization is enhancing volunteer relationships via peer interactions, it increases the probability of volunteering and the dissemination of positive word-of-mouth (Lee et al., 2016). Social media platforms facilitate communication, enabling individuals to connect with previously unknown others, thereby influencing their social relationships and ties (Haythorntwaite, 2002). In crisis volunteering contexts, WOM and eWOM may have

increased importance as opportunities are often shared through social contacts, online communities and peer-to-peer sharing rather than through centralized communication.

From a social network perspective, the structure of relationships through which information flows is also important. Tie strength refers to the closeness and frequency of interactions between individuals, and ranges from weak to strong (Granovetter, 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Burt, 1992). Individuals with strong societal ties typically exhibit intimacy, characterized by overlapping social circles and engaged in reciprocal, and highly supportive discourse, while weak ties are defined as infrequent information sources that can provide new information (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009). While strong ties are often associated with trust and reinforcement (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993, Levin & Cross, 2004; Shen et al., 2016), weak ties may facilitate the rapid diffusion of timely information across wider networks (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009). According to Tezcan (2025), strong ties create an information bubble characterized by uniform norms and perspectives, while weak ties complement them by enabling access to novel information and different points of view.

Previous studies highlighted that social ties function as bridges to new opportunities (Bian et al., 2015; Kim & Fernandez, 2017; Song et al., 2026), which becomes particularly important in crisis contexts, where volunteers rely on rapidly circulating information to identify opportunities to provide aid. The closeness of relationships has been studied concerning the role of strong ties like family and friends in hosting migrants (Birger et al., 2024), but weak ties have rarely been studied, especially regarding information related to refugee assistance opportunities. In our study, strong ties refer to close and frequent personal relationships such as family and close friends, while weak ties include more distant and less frequent contacts, such as acquaintances or individuals contacted solely through online platforms.

Regarding information dissemination by voluntary organizations, Clary et al. (1998) found that volunteering advertisements tend to be more persuasive when they focus on volunteers' motivational functions. Volunteers exposed to advertisements highlighting their motivations have a greater willingness to volunteer compared to those seeing alternative messages, with a heightened level of persuasion (Clary et al., 1994). In alignment with Clary et al. (1994), Jedicke et al. (2024) identified various

volunteer segments with different motivations and proposed focused strategies tailored to each segment for nonprofit organizations.

Information about volunteering opportunities can originate from a third party, such as the individuals' employer. According to Rodell et al. (2016), employee volunteering is defined as "employed individuals dedicating time to a scheduled activity for an external non-profit or charitable group or organization" (p. 3.). Corporate volunteering initiatives serve as both a means of engagement and a source of information that promotes greater community participation. This study does not primarily focus on employee volunteering; however, it demonstrates that formal institutions can serve as information intermediaries in crisis.

While motivations explain why individuals engage in volunteering, information sources shape how individuals become aware of the volunteering opportunities. Prior research suggests that volunteer motivations are relevant for understanding engagement, and that communication plays an important role in volunteer mobilization (Clary et al., 1994). However, in crisis contexts, where rapid mobilization and information dissemination are critical, it remains unclear whether different motivations are associated with different information channels. In crises, individuals may rely on easily accessible and rapidly disseminated information regardless of their motivations. Therefore, examining motivations and information sources provides a more comprehensive view of volunteering in crisis situations. To capture these aspects, the study used a deductive approach to examine motivations based on theoretical frameworks (Clary et al., 1998), while exploring information sources for volunteering opportunities through an inductive approach that allows patterns to emerge from the data. Taken together, functional theory aids the investigation of volunteer motivations, whereas WOM and social network perspectives enhance the analysis of the information sources, particularly highlighting the role of tie strength. On this basis, this study addresses volunteer motivations and information sources as two related but analytically distinct aspects of crisis volunteering.

5.4. The specific context of the current study - Hungary

Our interviews were conducted from April to September 2022. According to official statistics, by June 2022, 1,312,550 individuals have migrated from Ukraine to Hungary (UNHCR, 2022). The socio-political factors make Hungary a distinctive setting for analyzing crisis-related volunteerism and attitudes towards refugees. To contextualize the current study, it is essential to understand the specific background of Hungary, as our research provides empirical insights into this distinct political and societal context.

Hungary, a postsocialist country in Central Europe, has remained isolated for decades, with limited immigration, resulting in increased ethnic homogeneity. The main immigration groups are ethnic Hungarians from nearby countries, followed by Chinese (Malota et al., 2024). Over the past two decades, Hungary has experienced a markedly exclusionary political environment, characterized by the ruling Orbán government's[1] recurrent exploitation of anti-migrant and anti-refugee sentiments particularly leveraging the 2016 refugee crisis to propagate the narrative of refugees as an existential threat to Hungarian and European identity (Pepinsky et al., 2024). Migrants were pejoratively labeled as "migráncsok," a narrative bolstered by the government through the installation of 1,025 street billboards aimed at refugees, proclaiming 'If you come to Hungary, respect our culture,' 'don't take away our jobs,' and 'respect our laws' (Nagy, 2016). The government also used authoritarian strategies to restrict the civic space in Hungary by financial surveillance of non-governmental organizations (Nagy, 2017).

The Századvég Europe Project was initiated during the European migration wave, focusing on a comparative analysis of migration issues and the perceptions held by populations across various European countries. During the initial phase of the 2016 survey, 84% of Hungarians were either somewhat or very concerned regarding the issue of illegal immigration into their nation (Századvég, 2016). The European Social Survey in 2022 also indicated that Hungary exhibits the lowest levels of support for migration among the 21 European countries surveyed, with similarly low levels observed in certain other Eastern European nations (ESS, 2022). Concurrently, the

[1] According to the election results on April 12, 2026. the center-right opposition Tisza party defeated Fidesz, assuming power by a parliamentary supermajority of 141 seats out of 199, ending Orbán Viktor's 16-year reign.

European Commission (2022) survey regarding the "EU's response to the war in Ukraine," conducted in mid-April 2022 across 27 Member States (with 26,066 EU citizens interviewed online), reveals a notable level of solidarity, as 48 percent of Hungarians fully support the EU's initiative to "welcome individuals fleeing the war," albeit this figure is below the EU average of 55 percent.

Pepinsky et al. (2024) illustrated through their survey data on refugee opinions from April and November 2022, in comparison to prior years, that the Ukrainian refugee crisis generated a notable increase in tolerance, transforming public sentiment towards refugees in a country characterized by pervasive anti-immigrant rhetoric. This was explained by the conflict proximity and the distinguishing characteristic of the 2022 refugee crisis that the refugees were predominantly white European Christians displaced from their homeland due to conflict. Comparative analyses of Kentmen-Cin (2024) also indicated that Ukrainian refugees typically experienced a more positive public welcome than other populations, e.g., Syrians. This disparity has been ascribed to the perceived proximity and spillover risk of the war conflict, along with similar cultural values with Western nations. These results are in line with prior research results indicating that who the asylum seekers are is essential in influencing public willingness in host countries to accept them and in shaping refugee policies that generate popular support (Letki et al., 2025).

In the aftermath of the 2022 Hungarian elections, the discourse evolved as the prime minister highlighted Hungary's dedication to aiding Ukrainian refugees, accentuating the racial, religious, and cultural distinctions between refugees from European and non-European nations (Pepinsky et al., 2024). The emphasis on the ethnic Hungarian minority living in Transcarpathia has also become a significant focal point in regional politics. Moreover, several governmental decisions have been taken in order to help the transit process (Erőss, 2022; Kyriazi, 2022; Zakariás et al., 2023) e.g., by providing free public transportation in Budapest for refugees from Ukraine. As a result, in Hungary, the narratives of refugees from neighboring countries did not endure the typical characterization of "migrants", resulting in more hospitable and helpful attitudes. Zakariás et al. (2023) report that 40% of respondents had actively aided Ukrainian refugees at least once during the survey period (June, 2022, N=1000). The majority of individuals contributed through material and financial donations (about 23% of respondents in each instance), whereas 8% engaged in voluntary activity. The

percentage of responders who assisted with accommodation was minimal (2%), as was the percentage who supplied employment (4%) or offered assistance in other capacities (4%).

5.5. Method

To answer these questions, this study employed a qualitative methodology to better understand how volunteers accessed information and what motivated their engagement for volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. Twenty-five semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to gain understanding of the participants' motives and to document their volunteering experiences. To address the study's dual focus, a combined analytical strategy was applied: volunteer motivations were examined using a deductive approach grounded in functional theory (Clary et al., 1998), while information sources related to volunteering opportunities were explored inductively to allow patterns to emerge from the data.

5.5.1 Sample and data collection

Purposive sampling was employed to gather in-depth interviews with volunteers assisting Ukrainian refugees in Hungary. The participants were recruited using online and offline sources, resulting in a heterogeneous sample. Online, individuals were approached via social media platforms and relevant volunteer networks where calls for participation were posted. Given that most refugees seeking assistance were located in the capital city, characterized by high internet penetration, sampling through online channels is improbable to have introduced substantial bias. Offline recruitment occurred at refugee centers, where volunteers were directly invited to participate in the study. The limitation of our purposive sampling is that only members of the social media groups and those present in the refugee facilities (e.g., railway station) may be surveyed from the population. The criteria for eligibility were their engagement in aiding Ukrainian refugees in Hungary during the 2022 refugee crisis. Among the interviewees there were both formal and informal volunteers. No particular time commitment for volunteering was required due to the varying durations of the activities.

The interview guide was pre-tested through two preliminary interviews, which were not included in the final sample. Based on these pilot interviews, the guide was fine-tuned to improve clarity and relevance of the questions. All participants were asked about their motives for volunteering, the information sources through which they learned about volunteer opportunities, their demographics, and their previous volunteering experience.

Two researchers conducted interviews at least two months after the onset of the refugee crisis, specifically between April and September 2022, to provide participants adequate time to process the events and their volunteer experiences, as well as provide enough time for activities to unfold. The study was conducted on a voluntary basis and provided no incentives. Individuals were interviewed both in person and through Teams. Participants provided consent prior to the interviews, and their data was anonymized. Transcripts of the 40–60-minute interviews in Hungarian were produced.

5.5.2. Analysis and coding categories

Both inductive and deductive methodologies (Hatta et al., 2020) were employed in the investigation. All interviews were conducted by the authors who had previous experience in qualitative research. A total of 27 interviews were conducted. Following the exclusion of 2 incomplete interviews, which hindered the interpretability and comparability of the data due to absent replies on key aspects, 25 semi-structured interviews served as the primary data source for developing volunteer profiles.

The study employed thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) methodology, which included familiarization, coding, categorization, with the application of double coding, reviewing and naming themes, then writing the report. Transcripts were generated and analyzed to comprehend the data. The transcripts totaled 227 pages (single-spaced). The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was iterative, oscillating between phases and conducted by the two researchers.

Initially, we reviewed all interviews to acclimate ourselves to the dataset. Subsequently, we performed open coding to establish preliminary categories and themes from the interview data. The subsequent rules were established in the coding manual. We employed sentences or paragraphs as coding units and assigned them to actual codes. The coding was performed in the original language (Hungarian) of the

interviews. Given that the interviews were conducted in Hungarian, a translation-backtranslation procedure was applied to all quoted excerpts to ensure accuracy. The manual coding was carried out using spreadsheets. We analyzed the interview transcripts and noted all signs of motivations and sources of volunteering information.

