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A STRUCTURAL EQUATION FOR VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT: INCLUSIVE
LEADERSHIP, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT

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A STRUCTURAL EQUATION FOR VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Approval Page



Approval of Dissertation

The undersigned certify that they have read the dissertation entitled

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PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT**

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Abstract

Volunteers play a significant role in solving community, national, and global problems and are essential to the social organization's operating structure. They help non-profits and charities meet their social missions by increasing program effectiveness and reducing overhead costs.

Unfortunately, many organizations have trouble keeping volunteers engaged, and only one-third of volunteers are retained each year.

Research has identified a positive relationship between volunteer engagement and retention, allowing organizations to become more efficient and effective. However, while a more engaged volunteer population may provide many benefits to social organizations, volunteer engagement is still a vague and underdeveloped concept. Additionally, modern volunteer management techniques do not recognize the differences between volunteers and paid staff, creating barriers to engagement.

This quantitative study utilized structural equation modeling to identify contributors to, and outcomes of, engagement in the context of volunteerism. The results demonstrate that inclusive leadership has a positive relationship with engagement and is partially mediated by empowerment. Psychological safety has a negative relationship with engagement, though when empowerment is present the relationship becomes positive, which is a sign of competitive mediation. Further, results of serial mediation demonstrate that psychological safety and intentions to remain and inclusive leadership and intentions to remain are partially mediated by empowerment and engagement, while the relationship between psychological safety and involvement is fully mediated by empowerment and engagement. Lastly, engagement also has a significant and positive relationship with intentions to remain, service contributions, and giving intentions.

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This research provides volunteer managers with a greater understanding of the factors that create a more engaged volunteer workforce and the benefits or outcomes of increased engagement of volunteers for the organization. Social organizations may use this study to increase their understanding of the engagement of volunteers. As a result, volunteers may become more engaged, enabling social organizations to better meet their social missions.

Keywords: volunteer, volunteering, engagement, inclusive leadership, psychological safety, empowerment, retention

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Volunteers provide many resources to social organizations (Bortree & Waters, 2008). They increase the quality and scope of programs and services while reducing costs (Hager & Brudney, 2004) and are considered critical to the operation of many organizations with social missions (Garner & Garner, 2011). Research demonstrates that 47% of Canadians volunteer, providing 156 hours annually, equivalent to 1.1 million full-time jobs (Vezino & Crompton, 2012). Furthermore, an estimated 81% of non-profit organizations and charities across the U.S. utilize volunteers as part of their mission, and many operate entirely on volunteer labor and support (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Research across 15 countries estimates that the value of volunteering combines for 0.9% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) (Salamon et al., 2012, as cited in Studer, 2016), making volunteers a valuable and essential component of social organizations across the globe.

Though volunteers are a critical component of the social organization operating model, leaders of non-profits and charities that utilize volunteers have difficulty retaining them (Gagné et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2011). Just as the number of non-profit organizations continues to increase, the number of people volunteering continues to decline (Edeigba & Singh, 2021). Additionally, recruiting enough volunteers and finding volunteers that fit within the organization's operating schedule are some of the most significant issues that non-profits and charities face within their volunteer programs (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Considering the difficulties that volunteer administrators face in recruiting, retention is considered an operational priority (Garner & Garner, 2011). Therefore, researchers as well as practitioners are beginning to focus less on recruitment, and more on strategies for engaging and motivating volunteers to stay (Ganzevoort & van den Born, 2023). At the same time, current volunteer management

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approaches utilized by non-profit leaders do not sufficiently recognize the uniqueness of volunteers beyond paid staff (Studer, 2016) and create barriers to volunteer engagement (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009).

Traditional volunteer management models are firmly grounded in standard human resources practices (Studer, 2016) and are widely known in the field of volunteerism, yet there has been limited research on which methods are most effective (Einolf, 2018), making their usefulness to the volunteer manager unclear. Additionally, there is a constant debate among volunteer administrators on whether volunteers should be managed at all (Rochester et al., 2010), given the difference between volunteers and paid staff (Mazi, 2015) and both groups have unique needs when it comes to management (Brudney & Meijs, 2009). Moreover, researchers have voiced concerns that traditional volunteer management models create barriers to involvement and have suggested a more collaborative approach that focuses on engagement and encouraging autonomy through empowerment (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). This has moved conversations in volunteer studies from managing volunteers to organizing and engaging volunteers effectively (Rochester et al., 2010). Notably, volunteer administrators require a different leadership style working with volunteers than employees due to the dependence on volunteer support and donations to meet their social mission (Allen et al., 2018) but without the incentive of compensation or an employment contract. Yet there is limited evidence of what approaches might work best in a volunteer context.

Research within a traditional work environment has identified that inclusive leadership (Aslan et al., 2021) and psychological safety (Bakker et al., 2006; Saks, 2006) positively impact engagement. Organizational researchers have described engagement as a positive psychological state that benefits individuals and organizations (Alfes et al., 2016). Engaged individuals give

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more energy towards their organizational role (Kahn, 1990) and are more connected, focused, and integrated within an organization (Rich et al., 2010). In addition, research demonstrates that engagement can help predict organizational commitment, job satisfaction (Saks, 2006), intentions to quit (Saks, 2006; Sanhya & Sulphrey, 2019) and can increase creativity (Gilson & Shalley, 2004), employee performance (Saxena & Srivastava, 2015), and organizational performance (Macey et al., 2011). Thus, engagement provides a competitive advantage for organizations (Rich et al., 2010).

Regardless of the increased interest in engagement in the field of volunteerism, volunteer engagement is still an undefined, and underdeveloped (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) concept that is often misunderstood (Vecina et al., 2012). While volunteers expect leadership and ongoing support when serving an organization (Lee Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002) there is limited research on the social context that motivates a volunteer to continue to engage (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Additionally, the continuous decline in the number of volunteers is problematic for social organizations, creating a need to understand the factors that positively impact engagement and retention among volunteer populations (Harp et al., 2017). Because volunteers are critical to the non-profit operating model (Einolf, 2018) by reducing costs and performing key organizational duties (Malinen & Harju, 2016), creating more engaged and better-retained volunteers will allow social organization to continue operation (Harp et al., 2017) as well as function more effectively and efficiently. Moreover, because non-profits and social organizations provide resources and services that are vital to individuals and communities (National Council, 2019), it is essential to identify an effective volunteer leadership model to encourage engagement.

Even though almost half of Canadians (Vezino & Crompton, 2012) and 65 million Americans (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005) volunteer their time each year, non-profits

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continue to experience a decline in volunteerism (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). At the same time, social organizations have received substantial pressure to spend less money and become more efficient and businesslike (Allen et al., 2018). Coincidentally, research has identified that engagement provides a competitive advantage for organizations, including increased job performance (Rich et al., 2010), enabling social organizations to meet their missions while reducing resources (Kim et al., 2007). Nonetheless, research on engagement in volunteerism is still limited (Malinen & Harju, 2017). Also, there is a lack of understanding of the variables that contribute to engagement and the potential outcomes it provides for a social organization.

Currently social organizations are faced with another challenging task when mobilizing volunteers. They must now develop solutions to create and engage teams of volunteers diverse in age, ethnicity, educational background, and race as volunteer populations continue to become more diverse (Nesbit & Brudney, 2013). Modern volunteer management resources do not provide leaders of volunteers with the tools needed to engage a diverse volunteer population. However, researchers have identified that inclusive leadership and psychological safety can help managers acknowledge appreciation for others and recognize an individual's unique contributions to an organization (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). These practices can provide numerous organizational benefits (Chung et al., 2020), including increased engagement (Choi et al., 2015; Aslan et al., 2021).

Research has identified the importance of creating positive environments to enrich volunteer experiences as a strategy to increase retention (Cho et al., 2020), which includes workspaces that encourage collaboration and idea-sharing (Edmondson et al., 2004). The concept of psychological safety provides an opportunity for volunteers to share their thoughts and be recognized for their diverse talents and skills (Zaman & Abbasi, 2020). Though organizational

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researchers have found a relationship between psychological safety and engagement (Kahn, 1990; Lyu, 2016; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Tiwari & Lenka, 2016; Walters & Diab, 2016), the relationship between psychological safety and engagement of volunteers has yet to be evaluated. Further, research has also identified autonomy and empowerment as having a positive relationship with volunteer engagement (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Both volunteer (Hudson, 2018; Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and organizational (Jose & Mampilly, 2014) studies have found psychological empowerment to positively impact engagement. Further, while psychological empowerment has been identified as a mediator between various concepts and engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2014), the mediating effects of empowerment on inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement in volunteer populations has yet to be tested.

Statement of the Problem

Volunteers provide many resources to non-profits and charities (Bortree & Waters, 2008) and are critical to the social-organization operating model (Garner & Garner, 2011). However, they are difficult to retain (Gagné et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2011), as one-third of volunteers do not continue serving with an organization each year (Corporation, 2007). Though research has identified a relationship between engagement of volunteers and retention (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012;), current volunteer management procedures create obstacles to engagement (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009) and therefore do not provide volunteer managers with the tools to create a more engaged volunteer population. Inclusive leadership has been identified as important for working with diverse groups of individuals, making it a potential solution for engaging diverse and unique volunteer teams (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022). Building on research conducted within a traditional work setting, this study examines the antecedents and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteerism.

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Purpose of the Study

This quantitative study uses structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the anecdotes and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteers. Specifically, this research examines if inclusive leadership (Huang et al., 2020), and psychologically safe environments where volunteers can voice their thoughts and opinions (Hay, 2018), enhance engagement. Additionally, psychological empowerment, which has been found to have a positive relationship with engagement in previous research (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Cho et al., 2020; Harrison et al., 2017; Traeger & Alfes, 2019) is evaluated as a potential mediator. The study population includes volunteers serving the Louisiana 4-H program. The 4-H program, coordinated through Louisiana State University Extension and recognized as a non-profit, mobilizes over 2,000 volunteers state-wide for positive youth development initiatives (Annual Report, 2021). Volunteers serve in roles from judges that help conduct contests to club leaders that provide overall 4-H club leadership (Franks et al., 2020). In addition, over 100 4-H agents provide leadership to volunteers and receive ongoing training and resources for their volunteer management roles.

Research Questions

This study examines the following research question, “*What are the contributors to and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteerism?*” Research has found that inclusive leadership (Aslan et al., 2021) and psychological safety (Bakker et al., 2006; Saks, 2006) are positively associated with engagement. Therefore, this study tests the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement on volunteers. Consistent with previous research, I predict that *inclusive leadership and psychological safety will be positively associated with engagement*. Furthermore, through this research, I assess if engagement has a positive relationship with three expected outcomes of engagement for social organizations:

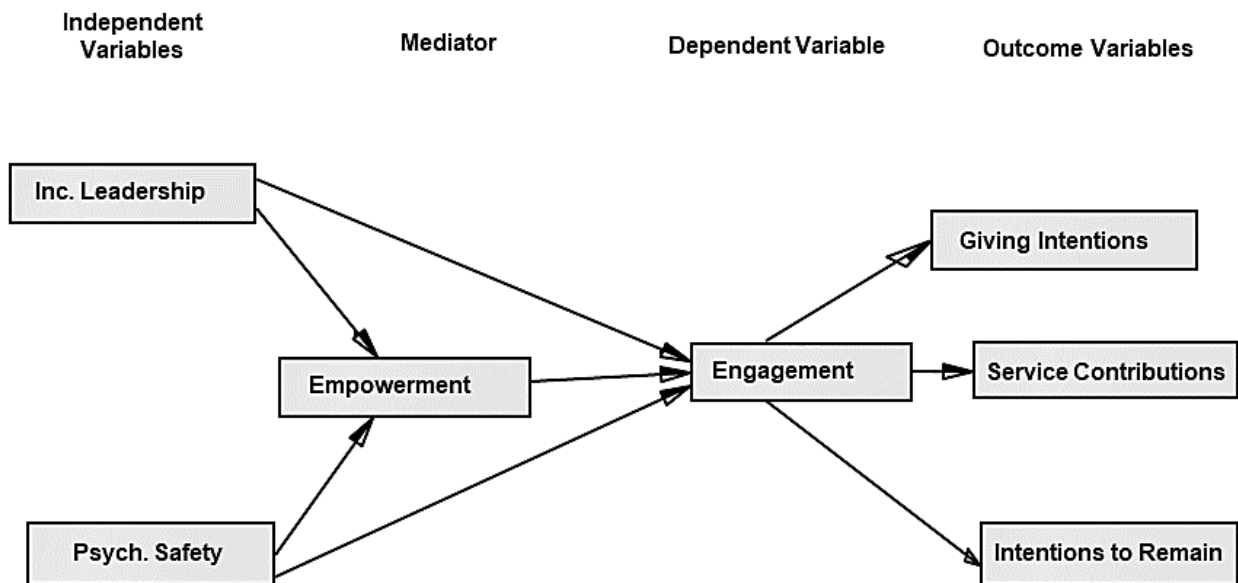
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intentions to give, volunteer service contributions, and intentions to remain. I predict that: 1) engagement will have a positive relationship with intentions to remain; 2) giving intentions; and 3) volunteer service contributions (see Figure 1).

Lastly, psychological empowerment has been identified as a mediator between various variables and engagement. This study examines the mediating effects of psychological safety through an additional research question, “*Does empowerment play a role in the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement?*” Consistent with previous literature on empowerment, I predict that empowerment mediates the relationships between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement.

Figure 1

The Anecdotes and Outcomes of Volunteer Engagement



Note. This figure shows the hypothesized relationships and the direction of those relationships to identify the anecdotes and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteerism.

Significance of the Study

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For the last decade, literature on volunteer mobilization has become more focused on strategies for engaging volunteers rather than task-based management procedures. Many practitioner resources have evolved to incorporate the term engagement, such as the Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement (Association, 2022), and 'Engage', the global voice of leaders of volunteer engagement (Foundation, 2021). Despite the interest, engagement is still a misunderstood (Vecina et al., 2012) and underdeveloped concept in volunteer studies (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). However, some research has been conducted that highlights critical concepts in engaging diverse volunteer populations. For example, studies have emphasized collaborative leadership models that focus on relationship development and empowerment to promote engagement, rather than control and management of volunteers (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Additionally, research has stressed the need to design engagement strategies for an increasingly diverse volunteer population, stressing the need for more flexibility and autonomy in volunteer roles (Speevak-Sladowski et al., 2013), as well as embrace a more collaborative leadership style to promote engagement (Gilbert et al., 2020). While engagement is still not well understood in volunteer research, the benefits of engagement are well known. Volunteers that are more engaged in an organization are more committed (Malinen & Harju, 2017), satisfied (Alfes et al., 2016; Harp et al., 2017; Malinen & Harju, 2017; Vecina et al., 2012), and better retained (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of understanding of the variables that are positively associated with engagement in the context of volunteers, as well as the outcomes of engagement that are beneficial to social organizations.

The terms "management" and "leadership" are often used interchangeably, but they are vastly different concepts (Gavin, 2019). Management focuses on systems for controlling people through order and stability (Bargau, 2015), leadership inspires and influences others to engage in

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a specific activity (Toor & Ofori, 2011). Despite research demonstrating that leadership focuses on development and people (Gavin, 2019), and plays a vital role in engagement (Aslan et al., 2021), volunteer management has dominated the literature on volunteerism for five decades.

Two popular theories in management and organizational studies that provide support for diverse and unique work environments are inclusive leadership and psychological safety (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022). Research in employee-employer relationships has identified that inclusive leadership (Aslan et al., 2021) and psychological safety (Bakker et al., 2006; Saks, 2006) positively impact engagement. Even though these theories are growing in importance and popularity in management studies, to my knowledge there has not been any research that brings together inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and empowerment to study engagement in the context of volunteerism.

This study has implications for both the academic and the practitioner or volunteer manager. Specifically, volunteer engagement is still an underdeveloped theory (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Therefore, for the academic, this study provides a greater understanding of the factors that have a positive relationship with engagement in volunteers. For the practitioner, this research provides a more suitable leadership model that is positively associated with engagement in the context of volunteers, and that considers the uniqueness and diversity of the volunteer workforce (Nesbit & Brudney, 2013). As a result, volunteer managers may reduce volunteer turnover and increase retention, a critical issue for social organizations (Faletehan et al, 2020). Moreover, as non-profits receive public pressure to reduce costs and increase their social missions (Allen et al., 2018), understanding the antecedents and the outcomes of engagement within a volunteer organization could contribute to program effectiveness and efficiency. Also, this research examines potential benefits of engagement to a social organization, including intentions to

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remain, intentions to give, and volunteer service contributions. Identifying solutions for retaining volunteers is critical to sustaining a volunteer workforce and continuing to provide essential services (Smith, 2017). By retaining volunteers, social organizations could increase efficiency by reducing resources allocated towards paid staff, onboarding, and recruitment (Kim et al., 2007). Because raising capital and financial giving is an essential business operation for surviving as a social organization (Maqbool, 2019) increased giving intentions could help a social organization grow in-kind and monetary donations that are essential to program operation. Finally, in a situation where social organizations are having to decrease staff while the need for services continues to increase, increasing service contributions of volunteers, or volunteers provided more hours towards the organization's mission, has provided a solution in the past (Salamon & Spence, 2009). Therefore, increased volunteer service contributions would enable volunteers to complete more tasks, increasing program effectiveness and enabling the organization to better meet community needs.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will help the reader understand the context of each important term in this study:

Volunteer: an individual that provides unpaid help to an organization to whom a worker has no formal obligations (Kang, 2016).

Social organization: Any organization that utilizes volunteers to meet its social mission, including non-profits, charities, and hybrid organizations.

Leader of volunteers: an individual that oversees volunteers serving in an organization. This person is sometimes referred to as a volunteer manager or volunteer administrator and is also considered the practitioner in this research.

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Engagement: the process individuals take to emerge themselves physically, emotionally, and cognitively in their service roles (Kahn, 1990) and will be measured across three facets: physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Rich et al., 2010).

Inclusive leadership: the actions of leaders that acknowledge appreciation for others and recognize their unique contributions. It will be measured across three factors: leader openness, accessibility, and availability (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Psychological safety: when individuals feel comfortable expressing and being themselves (Edmondson et al., 2004), and feel safe enough for social risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999), such as asking questions, sharing ideas, and reporting problems or inefficiencies (Simons, 2018).

Psychological empowerment: described as an individual feeling a sense of control over their work and having the necessary abilities, knowledge, and skills to perform a specific task (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). It is measured across four dimensions, which include meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Jose & Mampilly, 2014).

Limitations of the Study and Researcher Perspective

Though this study has implications for both the academic and practitioner, it does have its limitations. First, this study was conducted specifically within the Louisiana 4-H program. While this research will benefit other social organizations with similar volunteer populations and missions, different volunteer programs may come with unique needs and issues. Next, in my role I have interviewed volunteers who sometimes feel like they lack autonomy in their service roles, even though the resources they provide are essential to the mission. Moreover, I have witnessed situations where volunteers are not always provided a voice in organizational decision-making, which can be problematic because volunteers often have community connections and insight that could benefit the organization if given a voice and an opportunity to provide feedback. These

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statements also demonstrate my biased perspective, which has resulted from working with diverse groups of volunteers over the last 12 years.

Summary

Volunteers are a vital resource to social organizations. They provide their skills, knowledge, and expertise to help organizations meet their social missions while reducing operating costs. While volunteers are an essential component of the social organization operating model, non-profits and charities have difficulty retaining them and spending valuable resources recruiting and onboarding new volunteers.

Volunteer engagement benefits social organizations in many ways. This includes contributing to volunteer intentions to remain, service contributions and giving behavior. However, current volunteer management models of social organizations do not adequately differentiate volunteers from paid staff and potentially contribute to disengagement rather than engagement. While literature in volunteer studies has become more focused on engagement strategies, researchers and practitioners have yet to determine the contributors and outcomes of a more engaged volunteer population. Prior research has identified a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological safety, though these variables have not been studied in the context of volunteers. The following section will describe variables that may contribute to volunteer engagement and the potential outcomes. In chapter three, I describe the quantitative research method I used to evaluate the proposed relationships.

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Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the current field of research on volunteer management and the lack of emphasis on the factors that are positively associated with volunteer engagement. Following this section, I outline the differences between management and leadership, and the relationship between leadership and engagement. Next, I discuss volunteer engagement and the potential benefits that a more engaged volunteer workforce will provide an organization, including involvement, giving, and retention. Further, I will introduce the variables that I predict will contribute to volunteer engagement: inclusive leadership and psychological safety, and empowerment as a mediator. Finally, in the closing section, I present my hypothesized volunteer engagement model that was tested in this study.

The Current State of Volunteer Management

A study on volunteer engagement is not complete without discussing the history and current volunteer mobilization strategies for volunteer administrators. About half a century ago, when social organizations began heavily utilizing volunteers to meet their missions, leaders of volunteers needed resources on how to organize and effectively integrate volunteers into their operating model. As a result, a formal process for effectively managing volunteers emerged (Boyce, 1971). Early in developing a formal model of volunteer mobilization, researchers began looking at employee management processes to help address the management needs of their volunteer workforce (Rochester et al., 2010). Therefore, several volunteer management models were created to help assist with the management process (Culp et al., 1998), incorporating basic human resource practices (Studer, 2016). Some of the early models developed originate from 4-H Youth Development and the U.S. Cooperative Extension Services (Safrit & Schmiesing,

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2012), which relies heavily on volunteers to meet its mission (Boyce, 1971). These models included ISOTURE (Boyce, 1971; Dolan, 1969), the L-O-O-P model (Penrod, 1991), and the GEMS model (Culp et al.,1998). Many of these models are still used today by volunteer administrators.

Table 1

Volunteer Management Models Historically Situated in U.S. Extension Programs

Name	Author and Year	Basis	Components
ISOTURE	V. Milton Boyce, 1971	Provide an overview of tasks required to manage a volunteer program successfully.	Identifying, Selecting, Orientating, Training, Utilizing, Recognizing, and Evaluating.
The Loop Model	Kathryn Penrod, 1991	Volunteer management is a continuous process. This model allows educators to link volunteers to various organizational components.	Locating, Orienting, Operating, and Perpetuating.
GEMS	Ken Culp, III, Catherine A. Deppe, Jaime X. Castillo, Betty J. Wells, 1998	Volunteer managers must be equipped to handle a rapidly changing volunteer base.	Generating, Educating, Mobilizing, and Sustaining.
Modern Volunteer Management	Mary V. Merrill, 2003; Rochester et al., 2010	Volunteer managers should follow a standard list of HRM-related tasks to utilize volunteers in their program successfully.	Developing Volunteer Roles, Recruiting, Selection and Screening, Orientation and Training, Utilization and Supervision, Recognition, and Evaluation.

ISOTURE (Boyce, 1971) was first introduced to volunteer supervisors in 1971 and is still considered a foundational volunteer management model (Schmiesing & Safrit, 2007). ISOTURE helps provide an overview of tasks required to manage a volunteer program (Denny, 2018) by

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focusing on identifying, selecting, orientating, training, utilizing, recognizing, and evaluating volunteers (Boyce, 1971). The LOOP Model, developed by Penrod (1991), another volunteer management model used in 4-H extension programs, stands for locating, orienting, operating, and perpetuating volunteers. It emphasizes that volunteer management is a continuous process and provides a framework for how volunteers can be incorporated into various organizational components. Next, GEMS incorporates the components of earlier models by focusing on generating, educating, mobilizing, and sustaining volunteers. Finally, GEMS expands on previous versions by acknowledging that volunteer managers must be equipped to handle a rapidly changing volunteer population (Culp et al., 1998).

