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Willingness to volunteer

The role of urgency of the request for help, self-perceived ability to help and diffusion of responsibility.

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Abstract

A 2 (urgency of request for help: high vs. low) × 2 (diffusion of responsibility: high vs. low) between subjects experimental design was used to study predictors of organised helping behaviour (volunteering). Students (N = 113), with and without volunteering experience, were presented a scenario to test the influence of urgency of a request for help, self-efficacy and diffusion of responsibility on willingness to volunteer. These predictors have been studied before by Latané and Darley (1968, 1970; Darley & Latané, 1968) in the research field of spontaneous helping behaviour. Urgency of the request for help and self-efficacy were expected to positively influence willingness to volunteer and diffusion of responsibility was expected to negatively influence willingness to volunteer. Correlation analysis and regression analyses were performed. ANOVA's were used to examine potential differences between the participants in the low urgency group versus the high urgency group, and between participants in the high diffusion of responsibility group versus low diffusion of responsibility group. To examine potential interaction effects of moderation analyses involving a simple slope analysis was performed. The PROCESS TOOL (Hayes, 2012) was used for the moderation analyses. Results showed that the manipulations tested with ANOVA were successful, but the data did not show support for the hypotheses. Theoretical and practical implications, and limitations and avenues for further research, will be discussed.

Keywords: organised helping behaviour, spontaneous helping behaviour, volunteer work, willingness to volunteer, diffusion of responsibility, self-efficacy, urgency.

1. Willingness to volunteer

Prosocial behaviour refers to being helpful to other people without necessarily getting direct benefits for the self (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2007). Volunteerism is a form of prosocial behaviour that requires a long-term commitment (Baron et al., 2007). There are many different ways to volunteer, for instance: working as a volunteer for an organisation, volunteering for a sports club or raising money for a non-profit organisation. The different ways of volunteering share the feature that people do something without getting paid for it. Despite of the absence of money, there are many reasons why people volunteer (Pearce, 1993), but there are still many organisations that have problems with recruiting volunteers. What can organisations do to get more people to volunteer? The literature has a need for research on volunteer recruitment (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2013).

Volunteer work is organised help. People plan to help other people for free and most of the time this help is coordinated by an organisation. This help is recurrent, for example every week or every month. Besides organised help, there is spontaneous help. This is the kind of help that is not recurrent. People do this in the moment without the oversight of an organisation, like helping someone who is ill or helping a victim of violence. Most of the time, spontaneous help is about helping someone in an emergency (Baron et al., 2007). According to Latané and Darley (1970) there are five elements that play a role in occurrence of spontaneous helping behaviour: noticing that something unusual is happening, correctly interpreting an event as an emergency, deciding that it is your responsibility to provide help, deciding that you have the necessary knowledge and/or skills to help, and making the final decision to provide help.

Baron et al. (2007) mentioned these five elements required to respond to an emergency also apply to volunteering (organised help). The current study translates three of the five elements to volunteer work. If these elements turn out to influence organised helping

behaviour as well, this could help organisations to improve the recruitment of volunteers. This study contributes knowledge about why and how individuals decide to do volunteer work. When organisations know how individuals decide to become a volunteer, then volunteer recruitment might become easier for organisations. Research into these elements can also be used to complement the scientific knowledge of volunteer management. Until now, there are no studies that look into the applicability of the model of Latané and Darley (1970) to willingness to volunteer for an organisation. The current research will study the effects of correctly interpreting a request for help as urgent, diffusion of responsibility and being able to help, on willingness to volunteer.

2. Spontaneous helping behaviour

Prosocial behaviour is being helpful to other people without necessarily getting direct benefits for the self (Baron et al., 2007). This kind of behaviour is not always present in our society. Epley and Dunning (2000) state that people believe they are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour than their peers. The results of their study showed that people believe this, because they have overly charitable views of themselves. So even when people think that they act prosocial, this is often overrated.

Prosocial behaviour can be divided into spontaneous helping behaviour and organised helping behaviour. Spontaneous help is the type of help that people not plan and is, for example, needed in emergencies. Latané and Darley (1968, 1970; Darley & Latané, 1968) did a lot of research into why people do or do not act prosocial in emergencies. In one of their studies they tried to explain why Kitty Genovese got killed in New York in 1964, without being helped by one of the 38 eye witnesses. Not one of these witnesses used the telephone to call the police (Latané & Darley, 1970). Explanations for these failures of human actions have been eagerly sought (Latané & Darley, 1970). The studies of Latané and Darley explained

that these bystanders were not bad people. They suggested different reasons for why people did not act prosocial during this night. A chain of explanations will be discussed in a five-step process (see Figure 1) (Baron et al., 2007; Latané & Darley, 1970).

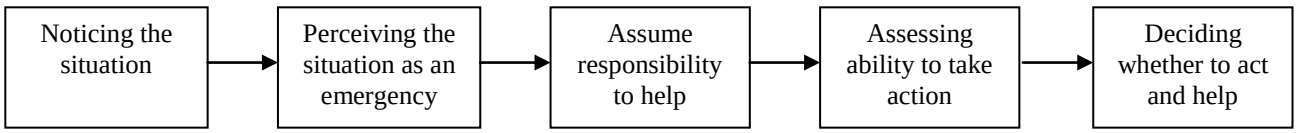

Figure 1. Five-step process in deciding whether to act prosocial or not.