Along the coding, we pursued objective judgement with a focus on the experiences of the individuals. To guarantee objectivity in the analysis, the authors independently coded the transcripts, then met to discuss their coding, in order to identify differences and establish an agreement on how to apply the codes. The initial agreement percentage was 73.91%, calculated using the approach proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The inconsistencies were resolved during three rounds of conversations. Contested codes were resolved by comparing the data unit to other units assigned to the same codes, ultimately selecting the one demonstrating the highest degree of similarity. By including this phase of informal intercoder comparison and discussion, revising the coded units and resolving discrepancies through discussion to obtain consensus on all codes, we maintained consistency and reliability in the analysis (Guest et al., 2012; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

The formulation of the coding categories aligned with theoretical concepts, while also incorporating the inductive elements. During the data analysis, the emphasis was on detecting patterns and their explicit interpretations. The coding process combined deductive and inductive approaches. Motivations were analyzed using Clary and Snyder's (1999) framework, while information sources were coded inductively to allow categories to emerge from the data. Initially, we coded all motivations, followed by categorizing them according to Clary and Snyder's (1999) motivation types. Codes indicative of the values motivation encompassed helping as a core value (e.g., "natural to help", "aiding selflessly", "helping minorities"). Protective motivation manifested in various forms, including coping with intense negative emotions (e.g., "I was devastated," "I was scared"). The understanding motivation appeared as an interest in the process of crisis (e.g., "experiencing new things", "curiosity"). Codes reflecting the career motivation included task fulfillment (e.g., "volunteering as part of the job," "language proficiency," "prior experience"). Codes concerning social motivation encompassed the development of personal relationships (e.g., "conversation with sister", "being part of the helpers", "family relevance"). Motivations were further categorized into primary and secondary types, with primary motivations as the most

clearly and explicitly mentioned by interviewees. For information sources, we utilized inductive coding to group these sources into our final coding tree based on their similarities.

5.5.3. Sample characteristics

Twenty-five in-depth interviews were performed with participants aged 20–65, 16 participants were female and 9 of them were male. Most of the volunteers have been engaged in other volunteer activity before aiding the Ukrainian refugees. Table 20 describes the interviewed volunteers along various aspects: gender, age, volunteer activities and motivations. Numbers were used to keep participants anonymous.

Table 20. Interviewee profiles: gender, age, type of activity and motivations

No.	***Gender***	***Age***	***Volunteer activity***	***Motivation***				
				V	***P***	***U***	***C***	***S***
1.	Female	24	Hosting	✓				✓
2.	Male	20	Coordination	✓				✓
3.	Male	33	Helping children, logistics			✓	✓	
4.	Female	27	Coordination				✓	
5.	Female	23	Hosting, helping with donations	✓	✓			✓
6.	Female	55	Hosting, logistics	✓	✓			✓
7.	Female	52	Hosting, helping children		✓			✓
8.	Female	32	Helping with donations, hosting, food distribution	✓			✓	
9.	Female	43	Logistics, helping children, helping with donations	✓	✓			
10.	Female	61	Translating, food distribution, hosting	✓			✓	
11.	Male	22	Food distribution, coordination	✓				✓
12.	Female	31	Logistics, hosting, helping with children		✓	✓		
13.	Male	61	Hosting, helping with children	✓	✓			
14.	Male	49	Hosting	✓	✓			
15.	Male	22	Hosting		✓			✓
16.	Female	47	Helping with donations, coordination, hosting	✓				✓
17.	Female	23	Helping with donations, hosting	✓	✓			
18.	Male	24	Other activities (SIM card distribution)	✓				✓

19.	Female	51	Food distribution, other activities (cleaning shelters), helping with donations		✓			
20.	Male	26	Coordination, other activities (cleaning shelters)		✓		⟋	
21.	Female	65	Hosting, helping with donations	⟋	✓			
22.	Female	53	Helping with donations, food distribution, hosting	✓	✓			⟋
23.	Female	21	Hosting, other activities (helping at shelters)	✓				
24.	Male	22	Coordination		✓			⟋
25.	Female	31	Hosting, other activities (helping at shelters)	✓				

Source: own editing

Note: Motivations listed above are values (V), protective (P), understanding (U), career (C) and social (S). ✓ : primary motivation, ⟋ secondary motivation

5.6. Findings

The findings are presented below in relation to the study's two focal aspects: volunteer motivations and information sources.

5.6.1. Motivations for helping the Ukrainian refugees

The aim of the research was to identify the underlying motives of volunteering to aid in a refugee crisis specifically within the context of the Ukrainian refugee situation. Values mean that the volunteer takes part in the activity to act according to important values such as humanitarianism and altruism (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Among the motivations connected to the values three subcategories could be identified. Some just wanted to help people because it was natural; they didn't consider acting differently. Others wanted to do as much as they can to reduce the trauma that the crisis caused to refugees, while others felt to take responsibility in helping as citizens.

> "This is how it is; this is what you do [helping] when you can do it, and we can do it." (22.)

> "I just wanted these women, children, men, to be hurt as little as possible." (17.)

> “I felt that I had to take social responsibility and the best way to do that was to apply for a volunteer opportunity.”(18.)

The other dominant motivation among the interviewed volunteers was protective motivation, which means taking part in the volunteering activity to reduce one’s negative feelings, such as guilt (Clary & Snyder, 1999) and related to which three different categories could be identified. Volunteers sought to assist the refugees directly to witness the outcomes of their aid firsthand. Other volunteers were profoundly affected by the Ukrainian refugee crisis and its proximity, which motivated them to engage in volunteer activities to reduce their guilt and unpleasant emotions. The final significant aspect of protective motivation stems from the proximity of the events: volunteers engaged due to their ability to empathize with the refugees' situations, identifying with them, and expecting analogous support from others in similar situations.

> “We wanted to help in a way that was really first-hand and to see the results.” (5.)

> “The war that has broken out has shaken us deeply, and we are turning these negative energies to help, not to fear.” (9.)

> “I would also expect that if [something similar happens], I would also be welcomed somewhere where there is no war, and I can live in peace.” (15.)

Understanding motivation means that the volunteer is open and eager to learn new things about the world (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Volunteers were interested in understanding the processes and coordination involved in situations such as the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

> “Basically, gaining new experience and curiosity was a big motivation. Obviously, there's a lot of fake news these days, and it was exciting to see that a situation actually looks like.” (3.)

Career motivation refers to the necessity of acquiring experience that will facilitate advancement in one's career (Clary & Snyder, 1999). There were volunteers whose activities were part of some kind of contractual job that required these activities to fulfill their duties.

> "This [the volunteering task] was part of the job of managing an office, but we were all happy to take part and take on this task." (4.)

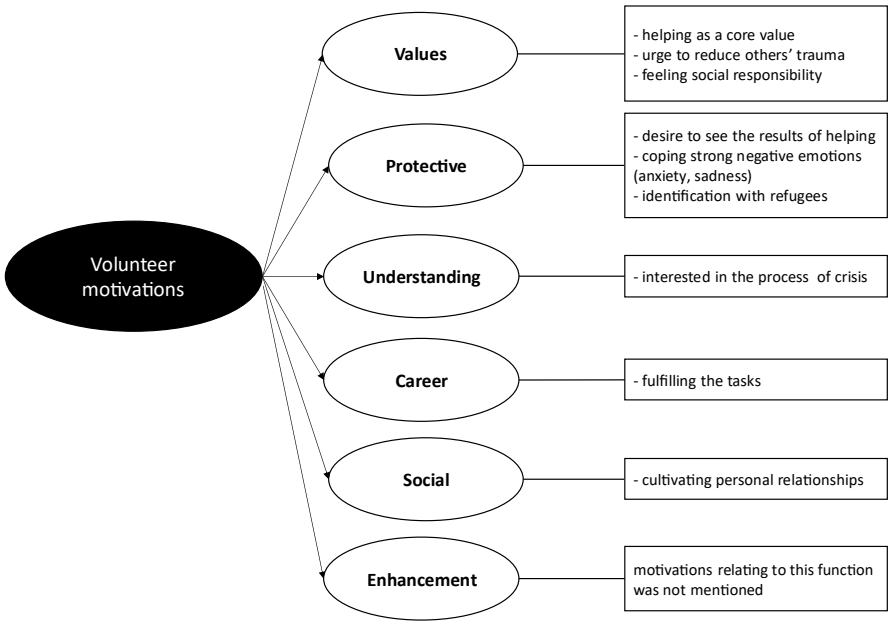
Social motivation involves the possibility of strengthening the volunteer's relationships and social network by taking part in the activity (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Volunteers regarded interactions with others as highly significant and participated in the volunteer activity due to the group they aspired to join, which volunteered there and extended an invitation to them.

> "He [my mentor] always invited us to go with him, and then for a day or two I was in Berehovo at the Maltese charity in Berehovo district." (11.)

The enhancement motivation, which presents the need for the volunteer's development and enhancing self-esteem (Clary & Snyder, 1999) was not mentioned by any of the interviewed volunteers.

Summary results and illustration of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of volunteer motivations are presented in Figure 5 along with the motivation themes and the associated codes. The findings of this study build on the functional approach of volunteering by Clary and Snyder (1999) and multiple motivational functions were identified among volunteers aiding Ukrainian refugees. However, due to the context of crisis, some motivations were found to be more prominent than others.

Figure 5. Thematic map of volunteer motivations



Source: own editing

Five of Clary and Snyder's (1999) volunteer motivation categories were identified among respondents engaged in volunteer activities during the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Values and protective motives emerged as the most prevalent, each comprising three subcategories, whereas enhancing motivation was absent.

5.6.2. Sources of information about volunteering opportunities

Beyond motivations, the analysis also examined how volunteers accessed information about volunteering opportunities. The volunteers were inquired about the sources of information on volunteer activities associated with Ukrainian refugees. Five primary sources of information were found during the analysis: self-organized Facebook groups, friends and relatives, aid organizations, workplace, other sources (TV and railway station).

Facebook groups emerged as the primary source of information for supporting Ukrainian refugees through voluntary efforts. Multiple participants identified self-organized Facebook groups as their source of information for the volunteering activity.

Given the growing importance of the internet and social media platforms, it is unsurprising that during emergencies such as this, attention on social media shifted to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, leading to the emergence of support groups. The majority of individuals in these Facebook groups were previously unacquainted, indicating that in emergencies, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is more prevalent among weak ties than strong ones. This could have happened because the information about the volunteering opportunities in the group posted by strangers was found to be authentic and were not questioned.

> "There was a [Facebook group named] group help (Ukraine, Carpathian) and it's a public group [that I was not a member of] and it just popped up to me on Facebook and I could see that refugees and volunteers were coming in all the time. There are a lot of volunteers on these platforms, they are all trying to help. I didn't even second-guess the content they've posted, we all tried to help the refugees." (7.)

> "And when we read this news, we simply looked at each other and there was no question of us giving them this humanitarian aid, even though it was posted by a stranger." (22.)

Friends and family as strong ties of the volunteers were found to be the second most important source of information. With the pervasiveness of digitization in daily life, it is unsurprising that the majority of information from friends and family is transmitted through social media, leading to widespread reliance on electronic word-of-mouth. It may serve as a resource for identifying volunteering opportunities and could facilitate assistance to refugees by disseminating information about those in need on social media platforms. An individual obtained information regarding volunteer activities from his mother, who had sourced it from a Facebook community dedicated to assisting Ukrainian refugees.

> "We saw a message through a Facebook post of our friend that some people [refugees] were looking for accommodation in the Győr area, but our friend lives in Germany, and he didn't know these people directly, but he asked for help through his own contacts." (14.)

In addition to self-organized Facebook groups and personal recommendations, the official channels of aid organizations were recognized as sources of information regarding volunteering opportunities. Multiple volunteers were previously engaged with the Maltese Charity Service and received information regarding volunteering possibilities from them. A respondent has previously enrolled in the Migration Aid phone number database and received information about help from them. The social media platforms of organizations like Budapest Bike Maffia and Amnesty International were actively endorsing volunteer activities. Both charitable groups and churches engaged their followers in diverse activities to assist those in need.