A direct result of the task-based method of mobilizing volunteers that these models promote has been the evolution of a standard list of duties that any volunteer administrator should follow to utilize volunteers within their program successfully (Merrill, 2003; Rochester et al., 2010). This checklist has been called the volunteer management model (Rochester et al., 2010). It typically contains many common elements in the foundational volunteer management models, including developing roles, recruiting, selection, screening, orientation and training, utilization and supervision, recognition, and evaluation.

Gaps in Existing Management Models

Over the last twenty years, the highly formalized and structured management model prevalent in volunteer organizations has been coined “modern” volunteer management (Rochester et al., 2010). Although the model's components are widely known by the volunteer manager, no detailed research demonstrates the positive outcomes of implementing modern management procedures on individuals and organizations (Cuskelly et al., 2006). However, studies have found evidence that a more formal approach to managing volunteers may result in a

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less engaged and involved volunteer workforce (Rochester et al., 2010). Furthermore, incorporated into each element of the modern volunteer management model are policies and procedures to adequately address risks and liabilities concerns for volunteer programs (Rehnberg et al., 2005). While managing risk is critical to the function of a social organization, they sometimes overestimate concerns. Furthermore, overestimating risk and liabilities may create unnecessary bureaucratic procedures and obstacles for an organization's volunteer workforce (Rehnberg et al., 2005), resulting in disengagement of volunteers and key stakeholders.

Relying on volunteer management practices to create an organizational environment that engages and retains volunteers may be problematic. Volunteers serve because they desire to make a difference, not to be managed or supervised (Cnaan & Cascio, 1999). Thus, the formalized process of managing volunteers may obstruct engagement (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Notably, volunteers are not employees and do not have the same incentives for performing their volunteer tasks. Instead, volunteers view their volunteer jobs as leisure and seek more control over their volunteer experiences (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). This is contrary to the goal of modern volunteer management, which is to control volunteers and their roles.

Instead of focusing on components that engage volunteers, modern volunteer management contains elements that negatively contribute to an individual's self-efficacy and ability to control their environment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). This provides further evidence that volunteer management may be disempowering and disengaging volunteers rather than engaging them. In addition, using a step-by-step approach to mobilizing volunteers creates a transactional approach to management by focusing on tasks completed rather than providing meaningful experiences for stakeholders (Franz, 2008). On the other hand, providing meaningful

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experiences for volunteers keeps them engaged in their roles (Schneider & George, 2010), positively affecting retention (Culp et al., 1998).

For each volunteer management model prevalent in social organizations, several more gaps exist for effectively engaging volunteers. For example, in reviewing ISOTURE, Boyce (1971) includes a brief description of sharing information with volunteers and creating autonomy to increase volunteer involvement. However, in developing this section, the author implies that the volunteer manager can control a volunteer's involvement by deciding whether to provide or not to provide critical information or a voice in decision-making processes. Another criticism is that within the topic of evaluation, the process is heavily weighted on the evaluation of the volunteer without considering the volunteer's opportunity to evaluate the organization or provide feedback. Currently, no research demonstrates that evaluating a volunteer contributes to retention (Stirling et al., 2011) though it is a component of every foundational volunteer management model (Boyce, 1971; Culp et al., 1998; Penrod, 1991; Rochester et al., 2010). However, research does show that allowing volunteers to evaluate the program creates a more engaged (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009) and longer retained (Franks & Hebert, 2021) volunteer workforce. Notably, this is the opposite of how evaluation is described within these models.

In looking specifically at the constraints to volunteer engagement within each model, each model has its limitations. ISOTURE, for one, touches very briefly on empowerment to increase volunteer involvement. Additionally, the model is very structured and lacks flexibility, which are opposite strategies for engaging and empowering volunteers (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Cho et al., 2020).

Within Loop (Penrod, 1991), the model falls short by incorporating volunteer evaluation, which has already been identified as ineffective for mobilizing volunteers (Stirling et al., 2001).

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Furthermore, there is no mention of allowing a volunteer to have a voice in program development, which would positively contribute to engagement (Garner & Garner, 2011) and longer retention rates (Franks & Hebert, 2021).

Beyond having a complicated 18-phase structure, the GEMS model does include volunteer empowerment strategies briefly within the concept of sustaining volunteers. The researchers describe how allowing volunteers to recognize their impact and providing them with a fulfilling role is key to retention (Culp et al., 1998). A fulfilling role allows individuals to recognize their impact, thus contributing to empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). However, the section on evaluation is like other models where it discusses the evaluation of the volunteer's accomplishments. Still, it fails to allow the volunteer to evaluate the organization, which would be a component of a more engaging volunteer management mode (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009).

While volunteer administrators have looked at employee management policies to learn how to manage volunteers, volunteers are not employees and do not engage with organizations the same way employees do. Also, and as previously mentioned, volunteers look at their volunteer roles to relax, and commit to inclusive working environments (Waters & Bortree, 2012) that are safe for them to give of themselves (Rochester et al., 2010).

Volunteer management was initially designed to outline the steps needed to integrate volunteers into an existing organization (Franz, 2008). Leaders of volunteers utilized management procedures to organize and control their volunteer workforce (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Studer, 2016) and minimize risk (Graff, 2002). While management is essential for an organization to run smoothly and efficiently, there is still limited research on whether volunteer management has a positive relationship with volunteer engagement. Additionally, management

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policies and procedures are not designed to be a resource for engaging individuals and can be counterproductive (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009).

While volunteer management practices may create unfavorable work environments for volunteers (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009), they still expect leadership and ongoing support when serving within an organization (Lee Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002). Additionally, when social organizations are experiencing a decline in volunteering, volunteer administrators should focus less on management and more on engagement, increasing retention and reducing barriers to volunteering (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Engaging volunteers has positive implications for both the organization and the volunteer (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Organizations that effectively engage volunteers are more efficiently run, more cost-effective, and can more easily adapt to change (York, 2017). Moreover, while one of the goals of effective volunteer management models is to keep volunteers involved, research demonstrates that increased engagement, and not management, can help retain volunteers (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012). This may help reduce administrative costs and allow an organization to run more effectively. Notably, management is not leadership, and it is vital to clarify the differences between these two concepts (Bârgău, 2015). While managers focus on formal systems of controlling people and processes, leaders concentrate on motivating, inspiring, and influencing people to engage in organizational activities (Algahtani, 2014). Thus, leading volunteers is uniquely different from managing employees (Nisbet & Wallace, 2007).

“Volunteer management” has been the focal path to mobilize volunteers for the last 50 years, yet today’s social organizations need to focus on other elements, such as diversity to survive (Campbell, 1997). Rather than relying solely on traditional management practices, there is a growing interest in the role of leadership for retaining and engaging diverse populations of

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volunteers (Ganzevoort & van den Born, 2023). Further, inclusive leadership, which emphasizes uniqueness and different perspectives, is well suited for diverse teams of individuals (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022), such as a typical volunteer organization.

Leadership of Volunteers

Though management procedures dominate the literature, it is leadership that plays a critical role in engagement (Aslan et al., 2021). Research demonstrates that leaders, who supervise and oversee the work of other individuals involved in an organization, are the most fundamental factors when it comes to turnover (Macey et al., 2011). Additionally, motivating individuals to increase engagement is vital to improving organizational performance and maintaining a competitive edge (Aslan et al., 2021). Moreover, leadership has a significant and positive relationship with engagement as leaders provide the structure and support individuals need to be engaged in an organization (Choi et al., 2015). Understanding that support is a vital component of inspiring creativity and innovation from organizational members (Carmeli et al., 2010), the relationship between leadership and engagement of volunteers should be assessed.

When considering the uniqueness and diversity of the volunteer workforce (Nesbit & Brudney, 2013), as well as the public pressure non-profits face to reduce costs and increase their social missions (Allen et al., 2018), identifying a suitable leadership model for engaging diverse groups of volunteers is increasingly difficult. Though recent literature has identified that inclusive leadership, which values uniqueness and diverging perspectives, is well-suited for diverse work environments (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2021) it has not been studied in the context of volunteers. Furthermore, volunteer studies still lack an understanding of the antecedents of engagement, as well as the benefits a more engaged volunteer workforce may provide an organization.

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Theoretical Framework

This next section will give an overview of the theoretical framework I used to study the variables that contribute to engagement of volunteers and the potential outcomes of engagement. The contributors to engagement studied include inclusive leadership and psychological safety, and psychological empowerment was evaluated as a mediator. The outcomes of engagement relevant to practice that were evaluated in this study, include volunteer service contributions, intentions to remain, and intentions to give. I begin the next section by providing an overview of engagement in the context of volunteerism.

Engagement

The concept of “engagement” entered the world of organizational studies with Kahn’s (1990) seminal research on camp counselors and employees at an architecture firm (Alfes et al., 2016). Since then, the term “engagement” has grown in popularity, and news and industry articles claim that it provides a competitive advantage for organizations (Rich et al., 2010). Engagement (also known as worker engagement) is described as “organization members harness[ing] their full selves in active, complete work role performances by driving personal energy into physical, cognitive, and emotional labors” (Rich et al., 2010, p. 619).

Engaged individuals give their cognitive, emotional, and physical energies towards their work roles (Kahn, 1990). Within *physical energy*, an individual utilizing their physical energy towards a work-related task contributes to accomplishing organizational goals because it enables behaviors valued by the organization (Rich et al., 2010). Research has demonstrated that individuals that work physically harder contribute more positively to job performance (Brown & Leigh, 1996 as cited in Rich et al., 2010). *Mental or cognitive energy* contributes positively to an organization by creating a more focused and attentive employee (Kahn, 1990). Research has

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demonstrated that job performance decreases when focus and attentiveness decrease (Weick & Roberts, 1993, as cited in Rich et al., 2010). Lastly, *emotional energy* contributes positively to an organization by enabling employees to meet or exceed the emotional stresses of their work roles resulting in more comprehensive and dependable work performance (Rich et al., 2010).

Most of the research on engagement stems from the original work of Kahn (1990) who researched employee work engagement (Harp et al., 2017). Referred to as personal engagement, Kahn (1990) developed a theory to help understand how people used their personal selves and abilities within their work roles. This theory, which became known as work engagement, described how the more of someone's self and personal energies were utilized to complete their work-related tasks, the greater levels of engagement the individual exhibited (Trent et al., 2020). Rich et al. (2010) advanced Kahn's (1990) work on engagement to explain that engagement is the key to understanding relationships among individual characteristics, organizational factors, and an individual's performance (Rich et al., 2010). They claimed that engagement provided a more comprehensive explanation of the relationships with performance than other well-known concepts that represent a smaller aspect of an individual's self.

Of the contributors to engagement, studies have demonstrated that leadership styles and organizational factors impact levels of engagement (Kahn, 1990) such as organizational support (Bakker et al., 2006; Saks, 2006) and more recently, inclusive leadership (Choi et al., 2015; Aslan et al., 2021). Additionally, research has identified that psychological safety (Bakker et al., 2005, Saks, 2006) and psychological empowerment (Jose & Mampilly, 2014) have positive implications for engagement. Though there is no theory for volunteer engagement, utilizing work or job engagement theories can help investigate how volunteers become engaged within an organization. For example, Kahn (1990) claims that supportive organizational environments

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created higher levels of engagement, which creates benefits for organization (Alfes et al., 2016). Given that there is a relationship between engagement and job performance (Rich et al., 2010) engagement is a relevant theory with potential implications for volunteer studies.

Engagement of Volunteers

For the last decade, literature and resources on volunteer administration have become more focused on strategies for engaging volunteers rather than managing them. Many practitioner resources have evolved to incorporate the term engagement, including Alive, the Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement, founded in 2009 (Alive, 2022), Engage, the global voice of leaders of volunteer engagement (founded in 2021) (Foundation, 2021), and the National Alliance for Volunteer Engagement (founded in 2017) (Alliance, n.d.). In volunteer research, there are six times more papers incorporating volunteer engagement in the last ten years than in the previous decade (170,000 compared to 27,900) (google scholar, n.d.). Despite the interest from practitioners and researchers, volunteer engagement is still a new concept (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019), and research is still limited (Malinen & Harju, 2016). Currently, volunteer studies lack a central definition, and clear understanding of what factors have a positive relationship with engagement and the benefits it provides an organization.

Like employee engagement, volunteer engagement is the process of a volunteer contributing more effort to their volunteer tasks. This is the direct result of feeling more fulfilled in their volunteer role and more able to be themselves (Alfes et al., 2016). Others have defined it as a motivational state (Alfes et al., 2016) that increases organizational contributions from individuals and positively engages them in their tasks (Kang, 2016). Engaged volunteers includes volunteers working to accomplish tasks and becoming more involved in an organization in many ways (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009).

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While most studies on engagement emphasize paid staff, studying the engagement of volunteers has benefits for volunteers and social organizations (Malinene & Harju, 2016). Given that there is a relationship between engagement and job performance (Rich et al., 2010), more engaged individuals within an organization give more of themselves into a role; they get more work done. As a result, organizations become more efficient and effective. For social organizations, a more engaged volunteer workforce could enable social organizations to meet their missions better while reducing costs (Kim et al., 2007). Additionally, engagement is vital for leaders, given that disengagement leads to reduced commitment and detachment from one's role (May et al., 2004). In social organizations, volunteers lack an employee contract and are free to come and go as they please. If they are not engaged within an organization, there is little motivation to keep serving. Keeping volunteers engaged is critical to organizational effectiveness (Conduit, 2019) though the organizational environment is a vital component of volunteer engagement (Alfes et al., 2016). Understanding the role that organizational factors, such as leadership, play in keeping a volunteer engaged helps organizations increase engagement and better meet their goals and objectives.

In recent years researchers have begun to study volunteer engagement using both qualitative (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009) and quantitative (Malinen & Harju, 2017; Shantz et al., 2014; Traeger & Alfes, 2019) research methods. For example, Barnes and Sharpe (2009) utilized a case study approach to research methods of engaging volunteers rather than managing them by highlighting volunteer collaboration, relationship development, and empowerment in parks and recreation volunteers. Next, Speevak-Sladowski, et al. (2013) explored current trends in how volunteers engage with the organization, emphasizing the need for volunteer managers to learn engagement strategies for Canada's gradually increasingly diverse volunteer base. A year later,

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Shantz et al. (2014) utilized volunteer engagement to better understand a volunteer's motivations and commitment to volunteering in a study of 534 volunteers in the United Kingdom. In their findings, engagement mediated the relationship between value motive and time spent volunteering. Additionally, the researchers found that with increasing levels of engagement, volunteers also increased their time spent volunteering. Their research demonstrated that engagement could help with understanding the elements that explain how much time a volunteer dedicates towards serving.

Next, Alfes et al. (2016) advanced the literature on volunteer engagement by studying 1,064 volunteers within a wildlife charity in the United Kingdom. They found that volunteer engagement was positively associated with various levels of organizational support. Also, they discovered that increased volunteer engagement also positively impacted volunteer happiness, social worth, and retention. Their research advanced the field by identifying the role of organizational support in fostering engagement and the positive relationship between engagement and retention (Alfes et al., 2016).

In 2017, Malinen and Harju's work on job and organizational engagement involved a survey of 221 volunteers in New Zealand serving in a variety of social organizations. Their research emphasized the significance of organizational support to enhance volunteer satisfaction and commitment, utilizing organizational engagement as a mediator in the relationship. Their research highlighted the importance of engagement to explain a volunteer's motivation to continue serving (Malinen & Harju, 2016).

Several years later, Traeger & Alfes (2019) utilized volunteer engagement as an outcome in their study of what they call high-performance human resources practices, or ability, motivation, and opportunity enhancing practices. They found these practices were positively

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associated with volunteer engagement and a volunteer's organizational identification. Further, they discovered that volunteer engagement increases when volunteers are empowered and have an identity within the organization. Their research helped identify the positive relationship between empowerment and engagement.

In more recent literature, a group of researchers studying community gardening volunteers and the leadership styles of garden managers stressed the importance of a collaborative approach to community volunteer programs, as well as the need for volunteer managers to receive training to work with diverse populations of volunteers (Gilbert et al., 2020). Their research advanced the field by identifying the positive role that a collaborative leadership style, volunteer input and voice, had in engaging diverse community volunteer groups.

Further, Edeigba and Singh (2021) used a case study approach to identify several factors that impact engagement of volunteers and retention. These factors supported the themes in previous research. They included prior knowledge of the organization's mission and vision and clarity of volunteer role, management support, role flexibility, internal communication, and belongingness as some of the main themes that contribute to engagement and retention.

Outcomes of Engagement

Volunteer engagement has implications for volunteers, organizations, and society (Alfes et al., 2016; Shantz et al., 2014; Vecina et al., 2013). Volunteer engagement has been found to be positively associated with volunteer commitment (Malinen & Harju, 2017) satisfaction (Alfes et al., 2016; Harp et al., 2017; Malinen & Harju, 2017; Vecina et al., 2012) and retention (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012). Three variables that are important to the volunteer manager that I study as potential outcomes of volunteer engagement, include retention (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012) as intentions to remain, giving

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(Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011) as intentions to give, and involvement (Shantz et al., 2014) as service contributions. While these variables have been studied in separate literature, I study them together as part of my research.

Intentions to remain. Retention is and continues to be a critical issue for volunteer managers (Waters & Bortree, 2012). As volunteer rates decline (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), social organizations continue to receive pressure to reduce resources and become more efficient (Allen et al., 2018) making volunteer retention more significant (Smith, 2017). Unfortunately, organizations that use volunteers to meet their social missions often struggle to retain them (Gagné et al., 2019) as research shows only 1/3 of volunteers return to their volunteer roles each year (Corporation, 2007). Therefore, retention is considered an operational priority (Garner & Garner, 2011) and identifying solutions for retaining volunteers is critical to sustaining a volunteer workforce and continuing to provide essential services (Smith, 2017).

Research demonstrates that engagement of volunteers leads to volunteer retention (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012;). Including measures for intentions to remain as an outcome of engagement in this model will help volunteer administrators understand the variables that contribute to engagement and ultimately lead to retention. In this study, retention is studied using 'intent to remain' with the organization. Intent to remain helps determine if a volunteer plans to continue serving (Garner & Garner, 2011), increasing the likelihood that the volunteer will be retained.

Intentions to give. Giving time and money is essential to the non-profit sector (McKeever, 2015). Increasing giving behavior and charitable financial contributions is essential for social organizations to continue operation (Maqbool, 2019). Increased giving intentions could help a social organization grow in-kind and monetary donations that are essential to business

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operations, especially as competition grows and funding continues to decline (Ariella, 2023). However, there has not been any studies identifying the relationship between engagement of volunteers and volunteer giving behavior, even though literature on fundraising and stakeholder engagement demonstrates a positive relationship between engagement and stakeholder giving (Radcliffe, 2011). Additionally, volunteers often donate to organizations that they have served as a volunteer because they are more familiar with the organization and have pre-established trust (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011). Prior research also suggests that volunteers that are more engaged are more likely to be donors (Garner & Garner, 2011; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Considering that volunteers are organizational stakeholders and valuable human assets (Huang et al., 2020), often giving resources to organizations beyond just time (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011), the relationship between volunteer giving intentions and engagement should be evaluated. In this study, the relationship between engagement of volunteers and volunteer giving behavior is assessed using volunteer giving intentions. Increasing giving intentions could provide additional resources for social organizations, enabling them to continue their operation.

Volunteer service contributions. Increasing volunteer service contributions has provided social organizations with a way to continue operation in a situation of decreased staffing (Salamon & Spence, 2009). Further, increased volunteer service contributions would allow more tasks to be completed by volunteers, thus increasing program effectiveness, reducing costs, and enabling the organization to better meet community needs. An engaged volunteer provides more energy towards their work-related tasks and is more involved in the organization. In volunteer studies, volunteer service contributions are studied in numerous ways, often in service hours provided (Shantz et al., 2014), increased volunteer roles performed, or collaborations initiated or maintained. Previous research has identified a relationship between

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engagement and service hour participation (Shantz et al., 2014). Understanding volunteer engagement's relationship with service contributions, measured by time or service hours provided, may help an organization continue operation.

This next section will discuss the variables tested as antecedents of engagement in volunteers, including inclusive leadership and psychological safety, and the role of empowerment as a mediator. Studies demonstrate that inclusive leadership (Aslan et al., 2021) and psychological safety (May et al., 2004) positively affect engagement in employer-employee studies. Additionally, research demonstrates that psychological empowerment is a mediator for engagement (Hudson, 2018).

Contributors to Engagement

While there has been limited research on the contributors to engagement in volunteers, most studies have focused on individual aspects, such as autonomy, and motivation (Alfes et al., 2016). Of the research that has been completed, studies have identified relationship development (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009), volunteer voice (Gilbert et al., 2020) and collaboration (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2020) as contributors to engagement in volunteers. Additionally, research has found that empowerment (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and identity within the organization (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) have a positive relationship with volunteer engagement. Research has also found that volunteer engagement was positively affected by various levels of organizational support (Alfes et al., 2016) whereas volunteers who encountered greater organizational constraints and role ambiguity were less engaged (Harp et al., 2017).

While the research on volunteer engagement has provided some understanding of what contributes to a more engagement volunteer work force, it does not completely acknowledge the

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foundation of worker engagement that highlights a supportive organizational environment as more critical to engagement than individual factors (Alfes et al., 2016). Though volunteer engagement is unique from worker engagement, collaborative (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2020) and supportive (Alfes et al., 2016) environments have been a theme in volunteer engagement research. However, there is limited application of these current and relevant theories to help create the organizational environments that volunteers desire to become more engaged.

Two theories in management studies that provide support for diverse and collaborative environments are inclusive leadership and psychological safety. Inclusive leadership has been found to create a sense of inclusion and psychological safety among diverse work teams, allowing unique individuals to contribute their own perspectives (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022). These two theories have not been studied in association with engagement in volunteer studies, even though research has identified that inclusive leadership (Aslan, 2021) and psychological safety (Bakker et al., 2005, Saks, 2006) are positively associated with engagement.

Though briefly mentioned, literature on volunteer administrator leadership styles centers on transformational (Dwyer et al., 2013; Almas & Perez-Munoz, 2020) and servant leadership (Allen et al., 2018; Franz, 2008; Schneider & George, 2010; Stedman, 2004). However, a volunteer workforce is often more diverse than typical work teams because volunteer programs are open to individuals across multi-generations and cultures and of different educational backgrounds, working together to accomplish the same tasks. Also, research demonstrates that the volunteer workforce will become increasingly more diverse over the next 30 years, including by age, ethnicity, educational background, and race (Nesbit & Brudney, 2013). Unfortunately, increased diversity is not considered in volunteer program development, as only 27% of social organizations consider diversity and inclusion in strategic planning (Johnson, 2018). Some

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countries are beginning to see the need to mobilize a diverse volunteer work force and are putting strategic plans into place, such as the Netherlands recent action plan for green volunteers (Ganxevoort & vanden Born, 2023). As this trend continues, a more relevant leadership style may be needed to engage volunteers today and, in the future. Moreover, this leadership style should consider the diversity and uniqueness of organizational members (Studer, 2016) and encourage belonging (Chung et al., 2020). Coincidentally, researchers have identified inclusive leadership as a potential solution to enable uniqueness and belonging and engage diverse workforces in organizational processes (Randel et al., 2018). By emphasizing uniqueness and different perspectives, it is well suited for diverse teams of individuals (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022), such as a typical volunteer organization.

Within inclusive leadership, leaders allow followers to share views and provide input, making them open, available, and accessible to followers (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmonson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018). Thus, relationships are a focal point of inclusive leadership (Carmeli et al., 2010) and inclusive leadership is a form of relational leadership (Carmeli et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2020). Furthermore, successful volunteer mobilization is all about relationships (Franz, 2008). Research has identified that strong and collaborative relationships with volunteer populations can increase volunteer involvement and engagement (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Additionally, relationship development and maintenance strategies are critical to the sustainability of social organizations (Harrison et al., 2017). Therefore, identifying a volunteer leadership model that utilizes relationships as a focal point is vital for volunteer retention and the overall success of a non-profit or charity.