Noticing the request for help. Before an individual can decide to intervene in an emergency, he or she must take several preliminary steps. The individual first must notice the request for help (Latané & Darley, 1968). If the individual does not notice there is something unusual going on, it is unlikely that help will occur. A study by Darley and Batson (1973), with 40 students, examined the influence of several situational and personality variables on helping behaviour in an emergency situation. The study showed that persons in a hurry are more likely to keep going without stopping to help someone in need. Simply said, individuals in a hurry do not notice a request for help.

Interpreting the situation as an emergency. After noticing the request for help, the individual must interpret the situation as an emergency (Latané & Darley, 1968). Latané and Darley (1968) thought that the reactions of the people around the bystander would have a strong influence on the bystander's decision process. Their study supported the predictions. In a room filling with smoke, subjects remained passive when surrounded by passive others, and solitary bystanders were more likely to report the smoke than small groups of three naive subjects. So, when participants were by themselves they were more likely to do something (like reporting the smoke or leave the room), compared to participants who were sitting in the waiting room with others. If you are waiting somewhere and you see something unusual, but

the people around you act like nothing is wrong, you will probably doubt yourself and trust the behaviour of the others.

Diffusion of responsibility. After noticing an event and perceiving it rightfully as an emergency, the individual must decide whether it is his or her responsibility to act (Latané & Darley, 1968). When you are the only person around, it is pretty clear you are the one responsible to do something. When there are more people it gets harder to decide who is responsible. In some situations it is clear who, of all the present people, is responsible for taking action. When there is a fire, and there is a fireman present, he is responsible. When something happens in a classroom, the teacher is responsible to do something. It becomes harder when there is nobody clearly in charge and individuals have to decide if they are responsible or not. The more people there are, the harder it gets to decide if you are responsible or not.

A study by Darley and Latané (1968) shows that when other people are also witnessing an event, the likelihood that an individual will intervene in an emergency decreases. In their experiment the participants heard a person having an epileptic seizure in another room. In the first condition, the participants thought they were the only one who could hear this. In the second condition, the participants thought they and four others could hear the epileptic person. The participants who thought they were the only one who could hear the victim were much more likely to intervene. The participants in this condition reacted in less than one-third of the time required by participants who thought there were four other listeners. Latané and Darley (1968) explain this as diffusion of responsibility. If an individual is alone while noticing an emergency, the individual is solely responsible. The individual knows that if he or she does not offer to help, the person in need will not get help at all (Latané & Darley, 1970). When there are more people present, the responsibility to help is spread between the individuals and the responsibility per individual decreases. If the individual does not offer to help, there are

still enough other individuals who could help (Latané & Darley, 1970). The responsibility is spread, and this diffusion of responsibility makes the individual less likely to help.

Latané and Darley (1970) also discussed that individuals who did not help, because of diffusion of responsibility, did not decide not to help, but were still in a state of indecision and conflict concerning whether to do something or not. If an individual is driving on a busy highway and sees someone's car has a breakdown, the individual only has a few seconds to decide before he or she is already too far away to decide to help. In the study of Latané and Darley (1968) the participants who thought they heard another participant having an epileptic seizure, were not able to leave the scene. Still, the conflict in their mind about what to do can take so long that it is too late to do something. Some emergencies happen so fast that bystanders do not have enough time to make up their mind. However, the murder of Kitty Genovese took about 45 minutes, but the bystanders still did not do something to help. This example shows how strong diffusion of responsibility can be.

Ability to take action. An individual notices a request for help, perceives it is an emergency and feels responsible to help. Still, the individual needs to be able to take action and help the person in need. There are two kinds of interventions in emergency situations: direct intervention, and reportorial intervention. In direct intervention, knowledge (for example medical knowledge), strength, or certain skills are often needed. If someone is drowning, not knowing how the swim, makes it very difficult to help. These certain skills or knowledge are not that necessary for reportorial intervention (Darley & Latané, 1968). An example of reportorial intervention is calling an ambulance or the police.

Help or not help? According to Latané and Darley (1970) an individual has to score positive on all these elements in order to decide whether or not to intervene in an emergency situation. Scoring positive is no 100% guarantee that the individual will help, but the elements do have a strong influence on this decision.

