Investigation among volunteers whether familiarity with the organization affects dedication to the volunteer work via role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict

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Abstract

This study addresses the problem that volunteers often feel unfamiliar with the organization and that they are often uncertain about their role within the organization (Pearce, 1993). In order to examine these problems a cross-sectional survey research was conducted. Research participants (n = 197) were volunteers from three different organizations. The results, analyzed with multiple regression analyses showed, in accordance with the hypotheses, that the feeling of being familiar with the organization increased role clarity and decreased role ambiguity and role conflict. We also predicted and found partial support that the feeling of familiarity increases the volunteers' dedication to the organization through role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict. Multiple regression analyzes also showed that the feeling of being familiar with the organization increased when volunteers had a mentor, received training and had social contacts within the organization. Theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations of the present research and suggestions for further research are discussed in the discussion.

Keywords: volunteer work, familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict, dedication

Volunteer work is work for an organization that is unpaid and without any obligations and is meant to help others (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2007). There are many volunteers who make this effort to help others, however at the same time they often feel unfamiliar with the organization and with their working role within the organization (Pearce, 1993). This is because volunteers do not have formal ties with the organization; they are unpaid workers, often do not have a contract of employment and have less contact with the organization than paid workers (Pearce, 1993). The feeling of unfamiliarity with the organization in volunteers is problematic for organizations with volunteers because it undermines the commitment of volunteers to the organization. Thus it is important for organizations to ensure that volunteers feel familiar with the organization and therefore in this research the concept of familiarity with the organization is introduced. The focus in this study is on whether familiarity with the organization (recognition, knowledge of the organization, affective organizational commitment and embeddedness) makes volunteers less insecure about their role in the organization and leads to more dedication to the volunteer work among volunteers. We also want to investigate if having social contacts within the organization, receiving training or having a mentor in the organization increases the feeling of familiarity with the organization among volunteer workers.

Familiarity with the organization

Familiarity with the organization involves that workers feel recognized by the organization, that workers feel that information is communicated adequately by the organization and that workers feel embedded within the organization. For further understanding of these components of familiarity with the organization, these components will be explained. Recognition involves that the worker feels appreciated by the organization (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). The organization can show its appreciation in private, from volunteer coordinator as a representative of the organization to the individual volunteer, which is known to increase feelings of competence and satisfaction among workers. However, organizations can also show their appreciation in public which will increase the status of the workers (Turner, 1988). Adequate communication quality refers to the evaluation that the organization communicates everything that the worker needs to know about the organization (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2008). Job embeddedness contains the connections a worker feels with the activities and people within the organization, it contains also how well workers perceive the job fits them and it contains the perceived sacrifices workers feel they have to make when they leave the organization (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001). If a worker experiences these three components (recognition, adequate communication quality, embeddedness), then the worker will feel as a part of the family with the organization; in other words the worker will feel affectively committed to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The question that rises now is whether these four components are relevant for the work behavior of volunteers.

The first component, recognition, influences volunteers' job attitudes. Fisher and Ackerman (1998) found that if volunteers feel recognized by the organization, they are much more willing to remain a volunteer for that organization. Adams and Shepherd (1996) found with questionnaire research that the feeling of being recognized increases job satisfaction and that job satisfaction increases the willingness to remain a volunteer. Adequate communication quality also increases job satisfaction (Adams & Shepherd, 1996). So, adequate communication quality also positively influences the volunteers' attitudes. Adequate communication quality also increases the feeling of commitment and makes the volunteer more attached to the organization (Knoke, 1981). Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski and Erez (2001) investigated the last component, job embeddedness, and found through surveys that job embeddedness predicts the intent to leave and job turnover. Studies thus show that the components of familiarity with the organization relate to positive job attitudes and emotions of volunteers. Through these emotions and positive job attitudes volunteers feel more emotionally attached to an organization and therefore more affective committed to the organization (Kanter, 1968). Boezeman and Ellemers (2008) found out with a questionnaire research that affective organizational commitment is a source of work motivation for volunteers. Allen and Meyer (1990) investigated the influence of affective organizational commitment on job turnover and found with the help of questionnaire research that this component was negatively linked to job turnover. Summarizing we can say that the four components (recognition, adequate communication quality, job embeddedness and affective organizational commitment) of familiarity with the organization are relevant for the work motivation of volunteers.