Considering the tremendous pressure social organizations are receiving to become more efficient and use fewer resources (Allen et al., 2018), inclusive leadership would be a more

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suitable model to increase engagement. The theory is most applicable to organizational environments that are complex, uncertain, and depend on organizational members to develop creative strategies to maintain operation (Carmeli et al., 2010). Moreover, although inclusive leadership overlaps with other leadership theories, such as authentic leadership, inclusive leadership is more focused on belongingness and uniqueness (Randel et al., 2018) and suitable for diverse teams (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2021). In further recognizing the positive relationship that belonging (Farid et al., 2020) and uniqueness (Studer, 2016) have on volunteer retention, the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement of volunteers should be studied. However, the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement of volunteers has yet to be studied.

Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership includes analyzing the philosophies of top management in creating diverse and inclusive workspaces (Shore et al., 2011). The behaviors of leaders place a significant role in creating an inclusive environment as leaders have an important impact on the individual experiences of team members (Shore et al., 2011). They also shape behaviors and provide recognition and rewards (Nishii & Mayer 2009). Within an inclusive leadership model, leaders are more supportive and welcome questions from all team members (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), providing the support that volunteers desire (Lee Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002, 2002). They also create an environment where all members of an organization feel equal and appreciate the contributions of all followers, regardless of their hierarchical level (Aslan et al., 2021). This is vital for volunteers who are often disadvantaged within the organizational hierarchy (Fahey, 2005).

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As organizations attempt to keep diverse teams of individuals engaged and involved in the workplace, they have found inclusion leadership to provide many unique organizational benefits. These benefits include improving worker, and organizational outcomes, increased team engagement and psychological safety (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), job engagement (Choi et al., 2015; Aslan et al., 2021), creativity (Randel et al., 2018; Fu et al., 2022), employee voice (Younas et al., 2022), job performance (Randel et al., 2018) and retention (Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Randel et al., 2018).

Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) first described inclusive leadership as the actions and words of leaders that value and welcome the unique contributions of others. Through this process, individuals can collaborate on projects and improvements regardless of organizational status. Therefore, all voices are valued and involved in decision-making within inclusive leadership, even those typically not always heard. To encourage inclusivity, leaders are open, accessible, and available (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmonson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018). In demonstrating *openness*, leaders take responsibility for failures, share vision, and mentor organizational members (Kahn, 2019). Within *accessibility*, leaders provide feedback in a timely matter, allowing organizational members to understand better the impact of their efforts on organizational outcomes (Kahn et al., 2020). Lastly, within *availability*, leaders are more available and ready to listen to the needs of all organizational members (Javed, 2018).

In 2009, Nishii and Mayer expanded the research on inclusive leadership by incorporating leader-member exchange to describe how leaders must create strong relationships with group members, which builds an inclusive organizational environment that allows all members to be involved in organizational decision-making. In addition, they surveyed 4,500 employees working within a large grocery store chain in the U.S. to discover that inclusive

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practices, where leaders develop high-quality relationships with all followers, result in reduced turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

Carmeli et al. (2010) expanded on Nembhard & Edmondson's (2006) single-construct 3-item scale of inclusive leaders by introducing a multi-dimensional 9-item scale of openness, accessibility, and availability. They also argued that providing an employee with both autonomy and support would have a positive impact on creativity, which is essential for organizations that exist in competitive or uncertain environments, much like social organizations that receive tremendous pressure to become more businesslike while operating with reduced resources (Allen et al., 2018). In addition, their research demonstrated that leader inclusiveness was positively associated with an employee's involvement in creative work (Carmeli et al., 2010).

Though still an untested model, researchers expanding on the inclusive leadership concepts of belonging and uniqueness (Randel et al., 2018) incorporated various inclusive leadership theories to construct a framework to better understand how leaders can increase the effectiveness of diverse work teams. They also described inclusive leadership as a leader's behavior that facilitates belonging in team members while maintaining uniqueness, allowing individuals to fully contribute to group tasks. This leads to greater work group identification, psychological empowerment, increased creativity, job performance, and retention. The authors identify five behaviors of leaders that contribute to an individual's perception of inclusion, including support, ensuring justice and equity, shared decision making, and encouraging and helping diverse member contributions (Randel et al., 2018).

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Table 2

Inclusive Leadership Versus Other Forms of Leadership in Volunteer Studies

<i>Theory</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Elements</i>	<i>Potential gaps</i>
<i>Inclusive Leadership</i>	Leaders acknowledge appreciation for others and recognize their unique contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).	Three factors: leader openness, accessibility, availability.	N/A
<i>Servant Leadership</i>	Leader's desire to motivate and guide followers, offer hope, and provide a more carrying experience through establishing quality relationships (Greenleaf, 1977).	Two constructs: ethical behavior and concern for subordinates.	Does not consider the unique contributions and needs of the current diverse volunteer workforce.
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	Focuses on change. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders (Bass, 1990)	Focuses on four factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.	Can result in overdependence on the leader, especially in a volunteer leadership role where the leader cannot always be present, and autonomy or empowerment is vital to organization survival. Additionally, considering the turnover in social organizations, leadership dependence can be problematic.
<i>Authentic Leadership</i>	When leaders know their thoughts and behaviors within the environment they lead. Leaders are seen as both in tune with their authenticity and how to coach followers to achieve common organizational goals (Maximo et al., 2019)	The multi-dimensional construct includes self-awareness, balanced processing, moral perspective, and relational transparency.	Authentic leadership is focused on the authenticity of the leader. Whereas inclusive leadership is focused on the uniqueness of the followers, creating an environment of belonging and allowing them to contribute their unique talents and perspectives.

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Inclusive leadership and volunteer engagement. In volunteer engagement research, inclusive leadership is a new concept. However, organizational studies have begun to evaluate inclusive leadership as a solution to meet the unique needs of their evolving workforce and increase belonging (Randel et al., 2018), a crucial factor in volunteer retention (Farid et al., 2020). Furthermore, inclusive practices have increased volunteer involvement (Bortree, 2010; Bortree & Waters, 2014) and are positively associated with retention (Garner & Garner, 2016). Also, creating inclusive organizational environments where leaders are more available and accessible (Nembhard & Edmonson, 2006; Carmeli et al., 2010; Randel et al., 2018) can increase volunteer satisfaction and volunteer referral (Wu et al., 2019). As a result of increased satisfaction and attracting more volunteers through referral, social organizations may experience an even more significant increase in volunteer engagement.

Critical components of inclusive leadership are belonging (Yanay & Yanay, 2008; Farid et al., 2020), valuing the unique abilities of individuals in an organization (Randel et al., 2018), and feeling connected and supported (Garner & Garner, 2011), which has a positive relationship with volunteer commitment and retention. Moreover, considering the diverse work teams in volunteer organizations and the relationship between belonging (Yanay & Yanay, 2008), uniqueness (Studer, 2016), and volunteer retention, inclusive leadership is a concept with implications for volunteer engagement.

While the relationship between leaders and followers is central to the inclusive leadership model (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010), volunteer engagement is all about relationships (Franz, 2008). For non-profits and charities, working collaboratively with a diverse volunteer population helps build stronger relationships (Bortree & Waters, 2008) and contributes positively to retention (Bortree & Waters, 2008; Gagné et al., 2019; Haung et al., 2020). Additionally,

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creating an inclusive environment for volunteers allows them to feel more competent, autonomous, and connected within the organization (Gagné et al., 2019). Volunteers who feel connected will experience belonging and identification within a group setting and be more easily retained (Lynch, 2000). This allows the social organization to improve operations by not spending time and resources continuously recruiting and training new volunteers.

Psychological Safety

Organizational performance and success are achieved through collaboration and idea-sharing among individuals involved in an organization (Edmondson et al., 2004). To feel like the organizational environment is welcoming enough for idea sharing, people need to feel safe to express their true selves. People feel safe in open and supportive environments (Kahn, 1990). For members of an organization to feel comfortable sharing ideas, they must feel psychologically safe. Psychological safety, studied in relationship with inclusive leadership (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2021) provides a greater understanding of the safe environment individuals need to grow, learn, and contribute within their organization (Zaman & Abbasi, 2020).

Studies have identified that psychological safety plays a role in the relationships between various leadership and organizational qualities and engagement, such as leader inclusiveness (Nembhard & Edmonson, 2006), justice (Lyu, 2016), and supervisor relations (May et al., 2004) and engagement. Leaders are the major contributors to psychological safety in workers (Edmondson, 1999). Leaders can effectively develop a sense of psychological safety in workers by enabling individuals in an organization to feel appreciated and comfortable expressing themselves (Carmeli et al., 2010). In utilizing an inclusive leadership model, leaders can increase psychological safety in organizational members by demonstrating openness, availability, and accessibility (Edmondson, 2004). Additionally, inclusive leaders can help work teams overcome

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issues of status that might be detrimental to psychological safety (Edmondson, 2006), such as the difference in the status of a volunteer versus an employee. Therefore, inclusive leadership provided by the leaders is an essential component of facilitating engagement in psychological safety research.

In a psychologically safe work environment, individuals feel safe and encouraged to be recognized for their unique talents and skills (Zaman, 2020). These psychologically safe work environments provide many benefits to organizations, including increased team performance (Edmondson, 1999) and learning behavior (Edmondson, 1999; Zaman & Abbasi, 2020), and engagement (Kahn, 1990; Lyu, 2016; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Tiwari & Lenka, 2016; Walters & Diab, 2016). Additionally, psychological safety has been positively linked to retention or intention to stay (Hansen, 2021).

Research has demonstrated that environments that are more psychologically safe promote higher levels of engagement for individuals (Ge, 2020; Kahn, 1990; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Psychological safety was first introduced by Schein and Bennis in 1965 in change research and described as an organizational quality that reduces fear of failure, breaks down barriers, and encourages connections (Zaman, 2020), allowing organizations to create impactful change (Edmondson et al., 2004). Then in 1985, Schein described psychological safety in an individual and an organization as being able to implement a needed change without feeling a loss of one's honor or identity. "If the change I have to make threatens my whole self, I will deny the data and the need for change" (Schein, 1990, p. 323). They claimed that leadership could create psychological safety by providing the vision that allows the organization to move forward. Later Kahn described psychological safety as "feeling able to show oneself without fear of negative consequence to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). He explained that when an

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environment is unpredictable or inconsistent, individuals will see engagement as unsafe and therefore not invest themselves in the organization. In contrast, people will engage themselves in work environments where they feel safe enough to be their true selves. Kahn (1990) described four factors that promote an individual's psychological safety: interpersonal relationships, group, and intergroup dynamics, management style and process, and organizational norms.

Psychological safety was expanded in 1999 by Edmondson studying team safety and learning behavior. They described psychological safety as a situation where people are comfortable expressing and being themselves (Edmondson et al., 2004), contributing to an inclusive environment safe for social risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999). Examples of risk-taking may include asking questions, sharing ideas, and reporting problems or inefficiencies (Simons, 2018). Additionally, Edmondson (2003) described psychological safety as lower costs and limiting the need to monitor employee behavior, which is vital for social organizations that often operate with limited resources and limited paid staff.

In 2006, Nembhard and Edmondson explored contributors to psychological safety by incorporating leader inclusiveness and professional status and the implications on the health care industry. Within her study, she discovered that leader inclusiveness, the actions of leaders who demonstrate appreciation for other people's unique contributions, helped cross-disciplinary teams overcome the effects of status differences and enabled collaboration to improve services.

Though psychological safety has not been researched in volunteer studies, research has identified that creating positive environments to enrich volunteer experiences can have a positive impact on volunteer retention (Cho et al., 2020). Also, research has demonstrated that volunteers that feel supported throughout the organization feel more empowered and are more engaged in their volunteer experience (Lee Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002,). Additionally, volunteers want to

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feel welcomed and valued for the services that they provide (Rochester et al., 2010); therefore, creating a safe, positive, and supportive environment, or a psychologically safe workspace for volunteers may have a positive impact on volunteer engagement and retention.

When combined with leader inclusiveness, psychological safety can also help overcome status issues in a volunteer organization that might be detrimental to psychological safety. While volunteers are sometimes not involved in decision-making because they are seen as organizational "helpers" (Fahey, 2005), allowing volunteers to provide feedback is a good thing, and social organizations should want to capture feedback from their volunteers (Garner & Garner, 2001). Volunteers have critical information to help organizations become more efficient and effective given their volunteer roles. In addition, psychological safety helps overcome the issues of power and organizational placement when it comes to leaders and followers, as "formal power relations affect perceptions of interpersonal risk in the workplace" (Edmondson et al., 2004, p. 14). Those of higher rank find it more appropriate to raise questions or ideas (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), making it less likely that a volunteer will offer feedback and suggestions to improve the organization. Therefore, the relationship between psychological safety and engagement of volunteers should be evaluated.

Psychological safety and engagement. Psychological safety is important for volunteers to continue serving an organization, as service to the community is a leisure experience (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). If a work environment is favorable and predictable, individuals will feel passionate about their organizational tasks and continue working (Lyu, 2016). Additionally, if a volunteer does not feel comfortable serving an organization, there is no formal contract holding them to the organization, and they can leave at any time. This makes a psychologically safe and welcoming environment important for retaining and engaging volunteers (Simons, 2018).

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Though the implications of psychological safety in volunteer studies have not been heavily studied, research has identified that the components of psychological safety have positive implications for volunteers and volunteer organizations. For example, psychological safety is a form of organizational support (Kahn, 1990), and organizational support is positively associated with job engagement (Bakker et al., 2006; Saks, 2006). Moreover, creating an environment where a volunteer feels comfortable speaking up in an organizational setting can increase satisfaction and retention (Garner & Garner, 2011). Moreover, while a critical component of psychological safety is a supportive environment where one can have their voice heard (Rich et al., 2010), research does demonstrate that creating opportunities for volunteer voice has a positive effect on volunteer engagement (Allen & Prange, 2020). Other research has identified that volunteers who felt they had a voice in organizational decision-making were more involved and had longer volunteer tenures (Franks & Hebert, 2021). Interestingly, allowing individuals to actively contribute to organizational decision-making, a component of psychological safety, enables engagement and is vital to organizational performance (West, 1990).

Psychological safety is also a crucial component of the organizational environment of volunteer organizations. Due to the limited staffing, resources, and the heavy reliance on diverse groups of volunteers, much of the work in social organizations is collaborative, involving unique teams of paid and unpaid staff sharing information and tasks. Psychological safety provides an organizational environment that allows diverse teams of individuals to share information, ideas, and tasks (Edmondson et al., 2004).

The Mediating Effect of Empowerment

In management research, strategies that contribute to worker empowerment are critical to organizational effectiveness (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) and success (Jose & Mampilly, 2014).

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Even though management literature is saturated with tactics to increase leader influence (Conger, 1989), researchers have discovered that empowerment of followers is essential to managerial success (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Psychological empowerment has been identified as a mediator between inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior (Javed et al., 2019), project success (Khan et al., 2020; Muhammad et al., 2021), and employee voice (Younas et al., 2022). Also, it has been found to mediate the relationship between psychological safety and innovative work behavior (Zhu et al., 2018) and performance (Jha, 2018). Moreover, research has identified that psychological empowerment is a predictor of engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2014).

In volunteer studies, empowerment can be described as a mechanism for allowing volunteers to gain confidence and competence in their volunteer roles (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and increasing volunteer involvement (Boyce, 1971) and engagement (Hudson, 2018; Traeger & Alfes, 2019). However, most of the management models volunteer administrators use encourage a formal approach to managing volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006), leaving volunteers with little autonomy in the volunteer-manager relationship (Fahey, 2006). Interestingly, volunteers often prefer more power over their volunteer experience and frequently reject current volunteer management methods that encourage control (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009), potentially contributing to volunteer turnover, which could be detrimental for the non-profit organization.

Empowerment is defined as an individual feeling a sense of control over their work and having the necessary abilities, knowledge, and skills to perform a specific task (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). First, Conger and Kanungo (1988) introduced empowerment as a process of increasing the motivational concept of self-efficacy in members of an organization by removing organizational conditions that contribute to powerlessness, including lack of role clarity, high

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control, and inadequate communication, and limited access to leadership. Next, Conger (1989) identified the five stages of the empowerment process. The five steps consist of: identifying the conditions contributing to the feeling of powerlessness; manager/organization employing empowering managerial practices; manager/organization removing conditions of powerlessness and increasing self-efficacy; subordinates experience empowering results; empowerment leads to the greater initiative, motivation, and persistence.

Further, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) researched empowerment beyond self-efficacy and a multi-dimensional concept defined as increased intrinsic task motivation emerging from the four cognitions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. From an interpretive perspective, they created a model to demonstrate the cognitive process that an individual goes through to experience an increase in intrinsic task motivation.

Expanding on Thomas and Velthouse's work, Spreitzer (1995) developed and validated a model of empowerment that included four psychological empowerment dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Jose & Mampilly, 2014). The four psychological empowerment dimensions include: *Meaning*, defined as a fit between a person's work responsibilities and their values, beliefs, and behaviors (Kraimer et al., 1999); *Competence*, also known as self-efficacy, is described as a person's belief in his/her ability to skillfully perform the required activities or roll (Spreitzer, 1995); *Self-determination*, defined as exercising autonomy and having a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one's actions and making decisions regarding work-related tasks and function (Spreitzer et al., 1999); and lastly, *Impact*, described as whether or not the individual feels that they are making a difference within the organization they are working (Jose & Mampilly, 2014).

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Psychological empowerment and engagement. Research has identified autonomy as increasing volunteer role satisfaction, wellbeing (Farid et al., 2020), and engagement (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). While there is limited research on the relationship empowerment has with volunteer engagement, studies have emphasized empowerment strategies to engage (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Cho et al., 2020; Harrison et al., 2017; Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and retain volunteers (Cho et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2007). Though the mediating effects of empowerment on engagement-inclusive leadership-safety have not been tested in current research, studies have shown that psychological empowerment serves as a predictor of engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2014). Also, it has been identified as a mediator within the relationship between perceived supervisor support, a component of inclusive leadership and a psychologically safe environment, and engagement (Jose & Mampilly, 2015). Additionally, empowerment has been identified as the mediator between high-performance H.R (Human Resources). and engagement (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and inclusive leadership and program success (Khan et al., 2020). Considering these findings, the implications of empowerment as a mediator are presented in this study.

Gaps and Hypotheses

This study contributes to theory and practice in several ways. First, this research brings together relevant theories in management studies that help social organizations understand the leadership style that creates a more engaged volunteer population. In reviewing the contributors to engagement that have been identified in the literature, it becomes evident that a transactional and highly structured approach to managing volunteers is potentially disengaging, however most of the existing volunteer mobilization literature is transactional and highly structured. Furthermore, while management is about directing and controlling people, leadership inspires, motivates, and engages individuals in their work (Algahtani, 2014). Studies have demonstrated

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that leadership styles and organizational factors directly influence levels of engagement (Kahn, 1990) and research has identified a relationship between transformational and servant leadership and volunteer engagement (Allen et al., 2018; Schneider & George, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 1999). Though transformative leadership has been shown to have a positive relationship with engagement of volunteers, the model can result in overdependence on the leader (Lin et al., 2017), which can be problematic in a volunteer leadership role where the leader cannot always be present. In social organizations where volunteer management staffing and resources are scarce (Urban Institute, 2004), autonomy or empowerment is vital to organization survival. Additionally, considering the turnover in social organizations (National Council, 2021), leadership dependence can be challenging. Inclusive leadership on the other hand, acknowledges appreciation for others and recognizes their unique contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006) putting emphasis on the followers' contributions rather than the leader. Researching inclusive leadership for social organizations may create a more collaborative environment for volunteers, potentially increasing engagement in the process, which has many organizational benefits (Alfes et al., 2016).

My next contribution involves providing a greater understanding of the factors that contribute to a more engaged volunteer population, and the outcomes of increased engagement that are relevant to volunteer managers and social organizations. Though it is well understood that an engaged volunteer workforce is vital to the success of non-profits and charities (Harp et al., 2017), there has been limited research on the contributing factors to volunteer engagement (Malinen & Harju, 2016). Furthermore, engagement is still an underdeveloped area of literature in volunteer studies (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Most research has focused on individual aspects, such as autonomy, and motivation (Alfes et al., 2016), while two incomplete areas include a

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volunteer leaders' impact and the organizational environment (Cho et al., 2020) and their relationship with volunteer engagement. Also, there is still limited information on the organizational context that motivates a volunteer to continue to engage (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and little application of current and relevant theories that help create the supportive and organizational environments that volunteers require to be more engaged. In employee studies, both inclusive leadership (Aslan et al., 2021) and psychological safety (Bakker et al. 2005; Saks, 2006) have been found to have positive implications for engagement. Components of these theories have been identified in the current volunteer engagement literature, such as relationship development (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009), volunteer voice (Gilbert et al., 2020), collaboration (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2020) organizational identity (Traeger & Alfes, 2019), as well as support (Alfes et al., 2016). However, prior to this study there had not been any research on engagement of volunteers that has included all these current concepts, as well as the anecdotes and outcomes. By researching the implications of inclusive leadership and psychological safety on engagement of volunteers, and the mediating role of empowerment, and the potential outcomes of volunteer engagement, I provide a better understanding of the contributors and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteers.

Volunteerism has changed tremendously in the last 50 years since some of the foundational literature on volunteer mobilization was created, including the modern volunteer management model. Social organizations have faced growth in many countries (Pennerstorfer & Rutherford, 2019) and are now experiencing increased competition and pressure to become more efficiently run (Allen et al., 2018). Thus, they now must recruit and retain more volunteers in the process. Unfortunately, the number of social organizations continues to grow just as the number of people volunteering is on a decline (Edeigba & Singh, 2021). Additionally, volunteers are

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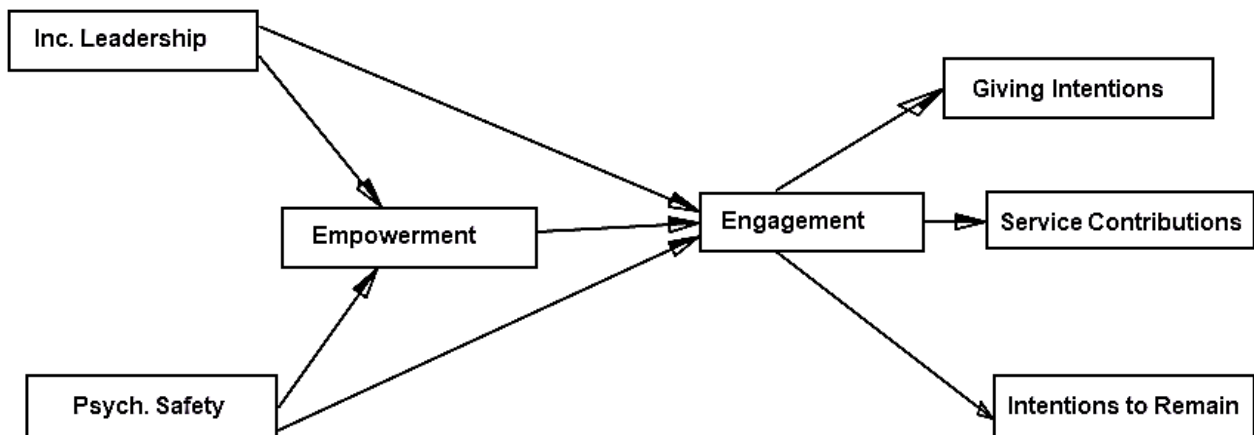
becoming more diverse, making inclusion, and feeling psychologically safe a requirement to maintain an adequate volunteer workforce. Unfortunately, the resources and training materials that volunteer managers utilize to engage volunteers in their organization have not evolved to meet the needs of the diverse volunteer population. Therefore, this research also identifies factors that contribute to a more engaged and retained diverse volunteer workforce, helping to shape the way social organizations mobilize volunteer populations in the future.