3. From spontaneous helping behaviour to organised helping behaviour

Latané and Darley (1968; 1970; Darley & Latané; 1968) tried to explain why and how people decide whether to intervene in an emergency situation. They came up with five different explanations which can be put into a five-step process. According to Baron et al. (2007), researchers propose that this process is also applicable to organised help, i.e. volunteer work. Volunteer work is something that people do without getting paid for it. There are many different ways to volunteer, for example: working in an organisation, doing something for your sports club or other associations, or collect money for people in need. Despite of the absence of a merit reward, there are many reasons why people volunteer. A few reasons are: to serve other people, the social contact it brings, or to help achieve the objectives of a certain organisation (Pearce, 1993). These examples are reasons why people volunteer, but they do not explain how people decide whether to volunteer. This makes it interesting to study if the explanations of Latané and Darley (1968, 1970; Darley & Latané, 1968) for spontaneous help could also explain the decision making in organised help. It would be interesting to know if a well-known and studied explanation of the bystander effect could be useful in volunteer management as well. Besides the many reasons why people would like to volunteer, there are still organisations that have problems with recruiting volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008). Knowledge about the decision process of individuals to volunteer or not could help recruiters in improving the recruitment process of volunteers. A clear decision process could be useful for organisations in recruiting volunteers. If recruiters know how potential volunteers make these decisions, they can try to change the recruitment tools with this knowledge. The current study will try to answer the questions: Are the explanations of Latané and Darley applicable to organised help? Do urgency of the request of help, diffusion of responsibility and self-efficacy influence willingness to volunteer?

4. Organised helping behaviour

The current study will test if three of the five elements described above can be applied to volunteer work. After translating the elements to organised helping behaviour, these elements should influence the willingness to volunteer (see Figure 2). The current chapter will explain how the elements could be translated to organised helping behaviour and hypotheses will be proposed.

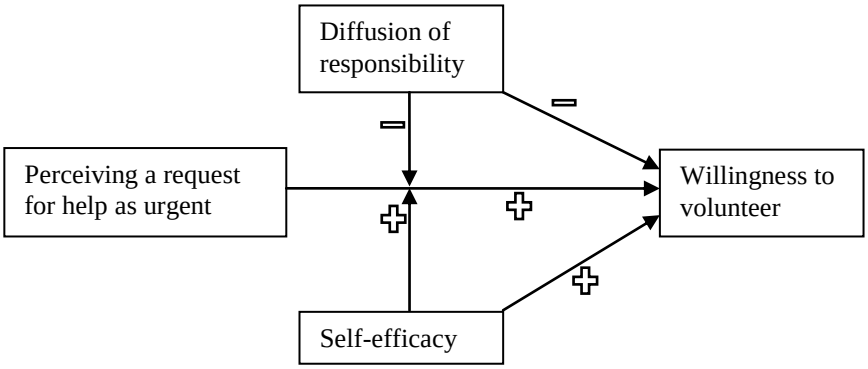

Figure 2. Expected effects of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Noticing the request for help. In order to become a volunteer, an individual first has to notice that there is a request for new volunteers from an organisation. Organisations can do this in the form of vacancies in papers, magazines, on the internet and more. In the current study, this element will not be tested. The current study is a lab study and the participants will read the request for help in the scenario and will automatically notice the request. However, future research could study how organisations can make potential volunteers aware of vacancies for volunteers.

Perceiving the request for help as urgent. Reading the scenario guarantees that the participants will notice the request for help. However, it is not self-evident that the participant will perceive this request for help as urgent. In case of an emergency, an individual can notice the event, for example someone is lying on the ground, but it is still possible the individual

does not perceive the event as an emergency. Potential volunteers can read a vacancy for volunteers, but still not perceive this request for help as urgent.

When this happens, the organisation will probably lose the individual's attention. So, it is important for the organisation to convey the request for help as urgent.

Bendapudi, Singh and Bendapudi (1996) proposed that the image of the charity, cause of the need, and the portrayal of the beneficiary may determine whether prospective donors of generic help even perceive that the need exists. Perceived positive familiarity, for example, improves the charity's image. The perception of need also appears to be greater when the need of the beneficiary is caused by external uncontrollable factors. Portraying the beneficiary in a needy way decreases the perception of need, because this will be perceived as manipulation. These are only a few examples that influence the perception of need.

Latané and Darley (1970) explain how important it is to perceive a situation as an emergency for making the decision to help. For organisations it is important that their request for help is perceived as urgent. The examples above show what could influence this perception of urgency. The current study will test if perceiving the request for help as urgent will increase the willingness to volunteer. This results in the first hypothesis. Hypothesis 1: Perceiving the request for help as urgent increases the willingness to volunteer of non-volunteers.

Diffusion of responsibility. Assuming that diffusion of responsibility has an influence on the likelihood of spontaneous helping behaviour, diffusion of responsibility might also have an influence on the willingness to volunteer. With more people present, the responsibility is spread between individuals, known as diffusion of responsibility (Latané & Darley, 1970). An individual might not feel responsible enough if there are many other potential volunteers. The current study will test the influence of the second element of Latané and Darley (1970) on organised helping behaviour: a potential volunteer will feel more responsible to volunteer if

the individual thinks there are no other potential volunteers and diffusion of responsibility will occur when other potential volunteers are present, resulting in a decrease of willingness to volunteer. Hypothesis 2: Diffusion of responsibility decreases the willingness to volunteer of non-volunteers.

Believing in being able to volunteer. After noticing a request for help by an organisation and feeling responsible enough to do something, an individual needs to believe in having the capacity to self-generate behaviours to obtain desired outcomes even when confronted with barriers and obstacles (Almeida et al., 2008). If the individual does not thinks he or she is capable of being a volunteer, the individual will probably not decide to become one. This belief of being able to achieve a goal as a result of one's own actions is known as self-efficacy (Baron et al., 2007; Almeida et al., 2008).