> “On the social media pages of Amnesty International and the Budapest Bike Maffia, you could find information about what to bring, when to bring it, what do they need and what they don't need.” (17.)

The interviewees highlighted the role of the workplace in this context. The corporation, if directly engaged in Ukraine, advocated for actions to assist employees and raised awareness of support for the subsidiary. The workplace provided employee volunteering options that facilitated assistance to refugees by collaborating with a charitable group offering organized volunteer activities. If a company did not actively facilitate volunteer opportunities, employees could disseminate information about charitable groups' activities to their colleagues.

> “For us, when the war broke out, the company started an initiative to try to help Ukrainian refugees, and because of the size of our office we were able to adapt it, to turn our basement into a temporary shelter, there was a possibility there.” (4.)

> “The opportunity came up practically through my employer, Vodafone, to set up a stand at the Eastern [railway] station where we would give SIM cards and provide services to the arriving refugees to help them to communicate. “(18.)

Other information sources comprised television and the railway station, as the on-the-spot information hub. Volunteers acquired knowledge about the comprehensive refugee crisis through traditional media, which included the advertisement of

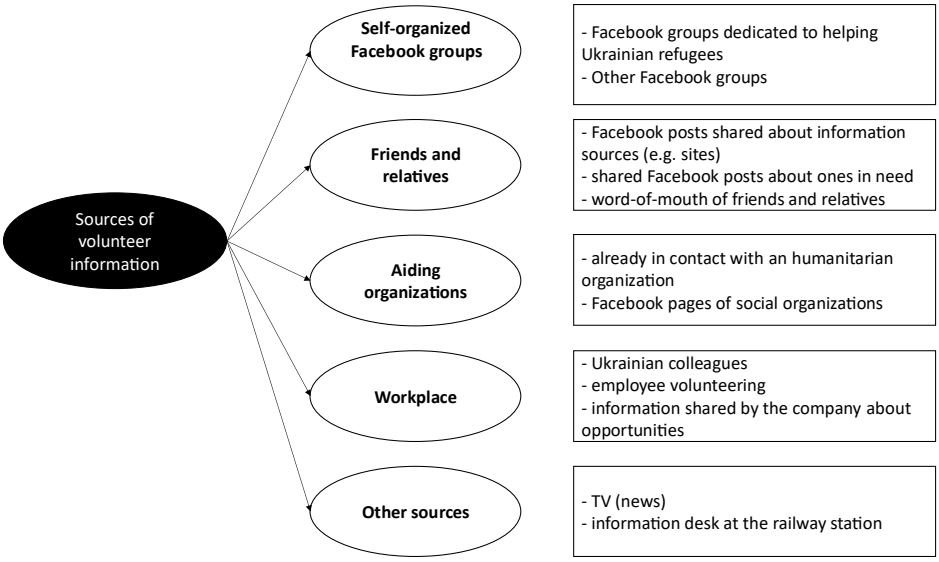
volunteering opportunities (e.g., needed help in transportation) on television news, emphasizing the demand for volunteers at various locations, such as railway stations.

The majority of Ukrainian refugees reached Hungary via train at the Eastern Railway Station. During the initial phase of the refugee crisis, it was established as the primary gathering point, serving as a hub for humanitarian organizations along with facilitating spontaneous information exchange between refugees and aid workers. According to one of the interviews, an individual lacking knowledge on how to assist could inquire there about available volunteer activities and could contact the refugees to provide aid. This underscored the importance of physical locations not merely as access points but as informal yet efficient sources of information and volunteer mobilization.

> "I just went to the station and was there, then I got information from the Facebook group." (10.)

Summary results and visualization of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of identified information sources are illustrated in Figure 6, where the first column displays the recognized sources of information, while the subsequent column specifies the codes associated with the themes.

Figure 6. Thematic map of volunteer information sources



Source: own editing

The findings indicate that people, groups, and enterprises have a pivotal role in disseminating volunteering opportunities during critical situations such as the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Both word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth emerged as the predominant sources of information, confirming the findings of Hibbert et al. (2003), which suggest that word-of-mouth serves as an effective communication channel for volunteer recruitment.

5.7. Discussion

Building on the findings, this section interprets the results in relation to existing literature. This study examined volunteers' motivations and the information sources through which they became aware of volunteering opportunities during the Ukrainian refugee crisis in Hungary. The findings demonstrate the rise of immediate crisis volunteering under circumstances where aid for refugees is related to a specific context, the Hungarian public discourse.

5.7.1. Motivations for helping the Ukrainian refugees

Previous research indicated the existence of the motivational functions of values, protective, understanding, career, social and enhancement motivations (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). However, our findings indicate the dominance of values and protective motivations among the Ukrainian refugee crisis volunteers. Values motivation were emphasised during the interviews to a great extent, with three distinguished categories: helping as a core value, urge to reduce others' trauma and feeling social responsibility. Values motivation appears in performed acts on important values (e.g., Anderson & Moore, 1978; Shantz et al., 2014; Sengupta et al., 2023) which supports our findings. The protective motivations appeared in the following forms: the desire to see the results of helping, coping with strong negative emotions (anxiety, sadness) and identification with refugees. These findings align with research conducted on crisis and disaster volunteering as it emphasizes the importance of moral and emotional aspects of volunteers (Simsa et al., 2019).

Understanding, career and social motivations were present in participants' answers but played a marginal role, mostly as secondary motivations. Most notably, the enhancement motivation function was not present in our study. While self-development has been identified in other studies in volunteering with refugees (e.g., Chudzicka-Czupała et al., 2023), it did not emerge among the volunteering motivations of individuals aiding Ukrainian refugees in our study carried out in the initial phase of the crisis. In a crisis, individuals may prioritize helping those in need over self-interested motivations, such as enhancing self-esteem or achieving psychological growth through volunteer activities.

Our findings suggest that in a crisis situation where there is urgency, values and protective motivations become more dominant for volunteers instead of focusing on self-development. This highlights the need for a contextualized interpretation of the volunteer motivation theories. The emerging pattern can be explained by the specific characteristics of crisis situations, which are typically described by urgency, emotional intensity and moral salience. In such contexts, individuals are less driven by long-term benefits of volunteering and may be driven more by immediate emotional reactions and perceived moral obligations. The geographical proximity of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, along with its psychological and historical relevance in Hungary, may have further intensified these empathic responses, reinforcing value- and protection-based

motivations. In particular, this proximity, combined with the perceived similarity between locals and the Ukrainian refugees population (many of whom are members of the ethnic Hungarian minority residing in Transcarpathia) may have strengthened identification with them, making helping more immediate and personally relevant. This may also distinguish the Ukrainian refugee crisis from other refugee contexts, where greater perceived social or cultural distance can reduce identification and influence motivational structures. The significance of values and protective motivations may indicate not just the importance of volunteering during a crisis but also the perception of this refugee group in Hungary.

These findings can also be contextualized considering recent extensions of the functional theory. In line with Meijeren et al. (2024), motivations related to humanitarian values and emotional engagement were particularly prominent in our study. The identified subcategories (e.g., helping as a core value, reducing others' trauma, and coping with negative emotions) reflect the emotional factors and context-specific motivations highlighted in prior research. However, in contrast to Meijeren et al. (2024), motivations related to self-development and skill enhancement did not emerge, suggesting that in acute crisis situations, emotionally driven and value-based motivations may dominate over self-oriented ones.

5.7.2. Sources of volunteer information

In addition to identifying the motivational dynamics, our study examines how volunteers acquired information about volunteering opportunities in an emergency situation such as the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Previous studies emphasized the central role of word-of-mouth communication in volunteer recruitment (Hibbert et al., 2003) focusing on the role of strong ties in disseminating information.

Our results partially support the findings of Hibbert et al. (2003), as both word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth were found to be important sources of information. However, our research identified the dominant role of self-organized Facebook groups consisting of weak ties which challenges the traditionally assumed importance of strong ties in information transmission (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993; Shan & King, 2015). While source credibility is most important in most electronic word-of-mouth communication (Moradi & Zihagh, 2022), due to the urgency and the contextuality (Steffes & Burgee, 2009; Ajrouch et al., 2016), specialized information

(e.g., how and where to help) (Constant et al., 1996) shared by unfamiliar individuals was perceived authentic and trustworthy. This can be explained by the immediacy of crisis situations, where the speed and accessibility of information may outweigh the need for established trust. In such contexts, individuals may rely on any available information about volunteering opportunities shared within broader networks, even when its source is unfamiliar. The perceived urgency of the situation may reduce the need for verification, increasing the acceptance and importance of volunteering-related information from weak ties.

Strong ties were identified as secondary information sources, often reinforcing information obtained through weak tie networks. Volunteers frequently discovered valuable information and volunteering opportunities through Facebook posts from friends and relatives that shared recruitment messages or links to useful websites. Formal volunteer organizations and workplaces also played a role in transmitting information about volunteering opportunities in their network, but they were less dominant during the initial phase of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. This may be linked to the specific dynamics of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, particularly in its early phase, which was characterized by rapid and largely decentralized responses. In the absence of fully coordinated institutional communication, volunteers relied on spontaneously emerging online communities, where information about volunteering opportunities could be shared and accessed in real time. This may also reflect the specifics of the Hungarian context, as organizations—within a partially decentralized support framework—frequently depended on flexible and informal channels. Consequently, the prevalence of weak-tie electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) may be explained not only by its immediacy but also from the fact that crisis volunteering emerged through flexible, informal and accessible channels in this context.

The relationship between motives and sources of information about volunteering opportunities was examined, revealing that the main pattern is the predominance of weak-tie electronic word-of-mouth as an information source across all motivation categories, hence underlining its importance. The findings indicate no meaningful relationship between motivations and information sources: while motivations varied, information sources did not differ across motivational groups. This suggests that in crisis situations, the relationship between motivations and sources of information about volunteering opportunities may be weaker than expected. Regardless of their

motivations, volunteers appear to rely on the same easily accessible channels through which volunteering opportunities are communicated, indicating that situational urgency overrides individual motivational aspects. Based on this, besides relying on motivation-based communication strategies, organizations may benefit from focusing on coordination mechanisms, clear task allocation, and establishing accessible entry points for volunteers.

5.7.3. Theoretical contribution

Based on the findings and their interpretation, this study contributes to existing theories in several ways. First, it provides insight into motivations for volunteering and sources of volunteering information in crisis situations. The investigation revealed that the values and protective motivations identified by Clary and Snyder (1999) were predominant, while enhancement motivation was absent. While Meijeren et al. (2024) extended the Volunteer Functions Inventory framework (Clary & Snyder, 1999), our study refines it by demonstrating that enhancement motivation may become less salient in acute crisis contexts. This suggests that self-related motives—such as self-esteem or personal growth—may become less salient in acute crisis contexts, thus requiring a contextualized application of the functional approach. Our study extends the literature not only by confirming the existence of these motivations but highlighting that in a crisis situation, moral and emotional motivations appear to be the most prominent, while other motivational factors play a more limited role. Our findings add to previous theories by demonstrating that the applicability of specific VFI dimensions may vary across volunteering contexts, indicating that self-oriented motivational functions are context-dependent rather than universal.

In addition, our results reveal the key role and impact of weak ties (e.g., members of Facebook groups) as information sources during a crisis. This contributes to research on word-of-mouth and social networks (e.g., Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993) by suggesting that in emergency volunteering, weak-tie electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) from unfamiliar individuals can serve as an important, credible, and mobilizing source of information. Rather than confirming the presumed dominance of strong ties, our results point to a pattern in which weak ties become particularly salient in immediate crisis contexts. Overall, our findings contribute by showing that in crisis contexts, the assumed relationship between volunteer motivations and information

dissemination channels may be weaker than expected. Our data indicate a more notable rise of values and protective motivations, as well as an increased emphasis on weak-tie electronic word-of-mouth, compared to findings from other nations (Sengupta et al., 2023; Meijeren et al., 2024), likely due to the severe crisis situation and the distinctive Hungarian socio-political context.