Research Aim

My research evaluates the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement in the context of volunteerism. Additionally, empowerment is studied as a potential mediator in the model. Further, volunteer intentions to remain, intentions to give, and service contributions will be evaluated as outcomes of the model. This research gives volunteer administrators a greater understanding of the factors contributing to engagement in volunteers and the benefits, allowing social organizations to operate more effectively and efficiently.

Figure 2

The Anecdotes and Outcomes of Volunteer Engagement



Note. This figure shows the hypothesized relationships and the direction of those relationships to identify the anecdotes and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteerism.

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Two research questions and five corresponding hypotheses have been developed, given my overall goal. The first question examines whether there is a positive relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement.

RQ1: What relationship do inclusive leadership and psychological safety have with engagement of volunteers?

Because inclusive leadership (Aslan et al., 2021) and psychological safety (Bakker et al. 2005; Saks, 2006) have been found to have positive implications for engagement, I made the following predictions:

- H1: Inclusive leadership will be positively associated with engagement.
- H2: Psychological safety will be positively associated with engagement.

My next step attempts to identify a mechanism that mediates inclusive leadership and psychological safety's relationship with engagement. As previously discussed, research has demonstrated that empowerment has a positive relationship with engagement (Traeger & Alfes, 2019) and retention (Kim et al., 2007). Therefore, my next research question examines whether empowerment mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership-safety and engagement.

RQ2: Does empowerment play a role in the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement of volunteers?

Given this second research question, the following hypothesis is tested:

- H3 (A & B): Empowerment will mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership (A), psychological safety (B) and engagement resulting in additional variance in the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement in the presence of empowerment.

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In this study I assess if engagement has a positive relationship with three important volunteer engagement outcomes, which are giving intentions, service contributions, and intentions to remain. Volunteer intentions to remain (intent to stay), volunteer service contributions (how much time provides to the organization), as well as a volunteer giving intentions (how much monetary and in-kind resources the volunteer intends to provide the organization), will be included as outcome variables. By including volunteer service contributions, giving intentions, and intention to remain as outcomes of engagement of volunteers, the practitioner audience can better understand the benefits of engagement for the organization.

- H4: Engagement will be positively associated with intentions to remain.
- H5: Engagement will be positively associated with intentions to give.
- H6: Engagement will be positively associated with volunteer service contributions.

Summary

Engagement of volunteers is a broad term that is heavily used but not consistently defined or understood. This study provides volunteer administrators with a better understanding of what organizational factors contribute to engagement and how engagement benefits the social organization. This chapter provided an overview of inclusive leadership and psychological safety and their relationship to engagement of volunteers. Additionally, the implications of the mediating effects of empowerment, identified as being positively associated with volunteer engagement in previous research, were also explored. Inclusive leadership and psychological safety have not been previously studied within volunteer populations, though organizational research has found that these concepts are positively associated with engagement. The next chapter describes the quantitative methodology that I used to investigate my research questions and corresponding hypotheses.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the quantitative methodology that I used to explore the relationships between inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and engagement of volunteers. Additionally, psychological empowerment was evaluated as a potential mediator. Quantitative research involves a deductive approach to developing hypotheses based on existing theory and proceeding to design a research process to test the hypotheses (Wilson, 2014). Because my study is not exploratory, which is more suitable for qualitative methods (Marshall & Rossman, 2014), and I am using existing theory to test my hypotheses (Wilson, 2014), a quantitative approach is the most suitable methodology for my research. In this chapter, I describe the population under study, my research design, the instrument for data collection, and the measures and data analysis methods.

Population and Sample

Louisiana 4-H provides a unique opportunity to study volunteer engagement. The program, now in its 103rd year, currently mobilizes over 2,000 volunteers annually through 64 programs statewide to meet its youth development mission (Annual Report, 2021). Volunteers serve a variety of roles, from project leaders that lead programs in a specific area, like STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) or civic engagement, to club leaders that provide overall 4-H club leadership (4-H Volunteer Roles, n.d.). Furthermore, over 100 4-H agents are provided ongoing training and resources for their work as volunteer managers in 64 different parishes (county) programs. These agents provide their volunteers, typically called leaders, with the training, resources, and support they need to perform their volunteer roles effectively.

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Volunteers in Louisiana 4-H have been recognized regionally and nationally for their contributions to 4-H since the inception of the 4-H program. Nearly every year, a volunteer within Louisiana 4-H is inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame (Hall of Fame, n.d.) or is named a National 4-H Volunteer of the Year or Regional Volunteer of the Year (4-H Salute to Excellence, 2020; 4-H Salute to Excellence 2021; 4-H Salute to Excellence, 2022). Moreover, Louisiana 4-H regularly recognizes the contributions of its volunteers through the Louisiana 4-H Hall of Fame, the Volunteer Leader Awards, and individual parish level award programs (Franks, n.d.). Volunteers are also typically retained on a long-term basis. The average retention of a Louisiana 4-H volunteer is 7-10 years, with active and engaged volunteers contributing over 140 hours of service to the Louisiana 4-H program annually (Franks, 2020).

4-H agents, who serve as volunteer managers, receive regular training to manage volunteers properly. In addition, many 4-H agents are very connected to the community and understand the vital role that volunteers play in making the Louisiana 4-H youth development program successful. However, as expected with any large organization with 64 different volunteer programs, some programs are more successful at engaging and empowering volunteers than others. Therefore, due to the depth and breadth of the state-wide volunteer development program, Louisiana 4-H provides a unique opportunity for this study.

The population surveyed during this study is 4-H leaders who serve as volunteers for the Louisiana 4-H program. Of the approximately 2,000 volunteers serving within Louisiana 4-H, about half are K-12 educators who lead school-based clubs (Franks, 2020). The other half of Louisiana 4-H volunteers are community volunteers and parents that lead clubs in a community setting. A convenient sampling strategy (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) was used, and a large

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sample (n=555) was obtained that helped reduce bias in any one area. Furthermore, volunteers serving in leadership roles, such as club leaders, were also included in the study.

Due to my unique positioning within the organization as the organizational development and evaluation specialist, and that the research has direct implications for Louisiana 4-H, I secured support from administrators, agents, and volunteers throughout Louisiana 4-H to administer the survey before the close of the 4-H program year. Also, I manage the volunteer enrollment system for the organization and initiated regular communication to secure an adequate sample. Communication channels included an email and text message reminder sent at regular intervals until an adequate sample is achieved. I also secured permission to attend a program that was heavily supported by volunteers during my data collection phase. This helped increase my survey responses by letting me speak to a volunteer population directly about the research's intent and blocking out a specific time during the day to complete the survey.

Considering the complexity of this research project, which included the studying of multiple variables and, potentially, multiple relationships, the data analysis method that I selected had to be able to determine potential relationships between multiple theories simultaneously (Hair et al., 2019). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical analysis method that can explain the relationships among multiple variables (Teo et al., 2013). SEM is a useful technique for research that requires testing multiple theories that can be combined to explain potential relationships between data (Hair et al., 2019). More information regarding SEM is included in the data analysis section within this chapter.

SEM required a larger sample compared to other multivariate approaches (Hair et al., 2019) to ensure accuracy (Gallgher et al., 2008). Taking into consideration multivariate normality, estimation technique, model complexity, missing data, and the average variance

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among reflective indicators (Hair et al., 2019), the minimum sample size calculated using anticipated effect (0.3), desired statistical power (0.8), number of constructs (7), and probability level (0.05) is a recommended sample size of at least 400 (Soper, 2022).

Instrument

Below I outline the instrument for data collection. The instrument used for this study was adapted from existing theory as discussed in this section. Inclusive leadership, psychological safety, psychological empowerment, and engagement were measured using a modified 7-point Likert scale rating from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), while other scales utilized used similar ratings as outlined in the appendix. The original scales were adapted from existing theory, and minor modifications were made to include language more specific to the 4-H program (see Appendix F, G, H, I), creating questions that align with the respondent's vocabulary (McQuitty, 2020). A copy of the full scale is included in the appendix (Appendix M).

Independent Variables

The independent variables for this study include inclusive leadership and psychological safety. Each original scale and the revised version are included in the appendix (G, H). Inclusive leadership and psychological safety are measured using a modified 7-point Likert scale rating from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

Inclusive leadership. Inclusive leadership is measured using a validated multi-dimensional nine-item scale from Carmeli et al. (2010), measuring inclusive leadership across three areas: openness, accessibility, and availability. The validated original scale contains questions relevant to my field of study and was easily adapted for the target audience (Appendix I). In addition, the inclusive leadership scale (Carmeli et al., 2010) was modified so that

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“manager” was replaced by “4-H agent” or “the 4-H agent in my parish” so that the volunteer was not confused as to what volunteer manager the scale was referring to.

Psychological safety. Psychological safety was measured using a validated seven-item scale from Edmondson (1999) (Appendix H), who described psychological safety as when individuals feel comfortable expressing and being themselves. The scale was adapted, and the language has been slightly modified for the target population. For example, the team was replaced by the "parish 4-H program" so that the volunteer was clear on what team to evaluate, given that volunteers are sometimes a part of regional and state teams. In addition, when referring to employees, the language was changed to be more specific (i.e., staff), and when referred to individuals serving in similar roles, the work "volunteers" was utilized.

Mediator Variable

With mediation, a third variable, the mediator, will intervene in the influence of two constructs (Hair et al., 2018). It means that one variable causes change in another variable, leading to an additional change in the outcome variable (Klein, 2016). Psychological empowerment was tested as a mediator variable as previously outlined. In addition, psychological empowerment was measured using a validated twelve-item scale from Spreitzer (1995) (see Appendix I). The psychological empowerment scale (Spreitzer, 1995) was adapted utilizing the same methods as the previous three scales, where work was replaced with "volunteer work" to be more specifically focused on the individual volunteer role and not be confused with their position of employment. Also, the department was replaced with the "parish 4-H program." Psychological empowerment was measured using a modified 7-point Likert scale rating from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

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Dependent Variables

The dependent variables include volunteer engagement using the worker engagement scale. As previously described in chapter 2, three potential outcomes of volunteer engagement were evaluated. These outcomes were service contributions, intentions to remain, and giving intentions.

Volunteer engagement. Within this study, engagement is defined as the process individuals take to emerge themselves physically, emotionally, and cognitively in their service roles (Kahn, 1990). I used the validated 10-item worker engagement scale (Rich et al., 2010) to measure engagement across three areas: physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. This is consistent with previous research on engagement (Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Shantz et al., 2014). Job engagement (Rich et al., 2010) was modified from a focus on an employee's job to a volunteer's role so that "work" became "while serving" and "job" became "volunteer role." For example, the question "At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job" became, "While serving, I devote a lot of attention to my volunteer role." Volunteer engagement was measured using a modified 7-point Likert scale rating from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

Volunteer engagement outcomes. To determine if engagement has a positive relationship with three important engagement outcomes, service contributions, intentions to remain, and giving intentions, I used the measures outlined below. A copy of each scale can be viewed in the Appendix (see Appendix J and M).

Service contributions. To examine volunteer service contributions, information was captured on the average number of hours a volunteer serves the organization. Like Bortree and Waters (2007), whose study found that a volunteer's evaluation of an organization on the relationship management scale was positively associated with the number of volunteer hours the

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individual served the organization monthly, volunteers were asked how often they serve the organization, either annually or monthly. Next volunteers were asked, "On average, how many hours per month/year do you spend serving with Louisiana 4-H?" The question displayed either annually or monthly depending on how frequently the volunteer serves. Therefore, volunteer involvement is treated as a continuous variable within the model, ranging from 1 hour to 1000+ hours served over a program year.

Intentions to remain. Volunteer retention has been measured in volunteer research in several ways, including assessing intent to remain (Garner & Garner, 2011) and years of service the volunteer has provided to the program (Trent et al., 2020). For this study, intentions to remain was studied using four-items from Garner and Garner's (2011) retention scale that also evaluated a volunteer's intent to remain. Intentions to remain and what a volunteer says about the organization to others helps to determine a volunteer's future activities with the organization and if they will continue to serve (Garner & Garner, 2011). Participants responded to items assessing their likelihood of continuing to serve, their motivation to continue serving, and what they would say about the organization to others using a 7- point scale ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely).

Intentions to give. Volunteer giving behavior was measured using components of an existing charitable giving scale that captures past giving behavior, and intent to donate (Smith & McSweeney, 2007). Given the nature of the 4-H program and the amount of in-kind donations critical to the operation of 4-H programs, such as food and educational supplies, the monetary value of in-kind donations was also considered. Past behavior was measured with the question, "I usually donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H." The intention was measured using the question, "I intend to donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H in the next program year."

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Giving Behavior was measured using a 7-point scale rating from not at all true (1), to very true (7), and 1(never) to 7 (very frequently).

Demographic and control variables

Variables that were held constant so that they did not impact the variables I intended to study, include age, sex, volunteer tenure, education, profession (educator or non-educator), and employment status, (see Appendix K). Also, volunteer active status was controlled by asking volunteers if they are currently serving with 4-H. Volunteers not actively serving were not included in the study.

Data Collection

Web-based surveys offer many advantages, including lower cost, easy entry of data, greater likelihood of achieving a large sample, and reduced response time (Wilson, 2014). To help increase the sample size, a web-based survey was utilized. The Louisiana 4-H volunteer population was studied using an electronic survey built with Qualtrics and administered through the Louisiana 4-H volunteer enrollment system. Qualtrics is a survey tool available to me from my employer and one I am most familiar with. Further, Qualtrics allowed for an organized data file that was easily cleaned and formatted before utilizing AMOS for analysis.

Prior to the main data collection phase, pre-testing was conducted. Pre-testing, or a pilot study (Wilson, 2014), is necessary when scale items are taken from other sources and adapted for one's study (Hair et al., 2019). Once the instrument was created, it was pre-tested with a pilot study of volunteers from the volunteer online seminar series mailing list. This is a sample of 130 volunteers who have regularly engaged in the 4-H program ongoing training opportunities.

During the main data collection phase, the questionnaire was disseminated via email to 3,299 active volunteers in all 64 parishes (county) 4-H programs. I maintain this list as part of

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their specialist responsibilities. To help increase the response rate, the questionnaire included an electronic covering letter explaining the research's purpose and goals and addressing any ethical issues (Wilson, 2014). In addition, the covering letter (Appendix N) provided information on informed consent, including the nature and purpose of the research, how I will use the information collected, that participation is voluntary, any risks to participating, as well as a statement on how confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the research process (Wilson, 2014).

The survey was incentivized to help increase response rate and response quality (Wilson, 2014) by entering each participant into a drawing to win one of the following: \$10 (5 chances), \$25, \$50, or a \$100 4-H camp store gift card after completion. The 4-H camp store offers gifts and other Louisiana 4-H merchandise and is a popular store among 4-H volunteers and members. Volunteers were notified of the survey via the 4-H enrollment system's various communication methods, including emails to the volunteer's personal and work accounts, and a text message reminder to their cellphone. Reminders to complete the survey were sent to the volunteer's phone and email account. Agents and administrators also assisted with sending reminders to help achieve a more accurate sample. The above techniques helped increase the likelihood of capturing a sample more representative of the population and increase the chance of multiple volunteers from each program participating.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process utilized structural equation modeling or SEM. Structural equation modeling is a statistical analysis method that can explain the relationships among multiple variables (Teo et al., 2013). SEM models are used with existing theory because it is considered a confirmatory analysis. This makes SEM useful for testing and potentially

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confirming theories (Hair et al., 2019), such as emerging theories like inclusive leadership and psychological safety. Because SEM allows researchers to test theorized relationships among several concepts, with simple frameworks like multiple regression or ANOVA (Gallagher et al., 2008), SEM can help determine what components of each theory are related or not related (Hair et al., 2019). Determining what relationships and non-relationships exist, SEM will create a structure within the data.

SEM Description

SEM can be defined as a series of factor analysis and path analysis that allows researchers to build, test, and confirm complex models of relationships (Gallagher et al., 2008). SEM models differ from more traditional models of regression in various ways, including estimating a series of separate, interdependent, multiple regression equations at the same time, creating the structural model that was used during analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

Software for SEM Analysis

Computer programs are critical for conducting all types of SEM (Kline, 1998), and IBM SPSS AMOS was used during the data analysis process. AMOS, which stands for Analysis of Moment Structures, is a user-friendly software typically used for structural equation modeling (Gallagher et al., 2008). Along with providing the researcher with a series of helpful tools during the analysis process, AMOS helps reduce error by not allowing the researcher to make illogical specifications among objects and giving various warnings about issues among objects, such as the disorder of an endogenous variable when running an analysis (Kline, 1998). Due to its efficiency, popularity, and ease of use, AMOS is a popular tool among novice and seasoned SEM researchers (Gallagher et al., 2008).

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SEM Process

There are several steps in the SEM data preparation and analysis process. For example, Weston and Gore (2006) describe this process across six steps: specification, identification, data preparation and screening, estimation, evaluation of fit, and modification. Other researchers describe similar versions of these six steps (Hair et al., 2019), whereas some researchers define these steps more broadly (Gallagher et al., 2008) (see Appendix L). My SEM process included a combination of the various 6-steps and broadly described 3-step approach, therefore more adequately addressing each element of the SEM process described by seasoned researchers.

Specification of individual constructs. During this step, I outlined which relationships are assumed to exist among the variables (Weston & Gore, 2006). This first step involved a solid theory-based definition of the individual constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Considering that this study used scales from prior research, as described earlier in this chapter, the constructs were previously defined, and relationships were assumed based on the results of prior research (Hair et al., 2019). Pre-testing is conducted when scale items are taken from other sources and adapted for one's study (Hair et al., 2019). To test for scale validity (Churchill, 1979), scale items were pre-tested with a pilot study (Wilson, 2014) of volunteers from the volunteer online seminar series mailing list, a sample of 130 volunteers who were regularly engaged in the 4-H program and ongoing training opportunities. Prior to the primary data collection phase, the instrument was created using Qualtrics, and reviewed by my committee and select 4-H agents and volunteers. Reviewers carefully examined scale questions and prompts before I evaluated each comment and implemented any relevant changes (Khan & Jaafar, 2020). After the review, the instrument was disseminated via email to the pilot study population. After reviewing the data captured from the pilot study, reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha scores of at least .70 (Bernardi,

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1994; Hair et al., 2019). Items that did not perform as expected were considered for modification or deletion.

Designing a study to produce empirical results. Step three involved handling issues regarding research design and estimation (Hair et al., 2019), including obtaining an adequate sample size, selecting the optimal estimation method, and deciding on an approach for missing data (Weston & Gore, 2006). While there is conflicting information on the recommended sample size for SEM analysis (Weston & Gore, 2006), researchers have stated that SEM requires a larger sample compared to other multivariate approaches (Hair et al., 2019). Also, simple models can be tested with smaller samples, but complex models with a larger number of constructs require a large sample size to produce accurate results (Gallgher et al., 2008) and achieve normality (Hair et al., 2019). Given the calculations I provided within the section on population and sample, a minimum sample size of 400 was calculated to obtain accurate results (Soper, 2022). 555 responses were collected.

Missing data can significantly impact research findings (Hair et al., 2019), and more specifically, any data missing not at random implies a potential pattern and should be addressed (Weston & Gore, 2006). Given the considerable number of complete cases, the impact of deleting cases with missing data was minimal. Cases that had more than 10% missing data (less than 20) were eliminated. Additionally, there was no pattern observed to the missing data, making any missing data approach appropriate (Hair et al., 2018). Therefore, mean substitution (Hamzeh, 2010) was utilized for the small number of cases that were 90% complete.

While there are several estimation methods available to produce accurate results due to the increased usage of computer software, maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) is the most standard and widely used by SEM software. Due to its ability to produce accurate information

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under many circumstances (Hair et al., 2019), MLE was the estimation method used for this study. Other issues related to data collection that were reviewed include issues related to outliers, multicollinearity, and determining normality. I used AMOS analysis properties to test for normality and outliers. Multivariate outliers were removed and only reevaluated if they are deemed statistically significant. Using Mahalanobis distance for observations farthest from the centroid, I removed cases with high Mahalanobis d-squared values, and P1 and P2 values less than 0.05. To check for multicollinearity, I screened bivariate correlations, noting that any bivariate correlations higher than .85 may create problems (Weston & Gore, 2006) and were evaluated. Additionally, removing univariate and multivariate outliers (Weston & Gore, 2006) and collecting a large sample size (Hair et al., 2019) helped enhance multivariate normality. After removing responses that were less than 90% complete, and reviewing the data for outliers, 499 full responses remained.

Develop and specify the measurement model. There are no valid conclusions without a valid measurement (Hair et al., 2019). Utilizing existing theory as a guide, a measurement model was used to describe the relationships between the variables and the constructs (Gore, 2006). During this step each latent construct was defined in developing the measurement model, and the measured indicator variables were assigned to each construct (Hair et al., 2018). Because the instrument is based on existing theory, including pre-determined variables and constructs, and has been slightly adapted for a volunteer audience, confirmatory factor (CFA) was utilized to help measure how well the indicators measured the unobserved constructs, or determining how well the data fit within the measurement model, and if the unobserved constructs were uniquely different (Gore, 2006). Therefore, I laid out a path diagram for the measurement model using CFA, which included labeling indicators, constructs, and the corresponding relationships (Hair et

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al., 2019). CFA also helped assess the measure's quality and identified any weaknesses in the proposed model (Hair et al., 2019).

CFA determined model fit by evaluating the factor loadings on the corresponding constructs and if the factor loading scores indicated that the model should be changed or remain the same. CFA also evaluated the discriminant and convergent validity of the variables (Hair et al., 2018). Several other reliability and validity checks were also conducted. SPSS and AMOS were used to draw and perform the analysis of the conceptual model representing the theorized relationships described in the previous chapter (Figure 1).

Assessing measurement model validity and Goodness of Fit. Now that the measurement model has been specified, adequate sample size has been collected; and an estimated technique has been identified, the validity of the measurement model was evaluated. Measurement model validity was determined by construct reliability, validity, and model fit (Hair et al., 2018). Construct reliability determined how well a variable or set of variables measures what it was intended to measure (Straub et al., 2004). It is assessed using composite reliability, variable factor loadings, and Cronbach's alpha.

First, to demonstrate convergent validity and reliability, standardized loading estimates were reviewed; scores of .5 to .7 or higher were preferred, with the average variance extracted being .5 or better. However, given that the sample size was sufficiently large (Klein, 1998), factor loadings of .30 or higher could be obtained for sample sizes of 350 as they may be significance (Hair et al., 2019). Construct reliability scores of 0.7 or better demonstrated convergent validity and internal consistency (Gallagher et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2019). CFA model fit statistics needed to signify adequate model fit include Chi-square with degrees of freedom and p-value (CMIN/df), the Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI), the standardized root mean

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square residual (SRMR), and root mean square error (RMSEA) (Kline, 2016). Improvements to the model were assessed only if there is theoretical justification and the improvements (Gallagher et al., 2006).

Specifying the structural model and assess structural model validity. Once validity and reliability were adequately assessed using CFA, I moved on to the last step of the SEM process (Gallagher et al., 2006). This involved assessing structural model fit and significance, testing relationships and path direction, size of structural parameter estimates (Hair et al., 2019), and performing any model modifications as needed (Weston & Gore, 2006). Establishing validity and structural model fit was evaluated using the same process as the measurement model (Hair et al., 2019).