Greenslade and White (2005) show in their study of 81 older volunteers from a non-profit organisation in Australia that individuals who felt confident that volunteering would be easy, were more likely to intent to volunteer. The fourth step of Latané and Darley (1970) is assessing the ability to help. Is the individual able to offer help? Does the individual have the right skills or knowledge to help? Are these questions also important for potential volunteers? Is the individual able to become a volunteer, does the individual have the right knowledge or skills? In the current study, it is proposed that feelings of self-efficacy will positively influence the willingness to volunteer. This proposal results in the third hypothesis. Hypothesis 3: Feelings of self-efficacy increase the willingness to volunteer of non-volunteers.

Interaction effects. Besides the direct effect of diffusion of responsibility on the willingness to volunteer, there might be an interaction effect. The effect of perceiving the request for help as urgent on the willingness to volunteer might be negatively influenced by diffusion of responsibility. Diffusion of responsibility occurs when there are other potential

volunteers. The feeling of being responsible spreads toward these other potential volunteers. If there are many potential volunteers the need for help decreases, because these potential volunteers can answer this need. Latané and Darley (1968) explained how the presence of others influences the perception of individuals, as mentioned before in chapter 2. Participants of their study that were by themselves were more likely to do something in an unusual situation, because they perceived the situation as an emergency, than participants surrounded by others. Diffusion of responsibility occurs when surrounded by others as well. This indicates that when diffusion of responsibility occurs, the direct effect of the urgency of the request for help in willingness to volunteer will decrease. Hypothesis 4: Diffusion of responsibility decreases the effect of the urgency of a request for help on the willingness to volunteer of non-volunteers.

Besides the direct effect of self-efficacy on the willingness to volunteer, a moderation effect is proposed. The effect of the urgency of the request for help on the willingness to volunteer might be positively influenced by self-efficacy. If a potential volunteer believes that he or she is able to help (having the right skills or knowledge), this can increase the influence of urgency on the willingness to volunteer. Having the right skills or knowledge makes it more likely to perceive an urgent request for help as actually urgent. The individual is more likely to know what the consequences are if no help is offered. In prosocial behaviour, whenever potential helpers are not completely sure about what is going on, they tend to hold back and wait for further information (Baron et al., 2007). A high self-efficacy will increase the chances that an individual knows what is going on. An individual that studied medicine is more likely to perceive a request of help from someone that is having a stroke as urgent, because the individual has the right knowledge to see that the individual is actually having a stroke and the individual needs help immediately. The same applies to organised helping behaviour. If an organisation is asking for more volunteers to help and the individuals knows

something about the cause, the individual is more likely to know what the consequences are if the beneficiary is not helped. This increases the effect of the urgency of the request for help on the willingness to volunteer. This results in the final hypothesis. Hypothesis 5: Self-efficacy increases the effect of the urgency of a request for help on the willingness to volunteer of non-volunteers.

5. Method

Participants. Participants were 113 students (46 males, 67 females) with a mean age of 21 (*SD* = 2.30). 36.0% of the participants had no experience with participating in volunteer work, 12,4% were doing volunteer work at the moment and 50.4% had done volunteer work in the past.

Design and procedure. A 2 (urgency of request for help: high vs. low) × 2 (diffusion of responsibility: high vs. low) between subjects experimental design was used. When the participants entered the lab, they were seated in separate cubicles. After reading and signing the informed consent form they were given the research materials on paper. The research material was given randomly to the participants. The four different versions of the research material determined the conditions the participants were in. The participants were asked to take their time and read the scenario presented in the research material carefully and answer all the questions. In every condition, the participants read about a fictional charity organisation, named JONG. JONG is a volunteer organisation that is committed to help young people, in Leiden and around, with a physical or sensory disability.

Urgency of the request for help. The distinction between the conditions was made by a difference in the way this information about JONG was given to the participant. One half of the participants received a questionnaire where the request for help was presented as urgent (high urgency condition) and in other half received a questionnaire where the request for help

presented as not urgent (low urgency condition). In the high urgency conditions, the information that the participant was given, indicated that help from extra volunteers was very important and urgent. In the low urgency conditions, the help from extra volunteers was not very urgent, but extra help was always welcome.

Diffusion of responsibility. The second manipulation was split up in high diffusion of responsibility versus low diffusion of responsibility. In the low diffusion of responsibility conditions, the participant read a text that indicated that the participant is the one of the very few people who could help and become a volunteer. In the high diffusion of responsibility conditions, the participant read a text that indicates that there were, besides the participant, other individuals who could help and become a volunteer. The responsibility will spread from the participant to other potential volunteers, known as diffusion of responsibility.

When the participant finished reading the information about the organisation and filled in the questionnaire, the participant was fully debriefed and paid €1,50 or 1 credit and thanked for their participation.