5.7.4. Managerial implications

In addition to theoretical contributions, the findings also have practical implications for nonprofit organizations, which often face recruitment challenges (Hager & Brudney, 2011). Our findings offer insights for improving volunteer mobilization in emergency crisis situations. Our findings suggest that in crisis situations, organizations should not rely only on motivation-based communication strategies. Instead, ensuring rapid, accessible, and widely disseminated information may be more critical for volunteer mobilization. Communication during emergencies should prioritize clarity, speed, and accessibility rather than assuming different motivational groups require different communication channels.

While value-driven and protective motivations were prominent among volunteers, our findings do not allow conclusions regarding the effectiveness of specific message contents. These findings are more useful for understanding volunteer engagement in crisis situations. The strong presence of protective motivations suggests that volunteers participate not only to help others but also to cope with negative emotions provoked by crises. Providing opportunities for reflection, emotional support, and visible feedback on the outcomes of helping can meet volunteers' psychological needs and can reduce emotional exhaustion and withdrawal.

From a managerial perspective, the role of eWOM as the main information source suggests that a shift from conventional, centralized communication toward decentralized, digital dissemination of information is important during emergencies. Timely, transparent, and easily shareable online messages can circulate rapidly across networks. Utilizing weak-tie networks by sharing opportunities through open digital platforms, such as Facebook groups, is crucial and communication methods extending outside established volunteer networks can be useful in emergency crisis situations.

Beyond effective communication, organizations may benefit from focusing on maintaining a higher level of coordination and developing protocols for similar scenarios for seamless operation in emergency situations. Many aspects-such as motivation, engagement, recognition, and retention strategies- can influence individuals to start or continue volunteering. Besides managing volunteer experience and satisfaction (Wymer & Najev Čačija, 2025), transparent operation, quality volunteer management and suitable work conditions (Meijeren et al., 2026) were also found to be important. As previous research (Nowakowska et al., 2025) suggests, there is a clear lack or underdevelopment of formal retention strategies and structured support systems. Enhancing these organizational aspects can foster volunteer retention and operational resilience, providing a desirable addition to a communication-focused approach.

5.7.5. Limitations and future research directions

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the interviewees among Hungarian individuals who assisted Ukrainian refugees, which may be a limitation of our research. Another limitation of our findings is the specific context of public and political opinion on Ukrainian refugees in Hungary during the crisis, as attitudes toward refugee groups may vary based on their cultural proximity and framing. A deductive approach was used in the analysis of volunteer motivations, based on the categories of functional theory, which may have limited the emergence of context-specific motivations. While this approach ensured theoretical consistency and comparability, a more inductive strategy could have allowed a more in-depth exploration of motivational patterns in a crisis context. Furthermore, although the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was originally developed for formal volunteering, it has also been applied in informal contexts. This supports its relevance as a guiding analytical framework, provided its limitations are acknowledged, particularly its ability to capture the unique, often situational motivations present in informal volunteering.

As a future research direction, it is important to undertake quantitative research to accurately delineate the motives of volunteers and their respective proportions supplemented with the emerged motivational aspects of Meijeren et al. (2024).

Second, conducting longitudinal research can track participants over time, revealing motivational changes following involvement in a crisis situation. Third, conducting similar research in other countries may help clarify how cultural and political contexts shape volunteer motivations and sources of volunteer opportunities in emergency situations. Fourth, the importance of weak ties in crisis situations could be also investigated further by identifying and ranking the perceived authenticity of information coming from different sources to find out which sources are viewed as more authentic. Moreover, the ethical implications of volunteering justify additional investigation, particularly regarding the interaction between collective and self-interest. Finally, future research could examine how message content relates to volunteer motivations in order to better understand whether any meaningful relationship exists between communication content and motivational profiles.

5.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study set out to examine volunteers assisting Ukrainian refugees in Hungary by assessing their motivations for crisis-related volunteering and the information sources of volunteering opportunities. The results revealed the motivational and information seeking aspects of crisis-specific volunteering which were not only shaped by urgency, but also by the specific political and social context in Hungary marked by the earlier anti-migration sentiment. Individuals helping with Ukrainian refugees predominantly exhibited values and protective motivations, while enhancing motives connected to self-development were notably absent. This underscores the necessity for contextual interpretation of the Volunteer Functions Inventory framework in crisis scenarios. Our findings indicate that weak-tie electronic word-of-mouth served as the principal source of information for volunteer opportunities, without questioning the credibility of the information. By highlighting the contextuality of volunteer motivations and the main information source of weak tie eWOM, our study advances research in the field of volunteering by providing organizations with insights into volunteering aspects during crises.

5.9. References

Ajrouch, K. J., Antonucci, T. C., & Webster, N. J. (2016). Volunteerism: Social network dynamics and education. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *71*(2), 309–319. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbu166

Anderson, J. C., & Moore, L. (1978). The motivation to volunteer. *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, *7*(3-4), 51–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/089976407800700312

Aslan, H., & Tuncay, T. (2024). Assessing the motives of active volunteers: A Turkish perspective. *Voluntas*, *35*, 556–569. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00619-2

Bekkers, R., & Wiepking, P. (2011). A literature review of empirical studies of philanthropy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *40*(5), 924–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010380927

Bian, Y., Huang, X., & Zhang, L. (2015). Information and favoritism: The network effect on wage income in China. *Social Networks*, *40*, 129–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2014.09.003

Birger, L., Tarshish, N., & Nouman, H. (2024). Expanding the boundaries of hospitality: the relationship between Ukrainian refugees and their hosts. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *50*(16), 3942–3958. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2359684

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Burt, R. S. (1992). The social structure of competition. *Networks in the knowledge economy*, *13*(2), 57–91.

Carlsen, H. B., Doerr, N., & Toubøl, J. (2022). Inequality in interaction: Equalizing the helper-recipient relationship in the refugee solidarity movement. *Voluntas*, *33*, 59–71. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00268-9

Chudzicka-Czupała, A., Chiang, S. K., Tan, C. M. et al. (2023). Association between mental health, psychological characteristics, and motivational functions of volunteerism among Polish and Ukrainian volunteers during the Russo-Ukrainian War. *Scientific Reports*, *13* (20725). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-47840-z

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Miene, P., & Haugen, J. (1994). Matching messages to motives in persuasion: A functional approach to promoting volunteerism. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *24*, 1129–1149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1994.tb01548.x

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A. A., Haugen, J., & Miene, P. (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1516–1530. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1516

Clary, E. G., & Snyder, M. (1999). The motivations to volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *8*(5), 156–159. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00037

Constant, D., Sproull, L., & Kiesler, S. (1996). The kindness of strangers: The usefulness of electronic weak ties for technical advice. *Organization Science*, *7*(2), 119–135. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.7.2.119

Dawson, S., Jackson, D., & Elliott, D. (2021). Understanding the motivation of nurses volunteering for non-disaster humanitarian service. *Collegian*, *28*(6), 645–651. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colegn.2021.06.003

Domaradzki, J. (2022). 'Who else if not we'. Medical students' perception and experiences with volunteering during the COVID-19 crisis in Poznan, Poland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(4), 2314. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19042314

Domaradzki, J., Walkowiak, D., Bazan, D., & Baum, E. (2022). Volunteering in the front line of the Ukrainian refugee crisis: A brief report from Poland. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.979751

Erőss, Á. (2022). Landscape in transition in the shadow of 2022 Russia's invasion in Ukraine – notes from Hungary. *Border and Regional Studies*, *10*(1), 71–86. https://doi.org/10.25167/brs4792

European Commission (2022). *Flash Eurobarometer survey: EU's response to the war in Ukraine*. https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2772

European Social Survey. (2022). *Data alerts*. Retrieved July 10, 2025, from https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/alerts.html

Frenzen, J., & Nakamoto, K. (1993). Structure, cooperation, and the flow of market information. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *20*(3), 360–375. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489353

Gilbert, E., & Karahalios, K. (2009, April). Predicting tie strength with social media. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 211–220).

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, *78*(6), 1360–1380.

Greussing, E., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2017). Shifting the refugee narrative? An automated frame analysis of Europe's 2015 refugee crisis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *43*, 1749–1774. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1282813

Grönlund, H. (2011). Identity and volunteering intertwined: Reflections on the values of young adults. *Voluntas*, *22*(4), 852–874. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-011-9184-6

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384436

Güntert, S. T., Wehner, T., & Mieg, H. A. (2022). Definition of volunteer work and a model of volunteer activity. In *Organizational, motivational, and cultural contexts of volunteering*. SpringerBriefs in Psychology. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92817-9_1

Hager, M. A., & Brudney, J. L. (2011). Problems recruiting volunteers: Nature versus nurture. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *22*(2), 137–157. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.20046

Hatta, T., Narita, K., Yanagihara, K., Ishiguro, H., Murayama, T., & Yokode, M. (2020). Crossover mixed analysis in a convergent mixed methods design used to investigate clinical dialogues about cancer treatment in the Japanese context. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *14*(1), 84–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689818792793

Haythornthwaite, C. (2002). Strong, weak, and latent ties and the impact of new media. *The Information Society*, *18*(5), 385–401. https://doi.org/10.1080/01972240290108195

Hibbert, S., Piacentini, M., & Dajani, H. A. (2003). Understanding volunteer motivation for participation in a community-based food cooperative. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *8*, 30–42. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.199

Jedicke, M. E., Olk, S., Zogaj, A., Tscheulin, D. K., & Lindenmeier, J. (2024). Designing effective volunteering appeals: Results of choice-based conjoint and latent class segmentation analyses. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640241227166

Jiranek, P., Kals, E., Humm, J. S., Strubel, I. T., & Wehner, Y. (2013). Volunteering as a means to an equal end? The impact of a social justice function on intention to volunteer. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *153*(5), 520–541. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2013.768594

Katz, D. (1960). The functional approach to the study of attitudes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *24*(2), 163–204. https://doi.org/10.1086/266945

Kende, A., Lantos, N. A., Belinszky, A., Csaba, S., & Lukács, Z. A. (2017). The politicized motivations of volunteers in the refugee crisis: Intergroup helping as the means to achieve social change. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *5*(1), 260–281. https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v5i1.642

Kentmen-Cin, C. (2024). Attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees: insights from the literature. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, *38*(1), 112–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2024.2430231

Killian, M., Fahy, J., & O'Loughlin, D. (2016). The case for altruism in eWoM motivations. In Plewa, C., & Conduit, J. (Eds.), *Making a difference through marketing*. Springer.

Kim, M., & Fernandez, R. M. (2017). Strength matters: tie strength as a causal driver of networks' information benefits. *Social Science Research*, *65*, 268–281. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.11.003

Kyriazi, A. (2022, December 28). *Ukrainian refugees in Hungary: Government measures and discourse in the first year of the war* [Working paper]. SSRN. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4313945

Lee, Y., Kim, M., & Koo, J. (2016). The impact of social interaction and team member exchange on sport event volunteer management. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(5), 550–562. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.04.005

Letki, N., Walentek, D., Dinesen, P. T., & Liebe, U. (2025). Has the war in Ukraine changed Europeans' preferences on refugee policy? Evidence from a panel experiment in Germany, Hungary and Poland. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *32*(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2024.2304610

Levin, D. Z., & Cross, R. (2004). The strength of weak ties you can trust: The mediating role of trust in effective knowledge transfer. *Management Science*, *50*(11), 1477–1490. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1030.0136

Maestri, G., & Monforte, P. (2020). Who deserves compassion? The moral and emotional dilemmas of volunteering in the 'refugee crisis'. *Sociology*, *54*(5), 920–935. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038520928199

Malota, E., Bogáromi, E., & László, T. (2024). Building a bridge with others: Alternative patterns of the acculturation process through the eyes of immigrants and members of the receiving culture. International *Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, *24*(2), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958241252313

Marsden, P., & Campbell, K. (1984). Measuring tie strength. *Social Forces*, *63*(2), 482–501. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579058

Meijeren, M., Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2023). Socio-structural determinants in volunteering for humanitarian organizations: A resource-based approach. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *52*(4), 1058–1076. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640221114821

Meijeren, M., Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2024). Assessing the 'why' in volunteering for refugees: Exploring volunteer motivations. *Voluntas*, *35*, 129–139. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00574-y

Meijeren, M., Ellemers, N., & Lubbers, M. (2026). How to keep them inside? Organizational and motivational factors that influence volunteer retention for refugee aid organizations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *36*(3), 351–364. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21667

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage.