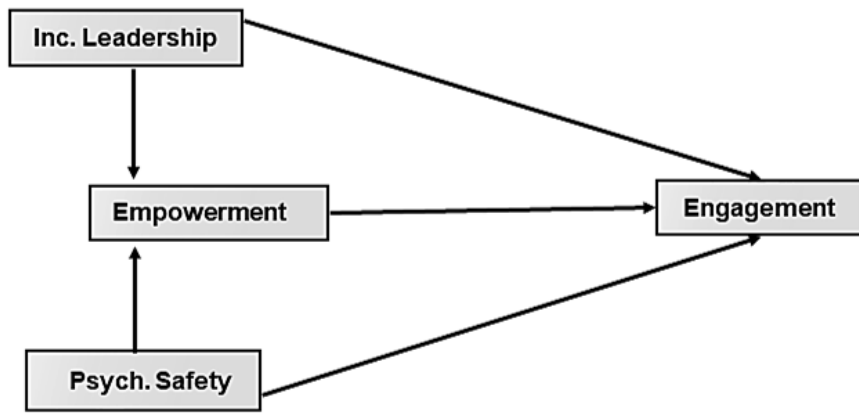
When testing relationships and path directions, statistically significant relationships were greater than zero for a positive relationship and less than zero for a negative relationship; practical significance was determined by assessing standardized loading estimates (Gallagher et al., 2008; Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, when model modifications were needed, a detailed description of changes is included in my results in chapter 4, enabling my model to be replicated in future studies (Weston & Gore, 2006).

Mediation analysis and reporting results. In my study, psychological empowerment was evaluated as the primary mediator. Using the full structural model, I examined if inclusive leadership and psychological safety had an indirect effect on engagement through empowerment. While mediation has been assessed using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach, or the Sobel test, both approaches have been scrutinized in recent literature (Gaskin, 2016; Chen & Hung, 2016). Therefore, to test for mediation, the direct, indirect, and total effects were recorded, as well as their significance (Hayes, 2017).

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Figure 3

Original Mediation Model



Note. The above figure shows the mediation model that was tested. First the direct effect is shown, which is from inclusive leadership and psychological safety through engagement in the presence of empowerment. Next the indirect effect is shown, which is from both independent variables to empowerment, and then through engagement.

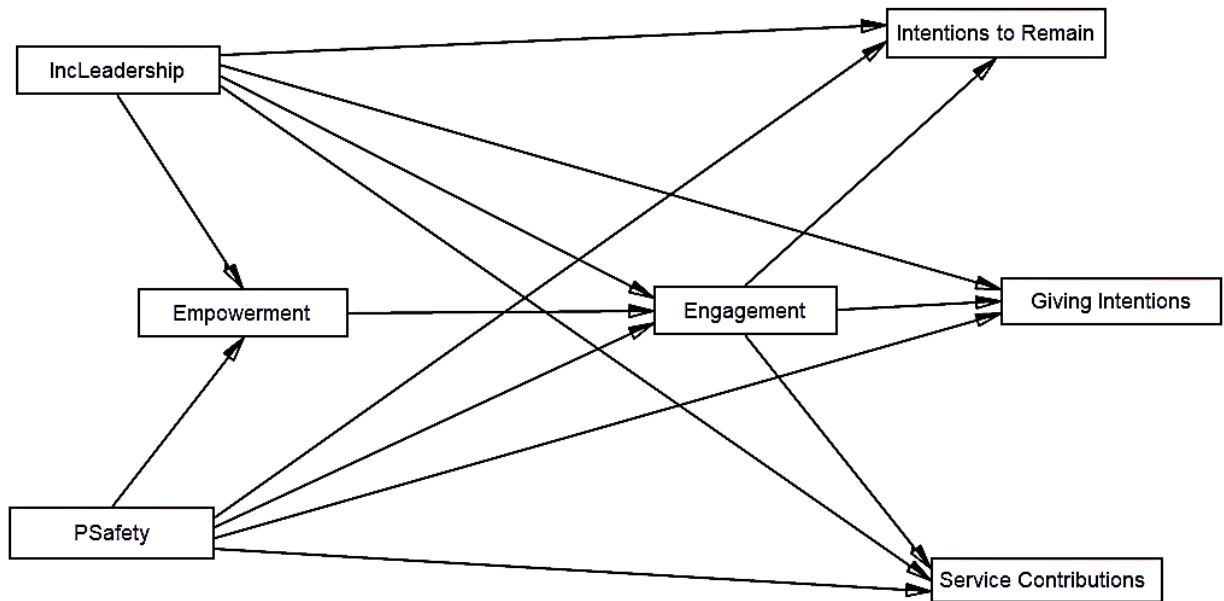
Figure 2 shows the path of mediation. To assess if mediation was present, first I evaluated the direct effect (Kline, 2023), which is the direct relationship between the independent variable(s) (psychological safety and inclusive leadership) and dependent variable(s) (engagement) in the presence of the mediator variable (psychological empowerment). Next, I evaluated the indirect effect by assessing the relationship between the independent variables to the mediator and then the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2018). During the mediation analysis I performed Bootstrapping (2000) with a bias-corrected confidence interval of 95% (Gaskin, 2022). I later performed serial mediation to investigate the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on the outcome variables in the presences of multiple mediators (Hayes, 2017), empowerment and engagement. In this study, serial mediation enabled me to determine the direct and indirect effect of inclusive leadership and psychological safety on

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service contributions, giving intentions, and intentions to remain through empowerment and engagement as mediators.

Figure 4

Serial Mediation Model



Note. The above figure shows the serial mediation model that was tested. First the direct effect is shown, which is from inclusive leadership and psychological safety to the independent variables, intentions to remain, giving intentions, and volunteer involvement, in the presence of the mediators, empowerment and engagement. Next the indirect effect is shown, which is from both independent variables to the dependent variables, intentions to remain, giving intentions, and service contributions, through empowerment and engagement acting as mediators.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research process I took to study inclusive leadership and psychological safety and their relationship to volunteer engagement. Additionally, empowerment was also studied as a mediator in these relationships. SEM is a powerful and increasingly popular method of data analysis that examines the relationships between data (Gallagher et al., 2008), such as inclusive leadership, psychological safety, empowerment, and engagement. SEM is utilized with existing theory because it is considered a confirmatory

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analysis (Hair et al., 2019). My study's objective was to examine existing theory to identify the relationships between inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and engagement of volunteers. SEM provided the solution for my data analysis. My study included an electronic survey built with Qualtrics and disseminated across a state-wide volunteer program. Additionally, AMOS, a user-friendly software typically used for structural equation modeling (Gallagher et al., 2008), was used as the computer software for this study.

Louisiana 4-H, a non-profit organization that operates through the LSU (Louisiana State University) AgCenter, is a long-standing volunteer-driven program that provides a unique opportunity to study volunteer engagement. Volunteers in Louisiana 4-H serve various long-term roles throughout 64 parishes (county) areas of Louisiana. This research provides volunteer administrators with a greater understanding of the factors that contribute to the engagement of volunteers, allowing social organizations to better meet their missions.

Chapter 4. Presentation of Research

Introduction

This chapter describes the data analysis process I implemented using structural equation modeling to explore my research questions and corresponding hypotheses. In this chapter, I first describe the various steps I performed to analyze the data, starting with pre-testing and pilot study results, main study results, measurement model results and model fit, structural model and model fit, and the mediation analysis results. Lastly, I describe the study findings and results for each individual hypothesis.

Pre-Testing and Pilot Results

My first step was to pre-test the survey instrument with a pilot study (Wilson, 2014) of active volunteers from the volunteer online seminar series mailing list. 51 complete responses were collected during the pilot study. Individuals who participated in the pilot study were also given the opportunity to provide written feedback on survey flow and wording. No issues regarding flow were identified.

After the pilot study was complete and the data collected were reviewed, a few revisions were made to the wording of the giving scale after consulting my supervisor. Because of the initial review of Cronbach's alpha for giving (Table 5), three items were revised to clarify the language and take out unnecessary words. For example, "I usually donate money or in-kind goods," became "I usually donate...." For the second item in Table 3, I decided not to use "past program year" because some volunteers may not know when the program year starts or ends. I revised this language to say, "the past 12 months." Further, "I intent to donate" became "How likely are you to donate...." Table 3 shows the beginning item and the revised item used during the main data collection phase.

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Table 3

The Giving Scale Items in the Original Pilot Instrument Vs. The Revised

Original Item	Revised Item
I usually donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H.	I usually donate to Louisiana 4-H.
How often during the past program year have you made monetary or in-kind donations to Louisiana 4-H?	How often during the past 12 months have you donated to Louisiana 4H?
I intend to donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H within the next program year. (Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree (Agreement))	How likely are you to donate to Louisiana 4H during the next 12 months? (Very Likely/Very Unlikely)

Note. The above chart shows the giving scale items used in the pilot study versus the revised items used in the main data collection phase. After reviewing Cronbach’s alpha score for the scale (Table 5), and the varying results if items were retained or removed, the above items were revised for clarity and any unnecessary words were removed.

The minimum and maximum scale values for involvement and retention were also identified during the pilot. To establish the minimum and maximum values for involvement and retention, I reviewed the highest and lowest values recorded during the pilot phase and established a numeric scale. For service contributions, I found there were two responses that had outliers. This included 400+ for the number of hours served in the past 12 months, and 180 for the number of hours served per month. Beyond the two outlier values, the highest other values recorded were 30 hours monthly and 55 hours annually. Utilizing this information, I created a scale of 1 to 100+ for both service contribution questions.

For the retention question concerned with the number of years of service, the minimum was 1, and the maximum was 40, as identified during the pilot. Therefore, I used 1 – 50+ for the minimum and maximum on the numeric tenure scale. These two steps (service contributions and tenure) helped simplify the data analysis and grouping process for service contributions and

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tenure. Next, I went back through the instrument, reviewed each question for clarity, and ensured there were not extra or unnecessary words in the items that may have caused confusion.

Pilot Study Validity and Reliability

SPSS and AMOS were utilized during the pilot data to find preliminary calculations regarding reliability and validity within each construct. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha scores of at least 0.7 (Bernardi, 1994; Hair et al., 2019) and provided promising results. Regarding construct reliability, engagement, leadership, and empowerment, all recorded factor loadings of 0.8 to 0.9. For engagement, 17 items recorded loadings of 0.7 or higher. Regarding convergent validity, all items in the pilot were over 0.7, except for one item for inclusive leadership and one for psychological safety which were nearing 0.7. For empowerment, seven items were nearing 0.7 or higher. For engagement, twelve items had loadings of 0.7 or higher. For intentions to remain, all items were over 0.7. In summary, the review of the pilot data demonstrated encouraging results for all variables.

Main Study Results

At the time of the study, there were 2,241 volunteers officially enrolled in the Louisiana 4-H registration system. This made the maximum number of participants eligible to complete the survey 2,241. I disseminated the survey notification via email and text message using the 4-H enrollment system. At the same time, the 4-H Program Leader, and Department Head each sent emails to the 4-H agent population, encouraging them to ask their volunteers to complete the survey. To help eliminate potential bias from volunteers no longer serving, volunteers were asked if they had volunteered with Louisiana 4-H in the last 12 months. If volunteers answered no, they were told that only active volunteers were needed for the survey and were told not to

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continue. As a result, only active volunteers were included in the study analysis. Convenience sampling was used to help obtain a large sample (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Within three weeks of the initial communication being sent, 557 responses to the survey were collected with minimal or no missing data, a response rate of 24.85%. While complex SEM models with a more substantial number of constructs require a large sample size to produce accurate outcomes (Gallgher et al., 2008), a minimum sample size of 400 was calculated to achieve accurate results (Soper, 2022). 557 responses were received, above the minimum recommended, and considered a large sample (Hair et al., 2019).

Description of Study Sample Population

Of the 557 survey responses, 84.1% identified as female, and 15.7% identified as male. About 85.4% are White or Caucasian, 9.4% Black or African American; 1.6% Mixed Race; 1.3% Indigenous; 1.4% Hispanic or Latino; 0.4% Native Hawaiian; 0.4% Northeast Asian; 0.2% South Asian, 0.2%, 0.2% Southeast Asian; and just 0.2% are of Middle Eastern decent. The average age is 42.9 years. Regarding previous participation in 4-H, 70.6% stated they were previous 4-H members, and 29.4% said they did not participate in 4-H as a child. Most of the volunteers said they are employed, with 77.5% holding some form of current employment, and 46.8% either served as a K-12 teacher or educator or worked as such in a previous/past profession. About 59% have a college or university degree, and another 15.3% have completed some college or university. Additionally, the study population has a long average tenure with the 4-H program of 7.15 years of service.

Notably, this study sample is heavily White or Caucasian and female, with a long service tenure. However, this sample is comparable to the overall volunteer population, which is also predominantly female (72%), White or Caucasian (84.2%), 40 years of age, working in K-12

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education (43%), and with about 7-10 years of service (Franks & Hebert, 2021). It is important to note that a study on a younger and more diverse population regarding racial and ethnic backgrounds and biological sex could have different results. See Table 4 for description of sample.

Table 4

Description of Study Sample Population

Gender	Female – 84.1%; Male 15.7%
Race/Ethnicity	85.4% White or Caucasian; 9.4% Black or African American; 1.6% Mixed Race; 1.3% Indigenous; 1.4% Hispanic or Latino; 0.4% Native Hawaiian; 0.4% Northeast Asian; 0.2% South Asian, 0.2% Southeast Asian; 0.2% Middle Eastern.
Average Age	42.9 years
Employment Status	77.5% currently employed
Education	59% college/university degree; 15.3% some college or university
K-12 Educator	46.8% current or former K-12 teachers or educator
4-H Membership	70.6% of previous 4-H members in their youth
Average Tenure	7.15 years of service

Note. The table describes the study sample population in terms of demographics such as gender, race, age, employment status, education, profession, 4-H membership, and average length of service with the 4-H program.

Missing Data

Given the considerable number of complete cases, the impact of deleting cases with missing data was minimal. Cases that had more than 10% missing data were eliminated, which was less than 20 total cases. Additionally, there was no pattern observed to the missing data, as all the questions were required, and only a small portion of responses (less than 13) had missed saving their last page of responses, making any missing data approach appropriate (Hair et al., 2018). Mean substitution (Hamzeh, 2010) was utilized as a missing data remedy. The small number of incomplete cases and missing data was due to all responses being required and the incentives for completing the survey.

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Multivariate Outliers and Multivariate Normality

Before proceeding with the analysis, I checked for multivariate normality and for multivariate outliers. A guiding principle to reduce issues of normality is collecting ten responses per parameter (Hair et al., 2018). My model exceeds this ratio. I tested multivariate outliers using a Mahalanobis distance test. A significant Mahalanobis distance may mean a case is an outlier (Aguinis et al., 2013). When performing this test, I removed 38 cases with high Mahalanobis d-squared values and P1 and P2 values less than 0.05 (Fawad, n.d.). After removing outliers, I had 499 cases remaining. Any additional removal of cases with questionable Mahalanobis d-squared values did not provide for any additional improvements in model fit or kurtosis values.

Construct Reliability and Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to create the measurement model, determine model fit, and how well the indicators measured the unobserved constructs (Gore, 2006). Measurement model validity was determined by construct reliability, validity, and model fit (Hair et al., 2018). Construct reliability was assessed using composite reliability, variable factor loadings, and Cronbach's alpha (Appendix S) (Hair et al., 2018).

Cronbach's alpha scores of .7 or higher indicated adequate convergence or internal consistency (Hair et al., 2018). For each construction, alpha scores were within .73-.92 for all variables, apart from Giving Behavior. For the variable, Intentions to Give, one item reduced the alpha scores to an unacceptable level and was therefore removed. The item was, "How often during the past 12 months have you donated to Louisiana 4-H?". In review, I discovered that this question was inconsistent with the other items in the measure. In contrast, the other three questions focused on willingness and ability to give, and the removed question focused more on

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the frequency of giving. Once the item was removed, the alpha recorded for the construct became .881, which was above the threshold of .70 to be acceptable (Table 5).

Table 5

Construct Reliability Analysis

<i>Variable</i>	Original Alpha	Original Number of Items	Final Number of Items	Final Alpha
Psychological Safety	.733	7	7	.733
Inclusive Leadership	.980	9	9	.980
Empowerment	.904	12	12	.904
Engagement	.968	18	18	.968
Intentions to Remain	.847	4	4	.847
Giving Intentions	.130	4	3	.881

Note. N=555. The above table shows the original and final Cronbach's alpha score for each construct. The only modification made was to Giving Behavior, where an item was removed. Upon removal Cronbach's alpha score was improved from .130 to .881, which was above the threshold of .70 and considered acceptable.

Establishing Model Fit

A good-fitting model will have a value of between 2 and 5 for the Chi-square with degrees of freedom and p-value (CMIN/df) (Hair et al., 2010); above .90 on the Tucker and Lewis (1973) index (TLI); and above 0.90 on the Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI) (Hair et al., 2019). In addition, a good fitting model in AMOS should have a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of less than .08, and the root mean square error (RMSEA) between 0.05 and 0.08 (Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, the minimum fit statistics that should be reported to signify adequate model fit include CMIN/df, CFI, SRMR, and RMSEA (Kline, 2016).

Several steps were taken to establish measurement model fit. First, items that scored low standardized estimates were evaluated for removal. While Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.5 and preferably .70 per item or above are deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 2018) the sample size was sufficiently large (Klein, 1998) and over 350 responses. In large samples, items alpha scores as low as .30 should be retained for significance (Hair et al., 2018). In reviewing the model fit

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statistics when items with low estimates were removed, model fit statistics only appeared to improve marginally if at all. Additionally, because I am using existing (and validated) theory to build my model, and therefore decided it was important to retain as many items as possible.

Next, I used modification indices to help improve the model fit, which is customary practice in SEM (Hox & Becher, 1998). I added parameters to improve model fit only if there was a theoretical justification for adding them (Hox & Becher, 1998) and not under a threshold of 20. I avoided unacceptable alterations and focused on error terms within the same construct (Fawad, n.d.). These steps provided a better fitting model (Table 6). Using the same process and criteria to establish measurement model fit, I used modification indices to help improve structural model fit. The fit indices for the final structural model shown in Table 8 (also see Appendix X) were within the good-fit range: CMIN/df = 2.23**, TLI = .94, CFI = .94, SRMR = .059, and RMSEA = .050. According to the model fit statistics recorded and the appropriate fit values provided by the literature, adequate model fit was achieved.

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Table 6

Model Versions and Fit Statistics

Model version	Changes performed to improve model fit	Fit statistics
Measurement Model Version 1- Initial 6-factor	N/A	CMIN/DF = 5.904; CFI= .777; SRMR =0.054; RMSEA = .0737
Measurement Model Version 2 – Revised 6-factor model	Checks for normality and outliers. Outliers removed.	CMIN/DF = 4.942; CFI= .813; SRMR =0.0741; RMSEA = .089
Measurement Model Version 3 – Final measurement model	Modification indices added.	CMIN/DF = 2.68; CFI= .921; SRMR =0.0587; RMSEA = .058
Structural Model Version 1 – Initial 6-factor model	Original model with no adjustments.	CMIN/DF = 5.191; CFI= .804; SRMR =0.1239; RMSEA = .092
Structural Model Version 2 – Modified 6-factor model	No covariance between independent variables. Modification indices added.	CMIN/DF = 2.908; CFI= .912; SRMR =0.1192; RMSEA = .062
Structural Model Version 3- Revised 6-factor model	Covariance between independent variables. No modifications added.	CMIN/DF = 5.079; CFI= .809; SRMR =0.0803; RMSEA = .090
Structural Model Version 4- Revised 6-factor structural model	Establish modification indices. Remove items with low estimates (less than .60)	CMIN/DF = 2.03; CFI= .971; SRMR =0.047; RMSEA = .046
Structural Model Version 5- 5- factor structural model	Combine inclusive leadership and psychological safety into one factor.	CMIN/DF = 2.35; CFI= .937; SRMR =0.0590; RMSEA = .062
Structural Model Version 6- Final 6-factor structural model	Retain all items in validated theories.	CMIN/DF = 2.23; CFI= .94; SRMR =0.0590; RMSEA = .050

Note. The table shows the different measurement and structural model versions tested, the changes to each version to change the model or improve model fit, and the reported fit statistics of each. A good-fitting model will have a value of between 2 and 5 for the CMIN/df (Hair et al., 2010); above .90 on the Tucker and Lewis (1973) index (TLI); above 0.90 on the Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI) (Hair et al., 2019), a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of less than .08, and the root mean square error (RMSEA) between 0.05 and 0.08 (Hair et al., 2010).

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Results of Alternative Models

Several alternative models (Table 6) were explored beyond the final measurement model (CFA) (Measurement Model Version 3) and the final 6-factor structural model (Version 6). Both the final measurement model and structural model retained all items in the theories, apart from one item for giving behavior. The justification for removing that item is identified earlier in the chapter.

In one model version that I evaluated (Table 7-Structural Model Version 4) I removed standard regression weights under .70, with the exception for one (.60). The results indicated that inclusive leadership was partially mediated by empowerment, which was a different result from the reported model. This means that in the alternative model the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement was stronger and more significant when empowerment was present. Therefore, an inclusive leadership model and an empowered volunteer creates a more engaged volunteer. The implications of empowerment within volunteerism research are essential given that the theory focuses more on intrinsic motivation rather than power dynamics (Kraimer et al., 1999). This is important because volunteers are often placed in powerless positions (Fahey, 2005) and sometimes at the bottom of organizational hierarchies (see Appendix V). Furthermore, some of the items in psychological safety that were removed from the alternative model caused confusion for the volunteer population. One example was the question, “It is safe to take a risk in this 4-H program.” Given that risk management is a core component of 4-H volunteer training (Louisiana 4-H, n.d.) volunteers may have associated this question with going against “risk management” policies and procedures. A suggestion for future research could include evaluating the items that result in low estimates (below the .50 threshold) and consider deleting them or

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modifying the wording, with justification, to help identify a theory more specific to volunteer engagement.

Another alternative model that was studied included inclusive leadership and psychological safety as one factor. While the model fit was acceptable, the combined factor of inclusive leadership-psychological safety did not have a significant relationship with engagement. Further, eliminating standardized regression weights under .50 did not improve the relationships or the model fit. The best results of model fit were achieved for structural model 4, however removing items with standardized regression weights below 0.60 reduced the integrity of the scales that had been validated in previous research. Therefore, the final structural model was a 6-factor model (Model 6) which retained the most items and retained the integrity of the validated scales. In the next section the hypothesized relationships were assessed for their significance and results.

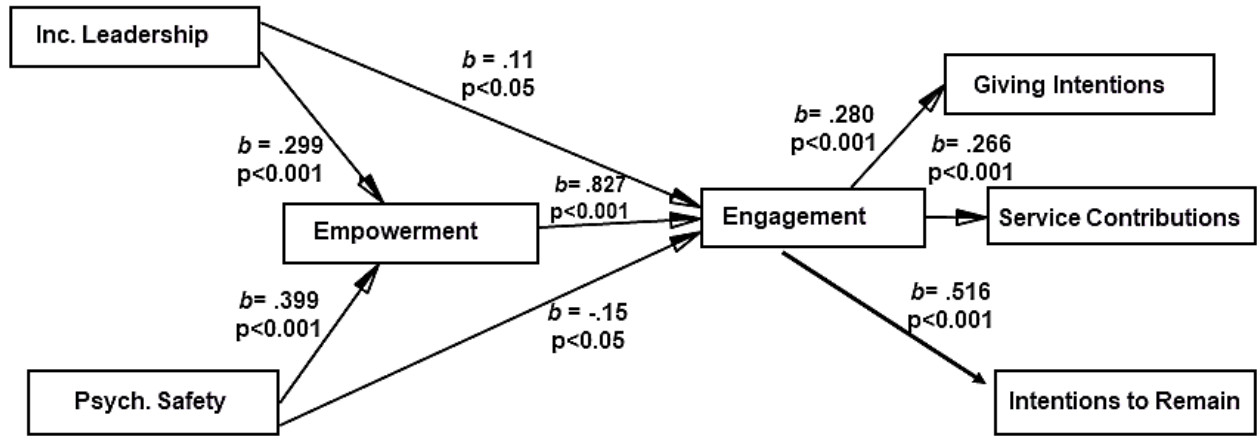
Results

My study focuses on the relationship that inclusive leadership and psychological safety have on engagement and whether empowerment serves as a mediator. Two research questions and five corresponding hypotheses were developed, given my overall goal. The results of each hypothesis based on the model's results are outlined in the next paragraph (See Figure 3). The full hypotheses results are presented in Table 7.