Dependent variables. Most measures were adapted from existing measure scales and translated into Dutch. Some items were adjusted to volunteer work. All items used a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The perceived urgency for extra help (α = .93) was measured with an adapted version of the Group Need Scale (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). Five items were used, including "JONG has an urgent need for additional volunteers to help young people". Diffusion of responsibility (α = .74) was measured with a scale specially designed for this research. Three items were used, including 'I am one of the few who can help JONG with the guidance of young people with a physical of sensory disability'. The willingness to volunteer (α = .89) was measured with a general self-developed scale. Three items were used, including "If I was asked, I will most likely help JONG and her clients". Self-efficacy (α = .78) was measured with an adapted version of the

Perceived Behavioural Control scale (Taylor & Todd, 1995). Five items measured self-efficacy, including “I am confident that I can help JONG with the guidance of young people with a physical or sensory disability”.

6. Results

Manipulation checks. An ANOVA showed that the participants in the high urgency condition (M = 6.02, SD = 0.64) thought extra help was more urgent than the participants in the low urgency condition (M = 2.62, SD = 1.28) did, $F(1, 110) = 315.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .74$. Second, an ANOVA indicated that the participants in the low diffusion of responsibility condition (M = 2.99, SD = 1.21) perceived a higher feeling of responsibility compared to the participants in the high diffusion of responsibility condition (M = 1.77, SD = 0.71), $F(1, 111) = 43.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .28$. These results show that the manipulations had worked as intended.

Participants experiences with volunteer work. The participants were not recruited on possible experiences with volunteer work in the past or present. After collecting the data it turned out that 36,6 % of the participants had never done volunteer work, 12,5% was a volunteer at the moment of the study and 50,9% of the participants had done some kind of volunteer work in the past. An ANOVA was used to test if this difference in experiences with volunteer work between the participants had an influence on the willingness to volunteer. Already being a volunteer might have a negative influence on the willingness to volunteer and being familiar with being a volunteer might have a positive influence on the willingness to volunteer. However, the ANOVA showed there was no significant difference in willingness to volunteer between the participants that were not familiar with volunteer work (M = 3.44, SD = 1.47), the participants that were a volunteer when the study took place (M = 3.40, SD = 1.28),

and the participants that have done volunteer work in the past (M = 3.63, SD = 1.24), F(2, 111) = .30, p = .74.

Factor analysis. A factor analysis was conducted on the 22 items with VARIMAX rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .73. Barlett's test was highly significant (p < .001), so the data is not randomly factored. The analysis confirmed that the items that were used to measure the variables clustered as intended (see Table 1). The criterion level used for the rotated factor loadings of all items was .40 (values that appear in bold in Table 1). The factor solution suggested that factor 1 represents willingness to volunteer (9 items), factor 2 represents urgency of the request for help (5 items), factor 3 self-efficacy (5 items) and factor 4 diffusion of responsibility (3 items). The four factors in combination explained 61.96% of the variance.

Correlation analysis. Correlations between the independent and dependent variables show no significant direct effects (see Table 2). There is, however, a significant correlation between the manipulated urgency variable and measured urgency variable and the manipulated diffusion of responsibility variable and measured diffusion of responsibility variable. There is a positive relationship between the manipulated urgency and the measured urgency (r = .86, p < .001). On average the higher a participant scored on the manipulated urgency variable, the higher the participant scored on the measured urgency variable. There is also a positive relationship between the manipulated diffusion of responsibility variable and the measured diffusion of responsibility variable (r = .53, p < .001). On average the higher a participant scored on the manipulated diffusion of responsibility variable, the higher the participant scored on the measured diffusion of responsibility variable. These results show that the manipulation did work. Given the correlations there were probably no further effects to be found.

Table 1. *Confirmatory factor analysis results of study variables.*

	Rotated Factor Loadings			
Item	Willingness	Urgency of request	Self-efficacy	Diffusion of responsibility
Zal ik zeer waarschijnlijk JONG en haar jongeren met een beperking helpen.	**.85**			
Heb ik het voornemen om JONG met jongeren met een beperking te helpen.	**.83**			
Heb ik niet het voornemen om JONG met jongeren met een beperking te helpen.	**.75**			
Ik ben bereid om een jong iemand met een lichamelijk of zintuigelijke beperking te helpen bij het vinden van een geschikte woning.	**.74**			
Ik ben bereid om een jong iemand met een lichamelijk of zintuigelijke beperking te helpen bij het maken van zijn of haar studiekeuze.	**.66**			
Ik ben bereid om een jong iemand met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking te begeleiden tijdens voorlichtingsdagen van een universiteit of hogeschool.	**.63**			
Ik ben bereid om administratieve taken uit te voeren voor JONG.	**.59**			
Ik ben bereid om posters en flyers te verspreiden van JONG om zo de naamsbekendheid te vergroten.	**.56**			
Ik ben bereid om een leuke activiteit te organiseren in Leiden voor jongeren met een lichamelijk of zintuigelijke beperking.	**.56**			
JONG heeft urgent behoefte aan extra hulp om jongeren met een beperking beter te kunnen helpen.		**.94**		
JONG heeft urgent behoefte aan meer mensen op vrijwillige basis om jongeren te helpen.		**.93**		
Met extra mensen op vrijwillige basis zou JONG meer jongeren kunnen helpen.		**.89**		
Wanneer meer mensen zich vrijwillig zouden inzetten voor JONG zou JONG effectiever kunnen zijn in het helpen van jongeren met een beperking.		**.83**		
Het is noodzaak dat mensen JONG komen helpen om de jongeren te helpen.		**.81**		
Als ik JONG zou helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking dan heb ik daar zelf de volledige controle over.			**.86**	
Als ik JONG zou helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking dan heb ik dat zelf helemaal in de hand.			**.78**	
Of ik JONG wel of niet zou helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking zou volledig aan mijzelf zijn.			**.69**	
Ik ben vol vertrouwen dat ik JONG kan helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking.	.33		**.64**	
Als ik het wil, dan is het niet moeilijk voor mij om JONG te helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking.			**.61**	
Naast mij zijn er ook veel anderen die JONG kunnen helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking.				**.89**
Anderen kunnen JONG ook helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking.				**.83**
Ik ben één van de weinigen die JONG kan helpen bij het begeleiden van jongeren met een lichamelijke of zintuigelijke beperking.			.31	**.71**
Eigenvalues	4.57	4.13	2.88	2.05
% of variance	20.78	18.75	13.10	9.33
Cumulative %	20.78	39.54	52.63	61.96
α	.89	.93	.78	.74