Role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict

However we still don't know why the feeling of familiarity with the organization would increase the effort a volunteer puts in an organization. Familiarity with the organization might increase the role clarity and might decrease the role ambiguity and the role conflict that a volunteer regularly experiences (Pearce, 1993) and therefore the volunteer feels more dedicated to the volunteer work. Role clarity is the opposite of role ambiguity and role ambiguity refers to the feeling of a volunteer that the activities that are expected from him by the organization are not sufficiently articulated in terms of domain, methods and fulfillment and consequences of role performance (Hassan, 2013, p 717). Role conflict occurs when the volunteer receives inconsistent messages (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). A lot of role ambiguity and role conflict exists among volunteers, for instance because they receive mixed messages about their work. Some messages show appreciation other messages show indifference towards the volunteers (Pearce, 1993). The roles of volunteers are often vaguely defined and volunteers spend few hours per week working for the organization, so they have fewer contacts within the organization than paid workers, which can lead to role ambiguity (Pearce, 1993).

Role ambiguity and role conflict are problems for organizations with volunteers because they are associated with decreased effort and job performance, lower job satisfaction, lower commitment and more stress (Abramis, 1994; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). An investigation through questionnaire research from Hassan (2013) shows that if organizations make the role of workers clearer that workers feel more job satisfaction and that there is less job turnover. Another study (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002) found that when the tasks and goals of workers are very specific, they will become aware of the importance of the tasks and that enhances their effort.

Hence, we predict that if a volunteer feels more familiar with the organization the volunteer feels more committed to the organization and thereby feels more motivated to work for the organization due to role clarity. In a similar vein, we suggest that the four components of familiarity with the organization diminish role conflict among volunteers and this might lead to more job satisfaction, more work effort and the intention to remain a volunteer (Hassan, 2013; Yukl, Gordon & Taber, 2002). For example organizations can provide volunteers via adequate communication quality with clearer job descriptions, this can create a better understanding of their role among volunteers, which leads to more job satisfaction and which makes the volunteer more willing to stay involved with the organization (Wharton, 1991). Another example is that when volunteers feel familiar, they will also feel more recognized for their work and feel that their work is important. This might give volunteers a more certain feeling about their work and role and so the volunteers will experience less role conflict (Pearce, 1993). This feeling that their work is important might enhance the work effort among volunteers (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). Finally familiarity also includes the connections volunteers have with the activities and people within the organization. These connections might be useful, because volunteers can ask questions to their connections and gain information about their tasks in that way, which might lead to more role clarity.

This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: Among volunteers, familiarity with the organization relates positively and directly to role clarity and negatively and directly to role ambiguity and role conflict within the organization (H1a).

Also familiarity with the organization relates positively and indirectly to dedication to the volunteer work via role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict (H1b).

Dedication to volunteer work

In the previous chapter we predict that the components of familiarity with the organization (recognition, adequate communication quality, job embeddedness and affective organizational commitment) will lead to more dedication to the volunteer work, through role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict. But what does dedication to the volunteer work means exactly? We will use the

concepts: work effort, intent to remain, willingness to volunteer and voice behavior to investigate the dedication volunteers have to their work and these components will be discussed in this section.