Moradi, M., & Zihagh, F. (2022). A meta-analysis of the ELM model in the eWOM literature. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *46*(5), 1900–1918. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12814

Moise, A. D., Dennison, J., & Kriesi, H. (2024). European attitudes to refugees after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. *West European Politics*, *47*(2), 356–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2023.2229688

Nagy, V. (2017). How to silence the lambs? Constructing authoritarian governance in post-transitional Hungary. *Surveillance & Society*, *15*(3/4), 447–455. https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/view/6642

Nagy, Zs. (2016). Repertoires of contention and new media: The case of a Hungarian antibillboard campaign. *Intersections*, *2*(4), 109–133. https://doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v2i4.279

Nichol, B., Wilson, R., Rodrigues, A. & Haighton, C. (2024). Exploring the effects of volunteering on the social, mental, and physical health and well-being of volunteers: An umbrella review. *Voluntas*, 35, 97–128. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00573-z

Nolte, I. M., & Martin, E. C. (2021). Learning and crisis coordination: Experiences from the Balkan refugee route. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *31*, 783–804. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21457

Nowakowska, I., Duda, E., Ellena, A. M., Poli Martinelli, D., Szulawski, M., & Pozzi, M. (2025). Challenges for formal organizations engaging volunteers during regular and crisis times according to Polish and Italian volunteer coordinators. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *36*(1), 18–31. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-024-00689-w

O'Connor, C., & Joffe, H. (2020). Intercoder reliability in qualitative research: Debates and practical guidelines. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919899220

Omoto, A. M., & Snyder, M. (2002). Considerations of community: The context and process of volunteerism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *45*, 846–867. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202045005007

Pepinsky, T. B, Reiff, Á., & Szabó, K. (2024). The Ukrainian refugee crisis and the politics of public opinion: Evidence from Hungary. *Perspectives on Politics*, *22*(4), 989–1014. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592724000410

Rodell, J. B., Breitsohl, H., Schröder, M., & Keating, D. J. (2016). Employee volunteering: A review and framework for future research. *Journal of Management*, *42*(1), 55–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315614374

Sengupta, D., Verghese, A. K., & Rys, M. (2023). Motivations of volunteering during crises—Perspectives of Polish youths during the Ukrainian refugee crisis. *Administrative Sciences*, *13*(2), 53. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13020053

Shan, Y., & King, K. W. (2015). The effects of interpersonal tie strength and subjective norms on consumers' brand-related eWOM referral intentions. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *15*(1), 16–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2015.1016636

Shantz, A., Saksida, T., & Alfes, K. (2014). Dedicating time to volunteering: Values, engagement, and commitment to beneficiaries. *Applied Psychology*, *63*(4), 671–697. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12010

Shen, G. C. C., Chiou, J. S., Hsiao, C. H., Wang, C. H., & Li, H. N. (2016). Effective marketing communication via social networking site: The moderating role of the social tie. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(6), 2265–2270. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.12.040

Simsa, R., Rameder, P., Aghamanoukjan, A., & Totter, M. (2019). Spontaneous volunteering in social crises: Self-organization and coordination. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *48*(2_suppl), 103S–122S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018785472

Smith, M., Bruner, J., & White, R. (1956). *Opinions and personality.* Wiley.

Song, J., Zhang, Z., Pettis, P. J., & Rainock, M. (2026). Do social networks help or hurt? Accessed status and tie strength across occupational status and mental well-being. *Social Science Research*, *136*, 103357. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2026.103357

Steffes, E. M., & Burgee, L. E. (2009). Social ties and online word of mouth. *Internet Research*, *19*(1), 42–59. https://doi.org/10.1108/10662240910927812

Századvég. (2016, August 9). *Bevándorlás* [Immigration]. https://szazadveg.hu/hu/2016/08/09/bevandorlas~n872

Tezcan, T. (2025). The strength of weak ties in shaping attitudes toward interfaith marriage: Muslim migrants in Western Europe. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *109*, 102288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2025.102288

UNHCR. (2022, June 7). *Hungary: UNHCR Ukraine refugee situation operational update*. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93509

UNHCR. (2025). *Ukraine situation*. Retrieved July 31, 2025 from https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

Wisner, P. S., Stringfellow, A., Youngdahl, W. E., & Parker, L. (2005). The service volunteer–loyalty chain: An exploratory study of charitable not-for-profit service organizations. *Journal of Operations Management*, *23*, 143–161. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2004.07.003

Wymer, W., & Najev Čačija, L. (2025). Experiential influences on volunteers' retention and support intentions. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *36*(5), 590–600. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-025-00748-w

Zakariás, I., Feischmidt, M., Gerő, M., Morauszki, A., Zentai, V., & Zsigmond, Cs. (2023). Solidarity with displaced people from Ukraine in Hungary: *Attitudes and practices. Journal of International Migration and Integration*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-023-01096-8

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of results

The results of empirical studies and the integrative literature review contributed to gaining insight into how communication influences behavior, with a particular focus on volunteering. Beginning with the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in consumer contexts, the dissertation progressively explored the role of communication and motivation in volunteering and extended the analysis to a specific crisis context. A summary of the main results is presented below.

Based on the research findings presented in Article 1, the Theory of Planned Behavior was found to be an appropriate framework for analyzing participation intentions in referral reward programs (RRPs), which can be considered a form of word-of-mouth communication. This is consistent with previous findings in other domains (e.g., Sanne & Wiese, 2018; Raza et al., 2019). Among the TPB components, perceived behavioral control was found to have the strongest effect on behavioral intention to participate in a referral reward program. The difference between high- and low-involvement products was identified based on the results, and in both cases, the referral code, as a form of eWOM, was found to have a significant impact. Decision journey conformity was found to be high in the case of high-involvement products, and low for low-involvement products, indicating a need for differentiation when designing and implementing a referral reward program. Overall, Article 1 emphasized the importance of word-of-mouth as a source of information from social ties that can influence behavioral intention.

Article 2 provides an integrative literature review that explores dominant research themes of volunteering and communication. The categorization of existing research and the defined potential research directions add to the existing literature with a summary of previous research. The categories identified in the literature review related to volunteering were individual characteristics that influence volunteering (motivations, age, gender, cultural background), the impact of volunteering (subjective well-being, satisfaction) and the organizational aspects of volunteering (psychological

contract, employee volunteering, contribution, reliability). The literature connecting volunteering and communication can be divided into two categories: communication related to recruiting new volunteers and communicating about volunteering experiences. After reviewing existing research, four possible research directions have been identified which lay the foundations for further research in the area of volunteering and communication. Overall, Article 2 provides a foundation for conducting future research in communication and volunteering with the summary of previous research and theories.

Article 3 is an empirical investigation into the factors that inhibit volunteering, filling a gap in literature that has previously focused on motives rather than hindering aspects. The findings indicate that one of the reasons individuals refrain from volunteering is lack of opportunities. This suggests that either there were no volunteer opportunities, or the communication about them did not reach the individuals, providing useful insight to practitioners while highlighting the need for more effective communication. The other dominant reason was found to be lack of time, which proposes the need to provide more short-term opportunities to avoid high consumption of the individuals' time. Lack of skills were also found to be relevant, highlighting the need for clear communication about the volunteer opportunities to help individuals lower the perceived entry barriers for volunteering. These findings confirm that barriers are not merely individual limitations but are substantially linked to structural and communication-related obstacles. Based on the empirical testing of the Hungarian version of the 44-item scale of Willems and Dury (2017) that measures the inhibiting factors to volunteering, 3 dimensions were found to be significant: lack of skills, lack of accountability and lack of opportunities. Three dimensions were found to be partially utilizable (after omitting items), and the other three were found to be unusable in the Hungarian context.

In Article 4, we have analyzed sources of information and motivations in a very specific context, in the case of volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. When analyzing the information sources of volunteers, five key patterns have been identified: self-organized Facebook groups, friends and relatives, aiding organizations, workplace, and other sources. The most dominant source of information was eWOM, which was more common among weak ties and strangers. Among volunteer motivations, the two dominant ones, based on Clary and Snyder's (1999) framework, were value and

protective motivations, where 3-3 subcategories were identified. In the case of values, these were (1) helping as a core value, (2) urge to reduce others' trauma, and (3) feeling social responsibility, while in the protective motivations it was (1) desire to see the results of helping, (2) coping with strong negative emotions (anxiety, sadness), and (3) identification with refugees. Motivations relating to self-development were not prominent in the context, which may be due to the crisis-specific behavior or prioritizing helping those in need over self-interests. As effective communication is crucial in an emergency crisis situation (e.g., Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Simsa et al., 2019; Maestri & Monforte, 2020), this research could provide insights for nonprofit organizations on how to spread the important information about volunteering, and on how to target volunteers better, based on their motivation. In conclusion, the findings of Article 4 indicate that in a crisis situation such as volunteering with Ukrainian refugees, word-of-mouth from weak ties was the most dominant, along with values and protective motivations. Being aware of these factors helps in tailoring communication about the opportunities in a similar situation.

The findings must be evaluated with regard to their contextual restrictions, as cultural (Dang & Raska, 2022) and digital (Ireland & Lestari, 2025) aspects might impact the role of eWOM communication, limiting its general applicability.

6.2. Answers to the research questions

The article-based dissertation intended to investigate multiple research questions and based on the analysis in the articles, the following conclusions can be drawn with paying attention to their limited generalizability.

- What is the role of communication in influencing individuals?

Based on Article 1, communication plays a key role in shaping attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and overall behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Word-of-mouth was found to be relevant as it may enable the rapid flow of information, even in digital environments via eWOM. Based on the findings, communication is not only a tool for dissemination of information but also shapes behavioral intention and influences decision-making.

- What are the main research areas related to volunteering?

According to Article 2, the main areas of volunteering research include personal (e.g., motivations), impact-based (e.g., well-being) and organizational (e.g., recruitment) aspects, where the role of communication was highlighted. The most research focused on motivations, while inhibiting factors were less investigated.

- How can the importance of communication be described in the context of volunteering?

Article 2 highlights that the role of communication can be described not as a supporting function but as a fundamental mechanism through the entire volunteering process (recruitment, volunteering, post-participation). Communication may influence motivation, behavioral intention and how the information reaches individuals.

- What factors inhibit individuals from participating in voluntary activities?

As there is limited research on the subject, it is important to investigate what inhibits volunteering. The findings of Article 3 indicate that volunteering can be inhibited by multiple causes: individuals can't engage in activities, they don't want to or no one asks them to join (Brady et al., 1995). Based on empirical evidence, lack of opportunities, which may relate to lack of or insufficient communication, was found to be one of the critical barriers of volunteering, along with lack of time and lack of skills.

- What are the primary motivations for individuals to engage in volunteer opportunities?