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Figure 5

SEM Structural Model and Results of Hypothesized Relationships



Note. This figure shows the SEM structural model, the studied relationships and direction of the relationships, the resulting estimates, and the significance. All relationships were significant. The significance level was documented at $p < 0.001$ (***) or $p < 0.005$ (**).

Table 7

Hypotheses Testing using Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesized Relationships		Est.	t-value	p-value	Result
H1: Psych. Safety →	Engagement	-.150	-2.99	**	Negative, weak effect
H2: Inclusive Leadership →	Engagement	.113	2.89	**	Positive, weak effect
H4: Engagement →	Giving Intentions	.280	5.87	***	Positive, medium effect
H5: Engagement →	Intentions to Remain	.516	12.04	***	Positive, medium effect
H6: Engagement →	Involvement	.266	4.33	***	Positive, strong effect
H3-A: Inclusive Leadership →	Empowerment	.299	4.42	***	Positive, medium effect
H3-B: Psych. Safety →	Empowerment	.399	5.04	***	Positive, medium effect
H5: Empowerment →	Engagement	.827	7.392	***	Positive, strong effect

Note. The above chart shows the results of testing each hypothesis. The result is included in the last column. The significance level was documented at $p < 0.001$ (***) or $p < 0.005$ (**).

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H1: Inclusive leadership will be positively associated with engagement. Hypothesis 1 assessed the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement. The relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement was positive and significant ($b = .113$, $t = 2.89$, $p < 0.005$), indicating a small, but significant effect. Notably, empowerment was also positively associated with engagement ($b = .827$, $t = 7.37$, $p < .001$) indicating a strong relationship.

H2: Psychological safety will be positively associated with engagement.

The relationship between psychological safety and engagement was slight, negative, and significant ($b = -.15$, $t = -2.90$, $p < 0.005$), not supporting H1.

H3: Empowerment will mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership (A), psychological safety (B), and engagement. This study assessed the role of empowerment as a mediator in the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety, and engagement (see Figure 3). Results (see Table 8) demonstrate that inclusive leadership (A) is partially mediated by empowerment, thus supporting H3. Further, psychological safety (B) is also mediated by empowerment (positive and significant) also supporting H3. The results also indicate competitive mediation whereas the presence of empowerment significantly changes the direction of the influence of psychological safety on engagement (Hair et al., 2021).

H4: Engagement will be positively associated with intentions to remain.

H2 assessed the relationship between engagement and intentions to remain. The relationship between engagement and intentions to remain was positive and significant ($b = .516$, $t = 12.04$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a medium effect and supporting H2.

H5: Engagement will be positively associated with volunteer giving intentions. The study assessed the relationship between engagement on volunteer giving intentions. The relationship

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between engagement and giving intentions was positive and significant ($b=.280$ $t = 5.87$, $p < .001$) supporting H3.

H6: Engagement will be positively associated with volunteer service contributions. The study assessed the relationship between engagement and service contributions. The relationship between engagement and volunteer service contributions was positive and significant ($b=.266$ $t = 4.33$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4.

Table 8

Mediation Results

Relationship	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	Total Effect	Significance
Inclusive Leadership → Engagement	.181**	.082**	.263**	.001**
Psychological Safety → Engagement	.239*	-.108*	.131*	.03*

Note. This table shows the mediation results for the model, including the indirect effect (empowerment serving as a mediator) and the direct effect (from the independent variable to the dependent variable) and the total effect (direct + indirect). The results show competitive mediation (psychological safety) and partial mediation (inclusive leadership).

Serial Mediation Results

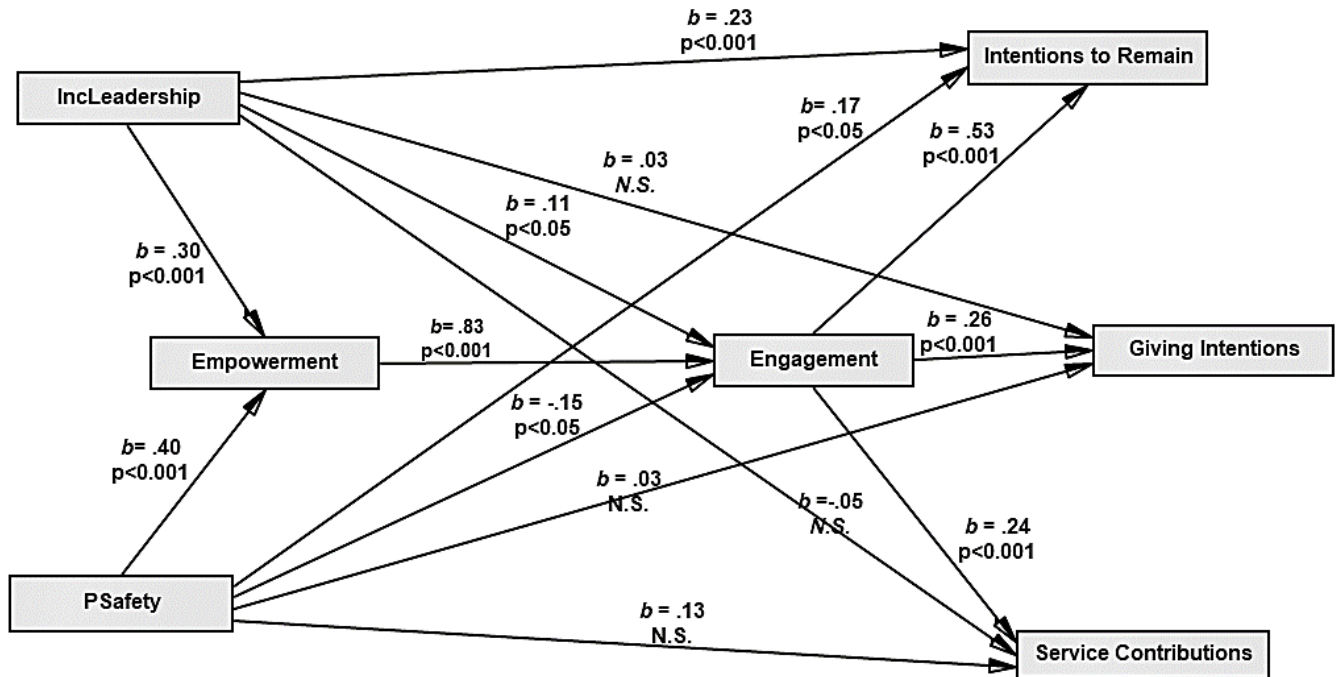
Using serial mediation, I was able to investigate the direct and indirect effects of X on Y (Hayes, 2017). In this study, serial mediation enabled us to determine the indirect effect of inclusive leadership and psychological safety on volunteer service contributions, giving intentions, and intentions to remain through empowerment and engagement, as well as the direct effect. In testing serial mediation, first I tested the direct effect; inclusive leadership and psychological safety to the independent variables, intentions to remain, giving intentions, and volunteer service contributions. Next the indirect effect is tested, which is from both independent variables to the dependent variables, intentions to remain, giving intentions, and service contributions, through empowerment and engagement acting as mediators. Lastly, I tested an

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alternative mediation model, where engagement served as the mediator between the independent variables (inclusive leadership and psychological safety) and the outcome variables (intentions to remain, giving intentions, and service contributions).

Figure 6

Serial Mediation Model



Note. This figure shows the SEM serial mediation model, the direct and indirect relationships from the independent variables to the outcome variables, including the direction of the relationships, the resulting estimates, and the significance. All relationships were significant. The significance level was documented at $p < 0.001$ (***) or $p < 0.005$ (**) and the model fit statistics were recorded were CMIN/DF = 2.22; CFI = .94; SRMR = 0.059; RMSEA = .05.

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Table 9

Serial Mediation Results

Relationship	Direct Effect	P-value	Indirect Effect	P-value	Total Effect	P-value	C.I. - Lower B.	C.I. - Upper B.	Conclusion
Psychological Safety--> Giving Intentions	0.029	0.65	0.047	0.017	0.076	0.243	-0.103	0.175	Not significant
Psychological Safety---> Intentions to Remain	0.169	0.002	0.097	0.024	0.266	***	0.132	0.419	Partial mediation
Psychological Safety-->Service Contributions	0.133	0.069	0.044	0.018	0.177	0.028	0.017	0.321	Full mediation
Inclusive Leadership ---> Giving Intentions	0.033	0.592	0.091	***	0.12	0.051	-0.001	0.246	Not significant
Inclusive Leadership ---> Intentions to Remain	0.233	0.001	0.187	***	0.42	***	0.277	0.553	Partial mediation
Inclusive Leadership ---> Service Contributions	-0.045	0.507	0.085	***	0.039	0.716	-0.156	0.189	Not significant

Note. This table shows the indirect, direct, and total effect results of serial mediation model that was tested. The results show that psychological safety and intentions to remain and inclusive leadership and intentions to remain are partially mediated by empowerment and engagement. Also, psychological safety and involvement is fully mediated by empowerment and engagement.

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Table 10

Alternative Model

Relationship	Direct Effect	P-value	Indirect Effect	P-value	Total Effect	P-value	C.I. - Lower B.	C.I. - Upper B.	Conclusion	
P.S. -- >Engagement->Giving Intentions	0.18	0.775	0.042	0.044	0.061	0.393	-0.12	0.165	*Indirect only	
P.S. -- >Engagement->Intentions to Remain	0.159	0.003	0.086	0.055	0.246	0.001	0.054	0.292	No mediation	
P.S. -- >Engagement->Service Contributions	0.114	0.141	0.04	0.042	0.154	0.084	-0.042	0.272	*Indirect only	
I.L.--->Engagement--->Giving Intentions	0.039	0.534	0.094	***	0.133	0.035	-0.085	0.165	Full mediation	
I.L.--->Engagement--->Intentions to Remain	0.239	0.001	0.193	***	0.433	***	0.101	0.383	Partial mediation	
I.L.--->Engagement--->Service Contributions	-	0.035	0.606	0.089	***	0.054	0.624	-0.234	0.11	*Indirect only

Note. This table shows the mediation results for the alternative model, including the indirect effect (engagement serving as a mediator) and the direct effect (from the independent variable to the dependent variables) and the total effect (direct + indirect). The results show that the relationship between inclusive leadership and giving intentions is fully mediated by engagement, and that the relationship between inclusive leadership and service contributions is partially mediated by engagement.

Conclusion

This chapter summarized the data analysis process used to study two research questions that evaluated the contributors to, and outcomes of volunteer engagement, and the mediating effect of empowerment. I used structural equation modeling as an analytical approach with the

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help of SPSS and AMOS. Good model fit was achieved for both the measurement model (CFA) and the structural model, and several positive and significant relationships were identified. The results demonstrate that inclusive leadership has a positive relationship with engagement and is partially mediated by empowerment. Psychological safety has a negative relationship with engagement, though when empowerment is present the relationship is significant and becomes positive, which is a sign of competitive mediation. In addition, empowerment also has a strong and significant relationship with engagement.

The results of serial mediation showed that psychological safety and intentions to remain and inclusive leadership and intentions to remain are partially mediated by empowerment and engagement. Additionally, psychological safety and involvement is fully mediated by empowerment and engagement. The findings also show that engagement has a positive and significant relationship with three important volunteer program outcomes: volunteer giving intentions, volunteer service contributions, and intentions to remain. The next chapter will discuss the results and implications of the study for practitioners and researchers, describe the limitations, and make suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I summarize and discuss the findings of my study, my interpretation of the results, and the implications and recommendations for practitioners and researchers. Next, I discuss the study's limitations, as well as suggestions for future research. Finally, the conclusion will provide a concise summary of the answers to my research questions, including the research process, and findings.

Discussion

The goal of my research was to evaluate the anecdotes and outcomes of volunteer engagement. Additionally, I wanted to study the possibility of empowerment serving as a potential mediator in the relationship. volunteer giving intentions, volunteer service contributions, and intentions to remain were also evaluated as outcomes of volunteer engagement. Two research questions and five corresponding hypotheses were explored. The two research questions were as follows:

1. *“What are the contributors to and outcomes of engagement in the context of volunteerism?”*
2. *“Does empowerment play a role as a mediator in the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety and engagement when studying volunteers?”*

This study utilized structural equation modeling to investigate the relationship between inclusive leadership-psychological safety on engagement with psychological empowerment serving as a potential mediator. This next section will discuss the results of each of the five hypotheses and explain the significance to research and practice. Furthermore, study limitations and suggestions for future research will also be discussed.

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H1: Inclusive Leadership Will Be Positively Associated with Engagement

This study identified a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement in the context of volunteerism. This outcome was expected as it is in line with previous research that has identified a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and worker engagement (Aslan et al., 2021). This finding also helps fill a gap in the field demonstrating the relationships between inclusive leadership, psychological safety and engagement within a volunteer context.

This finding helps demonstrate that inclusive leadership, where organization leaders are open, available, and accessible to volunteers, allows managers to appreciate an individual's unique contributions to an organization (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006) and provides increased engagement (Choi et al., 2015; Aslan et al., 2021). Operating within an inclusive leadership model also helps volunteer managers create engagement strategies for an ever-increasingly diverse volunteer population, which is a current issue in the field (Speevak-Sladowski et al., 2013). Research demonstrates that the volunteer workforce is becoming increasingly more diverse over the next 30 years (Nesbit & Brudney, 2013). Volunteers are often unique in culture, age, race, skill, and socioeconomic status, which requires a more inclusive leadership style that is different from working with employees (Allen et al., 2018). However, only about one-fourth of social organizations have started implementing diversity and inclusion within their long-term planning process (Johnson, 2018). Coincidentally, volunteer retention rates continue to decline (Corporation, 2007) and people are volunteering less and less each year. Considering this trend, adoption of an inclusive leadership model may help reverse the current trend and help organizations increase volunteer engagement and retention.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, volunteer management resources do not provide leaders of volunteers with the tools needed to engage a unique and diverse volunteer population.

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Outlining effective leadership styles within the "modern volunteer management" framework is nonexistent. This is problematic in the volunteer realm as leadership is not management. While employee engagement literature often highlights the leader's role in creating engagement, in the volunteering literature an effective leadership model is only briefly mentioned. Also, if leadership is highlighted at all, it is typically focused on transformational and servant leadership styles. However, volunteer projects are typically open to everyone that can pass a background check and is able and willing to work. Therefore, a more inclusive model of leadership is desired, such as inclusive leadership that highlights diversity and uniqueness of team members (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022).

Research also demonstrates that inclusive leadership is most applicable to organizational environments, such as non-profits, that are complicated, sometimes uncertain, and depend on all members to share ideas to evolve and be successful (Carmeli et al., 2010). This includes volunteers who are critical to a non-profit or social organization's operation (Einolf, 2018). Understanding the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement allows leaders of volunteers to create a more engaged volunteer workforce – cognitively, emotionally, and physically.

H2: Psychological Safety Will Be Positively Associated with Engagement

Previous research has identified a positive relationship between psychological safety and engagement (Bakker et al. 2005; Saks, 2006), though the impact of psychological safety on engagement in volunteer populations has been unknown. In this study, the impact of psychological safety on volunteer engagement was found to be negative and significant. In reflection, there are a couple of reasons why this may be the case. The first reason the relationship may be negative is that when a volunteer feels more psychologically safe, they may

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become more honest as a result and feel less inclined to answer so positively to the volunteer engagement scale. This was a potential reason given to me by a volunteer when reflecting on the study results. Psychological safety is known to increase honesty (Edmonson, 1999). A volunteer that is not afraid to be their true self may be more likely to also honestly say that they do not always work extremely hard and invest all of themselves in their volunteer role. It is volunteer work that often comes with little to no fear of being fired for lack of effort. Therefore, becoming more psychologically safe may result in a volunteer that is more likely to voice their thoughts and opinions, not necessarily a more engaged volunteer if not empowered.

The scale for psychological safety used some language that may have caused confusion for the Louisiana 4-H volunteer population. Though I adapted and piloted the survey before administering it to my sample, one of the questions contained the word "risk." In the context of the question, the word meant risk as in "I can be myself" or "I can *risk* being myself." In youth development, risk management policies and procedures are critical to operation. After talking with some volunteers and 4-H agents, I concluded that some of the volunteers associate the word "risk" with "risk management" or taking a "risk" that would create an unsafe learning environment. Additionally, the scale used several reverse items, which could have been better communicated to the sample population. Some volunteers needed clarification on the reverse items or did not expect them. In hindsight, I could have better prepared or alerted the participants to the reversed scale items so they could have been more aware. Further research is needed to assess the relationship between psychological safety and volunteer engagement.

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H3: Empowerment Will Mediate the Relationship Between Inclusive Leadership (A) - Psychological Safety (B) and Engagement

In previous research, psychological empowerment has been found to mediate the relationship between inclusive leadership and work behavior (Javed et al., 2019) in employee literature. Consistent with previous research, this study identified that the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement was partially mediated by empowerment. This means there was additional variance in the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement when empowerment was present. Therefore, an inclusive leadership model and an empowered volunteer creates a more engaged volunteer. The implications of empowerment within volunteerism research are essential given that the theory focuses more on intrinsic motivation rather than power dynamics (Kraimer et al., 1999). This is important because volunteers are often placed in powerless positions (Fahey, 2005). Thus, enabling a volunteer to experience empowerment through meaning (Kraimer et al., 1999) competence (Spreitzer, 1995), autonomy (Spreitzer et al., 1999), and impact (Jose & Mampilly, 2014) contributes more positively to volunteer engagement.

This study also found that the relationship between psychological safety and engagement was mediated by empowerment. Further, this finding demonstrated competitive mediation (Hair et al., 2021), in that the relationship became positive and significant in the presence of empowerment. Therefore, volunteers that experience psychological safety in the presence of empowerment become significantly more engaged, and psychological safety without the presence of engagement contributes negatively to engagement. When I reflected on this finding, I had a couple of thoughts. First, the scale for psychological safety focuses on volunteers feeling comfortable enough to express their thoughts and feelings and be themselves (Edmondson,

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1999). This may not contribute directly to engagement, but it may make a volunteer answer more honestly when asked how they engage with their work. However, in the presence of engagement, volunteers feel comfortable expressing and being themselves and are given the autonomy to make their own decisions regarding their volunteer roles. Empowerment allows the psychologically safe volunteer to also experience meaning, self-determination, competence, and that they are making an impact (Spreitzer, 1995). Thus, empowerment combined with psychological safety contributes to a more engaged volunteer.

As previously mentioned, the volunteers were possibly confused by some of the survey items' words which caused irregular responses. In future studies, the scale for psychological safety should be reviewed heavily for modifications, especially when working with volunteer populations that might associate words like “risk” with risk management.

Consistent with previous literature that demonstrated a positive relationship between empowerment and engagement (Hudson, 2018; Traeger & Alfes, 2019), this study also identified a strong and positive relationship between empowerment and engagement. The implications of empowerment within volunteerism research are important because they center on intrinsic motivation rather than organizational power dynamics (Kraimer et al., 1999). Because volunteers are typically placed at the bottom of organizational hierarchies in powerless positions (see Appendix V) this is an important consideration (Fahey, 2005).

For the dimensions of psychological empowerment that were significant to the study, all items were included in the final SEM model. The dimension of *meaning* is described as matching the job's requirements to one's values and beliefs. *Competence* is considered a self-belief that one has the needed skills and abilities to perform the specific role and role tasks (Kraimer et al., 1999). Within these dimensions, the strong and positive relationship with *meaning* emphasizes

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volunteers valuing their role's overall goal or purpose, which are aligned personally with their beliefs and values. Additionally, it emphasizes placing volunteers in roles suitable for their knowledge and experiences. It also highlights the need for volunteers to have proximity to the cause that aligns with their beliefs and values. For example, if the volunteer serves the organization because they believe that a reduction in poverty leads to a better community and society, it would be essential to allow volunteers to interact directly with the people and families that they are helping with the services they provide the organization. In the case of 4-H, allowing 4-H volunteers to interact directly with youth 4-H members could contribute to greater volunteer engagement.

Within the dimension of competence, having the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform a specific task makes a volunteer feel empowered, thus contributing to engagement. Therefore, a social program that provides volunteers with the opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in certain areas, and exercise these skills over time, has positive implications for engagement. This would include providing volunteers with the training and resources they need to gain new skills, and creating spaces for volunteers to exercise these skills, thus feeling more confident about their abilities. By incorporating training that includes experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), volunteers can learn more about specific topics, exercise skills, reflect, and apply their learning. This allows volunteers to engage in the learning, providing an opportunity for mastery of a topic (Meyer & Jones, 2015). In 4-H, mastery is the process of growing skills, knowledge, and perceptions resulting in self-confidence. It is used as a method to empower youth to learn new skills and provide opportunities to demonstrate their learning to reach mastery of a specific topic (Parrott, 2009). While the competence dimension is comparable to personal

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mastery (Spreitzer, 1995), implications within 4-H cannot be ignored. This is especially considering the emphasis on mastery within youth programming.

Within the dimension of self-determination, volunteers can exercise autonomy and can make their own decisions on work related tasks (Spreitzer et al., 1999). For volunteers, like 4-H leaders, that serve in an expert role to teach other individuals a new skill (which is a skill they are often an expert in), having autonomy in designing the training or educational experience may contribute to self-determination, and empowerment as a result.

As mentioned previously, volunteers look at their service experiences as a form of leisure and seek more control of their leisure. If volunteers believe in the organization's mission, are placed in suitable roles for their experience and knowledge, having autonomy in their role, and are provided the opportunities for robust hands-on learning, they should have suitable opportunities to make their own decisions regarding the volunteer tasks they complete and the volunteer programs they run. Thus, contributing to an empowered and more engaged volunteer.

H4: Engagement Will Be Positively Associated with Volunteer Intentions to Remain

Findings demonstrate that volunteer engagement has a substantial and significant relationship with volunteer intentions to remain, which is an operational priority for many non-profits and social organizations (Garner & Garner, 2011). This finding is significant, expected, and in line with previous research (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012;). While volunteers provide many resources to social organizations (Bortree & Waters, 2008), volunteerism is declining at an alarming rate, and only one-third of volunteers are retained yearly (Corporation, 2007) even as the number of social organizations available continues to rise. This is problematic in that non-profits often operate with minimal staff (Edeigba & Singh, 2021). Further, recruitment (Handy, Srinivasan, 2004) and onboarding (Benge et al., 2015) can be

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costly, considering that volunteers often go through the same training and screening process as employees. Understanding the relationship between volunteer engagement and retention can enable organizations to function more effectively and reduce employee and onboarding costs. Greater retention means that a volunteer will continue to perform work-related tasks, allowing the organization to reach its mission with minimal costs. Moreover, when volunteers are retained longer and engaged emotionally, cognitively, and physically, they will continue to gain more knowledge and skills in their role. As a result, volunteers become more effective service providers.

H5: Engagement Will Be Positively Associated with Volunteer Giving Intentions

There has been little research on volunteer engagement and volunteer giving behavior before this study, as volunteers are not often evaluated for their giving behavior. However, this finding was predicted as it is consistent with literature in fundraising and stakeholder engagement that has demonstrated a positive relationship between engagement and stakeholder giving (Radcliffe, 2011). While volunteers are valuable human assets to social organizations (Huang et al., 2020), and are often giving various organizational resources (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011), understanding the positive impact that volunteer engagement has on volunteer giving intentions could provide more funding to social organizations in an environment where funding is sometimes limited given that competition is rising (Ariella, 2023).