First work effort will be discussed. Work effort can be described as the energy a worker exerts in a certain task (De Cooman, De Gieter, Pepermans, Jegers, & Van Acker, 2009). According to Kanfer (1990) work effort can be divided in three dimensions: The first refers to what a worker does (the direction), then how hard a worker works on a task (intensity) and finally how long a worker persists in completing tasks (persistence). The last, persistence, will be researched in this study in the form of the intent to remain and intent to remain is a good predictor of job turnover (Miller, Powell, & Seltzer, 1990). It is important to make sure workers exert much work effort in organizational tasks, because in this way the performances of this worker will increase. All three dimensions can be measured with the 'Work Effort Scale' (De Cooman, De Gieter, Pepermans, Jegers, & Van Acker, 2009). For example direction can be measured with the item: 'I do my best to do what is expected from me.' A sample item of intensity is: I think of myself as a hard worker' and a sample item for persistence is: 'I do not give up quickly when something does not work well.' Second, willingness to volunteer is the willingness to help others (Simon, Sturmer, & Steffens, 2000). Willingness to volunteer is an important outcome variable, because it refers to the willingness volunteers feel to work for the organization and the willingness they feel to promote the organization, which is beneficial for the organization, because it makes the organization more known. A sample question to measure this is: 'I am willing to raise money for the organization'. The last concept, voice behavior, is also relevant for dedication to the volunteer work. Voice behavior is defined as the expressions and constructive suggestions workers make with the intention to improve their work and not with the intention to criticize or complain. Voice behavior is an extra effort, and is made out of the workers' own initiative (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Katz and Kahn (1978) describe voice behavior as challenging the status quo with the intent to improve the situation and that voice behavior is important because it contributes to the organizational effectiveness. Voice behavior is also very important nowadays because it enhances the organizational flexibility (Howard, 1995). This concept is measured with a six item scale of van Dyne and LePine (1998) and a sample question of the original scale is: 'This particular co-worker develops and makes recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.'

Antecedents of familiarity with the organization

We discussed what familiarity with the organization is and what its components are. However it is also important to know what the antecedents of familiarity with the organization are in order to create interventions that increase this feeling of familiarity with the organization within volunteers. We predict that training, having a mentor in the organization and having social contacts will increase familiarity with the organization.

As mentioned before a lot of volunteers do not feel familiar with the organization; According to Stubblefield and Miles (1986) many long-time volunteers report that they need more education in

order to be prepared for the volunteer tasks they are attending and according to Brudney (1992) volunteers made clear they often need more knowledge and training. Also Skoglund (2006) found with questionnaire research that volunteers would like to have more training and professional development in their work, because they did not feel prepared for the whole job. Besides the feeling of being unprepared volunteers often feel alone within an organization (Skoglund, 2006). These feelings of being unprepared and being alone are the consequences of not having the same formal ties with the organization as paid workers. Volunteers spend fewer hours at the organization they work for and so it is likely that they make fewer contacts within the organization than paid workers (Pearce, 1993). They also develop fewer skills because they spend less time doing their work than paid workers. These feelings also make volunteers feeling less familiar with the organization and so, to make them feel more familiar with the organization, organizations have to undertake action to diminish these feelings among volunteers. Training could be a good option to diminish these feelings, because training gives them the opportunity to get to know more volunteers, and to gain knowledge about the organization, the work they have to do and about the skills they need to perform their tasks properly. This means that training increases the feeling of embeddedness among volunteers, because they will make more connections with people within the organization. It also increases the adequate communication flow, because a training provides volunteers with information about the organization and their tasks. At last training might increase the feeling of being recognized by the organization, because the organization makes an effort to make the volunteers feel more familiar with the organization. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Training will increase the familiarity with the organization among volunteers.

Having a mentor within the organization could also diminish the feelings of being alone and being unprepared. When the volunteers have a mentor within the organization they will receive more supervision and knowledge from the organization. Brudney (1992) found with questionnaires that volunteers would like to have more supervision and knowledge and according to the questionnaire research of Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2008) an expansion of knowledge about the tasks a volunteer has to fulfil and about the organization will increase the adequate information flow that the volunteers receive. A mentor also gives the volunteers a new connection with in the organization and the more social connections or relations a volunteer has with the organization, the more a volunteer feels bound to the organization (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001). The volunteer feels more as if he is a part of the organization, because the organization invests a mentor in the volunteers and makes an effort to give them proper information. The volunteers feel more seen, more visible, because of this effort. So, they feel more recognized (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). Therefore we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Having a mentor in the organization will increase the feeling of familiarity with the organization among volunteers.