Table 2. *Correlations between independent variables and dependent variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Willingness to volunteer	—					
2. Measured urgency	–.00	—				
3. Measured diffusion of responsibility	–.02	–.08	—			
4. Self-efficacy	.06	.03	.15	—		
5. Manipulated urgency	–.10	.86***	–.02	.02	—	
6. Manipulated diffusion responsibility	–.11	.03	.53***	.16	-.03	—

Note. * $p < .001$ (2-tailed), $N = 113$

Urgent request for help. The first hypothesis stated that perceiving the request for help as urgent positively influences the willingness to volunteer. The analysis did not support this hypothesis. An ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in the willingness to volunteer between the participants in the low urgency group ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.30$) compared to the high urgency group ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.36$), $F(1, 111) = 1.21$, $p = .28$. A regression analysis showed that there was no significant effect of urgency ($\beta = -.00$, $p = .97$) on willingness to volunteer ($R^2 = .00$). Therefore, the urgency of a request for help has no influence on the willingness to volunteer.

Diffusion of responsibility. The second hypothesis proposed a negative influence of diffusion of responsibility on the willingness to volunteer. If diffusion of responsibility occurs, an individual experiences low feelings of responsibility as a result of the knowledge that there are many other potential volunteers. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. An ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in willingness to volunteer between the participants in the high diffusion of responsibility group ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.40$) and the low diffusion of responsibility group ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.25$), $F(1, 111) = 1.31$, $p = .25$. A regression analysis showed that there was no significant effect of diffusion of responsibility ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .87$) on the willingness to volunteer ($R^2 = .00$). Therefore, diffusion of responsibility has no direct influence on the willingness to volunteer.

Self-efficacy. The third hypothesis was that feelings of self-efficacy would increase the willingness to volunteer. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. A regression analysis showed that there was no significant effect of self-efficacy (β = .06, p = .50) on the willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .00). Therefore, feelings of self-efficacy have no direct influence on the willingness to volunteer. Beliefs of being able to volunteer did not influence the willingness to volunteer in the current data.

Moderation diffusion of responsibility. The fourth hypothesis stated that there is an interaction effect of the urgency of the request for help and diffusion of responsibility on the willingness to volunteer. The hypothesis proposed a decrease of the influence of urgency of the request for help on the willingness to help as a result of diffusion of responsibility. To test this hypothesis a simple slopes analysis was done, using the PROCESS tool (Hayes, 2012). The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The analysis showed a non-significant effect of urgency of the request for help (β = - .00, p = .98) on the willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .01). The analysis also showed a non-significant effect of diffusion of responsibility (β = .03, p = .82) on the willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .01). Finally, the analysis showed a non-significant interaction effect of urgency of the request for help and diffusion of responsibility (β = .04, p = .50) on willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .01). These results indicate that the relationship between urgency of the request for help and the willingness to volunteer is not moderated by diffusion of responsibility.

Moderation self-efficacy. The fifth and last hypothesis stated that there is an interaction effect of the urgency of the request for help and self-efficacy on the willingness to volunteer. High feelings of self-efficacy will increase the effect of urgency of the request for help on the willingness to volunteer. The same simple slopes analysis was done to test this hypothesis. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The analysis showed a non-significant effect of urgency of the request for help (β = -.00, p = .97) on the willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .01).

The analysis also showed a non-significant effect of feelings of self-efficacy (β = .09, p = .58) on the willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .01). Finally, the analysis showed a non-significant interaction effect of urgency of the request for help and self-efficacy (β = - .02, p = .82) on the willingness to volunteer (R^2 = .01). These results indicate that the relationship between urgency of the request for help and the willingness to volunteer is not moderated by feelings of self-efficacy.