In this study, volunteers stated that they usually donate, intend to donate, and are likely to donate, but when asked about their frequency of giving, the results were inconclusive. This leads one to believe that volunteers should be asked to give more consistently. A conversation with the Louisiana 4-H development director confirmed this theory. This finding provides evidence that volunteers may be another source for social organizations or non-profits needing opportunities to

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secure more financial capital, providing them with a competitive advantage. Especially considering that the number of social organizations continue to grow (Pennerstorfer & Rutherford, 2019) thus creating a more competitive environment for funding opportunities. Additional research on the relationship between volunteer engagement and volunteer giving behavior is needed.

H6: Engagement Will Be Positively Associated with Volunteer Service Contributions

Consistent with previous research demonstrating a relationship between engagement and involvement as service hours provided (Shantz et al., 2014), this study also identified a positive and significant relationship between engagement and service contributions in the form of service hours, which was an expected result. This supports the theory that engaged volunteers put more physical energy into their work-related tasks and become more involved in an organization. When an individual performs volunteer hours, they are performing work on behalf of an organization for nothing, a social output that the organization would typically pay someone to do, which comes with a considerable cost (Freeman, 1997). Thus, knowing engagement has a positive relationship with involvement could help an organization save time and money, as well as get more tasks completed. Moreover, understanding the factors that are associated with engagement and engagement's relationship with service contributions will help social organizations keep volunteers more involved and give more of their time to a particular cause. This could strengthen a volunteer's commitment to the organization and allow them to become more effective in their volunteer role.

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Implications for Research

This study makes several significant contributions to research in the field. First, it expands the research on engagement into the context of volunteers, and the impact of engagement on volunteer organizations. Further, it provides a more solid foundation for volunteer engagement by identifying significant contributors and outcomes. Researchers have claimed that engagement is the key to understanding relationships between individual and organizational factors and an individual's performance (Rich et al., 2010); however, in volunteer research, engagement is still a new concept (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019) with limited studies (Malinen & Harju, 2016). This study helps to open the door for further engagement studies evaluating other related theories and studying more unique volunteer populations.

Second, this study expands current and growing research on inclusive leadership and psychological safety into volunteer populations. While a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and volunteer engagement has been identified in employee studies (Choi et al., 2015; Aslan et al., 2021), no previous study had found a relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological safety and engagement in volunteer populations. Additionally, this study also found that additional variance in the relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement when empowerment is present. Thus, this research opens the door for further studies, such as a longitudinal study on a volunteer population that examines the relationships between the variables in this study over time.

Lastly, this research identifies a relationship between engagement and three outcomes important to social organizations: giving intentions, intentions to remain, and service contributions. While previous research has identified a relationship between volunteer

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engagement and involvement (Shantz et al., 2014) and retention (Alfes et al., 2016; Malinen & Harju, 2016), volunteer giving intentions has not been adequately studied within the volunteer literature. Some studies have suggested that more engaged volunteers are more likely to be donors (Garner & Garner, 2011; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). However, most research on non-profit giving behavior involves fundraising (Radcliffe, 2011). This leads one to believe that volunteers are not asked to give and may be an untapped resource for social organizations and non-profits needing opportunities to secure more financial capital. This finding opens the door for future research and additional studies on volunteer giving behavior.

Implications for Practice

My primary motivation for this research is to provide a better understanding of engagement in the context of volunteerism, what contributes to it, and what the outcomes are. I aim to help practitioners understand that engagement is a critical area of study and important to consider in developing a thriving volunteer program. Since the volunteer management model ISOTURE (Boyce, 1971) was published, we have spent over 50 years teaching the same volunteer management procedures while volunteers are not retained (Jones, 2021) and leaving their volunteer roles even though the number of social organizations continues to rise (Edeigba & Singh, 2021). This is costly and problematic, especially considering the current pressure social organizations face to become more efficient and effective (Allen et al., 2018) and are often operating with minimal staff (Edeigba & Singh, 2021). Furthermore, competition is growing (Ariella, 2023), and volunteer rates are at an all-time low (Jones, 2021); there is a dire need for social organizations to evolve and better understand engagement of volunteers. Further, by assessing giving intentions, intentions to remain, and service contributions as outcomes of engagement of volunteers, the practitioner audience can better understand the benefits of

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engagement for the organization. In the next section, I will present strategies for practitioners that will encourage inclusive leadership, and contribute to psychological safety, and empowerment, thereby leading to engagement.

Adopting an Inclusive Leadership Style

Inclusive leadership can help managers appreciate and recognize the unique skills and contributions of all individuals in an organization (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006) and contribute to engagement (Choi et al., 2015; Aslan et al., 2021). There are three main facets of an inclusive leadership model:

- Openness: which includes a shared vision, and mentorship (Kahn, 2019)
- Availability: being available and ready to listen to the needs of others (Javed, 2018)
- Accessibility: where leaders provide feedback and allow organizational members to understand their impact on organizational outcomes (Kahn et al., 2020).

Within an inclusive leadership model, leaders welcome feedback from all levels of the organizational hierarchy (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Therefore, inclusive leaders see volunteers as a vital part of the organization, praise them for their contributions, and design mechanisms for capturing their feedback across all volunteer roles and organizational levels.

One strategy to work towards an inclusive model of leadership is to create various channels of communication, helping to provide support and share information with volunteers. This could be in the form of an advisory or leadership board that is equally represented and led by volunteers, volunteer forums, focus groups, surveys, interviews, message groups, or other methods that create opportunities for volunteers to voice their thoughts and opinions, as well as ask questions, and have access to vital information.

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An additional method that encourages uniqueness and belongingness, key elements of inclusive leadership (Randel et al., 2018), would be to include volunteers of all backgrounds in organizational meetings and program planning sessions. Just as employees have different perspectives and ideas that may benefit an organization (Primus, 2021), so do volunteers. Allowing volunteers to have a voice in program development has been known to positively contribute to engagement (Garner & Garner, 2011). Volunteers are sometimes placed outside the organization in social organizations and are therefore not included in organizational discourse (Fahey, 2005) such as program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Including volunteers in critical organization meetings where they can voice their thoughts and suggestions may provide solutions for organization issues and may provide ideas for ways the organization can improve programs and/or service.

Inclusive leaders make individuals across the organization feel equal and appreciated regardless of their hierarchical level (Aslan et al., 2021), which for volunteers is often at the bottom (Fahey, 2005). Another strategy to adopt an inclusive leadership style, allowing volunteers to feel equal and appreciated, is to provide volunteers with real positions and titles, rather than volunteer. When volunteers can manage and run critical parts of the organization, they become empowered and engaged as a result (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). In addition to real positions and titles, volunteers should have ownership over the components of their role, when practical, and have opportunities for autonomy in programs or organizational components where they are considered community experts. Also, volunteers should be placed in roles where they are knowledgeable and confident, allowing them to thrive.

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Lastly, recognizing volunteer contributions, through results sharing, or recognizing a volunteer's impact, is critical to retention (Culp et al., 1998). Volunteers prefer hearing the results of their impact over other forms of recognition (Dixon & Hientz, 2013). Allowing an individual to recognize their impact contributes to empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). In a volunteer organization that participates in results sharing, volunteers frequently receive information on their role and impact of volunteer efforts. Volunteers are also placed in positions that allow them to see the results of their impact. An example could be a Habitat for Humanity volunteer working on a home build project and then participating in the family home dedication ceremony once the home is built.

Contributing to Psychological Safety

Creating an environment where volunteers and employees can openly address challenging issues, embrace failure as an opportunity for growth, and engage in reflective learning is critical to developing psychological safety. Edmondson (1999) outlines a three-step approach to cultivate a culture of psychological safety that can be used in the context of volunteers, which emphasizes the importance of setting the stage, inviting participation, and responding productively.

Setting the Stage, involves reframing situations where things go wrong. Instead of assigning blame, the focus shifts towards studying failures as valuable learning opportunities. This reframing creates a transformation or “cultural shift” where individuals feel more at ease openly discussing problems and mistakes. Next, *Inviting Participation*, involves creating cross-functional teams to lead change. These teams should comprise diverse groups of employees, volunteers, and stakeholders. Using a multiple-focus group approach further reinforces the idea

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that input is welcomed and necessary for the group's success. This approach fosters a culture where individuals are encouraged to contribute their perspectives.

The last component, *Responding Productively*, requires leaders to approach concerns raised by volunteers with respect and appreciation. A productive response avoids anger or disregard and instead focuses on a more positive response. Leaders should emphasize how the volunteer's concerns can contribute to improvements across the organization and prevention of future issues or failures. This constructive approach reinforces the value of open communication and encourages a collaborative problem-solving mindset.

The Extension Volunteer Specialist Role

In 2019 when I began my doctoral journey, I also accepted a position as a volunteer specialist in U.S. Extension. In this position, I would oversee the state-wide Louisiana 4-H volunteer program. This includes 5,000 volunteers throughout Louisiana, and 100 agents serving as volunteer managers. I had just spent ten years recruiting and mobilizing thousands of volunteers for community partners throughout three counties in Mississippi, and this new role aligned nicely with my experience and research interests. Unfortunately, I quickly learned that this position was not about volunteer engagement. I spent most of my time troubleshooting volunteer training issues and implementing risk management onboarding procedures, such as background screenings. I was also instructed to teach agents the components of “modern volunteer management.” Though I dedicated most of my free time to educating agents on volunteer engagement, the policies and procedures for risk mitigation dominated my work. I felt conflicted when reflecting on what I learned in practice and what I was required to do as part of my job.

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When I went to national conferences and talked with other specialists about engagement, I found that the area of their role that their institutions would emphasize was risk management. More recently I attended a national conference and met several specialists that had risk management included in their position title or job description (NECV, 2023). I understand that risk management is essential for social organizations, especially those that deal with youth populations. However, research demonstrates that it is leadership, not management, that contributes positively to volunteer retention (Alfes et al., 2016; Traeger & Alfes, 2019; Vecina et al., 2012). While management focuses on formal systems of controlling people and processes, leaders motivate, inspire, and influence people to engage in organizational activities (Algahtani, 2014). Additionally, the modern volunteer management models (Rochester et al., 2010) that many volunteer specialists teach are not focused on engagement, and can be counterproductive (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). Therefore, in identifying solutions to volunteer engagement, inclusive leadership, and empowerment should be emphasized in training models and materials. Further, this research should allow 4-H youth development programs to rethink the role of their volunteer specialists. Are these positions task based, or should these professionals be more involved in strategies for engagement and retention? Further conversations on this topic are needed on a national level.

Limitations and Future Research

While this research sheds light on the antecedents and outcomes of volunteer engagement, it has limitations. Many of these limitations provide opportunities for future research. I will outline the study limitations and suggestions for future studies below.

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Incorporating More Controls and Additional Variables

While I controlled for several factors that may impact a volunteer's level of involvement such as age, sex, employment status (Krishnan et al., 2023) as well as tenure and previous 4-H involvement, I must acknowledge that there was still a lack of control variables that may have an impact on the study results. For example, I did not control for other variables that have been found to have a positive relationship with engagement, such as volunteer voice (Gilbert et al., 2020), collaboration (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2020), and organizational identity (Traeger & Alfes, 2019). Future studies could control for additional variables that may impact engagement and the studies overall findings.

Further, while the study identified a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and engagement, the relationship was small and suggests that other variables may have a positive relationship with engagement, such as authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), or leader-member exchange (LMX) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) that may have a significant overlap with inclusive leadership. Future studies could also control for other leadership styles to eliminate the potential impact of similar leadership styles on volunteer engagement and the ultimate outcomes of engagement.

Exploring Alternative Models

In this study I used existing and validated scales previously used in employee-employer research to study volunteers in social organizations. Due to this, future research may need to review the theories and identify potential changes, including removing low performing items from constructs. For example, one model version that I evaluated removed standard regression weights under .70, with the exception for one (.60). The results indicated that inclusive leadership had a stronger relationship with engagement than what was recorded in the reported model. A

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suggestion for future research could include evaluating the items that result in low estimates (below the .50 threshold) and consider deleting them or modifying the wording to help identify a theory specifically for volunteer engagement.

Additionally, the relationship between psychological safety and engagement was negative without empowerment present. In a future study, the psychological safety scale items should be reviewed specifically by volunteers to identify potential word changes that might make the questions clearer. This would help generate more meaningful results. For example, volunteers may associate words like "risk" with risk management, part of a 4-H volunteers' core training (How to Volunteer, n.d.), versus the social risk-taking that the psychological safety scale refers to. Next, the outcome variables retention and giving only have three items per scale. Notably, one of the scale items for giving was removed during the initial data analysis. If this study were replicated, reviewing other multi-item scales for retention, and giving, could provide more robust, and more meaningful results.

Another limitation of this study is that it is cross-sectional. In a cross-sectional study, data is collected at a single point in time, not over a specific period, which may contribute to information bias (Kesmodel, 2018). A longitudinal study that examines the relationship between the different variables over time may yield more robust and valid results.

Studying Different Volunteer Populations

Considering that this population was predominantly white and female, a more diverse population of volunteers could help identify if the relationships between the variables differ across various demographic populations. This would help volunteer managers find solutions for engaging and retaining underrepresented demographic populations. A study on a younger and more diverse population regarding racial and ethnic backgrounds and biological sex could yield

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different results. For example, some preliminary analysis performed by grouping volunteers into different ethnic populations based on racial backgrounds identified significant differences between them and the relationships between the variables in the model.

Repeating the study across 4-H programs in different states or provinces may produce different, and interesting, results depending on the program model. For example, the Louisiana 4-H utilizes a more traditional school-based model, where volunteers are often teachers. Other 4-H programs across the U.S. and in Canada may utilize a community-club approach, where volunteers are parents and community experts that may have more diverse experiences and needs. Lastly, this study should be replicated with a different non-profit organization with more diverse opportunities to serve, or one that is serving a variety of community populations, to see if various volunteer programs yield different results.

Conclusion

While working on my research, I came across the United Nations' 17 goals for peace and prosperity for all people (United Nations, n.d.), which provided an urgent call to action to social organizations worldwide. Volunteers are a critical operation component for most social organizations (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Therefore, if we want to eliminate poverty, end world hunger, and build more sustainable communities for the future, volunteerism is at the center. However, volunteerism continues to decline (Edeigba & Singh, 2021), and retention is an even more significant issue (Gagné et al., 2019). At the same time, social organizations are under tremendous pressure to become more efficient and use fewer resources (Allen et al., 2018), however their volunteer management models are not helping them attract or retain volunteers to assist, resulting in a less engaged volunteer workforce (Rochester et al., 2010). Therefore, to

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encourage people to become more involved in causes that improve our world, we must build social organizations a model for volunteer engagement.

This quantitative study used structural equation modeling to examine two research questions: 1. *“What are the contributors to and outcomes of engagement in a volunteer context?”*; 2. *“Does empowerment plays a role in the relationship between inclusive leadership, psychological safety, and engagement in volunteers?”* While engaged individuals give more of their cognitive, emotional, and physical energies towards their work roles (Kahn, 1990), this study found that inclusive leadership has a positive and significant relationship with engagement. This finding is significant because research demonstrates that the volunteer workforce will become increasingly more diverse over the next 30 years (Nesbit & Brudney, 2013). A more inclusive style of leadership is needed, one that would consider the diversity and uniqueness (Studer, 2016) of organizational members.

Consistent with previous literature (Hudson, 2018; Traeger & Alfes, 2019), this study found that empowerment had a strong and positive relationship with engagement. Empowerment also served as a mediator between psychological safety, inclusive leadership, and engagement. Creating a psychologically safe work environment means allowing individuals to feel safe and recognized for their unique talents and skills (Zaman, 2020), fundamentally important for volunteer environments where people from “all walks of life” must serve together. Additionally, empowerment, in the form of volunteers feeling a sense of control over their work and having the necessary knowledge and skills to perform a specific task (Traeger & Alfes) is critical in creating a more engaged volunteer population.

This study also found that engagement had a significant and positive relationship with volunteer giving intentions, intentions to remain, and service contributions, which are three

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important outcomes for volunteer managers. Understanding the relationship between volunteer engagement and retention can enable organizations to function more effectively and reduce employee and onboarding costs. While understanding the relationship between engagement and involvement could help an organization get more tasks completed, thus also saving time and money. Moreover, increasing volunteer giving behavior may help a social organization secure more financial capital or in-kind support.

This study gives volunteer managers a greater understanding of the factors that create a more engaged volunteer workforce and the benefits of engagement of volunteers for the organization. As a result, social organizations may use this study to increase volunteer engagement, volunteer retention, giving, and service contributions, enabling them to operate more effectively and meet their social missions. This research also gives the academic community a greater understanding of the anecdotes and outcomes of volunteer engagement, which has been widely used but needs to be refined. While social organizations serving a variety of community populations may yield different results, this study is the first to examine the contributions of inclusive leadership to engagement and giving intentions as a potential outcome. Thus, this study helps pave the way for future qualitative and quantitative studies on volunteer engagement.

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Appendix A: Working Model

Volunteer administrator leadership styles, empowerment, volunteer engagement

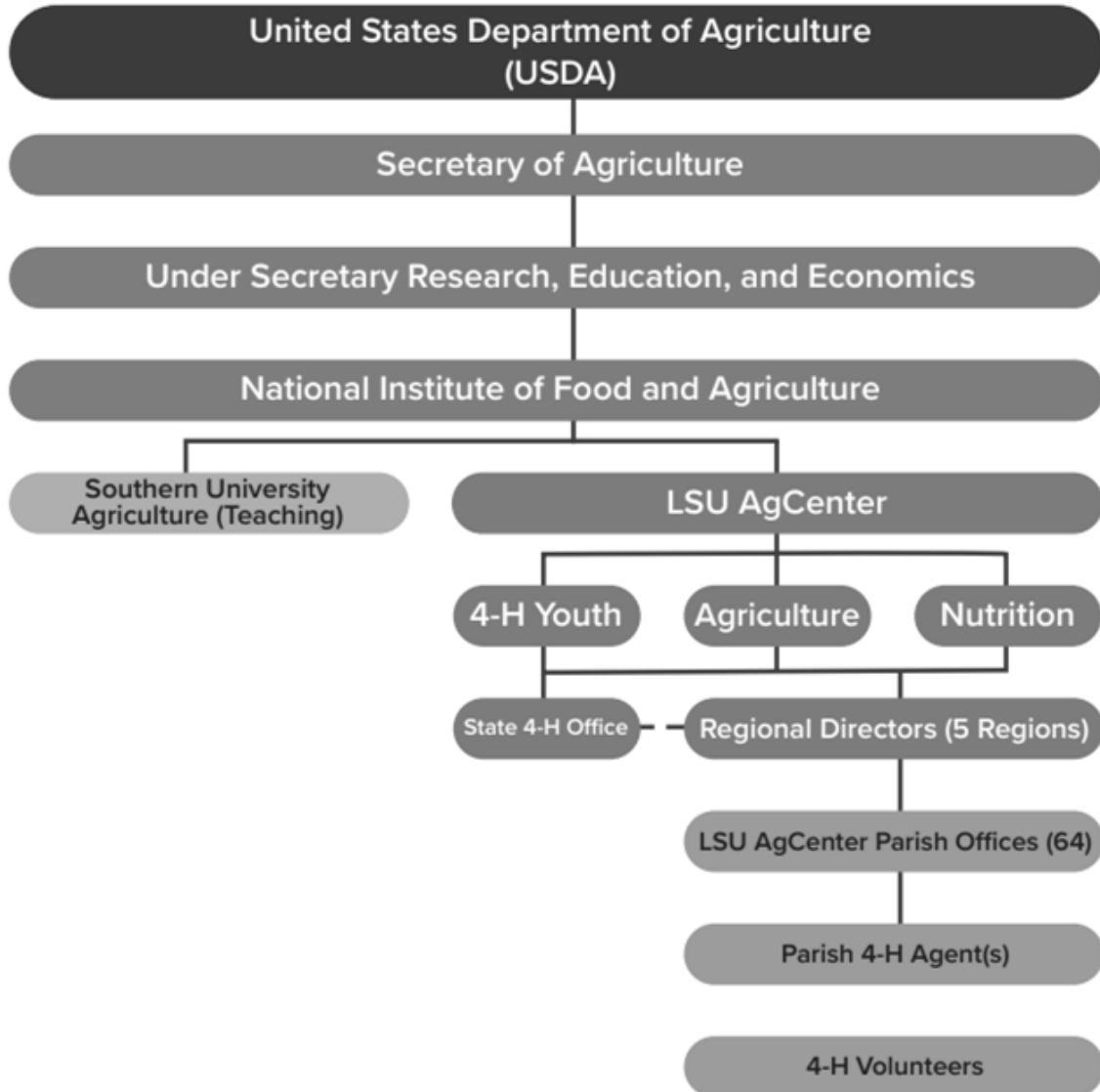
Independent Variables	Mediators	Dependent Variables: Volunteer Engagement Outcomes
<p>Volunteer Administrator Leadership Style: Inclusive Leadership (Carmeli et al., 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness • Availability • Accessibility <p>Welcoming and Safe Environment: Psychological Safety Scale (Edmondson, 1999)</p>	<p>Psychological Empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning • Competence • Self-determination • Impact 	<p>Volunteer Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Engagement/Disengagement (Rich et al., 2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical, cognitive, affective • Volunteer Service Contributions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hours Served • Giving Intentions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-kind & Monetary Donations • Intentions to Remain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Length of time volunteer has been with the organization

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Appendix B: Organizational Structure of Louisiana 4-H

Louisiana 4-H Club Leader Handbook (Franks, Hebert, Lepley, 2020).