Besides inhibiting factors, it is important to examine motivations for volunteering as well. Based on Article 4, in a specific context, while volunteering with Ukrainian refugees, values and protective motivations (Clary & Snyder, 1999) were found dominant while self-focused motivations were less present. This may indicate that in crises, individuals are more motivated by aiding and emotional identification rather than focusing on personal benefits.

- From what information sources do individuals access information about volunteer opportunities?

The sources of volunteering opportunities were also investigated in Article 4. Based on research, individuals gathered information from various sources, but the dominance of weak-tie eWOM indicated that in crisis situations, weak ties and rapid online communication may facilitate volunteering and immediate mobilization.

Based on the integrated findings of the article-based dissertation, volunteer participation is shaped by the interaction of communication processes, motivations, and inhibiting factors, where communication plays a central role in facilitating and constraining volunteer engagement through information gaps.

6.3. Theoretical contributions

The insights of the four publications present varied additions to the existing literature of research, which are summarized in Table 21. This outlines how each study expands, clarifies, or contests existing literature, so demonstrating the theoretical advancement of the dissertation.

Table 21. Summary of the articles' main theoretical contributions

Article	Area	Contributions to existing literature
Article 1	Theory of Planned Behavior	Prior research suggests that perceived behavioral control is not the strongest predictor within the TPB (Pelling & White, 2009; Sanne & Wiese, 2018), while our study demonstrates that PBC has the biggest effect on intention on the context of referral reward programs. As eWOM influenced all three components of TPB, the central role of communication was identified.
	Consumer Journey conformity	The consumer journey was researched before but not extensively. We have expanded the literature by introducing the consumer journey conformity's low and high classifications.
	Product involvement	Product involvement and the consumer journey were previously treated separately. This study shows that consumer journeys differ between high- and low-involvement products in the presence of RRPs.

Article 2	Literature synthesis	Volunteering research has examined individual, organizational, and communication aspects separately (e.g., Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Kramer, 2011), we provide a synthesis of volunteering and communication research across local and international contexts.
	Identifying research gaps	Previous research has not offered an overview of volunteering and communication together, we identified four key research directions, thereby defining previously unexplored research gaps.
Article 3	Motivational focus	Existing research has primarily focused on motivations for volunteering (e.g., Newton et al., 2014; Thoits, 2021; Chen et al., 2022), our research shifts the focus to barriers for the better understanding of volunteering behavior.
	Testing the framework	Existing frameworks (e.g., Willems & Dury, 2017) have been widely used, but rarely tested across contexts, this study empirically validates the framework in Hungary and shows that the measurements of the barriers included are context dependent.
Article 4	Domination of motivations	Prior research on volunteer motivations (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Meijeren et al., 2024) identified multiple functional motives, based on our findings, self-oriented motivations become less salient, while protective and values motivations become prominent in crisis situations, highlighting the motivational framework's context-dependency.
	Relevance of weak ties	Earlier research on word-of-mouth emphasizes the importance of social ties (Frenzen & Nakamoto, 1993), often assuming stronger ties are more influential, whereas our research demonstrates that weak-tie eWOM (e.g., from Facebook groups) can become a key, credible, and mobilizing information source in crisis situations.

Source: own editing

By using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Article 1 contributes to existing literature by demonstrating that perceived behavioral control is the strongest indicator of intention to participate in referral reward programs. Previous studies argue that the attitudes component is the strongest predictor of behavioral intention (e.g., Pelling & White, 2009), while others emphasized the joint importance of attitudes and perceived behavioral control (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). The results of Article 1 suggest that perceived behavioral control may play a dominant role in certain contexts. In order to

investigate the consumer journey conformity, a classification (for low and high conformity) was created, adding to the existing literature. The results of our research imply that the consumer journey is not identical in the case of high- and low-involvement products, which represents a previously unexplored connection between product involvement, eWOM (as referral reward programs), and the consumer journey. Investigating the effect of two variables on the consumer journey provided a complex view of the consumer's decision-making process and the willingness to participate in a referral reward program. The effect of the variables on the consumer journey adds to the literature and provides insights for marketers on how to design a referral reward program to have a greater impact on consumer journey.

In Article 2, the integrative literature review conducted on volunteering and communication synthesized the local and international research performed in the fields which never provided this detailed view on the phenomenon. Based on the findings, four possible research directions have been identified: getting to know the volunteers in a cultural context, investigating the impact of word-of-mouth recommendations, examining recruitment communication with focusing on its content, and the analysis of volunteer organizations' communication, which extemds prior research with defining unexploited research gaps. Based on the proposed research ideas, scholars can investigate the phenomenon of volunteering and communications more thoroughly.

Article 3 enriches literature by shifting the focus from motives (e.g., Newton et al., 2014; Thoits, 2021; Chen et al., 2022) to the barriers to volunteering, and with this, offering a more detailed understanding of volunteering behavior. This study examines the reasons individuals choose not to volunteer with empirically assessing the framework by Willems and Dury (2017) in the Hungarian context. The findings enhance existing theoretical models by identifying that inhibiting variables are somewhat situation-dependent. Identifying the lack of opportunities as a fundamental barrier suggests that communication aspects should be more explicitly integrated into theoretical models of volunteering behavior.

The findings of Article 4 not only extend the existing literature by investigating the specifics of crises but provide useful practices for volunteer organizations. The novelty of our article lies in its focus on the context of a crisis. Based on our findings we

provide insight to the volunteer organizations on how to customize their communication channels in a similar situation. It is also important to note that no other research has been conducted in Hungary regarding the investigation of volunteering in the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Consequently, our research makes a valuable contribution to the local and international knowledge in this area. The results indicate that understanding of the underlying motivations for volunteering and an in-depth knowledge of information sources can assist charitable organizations in developing effective communication strategies. This finding supports the conclusions of Clary et al. (1998). Based on previous studies (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Meijeren et al., 2024), volunteers may possess diverse motivations and that volunteer motivations differ in a crisis situation (e.g., Grönlund, 2011; Sengupta et al., 2023; Meijeren et al., 2024). Our results refine previous findings by implying that motivations are context-dependent, as self-oriented motivations are found to be less salient in a crisis situation. This supports that volunteer motivations may vary based on several factors, such as crisis contexts or individual and cultural characteristics (Chen et al., 2022). The findings of our research identified the relevance and impact of weak ties (e.g., Facebook group members) as sources of information, which contributes to the existing literature on weak ties with being the dominant source of information in a crisis situation. This importance may be due to perceived authenticity and trust in the information source. However, the key role of weak-tie eWOM must be interpreted with caution, as prior studies indicate that its influence may differ among various cultural segments (Dang & Raska, 2022).

In summary, the first article identified the importance of communication and word-of-mouth. The findings of Article 2 provided insights into prior research on volunteering and the dominant constructs in the field, along with identifying the connection between volunteering and communication, resulted in defining future research directions. Article 3 focused on why individuals are not engaging in volunteer activities, suggesting that lack of opportunities, lack of time and lack of skills are the most prominent barriers to volunteering. Building on the findings of Article 1 on eWOM and tie strength, Article 2 with the definition of the most important constructs, and Article 3 highlighting the importance of communication about volunteer opportunities, Article 4 demonstrated that the dominant source of information is eWOM, along with

values and protective motivations being the most prominent while volunteering in a crisis situation.

This dissertation extends the literature with incorporating communication into the theoretical framework of volunteering behavior. Firstly, it expands the Theory of Planned Behavior by demonstrating the central role of communication, such as word-of-mouth and information accessibility, as it influences not only attitudes and subjective norms but also perceived behavioral control. This dissertation connects three previously separate research fields: volunteering, consumer behavior, and communication. It links them by emphasizing that the dynamics of social influence and information distribution differ based on the context. This interdisciplinary integration offers a novel approach for investigating the role of communication on consumer and voluntary actions. The studies enhance volunteering theory by including motivational and inhibiting frameworks. Previous research has mainly concentrated on motivational factors; however, this dissertation suggests that barriers, particularly those related to communication, significantly impact behavior. Based on the findings, the importance of tie strength varies according to specific circumstances. While strong interpersonal relationships play an important role of influencing purchases, weak ties are vital during a crisis, particularly when rapid dissemination of information is required. As eWOM was a central phenomenon in the research, the findings are most likely to be applicable in contexts where digitalization enables digital communication and may be less transferable to countries with lower digital engagement (Ireland & Lestari, 2025). Besides digital divides, cultural and communicational differences may further determine the extent to which these findings can be implemented. The dissertation enhances theory by demonstrating that communication is not supporting, but a central mechanism through which individuals' behavioral intention is influenced.

6.4. Managerial implications

The dissertation provides practical implications for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations by illustrating the impact of communication on behavior in many circumstances, ranging from consumer decision-making to volunteerism. Based on the findings, interpersonal communication, particularly word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth, is a highly effective mechanism for altering behavior. Article 1 shows

that referral-based communication significantly influences decision-making, particularly when individuals perceive a high level of control in their actions. This indicates that developing communication strategies that empower individuals to exert greater control over their actions can enhance engagement and interest. Secondly, the dissertation asserts that in the context of volunteering, communication serves not only as a promotional tool, but also as a mechanism for disseminating information, as highlighted in Article 2. Article 3 identifies that the perceived lack of opportunities constitutes a significant issue. This frequently occurs because of inadequate communication among individuals or a complete lack of interaction, rather than a lack of existing opportunities. This indicates that when NGOs communicate with individuals, they must ensure their messages are clear, accessible, and widely disseminated using multiple communication channels. The results underscore the need to employ diverse methods for communication and fostering peer-to-peer interactions. From a practical perspective, the findings of Article 3 emphasize that increasing volunteer engagement requires both strengthening motives and reducing perceived barriers, particularly by improving the exposure and availability of volunteering opportunities. The results also emphasize the need for effective communication, since a lack of awareness of volunteering opportunities may keep individuals from volunteering. Organizations should focus not just on persuading individuals to volunteer but also on ensuring that information is clear, easily accessible, and effectively communicated to potential volunteers. Article 4 demonstrates that weak ties and expansive networks, such as social media groups, are crucial during crises, despite the greater significance of strong ties in consumer settings. This suggests that organizations must adapt their communication strategies according to the context and target audience. Finally, the dissertation demonstrates that effective communication tactics must simultaneously consider individuals' motives and their constraints. Organizations can develop more targeted and efficient strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention by integrating insights regarding motives (Article 4) and barriers (Article 3). Overall, these findings contribute to the enhancement of communication practices, and support both market-oriented and socially engaged organizations. These results highlight the essential role of communication as a link between personal aspirations and actual volunteer behavior.

6.5. Limitations

The articles included in my dissertation have several limitations. First, there are some limitations related to the methodologies. The included empirical studies relied on cross-sectional research designs, which limit the ability to investigate the changes over time, thus the findings provide only a snapshot of volunteering and communication processes. Studies may be subjected to self-report bias as the respondents may provide answers that are socially desirable. Besides empirical studies, the integrative literature review may be influenced by the selection bias.

Second, there are limitations regarding the samples. Articles 1 and 3 present quantitative research results where the sample size (n=218 and n=264) is acceptable for further analysis. Article 4 presents exploratory research based on 25 in-depth interviews among Hungarian individuals who volunteered with Ukrainian refugees. These sample sizes may limit the generalizability of the results. Sample homogeneity needs to be considered as respondents (Articles 1 and 3) were reached through convenience sampling, while interview participants (Article 4) through purposive sampling, which are both non-probability sampling techniques. The samples of Article 3 and 4 both consisted of Hungarian individuals which further restricts the generalizability. As Hungary is characterized as an individualistic culture (Balawi & Wachira, 2021), this may influence communicational aspects and limit the transferability of the findings to other cultures with different cultural dimensions.