7. Discussion

Prosocial behaviour is being helpful to other people without necessarily getting direct benefits for the self (Baron et al., 2007). Volunteerism is a form of prosocial behaviour that requires a long-term commitment (Baron et al., 2007). Volunteer work is organised help. People plan to help other people for free and most of the time this help is coordinated by an organisation. This help is recurrent, for example every week or every month. Besides organised help, there is spontaneous help. This is the kind of help that is not recurrent. People do this in the moment without the oversight of an organisation, like helping someone who is ill or helping a victim of violence. Most of the time, spontaneous help is about helping someone in an emergency (Baron et al., 2007). Latané and Darley (1968; 1970; Darley & Latané, 1968) studied what influences individuals to act prosocial and offer spontaneous help. They found an influence of noticing the request of help, perceiving the request as urgent, diffusion of responsibility and being able to help. The current study took three of these influences and studied their influence on organised helping behaviour. It was expected that being able to volunteer and the urgency of the request for help would positively influence the willingness to volunteer and diffusion of responsibility would negatively influence willingness to volunteer. The results showed the manipulations were successful, but the data did not show support for the hypotheses. Practical implications, and limitations and future

research, will be discussed before the discussion of possible explanations for the non-significant hypotheses and the theoretical contributions.

Practical implications. If the data showed support for the hypotheses, the knowledge would be useful for the recruitment of new volunteers. The results would contribute to the knowledge about the decision process of potential volunteers and could help organisations to influence this process. According to the hypotheses (if they were confirmed), the recruiters could focus on the way potential volunteers perceive the request for extra volunteers. The message toward the potential volunteers would have to be urgent and the perceivers of the message should think there are no other potential volunteers. Also, offering information or training possibilities could improve the self-efficacy of the potential volunteers which would improve the willingness to volunteer of the perceiver. However, the results could not confirm the hypotheses. For now, recruiters should focus on other tools and theories that could improve the recruitment of volunteers. Research shows most volunteers are primarily recruited through friends, co-workers, and family of current volunteers and employees (Pearce, 1993). Boezeman and Ellemers (2008) found across three studies that anticipated respect as a volunteer offers means of what volunteer organisations can do in recruitment efforts. They suggest that organisations could induce anticipated respect among potential volunteers to attract them to the organisation. This is possible through the social network of current volunteers and employees. So, recruiters should focus on theories like these instead of the theory of the current study. Improvement of the current study and other future research could contribute to the recruitment of volunteers too.

Limitations and future research. The dependent variable of the presented study was willingness to volunteer. This might be considered a limitation in that this measure does not guarantees that the potential volunteer will actually become a volunteer. There is a difference between the willingness to be a volunteer and actual become a volunteer. However, the study

of Greenslade and White (2005) indicates that individuals intending to volunteer at an above-average rate were more likely to engage in above-average participation in volunteerism.

A second limitation of the presented study is the lack of examination of a three-way interaction. The results did not show a significant two-way interaction effect, but there might be a significant effect of a three-way interaction of diffusion of responsibility, urgency of the request for help and self-efficacy. However, this interaction effect is unlikely, because the results did not show significant correlations between the variables.

Another limitation of the current study is the length of the questionnaire. It took the participants pretty long to fill in the whole questionnaire and this could have harmed the results (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

A fourth limitation of the presented study is the specific group of participants that is used, students. As mentioned in the results section, it did not matter that there was a difference in volunteering experience between the participants, because this did not have an influence on the willingness to volunteer. However, examining a homogeneous group of research participants (all students) may limit the generalizability of the results. The results may only specifically apply to highly educated and young potential volunteers. A recommendation for future research would be testing the influences of urgency of the request of help, self-efficacy and diffusion of responsibility on the willingness to volunteer in another group of participants. Research shows that individuals of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to volunteer (Pearce, 1993). The group of participants of the current study, students, do not have a lot of money. This could be a reason why they were less willing to volunteer. They have to earn money to live and study and cannot use their time to volunteer. However, the participants are highly educated, something that increases the likeliness of volunteering, because these individuals are more attractive for organisations and are often recruited from social networks of current volunteers and it is more likely that this network consists of other individuals with a

high socioeconomic status (Pearce, 1993). However, these explanations do not have an influence on what the potential volunteer wants. It does not explain that higher educated participants would be more likely to perform organised helping behaviour. Other studies show relationships between volunteering and demographic characteristics. Volunteering among teenagers increases until 18 years, then decreases and remains low during twenties. It remains low until late twenties (Pearce, 1993). The group of participants of the current studies were exactly in this period of age with a mean age of 21. Maybe the group of participant that is used in the current study is not the right group for studying the willingness to volunteer. The results could be different for a group of participants with a mean age of 40 or 50. Researches show a peak in volunteering when individuals are in their forties and fifties (Pearce, 1993). The current study might show different results when a group of participants in their forties and fifties is used. The results of the current study did not show significant effects, so it is possible that the tested elements do not influence willingness to volunteer among students and this is certainly of interest to the recruitment efforts of volunteer organisations.

Another recommendation for future research could be a study with a manipulation of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was not manipulated in the present study. In future research, one group could be trained a skill that is useful for the volunteer work or offer knowledge that is useful and use a control group that is not trained or given extra knowledge. It would be interesting to test if the first group scores higher on willingness to volunteer compared to the second (control) group. It is important that the self-efficacy really has to be about skills or knowledge and not about having enough time (or about other external factors).