Organizational Chart of USDA



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Appendix C: Worker Engagement Scale

(Rich et al., 2010)

Original	Adapted
<p>Physical engagement I work with intensity on my job I exert my full effort to my job I devote a lot of energy to my job I try my hardest to perform well on my job I strive as hard as I can to complete my job I exert a lot of energy on my job</p> <p>Emotional engagement I am enthusiastic in my job I feel energetic at my job I am interested in my job I am proud of my job I feel positive about my job I am excited about my job</p> <p>Cognitive engagement At work, my mind is focused on my job At work, I pay a lot of attention to my job At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job At work, I am absorbed by my job At work, I concentrate on my job At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job</p>	<p>Physical engagement I work with intensity in my volunteer role I exert my full effort to my volunteer role I devote a lot of energy to my volunteer role I try my hardest to perform well in my volunteer role I strive as hard as I can to complete my volunteer role I exert a lot of energy in my volunteer role</p> <p>Emotional engagement I am enthusiastic in my volunteer role I feel energetic in my volunteer role I am interested in my volunteer role I am proud of my volunteer role I feel positive about my volunteer role I am excited about my volunteer role</p> <p>Cognitive engagement While serving, my mind is focused on my volunteer role While serving, I pay a lot of attention to my volunteer role While serving, I focus a great deal of attention on my volunteer role While serving, I am absorbed by my volunteer role While serving, I concentrate on my volunteer role While serving, I devote a lot of attention to my volunteer role</p>

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Appendix D: Inclusive Leadership Scale

(Carmeli et al., 2010)

Original

The manager is open to hearing new ideas (openness)

The manager is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes (openness)

The manager is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them (openness)

The manager is available for consultation on problems (availability)

The manager is an ongoing 'presence' in this team-someone who is readily available (availability)

The manager is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her (availability)

The manager is ready to listen to my requests (availability)

The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues (accessibility)

The manager is accessible for discussing emerging problems (accessibility)

Adapted

The 4-H agent in my parish is open to hearing new ideas

The 4-H agent in my parish is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes

The 4-H agent in my parish is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them

The 4-H agent in my parish is available for consultation on problems

The 4-H agent in my parish is an ongoing 'presence' in this 4-H program-someone who is readily available

The 4-H agent in my parish is available for program-related questions I would like to consult with him/her

The 4-H agent in my parish is ready to listen to my requests

The 4-H agent in my parish encourages me to access him/her on emerging program related issues

The 4-H agent in my parish is accessible for discussing emerging program related problems

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Appendix E: Psychological Safety Scale

(Edmondson, 1999)

Original

1. If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.
2. Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
3. People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.
4. It is safe to take a risk on this team.
5. It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
6. No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized

Adapted

1. If I make a mistake in this parish 4-H program, it is held against me.
2. Volunteers involved in this parish 4-H program are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
3. 4-H professionals (staff and volunteers) in this parish sometimes reject others for being different.
4. It is safe to take a risk in this parish 4-H program.
5. It is difficult to ask other 4-H staff or volunteers in this parish for help.
6. No one on this parish 4-H program would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with other 4-H professionals (staff and volunteers) in this parish 4-H program, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

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Appendix F: Psychological Empowerment Scale

(Spreitzer, 1995)

Meaning

The work I do is very important to me
My job activities are personally meaningful to me
The work I do is meaningful to me

Competence

I am confident about my ability to do my job
I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities
I have mastered the skills necessary for my job

Self-Determination

I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job
I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job

Impact

My impact on what happens in my department is large
I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department
I have significant influence over what happens in my department

Adapted

Meaning

The volunteer work I do is very important to me
My volunteer job activities are personally meaningful to me
The volunteer work I do is meaningful to me

Competence

I am confident about my ability to do my volunteer job
I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my volunteer work activities
I have mastered the skills necessary for my volunteer job

Self-Determination

I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my volunteer job
I can decide on my own how to go about doing my volunteer work
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my volunteer job

Impact

My impact on what happens in my parish 4-H program is large
I have a great deal of control over what happens in my parish 4-H program
I have significant influence over what happens in my parish 4-H program

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Appendix G: Volunteer Involvement Questions

About how often did you volunteer with Louisiana 4-H during the past twelve months?
(Involvement) Once a week or more, 2-3 times a month, Once a month, 7-11 times during the last year, 3-6 times during the last year, 1-2 times in the last year

How many hours per year/month do you volunteer with Louisiana 4-H? (*Involvement-volunteers that serve monthly will see "month" volunteers that serve less than monthly will see "year"*) 0-100

Volunteer Intentions to Remain Questions (Garner & Garner, 2011)

Original

I plan to volunteer for this organization in the future.

(1 Very Unlikely, 2 Unlikely, 3 Undecided, 4, Likely, 5 Very Likely) (*Retention*)

I would recommend that others volunteer for the organization.

(1 Very Unlikely, 2 Unlikely, 3 Undecided, 4, Likely, 5 Very Likely) (*Retention*)

I am more motivated to volunteer because of my recent volunteer experience with this organization.

(1 Very Unlikely, 2 Unlikely, 3 Undecided, 4, Likely, 5 Very Likely) (*Retention*)

I hope that volunteering is a part of my life for years to come.

(1 Very Unlikely, 2 Unlikely, 3 Undecided, 4, Likely, 5 Very Likely) (*Retention*)

Adapted

I plan to volunteer for Louisiana 4-H in the future.

(1) Very Unlikely, (2) Unlikely, (3) Somewhat Unlikely (4) Neither Unlikely nor Likely, (5) Somewhat Likely, (6) Likely, (7) Very Likely (*Retention*)

I would recommend that others volunteer for Louisiana 4-H.

(1) Very Unlikely, (2) Unlikely, (3) Somewhat Unlikely (4) Neither Unlikely nor Likely, (5) Somewhat Likely, (6) Likely, (7) Very Likely (*Retention*)

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I am more motivated to volunteer because of my recent volunteer experience with Louisiana 4-H.

(1) Very Unlikely, (2) Unlikely, (3) Somewhat Unlikely (4) Neither Unlikely nor Likely, (5) Somewhat Likely, (6) Likely, (7) Very Likely (*Retention*)

I hope that volunteering is a part of my life for years to come.

(1) Very Unlikely, (2) Unlikely, (3) Somewhat Unlikely (4) Neither Unlikely nor Likely, (5) Somewhat Likely, (6) Likely, (7) Very Likely (*Retention*)

Giving Intentions (Smith & McSweeney, 2007).

I usually donate money to charities and community service organizations.

(1 Not At All True, 7 Very True)

How often during the past four weeks have you donated money to charities or community service organizations?

(1 Not At All, 5 Frequently)

I intend to donate money to charities or community service organizations in the next four weeks.

(1 Strongly Agree, 5 Strongly Disagree)

How likely do you think it is that you will donate money to charities or community service organizations in the next four weeks

(1 Very Unlikely, 2 Unlikely, 3 Undecided, 4, Likely, 5 Very Likely)

Adapted

I usually donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H.

1 Very Untrue, 2 Untrue, 3 Somewhat Untrue, 4 Neutral, 5 Somewhat True 6 True, 7 Very True

How often during the past program year have you made monetary or in-kind donations to Louisiana 4-H?

1 Never, 2 Very Rarely, 3 Rarely, 4 Occasionally 5 Frequently, 6 Very Frequently, 7 Always

I intend to donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H within the next program year.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

How likely do you think it is that you will donate money to Louisiana 4-H during the current program year?

(1) Very Unlikely, (2) Unlikely, (3) Somewhat Unlikely (4) Neither Unlikely nor Likely, (5) Somewhat Likely, (6) Likely, (7) Very Like

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Appendix H: Volunteer Demographic Questions

Are you a previous 4-H member?

Yes/No

Are you currently employed?

Yes

No

Are you currently, or have you ever worked as a K-12 teacher/educator?

Yes, Current profession

Yes, Previous/Past profession

No

What is your age?

25 years of age or less, 26 years of age to 35 years of age, 36 years of age to 45 years of age, 46 years of age to 55 years of age, 56 years of age to 65 years of age, 66 years of age to 75 years of age, 76 years of age to 85 years of age, 86 years of age or more

What is your Sex?

Male, Female, Prefer not to disclose

Are you of Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin?

Yes

No

How would you best describe yourself?

American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other

How long have you been volunteering with Louisiana 4-H? (*Tenure*)

0-100

Have you volunteered with Louisiana 4-H within the last 6 months? (*Active/In-Active*)

Yes, No

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Appendix I: Structural Equation Modeling Process

Weston, R., & Gore Jr, P. A. (2006).

Specification	Specify which relationships are theorized to exist or not to exist among observed and latent variables based on the findings of previous research.
Identification	Developing the measurement model, including path diagram and theorized relationships.
Data preparation and screening	Obtain an adequate sample as well as address issues of multicollinearity, outliers, missing data, and normality.
Estimation	Determining the value of the unknown parameters, and error associated with the estimated value utilizing AMOS. Determine estimation procedure.
Evaluation of fit	Assess model fit and validity.
Modification	Perform model modifications as needed.

(Gallagher et al., 2008)

Model development	Develop and define the theorized model, include the latent variables and indicators, as well as the predicted relationships between the latent variables based on the previous research.
Examination of empirical data	Prepare data for analysis, including obtaining an adequate sample for accurate results, and addressing missing data.
Model assessment	Assess the validity of the measurement model, model fit, construct validity, and reliability.

(Hair et al., 2019).

Defining individual constructs	Mapping out which items will be used for the measurement model.
Developing the overall measurement model	Developing a path diagram for the measurement model
Designing a study to produce empirical results	Obtaining an adequate sample size, selecting the optimal estimation method and approach for missing data.
Assessing measurement model validity	Assess goodness-of-fit, and construct validity.
Specific the structural model	Convert measurement model into structural model.
Assessing structural model validity	Assess structural model fit and significance, testing relationships, direction, size of structural parameter estimates.

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Appendix J: Covering Letter/Informed Consent

ONLINE PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Principle Researcher	Supervisor
Meggan Franks mfranks@agcenter.lsu.edu	Dr. Angela Workman-Stark angela.workman-stark@fb.athabascau.ca

You are invited to participate in a research study on volunteer engagement. More specifically, this research project will examine the contributors and outcomes of volunteer engagement. I am conducting this study as a requirement to complete my Doctorate in Business Administration.

As an adult volunteer, 18 years of age or older, you are asked to participate in this study by completing a short online questionnaire about your volunteer experience with Louisiana 4-H. Participation will take 10-15 minutes to complete. Your input will help develop a better understanding of how organizations, such as 4-H, can better engage volunteers and the impact that an engaged volunteer has on an organization. **By completing the survey, you will be entered into a drawing for one of ten (10) \$10 4-H Camp Store Gift Cards, and one of two (2) \$50 Camp Store Gift Cards.**

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. Involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions or to share information that you are not comfortable with. You will not be asked to provide any personal or identifiable information or data that will be associated with your responses. If at any point you no longer wish to participate in the study, you may withdraw by simply closing out of your browser. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate. Once you submit your completed survey, however, data cannot be withdrawn as the survey is completely anonymous. You can retain a copy of this consent form for your records.

Please note that the survey data may be initially collected and stored on a server in the U.S (United States). and is subject to access under the U.S. Patriot Act until it is transferred from that server to the researcher's computer.

Once submitted, only the research team members will have access to the anonymous survey data, which will be stored on password protected computers. As some of the data will be collected using an online survey, the confidentiality and privacy of data cannot be guaranteed during web-based transmission. The researchers acknowledge that the host of the online survey (Qualtrics) may automatically collect potentially identifying participant data without their knowledge (i.e., IP address). However, the researchers will not use or save this information. This information will be deleted immediately after the data collection.

The data will be retained indefinitely and will be made available to other researchers by request. The data may be reanalyzed in the future as part of a separate project. The results of this study will be presented at several state, regional, and national conferences including the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism and will be submitted for publishing in the Journal of

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Extension. The existence of the research will be listed in an abstract posted online at the Athabasca University Library's Digital Thesis and Project Room and the final research paper will be publicly available.

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Meggan Franks or Dr. Angela Workman-Stark using the contact information above.

This study has been reviewed by the Athabasca University Research Ethics Board. Should you have any comments or concerns about your treatment as a participant, the research, or ethical review processes, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at 780.213.2033 or by e-mail to rebsec@athabascau.ca. Thank you for your assistance with this project.

CONSENT:

BEGIN THE SURVEY

By clicking the box below, you are indicating that you meet the eligibility criteria for this study, have read this consent form and agree to participate in this research study. Otherwise, you may exit out of the survey. Please print a copy of this page for your records.

I have read and understand the above information. I consent to participate in this study.

EXIT

I do not want to participate in this study.

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Appendix K: Survey Instrument

Part 1: Volunteer Information

Have you volunteered with Louisiana 4-H within the last 12 months? (*Active/In-Active*)

Yes, No

- If “No”

Thank you for offering to participate in the study. At this time, only active volunteers will be asked to proceed. For more information about volunteering with Louisiana 4-H, contact the 4-H agent in your local area.

Are you a previous 4-H member?

Yes/No

Are you currently employed?

Yes/No

Are you currently, or have you ever worked as a K-12 teacher/educator?

Yes, Current profession, Yes, Previous/Past profession, No

Please select your age from the drop-down list:

0-100

Please indicate your highest level of formal education.

High School/Secondary school diploma, Technical school or certificate, Some college/university courses, College/university degree, Other, Prefer not to answer

What is your Sex?

Male, Female, Not Listed, Prefer Not to Answer

Which race/ethnicity best describes you?

Indigenous (First Nations, Maori, Native American, others), Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, African descent), Chinese (e.g., China, Hong Kong, Taiwan), Hispanic or Latino (including Mexican, Central American and others), Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian descent, Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, etc., Northeast Asian (e.g., Japan, Korea), South Asian (e.g., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), Southeast Asian (e.g., Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines), West Indian (e.g., Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago), White / Caucasian (e.g., European descent), Mixed, Not listed_____, Prefer not to answer

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Part 2: Service Contributions, Intentions to Remain, and Giving Intentions

About how often did you volunteer with Louisiana 4-H during the past twelve months?
(Involvement) Once a week or more, 2-3 times a month, Once a month, 7-11 times during the last year, 3-6 times during the last year, 1-2 times in the last year

How many hours per year/month do you volunteer with Louisiana 4-H? (*Involvement-volunteers that serve monthly will see "month" volunteers that serve less than monthly will see "year"*) 0-100

How long have you been volunteering with Louisiana 4-H? (*Approximate number of years in whole numbers*) 0-100

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

I usually donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H.

1 Very Untrue, 2 Untrue, 3 Somewhat Untrue, 4 Neutral, 5 Somewhat True 6 True, 7 Very True

How often during the past program year have you made monetary or in-kind donations to Louisiana 4-H?

1 Never, 2 Very Rarely, 3 Rarely, 4 Occasionally 5 Frequently, 6 Very Frequently, 7 Always

I intend to donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H within the next program year.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

How likely do you think it is that you will donate money to Louisiana 4-H during the current program year?

(1) Very Unlikely, (2) Unlikely, (3) Somewhat Unlikely (4) Neither Unlikely nor Likely, (5) Somewhat Likely, (6) Likely, (7) Very Likely

I plan to volunteer for Louisiana 4-H in the future.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I would recommend that others volunteer for Louisiana 4-H.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am more motivated to volunteer because of my recent volunteer experience with Louisiana 4-H.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I hope that volunteering will be a part of my life for years to come.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5)

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Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Part 3: Engagement

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

I work with intensity in my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I exert my full effort to my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I devote a lot of energy to my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I try my hardest to perform well in my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I strive as hard as I can to complete my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I exert a lot of energy in my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am enthusiastic in my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I feel energetic in my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am interested in my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am proud of my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I feel positive about my volunteer role.

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(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am excited about my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

While serving, my mind is focused on my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

While serving, I pay a lot of attention to my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

While serving, I focus a great deal of attention on my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

While serving, I am absorbed by my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

While serving, I concentrate on my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

While serving, I devote a lot of attention to my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Part 4: Inclusive Leadership

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

The 4-H professional in my program is open to hearing new ideas.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

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The 4-H professional in my program is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program is available for consultation on problems.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program is an ongoing 'presence' in this 4-H program-someone who is readily available

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program is available for program-related questions I would like to consult with him/her.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program is ready to listen to my requests.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program encourages me to access him/her on emerging program related issues.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The 4-H professional in my program is accessible for discussing emerging program related problems.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Part 5: Safety

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

If I make a mistake in this 4-H program, it is held against me.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Volunteers involved in this 4-H program can bring up problems and tough issues.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

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4-H professionals (staff and volunteers) in this program sometimes reject others for being different.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

It is safe to take a risk in this 4-H program.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

It is difficult to ask other 4-H staff or volunteers in this program for help.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

No one on this 4-H program would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Working with other 4-H professionals (staff and volunteers) in this 4-H program, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Part 6: Empowerment

Rate your agreement with the following statements:

The volunteer role I perform is very important to me.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

My volunteer activities are personally meaningful to me.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

The volunteer work I do is meaningful to me.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am confident about my ability to complete my volunteer tasks.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my volunteer tasks.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

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I have mastered the skills necessary for my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I have significant autonomy in determining how I perform my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I can decide on my own how to go about doing my volunteer work.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I perform my volunteer role.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

My impact on what happens in my 4-H program is large.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I have a great deal of control over what happens in my 4-H program.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

I have significant influence over what happens in my 4-H program.

(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Somewhat Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree

Thank you for completing the survey. If you would like to enter the drawing for a camp store gift card, enter your email address in the box below. Your contact email will be in no way associated with your responses to the survey. Email _____

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Appendix L: Study Recruitment Email

Hello {4-H Volunteer's Name}

You are invited to participate in a research study on volunteer engagement. This research project will explore volunteer engagement. Specifically, it will examine the contributors and outcomes of volunteer engagement. I am conducting this study as a requirement to complete my Doctorate in Business Administration.

As a participant, you are asked to participate in this study by completing a short online questionnaire about your volunteer experience with Louisiana 4-H. Participation will take approximately twenty minutes.

Involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions or to share information that you are not comfortable with. You will not be asked to provide any personal or identifiable information or data that will be associated with your responses.

You may withdraw from the study at any time by simply closing the survey. Once you submit your completed survey, however, data cannot be withdrawn as the survey is completely anonymous. You can retain a copy of this email consent for your records.

To access the survey, go to bit.ly/la4hvolunteersurvey

By completing the survey, you will be entered into a drawing for one of ten (10) \$10 4-H Camp Store Gift Cards, and one of two (2) \$50 Camp Store Gift Cards.

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Meggan Franks or Dr. Angela Workman-Stark at:

Principle Researcher
Meggan Franks
mfranks@agcenter.lsu.edu

Supervisor
Dr. Angela Workman-Stark
angela.workman-stark@fb.athabasca.ca

This study has been reviewed by the Athabasca University Research Ethics Board. Should you have any comments or concerns about your treatment as a participant, the research, or ethical review processes, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at 780.213.2033 or by e-mail to rebsec@athabasca.ca.

Appendix M: Certification of Ethical Approval



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: 25057

Principal Investigator:

Mrs. Meggan Franks, Graduate Student
Faculty of Business\Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Supervisor/Project Team:

Dr. Angela Workman-Stark (Supervisor)

Project Title:

A Formula for Volunteer Engagement: A Structural Equation Model of Inclusive Leadership -Safety and Empowerment

Effective Date: December 19, 2022

Expiry Date: December 18, 2023

Restrictions:

Any modification/amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval prior to proceeding.

Any adverse event or incidental findings must be reported to the AUREB as soon as possible, for review.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

An Ethics Final Report must be submitted when the research is complete (*i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable)*) or the research is terminated.

Approved by:

Date: December 19, 2022

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A STRUCTURAL EQUATION FOR VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Appendix N: Final List of Items Retained During CFA

<i>Item retained within each variable</i>	Standardized Factor Loadings	t-value
Empowerment (CR= .95)		
The volunteer work I do is very important to me	0.91	7.96
My volunteer activities are personally meaningful to me.	0.92	7.95
The volunteer work I do is meaningful to me	0.94	7.98
I am confident about my ability to do my volunteer job	0.83	7.87
I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my volunteer work activities	0.82	7.86
I have mastered the skills necessary for my volunteer role.	0.60	7.21
I have significant autonomy in determining how I perform my volunteer role	0.56	7.14
I can decide on my own how to go about doing my volunteer work.	0.41	6.30
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I perform my volunteer role	0.48	6.87
My impact on what happens in my 4-H program is large	0.50	10.10
I have a great deal of control over what happens in my 4-H program	0.31	14.98
I have significant influence over what happens in my 4-H program.	0.36	**
Engagement (CR = .98)		
I work with intensity in my volunteer role.	0.68	**
I exert my full effort in my volunteer role	0.80	21.21
I devote a lot of energy to my volunteer role	0.78	19.89
I try my hardest to perform well in my volunteer role	0.83	17.16
I strive as hard as I can to complete my volunteer role	0.85	17.43
I exert a lot of energy in my volunteer role	0.71	14.91
I am enthusiastic in my volunteer role	0.86	17.76
I feel energetic in my volunteer role	0.85	17.59
I am interested in my volunteer role	0.89	18.19
I am proud of my volunteer role	0.87	17.82
I feel positive about my volunteer role	0.88	18.01
I am excited about my volunteer role	0.92	18.66
While serving, my mind is focused on my volunteer role	0.87	17.77
While serving, I pay a lot of attention to my volunteer role	0.91	18.49
While serving, I focus a great deal of attention on my volunteer role	0.91	18.59
While serving, I focus a great deal of attention on my volunteer role.	0.67	14.06
While serving, I concentrate on my volunteer role	0.86	17.71
While serving, I devote a lot of attention to my volunteer role.	0.85	20.90

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	0.81	
Giving Intentions (CR = .89)		
I usually donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H.	0.79	**
I intend to donate money or in-kind goods to Louisiana 4-H within the next program year.	0.88	20.85
How likely do you think it is that you will donate money to Louisiana 4-H during the current program year?	0.89	21.01
 Inclusive Leadership (CR = .971)		
The 4-H agent in my parish is open to hearing new ideas	0.86	30.34
The 4-H agent in my parish is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes	0.89	33.73
The 4-H agent in my parish is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them	0.91	36.40
The 4-H agent in my parish is available for consultation on problems	0.94	40.47
The 4-H professional in my program is an ongoing 'presence' in this program-someone who is readily available	0.92	38.48
The 4-H professional in my program is available for program-related questions I would like to consult with him/her.	0.93	46.36
The 4-H professional in my program is ready to listen to my requests.	0.94	40.85
The 4-H agent in my parish encourages me to access him/her on emerging program-related issues	0.92	44.02
The 4-H agent in my parish is accessible for discussing emerging program-related problems.	0.94	**
 Service Contributions		
The number of hours served in a program year (continuous variable)	0.72	**
 Intentions to Remain (CR = .80)		
I plan to volunteer for Louisiana 4-H in the future.	0.81	20.89
I would recommend that others volunteer for Louisiana 4-H.	0.85	**
I am more motivated to volunteer because of my experience with Louisiana 4-H	0.68	15.84
I hope that volunteering will be a part of my life for years to come.	0.80	19.22
 Psychological Safety (CR = .78)		
If I make a mistake in this 4-H program, it is held against me.	.28	5.68
Volunteers involved in this 4-H program can bring up problems and tough issues.	.37	7.35
4-H professionals (staff and volunteers) in this program sometimes reject others for being different.	.45	8.94
It is safe to take a risk in this 4-H program.	.27	5.22
It is difficult to ask other 4-H staff or volunteers in this program for help.	.40	7.76

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No one on this 4-H program would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.	.57	11.62
Working with other 4-H professionals (staff and volunteers) in this 4-H program, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.	.82	**

Note. The table above shows the items retained for each construct, their standardized regression weights, and t-values. It also shows the construct reliability scores for each variable. The Model Fit Statistics were as follows: CMIN/DF = 2.02; CFI= .97; SRMR =0.047; RMSEA = .046. Items marked with ** were constrained for identification purposes.

Appendix O: Final Structural Model Fit

Table 10

<i>Model Fit Indices</i>	Good Fit Value	Model Value	Assessment
<i>CMIN</i>	Between 2 and 5, preferably under 3 for an acceptable fit (Kline, 2016).	CMIN/DF = 2.056	Good fit
<i>GFI</i>	GFI should be close to 1 and above .90 (Hair et al., 2019) but can be sensitive to sample size	0.829	Not good fitting
<i>NFI</i>	NFI should be above .90 for a good fit (Byrne, 1994; Smith & McMillan, 2001).	NFI = .91	Good fit
<i>TLI</i>	Above .90 indicates a good fit (Boelen & van den Bout, 2005).	TLI = .946	Good fit
<i>CFI</i>	It should be >.90; Not very sensitive to sample size (Byrne, 1994)	CFI = .95	Good fit
<i>RMSEA</i>	Values close to 0 represent a good fit; results should be less than .1 (Klien, 2016). RMSEA should be between .05, and .08 (Xia & Yang, 2019)	RMSEA = .047	Good fit
<i>RFI</i>	RFI should be between 0 and 1, approaching 1 = good fit.	RFI = .90	Good fit
<i>IFI</i>	Over .90 is a good fit (Bollen,1989).	IFI = .95	Good fit
<i>PNFI</i>	Should be greater than .50	PNFI = .843	Good fit
<i>PCFI</i>	Should be greater than .60	PCFI = .883	Good fit
<i>SRMR</i>	Should be less than .08	SRMR = .058	Good fit

Note. The above table shows the final structural model fit across various model fit indices. According to the literature the model is assessed as good fitting.