Third, the research has some measurement-related limitations. In Article 3, some of the used scales demonstrated only partial validity, pointing out the need for their additional refinement. Although Article 4 examined the association between motivations and information sources, the links were not empirically evaluated through statistical approaches.

Finally, the generalizability of the findings is constrained by contextual embeddedness. The research of Articles 3 and 4 focuses on the Hungarian socio-cultural environment and crisis scenarios, suggesting that cultural orientation and situational aspects both influence communication patterns, leading to the conclusions significantly context dependent. Findings related to the specific crisis situation (Article 4) may not be applicable to non-crisis or other crisis settings due to the unique

setting. Similarly, the results of Article 1 about the product categories and levels of involvement may not be transferable across different consumption contexts.

Overall, the findings provide great insight into how eWOM may influence behavior (Article 1), what are the main research areas on volunteering and communication (Article 2), along with what inhibits (Article 3) and motivates individuals to volunteer, and what were their information sources for volunteering opportunities (Article 4). However, these findings should be interpreted as context dependent, and their application to other countries, crises or domains remains limited.

6.6. Future research directions

The findings of the dissertation offer several potential future research directions, a summary of them can be found in Table 22.

Table 22. Summary of future research directions

Idea	**Potential research directions**
Quantifying relationships	- Extended framework of volunteer motivations - Relationship between motivations and sources of information on volunteering opportunities - Motivations analyzed together with inhibiting factors - Scale refinement for inhibiting factors
Longitudinal research	- Motivation and communication patterns over time - Quitting behavior
Cross-cultural studies	- Social and cultural aspects' effect on volunteering - Role of cultural orientation on WOM - Interpersonal communication between volunteers - Role of eWOM in volunteering in different cultures

Communication and information processes	- Further investigating the role of weak ties during crises - Content of communication - Negative WOM in volunteering - Role of AI in volunteering - Offline and online volunteering
Personal factors	- Volunteering and identity - Volunteering and personality profiles
Inhibiting factors	- In-depth analysis of inhibiting factors
Organizational aspects	- Content analysis - Identifying best practices
Interdisciplinary approach	- Outlining similarities between consumer behavior and volunteering

Source: own editing

First, conducting additional quantitative studies with larger sample size would enable researchers to gain insights into the motivations of volunteers and determine the relevance of those motivations. This involves testing motivating factors found in previous research (e.g., Meijeren et al., 2024). The relationship between sources of volunteering information and motivations should be examined statistically in future research. Based on my previous research, the effects of volunteer motivation and inhibiting factors may be integrated in a unified framework to investigate their strength and influence on volunteer intention. The scales included in Article 3 may be further developed to be able to capture the aspects which the adapted framework could not measure.

Secondly, conducting longitudinal research in volunteering may enhance the understanding of how motives and communication patterns evolve over time across different cultural and situational settings. Previous research has already focused on why individuals quit from volunteering (e.g., Holtrop et al., 2024; Almog-Bar & Cnaan, 2026), but the analysis of the process in the Hungarian context could be a potential addition to literature.

Third, performing cross-cultural studies would enhance the literature on social and cultural aspects influencing volunteerism, and interpersonal communication among participants. Future research should examine how cultural orientation influences the

role of social ties and communication processes (WOM and eWOM) in volunteering contexts and situations. Motivations were already investigated related to student volunteering (Grönlund et al., 2011), but there is still room for further investigation e.g., the role of eWOM in volunteering, or crisis volunteering.

Fourth, further research should investigate communication and information processes: the role of weak ties during crises, particularly by examining perceptions of their trustworthiness and credibility (Belardinelli & Gili, 2022) among various information sources. Extensive research is required to assess the relationship between the content of communication and volunteer motivations, particularly regarding the alignment of message with individual motivations. A deeper, qualitative investigation is required into the role of weak ties to be able to assess the underlying reasons why they were prominent in the case of crises communication. Additionally, future research should examine whether the observed importance of weak ties in crisis situations is context-dependent, and how their role varies across different cultural and crisis contexts. Much research has focused on the role of negative WOM (e.g., Vázquez-Casielles et al., 2013; Nguyen, 2026) but in the context of volunteering it hasn't been thoroughly investigated yet. With the rise of digital and technological transformation, the role of AI (Coutinho et al., 2025), offline and online aspects and digital volunteering (Urrea & Yoo, 2025) is worth investigating.

Moreover, as a qualitative study it is intriguing to investigate how volunteering shapes the identity and motivational profiles of individuals. To be able to contribute to the Hungarian landscape, it is interesting to examine how personality traits relate to volunteering (e.g., Ackermann, 2019; Bleidorn et al., 2025) in a domestic context.

Furthermore, future studies should investigate the inhibiting factors in greater detail, particularly the interaction between barriers of volunteering and communication-related variables. Organizational communication strategies should be examined as a part of content analysis (Bifkovics & Malota, 2024), along with practices regarding the management of WOM and nonprofit marketing operations.

Finally, research may investigate how consumer behavior frameworks could be adapted to volunteering context, which could further improve the existing comprehension of volunteer engagement processes.

7. LIST OF INCLUDED PUBLICATIONS

Bifkovics, B., Malota, E., Faria, L. N., & Martinez, L. F. (2024). Customer-to-customer communication: Referral of high and low involvement products through stimulated word-of-mouth. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *30*(2), 204–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2023.2253235

Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. (2024). Volunteering through word-of-mouth and organizational communication: Integrative literature review and proposed research directions. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *55*(4), 63–76. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2024.04.05

Bifkovics, B., & Béla-Csovcsics, A. (2025). Why do we refrain from volunteering? A test of inhibiting factors. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *56*(11), 28–40. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2025.11.03

Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. Understanding volunteer motivations and information sources during emergency crisis situations: Volunteering with Ukrainian refugees. [Under review]

8. RELATED WORKS AND RECOGNITIONS

Besides my included articles, further investigations were conducted in the domain of volunteering. The research on volunteering with Ukrainian refugees encompassed different areas, including interculturality, which facilitated a conference presentation on stereotypes and prejudices associated with this volunteer work.

- Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. (2024). *Sztereotípiák és előítéletek az ukrajnai menekültekkel való önkéntesség során*. In K. Szűcs, P. Putzer, & M. Töröcsik (Eds.), *A marketing világa megnövekedése. Egyesület a Marketing Oktatásért és Kutatásért XXX. Nemzetközi Konferenciájának absztrakt- és tanulmánykötete* (p. 15). Pécs, Magyarország: Egyesület a Marketing Oktatásért és Kutatásért; Pécsi Tudományegyetem Közgazdaságtudományi Kar.

Further study has concentrated on the actions performed by volunteers to identify the necessary competencies for assisting Ukrainian refugees. This was presented at the EMAC 2024 Fall conference in Lisbon.

- Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. (2024). *Needed competences for volunteering with Ukrainian refugees*. In *Proceedings of the 15th EMAC Regional Conference: Exploring the Future of Marketing: Reshaping Marketing's Role in Society*. EMAC.

In addition to examining the context of volunteering with Ukrainian refugees, my work also focuses on understanding the reasons individuals refrain from volunteering. In addition to the article included in my paper-based dissertation, multiple manuscripts have been prepared to examine the phenomenon of not volunteering.

- Béla-Csovcsics, A., Bifkovics, B., & Kazár, K. (in press). *A formális önkéntesek mozgósítási kihívásai: Klaszterelemzés egy empirikus kutatás alapján*. *Vezetéstudomány*.

- Bifkovics, B., & Béla-Csovcsics, A. (n.d.). *Barriers to volunteering: Toward a new theoretical framework* [Manuscript submitted for publication].

My research accomplishment has been acknowledged by the Hungarian academic society. The paper featured in this dissertation (Title: Volunteering through word-of-mouth and organizational communication: Integrative literature review and proposed research directions) received a Publication Excellence award from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) in 2025.

In 2024, EMOK has selected our research group (members: Bettina Bifkovics, Nóra Kisfürjesi, Marianna Hadadiné Jászay, András Fehér, Sándor Huszár) for the Most Promising Research Group Award.

My experience in volunteering research has received further public attention; I was invited to the national radio station Kossuth for a live interview regarding the barriers to volunteering on February 4th, 2026.

9. REFERENCES IN THE DISSERTATION BEYOND THE ARTICLES

Ackermann, K. (2019). Predisposed to volunteer? Personality traits and different forms of volunteering. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *48*(6), 1119–1142. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764019848484

Adila, T. M., Bintang, W. S., Ikhsan, R. B., & Fahlevi, M. (2020). Instagram as information in developing purchase intentions: The role of social e-wom and brand attitude. *2020 International Conference on Information Management and Technology (ICIMTech)*. https://doi.org/10.1109/icimtech50083.2020.92111

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Al-Dmour, R., Al-Dmour, H., & Al-Dmour, A. (2024). The crucial role of eWOM: Mediating the impact of marketing mix strategies on international students' study destination decision. *Sage Open*, *14*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241247661

Alfes, K., Antunes, B., & Shantz, A. (2017). The management of volunteers – what can human resources do? A review and research agenda. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *28*(1), 62–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1242508

Almog-Bar, M., & Cnaan, R. (2026). Volunteer quitting as a political statement and act of protest. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *55*(2), 421–445. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640251344942

Balawi, A., & Wachira, E. W. (2021). HRM Practices on foreign-owned companies in Hungary. *Modern Management Review*, *26*(4), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.7862/rz.2021.mmr.21

Bekkers, R., & Wiepking, P. (2011). A literature review of empirical studies of philanthropy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 40*(5), 924–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010380927

Belardinelli, S., & Gili, G. (2022). Credibility, trust, and suspicion: Social relationships put to the test by Covid-19. *Church, Communication and Culture*, *7*(1), 91–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2022.2039075

Bennett, R., & Kottasz, R. (2001). Advertisement style and the recruitment of charity volunteers. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketi*ng, *8*(2), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1300/J054v08n02_05

Bian, Y., Huang, X., & Zhang, L. (2015). Information and favoritism: The network effect on wage income in China. *Social Networks*, *40*, 129–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2014.09.003

Bifkovics, B., & Malota, E. (2024). Volunteering through word-of-mouth and organizational communication: Integrative literature review and proposed research directions. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *55*(4), 63–76. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2024.04.05

Bifkovics, B., & Béla-Csovcsics, A. (2025). Why do we refrain from volunteering? A test of inhibiting factors. *Vezetéstudomány Budapest Management Review*, *56*(11), 28–40. https://doi.org/10.14267/VEZTUD.2025.11.03

Bleidorn, W., Stahlmann, A. G., Orth, U., Smillie, L. D., & Hopwood, C. J. (2025). Personality traits and traditional philanthropy: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 129*(2), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000556

Bocsi, V., & Fényes, H. (2012). Values and motivations of higher education students' volunteering in a borderland central eastern region. In: Pusztai G, Hatos A, Ceglédi T, et al. (eds.) *Third Mission of Higher Education in a Cross-border Region*. Debrecen: CHERD-Hungary, University of Debrecen, 160–179.