The current study researched the applicability of theories from spontaneous helping behaviour to organised helping behaviour, but future research could take theories that explain what influences organised helping behaviour and study the influences of these effects on spontaneous helping behaviour. Are individuals with a higher socioeconomic status more

likely to offer their help in an emergency? Does respect toward a bystander influence spontaneous helping behaviour? Also, it would be interesting to study if volunteers are more likely to offer spontaneous help compared to non-volunteers.

Possible explanations for the non-confirmed hypotheses. A positive influence of the urgency of the request for help by an organisation for extra volunteers on the willingness to volunteer could not be confirmed by the results. The manipulation of the urgency of the request was successful so the non-significant result is not a result of an error in the manipulation of the experiment. It is possible that the urgency of the request for help does not influence the decision process of potential volunteers. Fisher and Ackerman (1998) could not prove a significant direct effect of urgency of the request for help on volunteer participation either. An explanation could be that there is a different meaning of urgency in organised helping behaviour compared to spontaneous helping behaviour. In spontaneous helping behaviour it is more about minutes and in organised helping behaviour it is about days or weeks. This also makes it easier for potential volunteers to delay their decision. When there is an emergency, immediate action is needed and this prevents the individual confronted from leisurely considering the possible courses of action open to him or her (Latané & Darley, 1970). It forces the individual to come to a decision before having time to consider the alternatives. However, the short amount of time bystanders have when spontaneous help is needed also has a bad influence on the decision making, because it causes a lot of stress (Latané & Darley, 1970).

The expected interaction effect of urgency of the request for help and diffusion of responsibility could also not be confirmed. The results indicate that the effect of urgency of the request cannot be increased or decreased by diffusion of responsibility. The interaction effect of self-efficacy and urgency of the request for help that was expected could also not be

confirmed in the current data. This indicates that self-efficacy cannot increase or decrease the urgency of the request for help.

A positive influence of self-efficacy of potential volunteers on the willingness to volunteer could not be confirmed by the data either. Self-efficacy of the potential volunteer was not manipulated, but it was measured. There might be an effect of self-efficacy on willingness to volunteer if the self-efficacy is manipulated. The current study measured the self-efficacy of the participants and checked for an effect of self-efficacy on willingness to volunteer. An explanation for the non-significant effect could be that the potential volunteers were thinking about having enough time to help instead of having the right knowledge or skills to help. Participants with the right knowledge and skills could have scored low on self-efficacy, because of their lack of time they thought they were not able to become a volunteer. In future research there should be a clear distinction between having the time to become a volunteer and having the right skills or knowledge to volunteer.

A negative effect of diffusion of responsibility on willingness to volunteer was expected. An individual is more likely to offer spontaneous help if the individual is alone, because the individual is solely responsible. If there are others present, the individual is not the only one responsible anymore and feelings of responsibility are spread from the individual to the other bystanders. It was expected that diffusion of responsibility would result in a lower willingness to volunteer in the current study, because the participant would feel less responsible if there are other potential volunteers as well. The data did not confirm this expectation. The manipulation of diffusion of responsibility was successful. This means the non-significant results are not a result of errors in the manipulation of the experiment. It is possible that diffusion of responsibility does not have an influence on the decision making process of potential volunteers. This indicates that feeling responsible or not to help does not have an influence on the willingness to volunteer. Other influences might be stronger.

Theoretical contributions. Latané and Darley (1968; 1970; Darley & Latané; 1968) tried to explain why and how people decide whether to intervene in an emergency situation or not. They came up with five factors and put these into a five-step process. According to Baron et al. (2007), researchers propose that this process is also applicable to organised help, i.e. volunteer work. The current study tried to apply three of the elements studied by Latané and Darley (1968; 1970; Darley & Latané; 1968) to organised helping behaviour. The data indicate that the expectations could not be confirmed. The knowledge that the elements did not influence organised helping behaviour (in the current study) contributes to the scientific field of volunteer management. Apparently, it is not easy to generalize theories from spontaneous helping behaviour to organised helping behaviour. Maybe this is caused by the difference in time. In spontaneous helping behaviour, individuals have to make a decision really fast so heuristics and external factors might have a bigger influence compared to organised helping behaviour. In organised helping behaviour, individuals can make an informed choice. The consequences for both types of helping behaviour differ as well. Spontaneous helping behaviour occurs often in emergencies and these emergencies could be dangerous. Fear could result in deciding not to offer help (Baron et al., 2007). The consequences of organised helping behaviour are long-term. In organised helping behaviour the individual has to commit for a longer period of time instead of offering help ones. The volunteer must commit time and effort for weeks, months, or longer. Time might have a bigger influence on organised helping behaviour than the elements that were studied in the current study. Does self-efficacy mean having the right skills and knowledge or is self-efficacy about deciding on a course of action that is possible for you, as mentioned by Baron et al. (2007)? Future research could help clear this up.

The current study could not support the hypotheses, but it still contributes new information to volunteer management. Mainly in the form of a new perspective on inapplicability of factors that can be considered antecedents of motivation to volunteer of individuals.

8. References

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