Brady, H. E, Verba, S., & Schlozman, K. L. (1995). Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation. *The American Political Science Review*, *89*(2), 271–294. https://doi.org/10.2307/2082425

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Chen, J., Wang, C., & Tang, Y. (2022). Knowledge mapping of volunteer motivation: A bibliometric analysis and cross-cultural comparative study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 883150. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883150

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Miene, P., & Haugen, J. (1994). Matching messages to motives in persuasion: A functional approach to promoting volunteerism. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *24*, 1129–1149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1994.tb01548.x

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A. A., Haugen, J., & Miene, P. (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1516–1530. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1516

Clary, E. G., & Snyder, M. (1999). The motivations to volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *8*(5), 156–159. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00037

Court, D., Elzinga, D., Mulder, S., & Vetvik, O. J. (2009). The consumer decision journey. *McKinsey & Company.* https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-consumer-decision-journey

Coutinho, R., Fraiz, J., & Sousa, B. (Eds.) (2026). *Impacts of AI on international volunteering*. IGI Global Scientific Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-5022-6

Dang, A., & Raska, D. (2022). National cultures and their impact on electronic word of mouth: a systematic review. *International Marketing Review*, *39*(5), 1182–1225. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-12-2020-0316

Deutsch, M., & Gerard, H. B. (1955). A study of normative and informational social influences upon individual judgment. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *51*(3), 629–636. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046408

Dunn, J., Chambers, S. K., & Hyde, M. K. (2016). Systematic review of motives for episodic volunteering. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *27*(1), 425–464. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-015-9548-4

Fan, C., Jiang, Y., Yang, Y., Zhang, C., & Mostafavi, A. (2020). Crowd or hubs: Information diffusion patterns in online social networks in disasters. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, *46*, 101498. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2020.101498

Fényes, H., & Kiss, G. (2011). Az önkéntesség szociológiája. *Kultúra és Közösség*, *2*(1), 35–47.

Frenzen, J., & Nakamoto, K. (1993). Structure, cooperation, and the flow of market information. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *20*(3), 360–375. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489353

Greussing, E., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2017). Shifting the refugee narrative? An automated frame analysis of Europe's 2015 refugee crisis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 43*, 1749–1774.

Grönlund, H., Holmes, K., Kang, C. *et al*. (2011). Cultural values and volunteering: A cross-cultural comparison of students' motivation to volunteer in 13 countries. *Journal of Academic Ethics, 9*, 87–106. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-011-9131-6

Grönlund, H. (2013). Cultural values and volunteering: A cross-cultural perspective. In: Vakoch, D. (eds) *Altruism in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. International and Cultural Psychology. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6952-0_6

Güntert, S. T., Wehner, T., & Mieg, H. A. (2022). Definition of volunteer work and a model of volunteer activity. In *Organizational, motivational, and cultural contexts of volunteering*. SpringerBriefs in Psychology. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92817-9_1

Hagger, M. S., Chatzisarantis, N. L., Barkoukis, V., Wang, J. C., Hein, V., Pihu, M., Soós, I., & Karsai, I. (2007). Cross-cultural generalizability of the theory of planned behavior among young people in a physical activity context. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, *29*(1), 2–20.

Hendrickx, J., & Vázquez-Herrero, J. (2024). Dissecting social media journalism: A comparative study across platforms, outlets and countries. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(9), 1053–1075. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2324318

Holtrop, D., Soo, C., Gagné, M., Kragt, D., Dunlop, P. D., & Luksyte, A. (2026). Exploring volunteer turnover reasons, intentions, and behavior. *Group & Organization Management*, *51*(2), 641–685. https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011241237841

Hughes, B. T., Jacobson, R., Rule, N. O., & Srivastava, S. (2025). Stereotypes and social decisions: The interpersonal consequences of socioeconomic status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 128*(5), 1226–1242. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000541

Ireland, J., & Lestari, Santi. (2025). *Digital divide: a literature review.* Cambridge University Press & Assessment. https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/745788-digital-divide-a-literature-review.pdf

Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin, & J. Putnam (Eds.), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory*, *Research and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 732–818.

Katz, D. (1960). The functional approach to the study of attitudes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 24(2), 163–204. https://doi.org/10.1086/266945

Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2023). *Önkéntes munkát végző népesség demográfiai és egyéb jellemzők, illetve a végzett munka formális vagy informális volta szerint, 2023.* https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/mef-kieg/mef_23_h.xlsx

Kramer, M. W. (2011). Toward a communication model for the socialization of voluntary members. *Communication Monographs, 78*(2), 233–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2011.564640

Liviatan, I., Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2008). Interpersonal similarity as a social distance dimension: Implications for perception of others' actions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 44*(5), 1256–1269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.04.007

López, L., & Sicilia, M. (2014). eWOM as source of influence: The impact of participation in eWOM and perceived source trustworthiness on decision making. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *14*(2), 86–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2014.944288

Luo, C., Wu, J., Shi, Y., & Xu, Y. (2014). The effects of individualism–collectivism cultural orientation on eWOM information. *International Journal of Information Management, 34*(4), 446–456. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2014.04.001

Maestri, G., & Monforte, P. (2020). Who deserves compassion? The moral and emotional dilemmas of volunteering in the 'Refugee Crisis'. *Sociology, 54*(5), 920–935. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038520928199

Marsden, P., & Campbell, K. (1984). Measuring tie strength. *Social Forces, 63(*2), 482–501. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579058

Mason, R. B. (2008). Word of mouth as a promotional tool for turbulent markets. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *14*(3), 207–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527260701754258

Maxmudova, S. (2026). The role of communication culture in interpersonal relationships. *TLEP – International Journal of Multidiscipline*, *3*(1), 280–283. https://www.tlepub.org/index.php/1/article/view/726

Meijeren, M., Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2024). Assessing the 'why' in volunteering for refugees: Exploring volunteer motivations. *Voluntas, 35*, 129–139. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00574-y

Melumad, S., Inman, J. J., & Pham, M. T. (2019). Selectively emotional: How smartphone use changes user-generated content. *Journal of Marketing Research, 56*(2), 259–275. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243718815429

Molnar, Z., Taralik, K., & Kozák, T. (2025). Motivations, concerns, and benefits of international volunteering in Hungary. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *36*(4), 494–510. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-024-00662-7

Morren, M., & Grinstein, A. (2021). The cross-cultural challenges of integrating personal norms into the Theory of Planned Behavior: A meta-analytic structural equation modeling (MASEM) approach. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 75,* 101593. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2021.101593

Newton, C. J., Becker, K. L., & Bell, S. (2014). Learning and development opportunities as a tool for the retention of volunteers: a motivation perspective. *Human Resource Management Journal, 24*(4), 514–530. http://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12040

Ngarmwongnoi, C., Oliveira, J. S., AbedRabbo, M., & Mousavi, S. (2020). The implications of eWOM adoption on the customer journey. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 37*(7), 749–759. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-10-2019-3450

Nguyen, L. P. (2026). Value-driven environmental advocacy in tourism: understanding the drivers of negative eWOM among tourists visiting island destinations. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *9*(2), 747–766. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-05-2025-0637

Nilashi, M., Abumalloh, R. A., Alrizq, M., Alghamdi, A., Samad, S., Almulihi, A., Althobaiti, M. M., Ismail, M. Y., & Mohd, S. (2022). What is the impact of eWOM in social network sites on travel decision-making during the COVID-19 outbreak? A two-stage methodology. *Telematics and Informatics, 69*, 101795. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2022.101795

Pelling, E. L., & White, K. M. (2009). The theory of planned behavior applied to young people's use of social networking web sites. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior: The Impact of the Internet, Multimedia and Virtual Reality on Behavior and Society, 12*(6), 755–759. https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2009.0109

Perez-Aranda, J., Tolkach, D., Panchal, J. H. (2026). Reputation and eWOM in accommodation decision-making: insights from Generation Z users. *Tourism Review*, *81*(1), 455–481, https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-03-2024-0185

Plagnol, A. C., & Huppert, F. A. (2010). Happy to help? Exploring the factors associated with variations in rates of volunteering across Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, 97, 157–176. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-009-9494-x

Pourjahanshahi, F., Mollalosseini, A., & Dehyadegari, S. (2023). Website quality and users' intention to use digital libraries: Examining users' attitudes, online co-creation experiences, and eWOM. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 74*, 103393. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103393

Raza, S. H., Abu Bakar, H., & Mohamad, B. (2019). The effects of advertising appeals on consumers' behavioral intention towards global brands: The mediating role of attitude and the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *11*(2), 440–460. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-11-2017-0134

Roy, K., Paul, U. K., Tiwari, S., & Mookherjee, A. (2025). Impact of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on purchasing decisions: an empirical study. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, *32*(10), 3901–3936. https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-08-2024-0642

Sanne, P. N. C., & Wiese, M. (2018). The theory of planned behavior and user engagement applied to Facebook advertising. *South African Journal of Information Management, 20*(1), a915. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v20i1.915

Sen, S., & Lerman, D. (2007). Why are you telling me this? An examination into negative consumer reviews on the web. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *21*(4), 76–94. https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.20090

Sengupta, D., Verghese, A. K., & Rys, M. (2023). Motivations of volunteering during crises—Perspectives of Polish youths during the Ukrainian refugee crisis. *Administrative Sciences*, *13*(2), 53. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13020053

Simsa, R., Rameder, P., Aghamanoukjan, A., & Totter, M. (2019). Spontaneous volunteering in social crises: self-organization and coordination. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 48*(2_suppl), 103S–122S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018785472

Smith, M., Bruner, J., & White, R. (1956). *Opinions and personality.* Wiley.

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guideline. *Journal of Business Research*, *104*, 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Song, J., Zhang, Z., Pettis, P. J., & Rainock, M. (2026). Do social networks help or hurt? Accessed status and tie strength across occupational status and mental well-being. *Social Science Research, 136*, 103357. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2026.103357

Sun, T., Youn, S., Wu, G., & Kuntaraporn, M. (2006). Online word-of-mouth (or mouse): an exploration of its antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 11*(4). http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol11/issue4/sun.html

Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C. (1998). Word-of-mouth communications: A motivational analysis, In NA. In J. W. Alba & J. W. Hutchinson (Eds.), *Advances in consumer research*, *25*, 527–531. Association for Consumer Research.

Thoits, P. A. (2021). Motivations for peer-support volunteering: Social identities and role-identities as sources of motivation. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *50*(4), 797–815. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764020983897

Tezcan, T. (2025). The strength of weak ties in shaping attitudes toward interfaith marriage: Muslim migrants in Western Europe. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *109*, 102288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2025.102288

Tompos, A., & Abu Khair, J. (2023). The Impact of Social Media Relationships on e-WOM in Syria and Hungary. *Review of Applied Socio-Economic Research*, *25*(1), 52–65. https://doi.org/10.54609/reaser.v25i1.335

UNHCR. (2025). *Ukraine situation.* Retrieved July 31, 2025, from https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

United Nations Volunteers (UNV). (2022). 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Building equal and inclusive societies. https://swvr2022.unv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/UNV_SWVR_2022.pdf

United Nations Volunteers (UNV). (2026). The world's largest workforce no one counts. https://www.unv.org/Success-stories/worlds-largest-workforce-no-one-counts

Urrea, G., Yoo, E. (2025). Exploring the landscape of online volunteering. In: Berenguer, G., Sohoni, M.G. (eds) *Nonprofit Operations and Supply Chain Management*. Springer Series in Supply Chain Management, vol 25. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-74994-0_8

Vázquez-Casielles, R., Suárez-Álvarez, L., & Río-Lanza, A. B. D. (2013). The word of mouth dynamic: How positive (and negative) WOM drives purchase probability: An analysis of interpersonal and non-interpersonal factors. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *53*(1), 43–60. https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-53-1-043-060

Warburton, J., Moore, M., & Oppenheimer, M. (2018). Challenges to the recruitment and retention of volunteers in traditional nonprofit organizations: A case study of Australian Meals on Wheels. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *41*(16), 1361–1373. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2017.1390581

Willems, J., & Dury, S. (2017). Reasons for not volunteering: overcoming boundaries to attract volunteers. *The Service Industries Journal*, *37*(11–12), 726–745. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2017.1318381

Windon, S., Robotham, D., & Echols, A. (2024). Importance of organizational volunteer retention and communication with volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Community Development*, *55*(2), 289–305. https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2023.2186457

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1994). The personal involvement inventory: Reduction, revision, and application to advertising. *Journal of Advertising, 23*(4), 59–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1943.10673459