Finally, we predict that knowing people in the organization might also increase the familiarity with the organization, because if volunteers know people within the organization they have already connections within the organization who they can ask questions about the organization and about the work that is expected from them. This refers to group integration, the social relationships a volunteer has within the organizations. Group integration is positively related to job satisfaction and the intent to remain a volunteer (Stevens, 1991). Knowing people might make volunteers feel more embedded within the organization and it can provide volunteers with information that is necessary, which increases the adequate communication quality. This leads to the fourth and last hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Knowing people within the organization will increase the familiarity with the organization for volunteers.
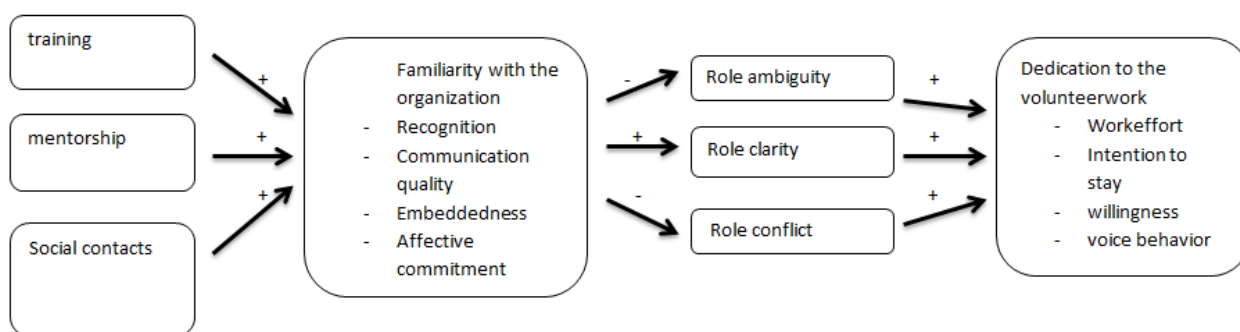

Figure 1. Familiarity with the organization is expected to relate positively and directly to role clarity and negatively and directly to role ambiguity and role conflict (hypothesis 1a) and positively and indirectly to dedication to volunteer work, through role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict (hypothesis 1b). Receiving a training, having a mentor and already knowing people within the organization are expected to relate positively and directly to familiarity with the organization (hypothesis 2, 3 & 4).

Method

Participants and design

To collect data for this study we distributed a survey in three organizations in the Netherlands. Two of the organizations were hospitals and one organization works to improve the safety in traffic.197 Surveys were returned, of which 132 surveys were complete and could be used for further analysis (N = 132). 42 Percent of the participants was male and the participants had an average age of 61 years old (SD = 12, 7). On average, the participants performed about 5,4 hours of volunteer work per week (SD = 5,6).

Procedure

      The coordinators of every organization received an e-mail with a link that gave access to the survey through a digital survey program, called qualtrics. The coordinators distributed the e-mail to the volunteers by e-mailing them or by sharing the link on a forum for the volunteers in that organization. The survey started with an informed consent form that provided information on the rights as participant and asked whether the participant wanted to participate in this study. Participants could choose to participate or not by clicking on the 'yes, I will take part in this study voluntary and I understand my rights' button or by clicking on the 'no' button. The survey closed automatically, when the participants clicked on the 'no' button.

      After filling in the informed consent and the survey, the volunteers were debriefed and thanked for their participation. The surveys were automatically saved in qualtrics after the participants finished the debriefing.

Measures

      All the measures that were used, were translated from already consisting scales into Dutch. First we measured familiarity with the organization as a composite measure out of the components: recognition, adequate communication quality, job embeddedness and affective organizational commitment.

      We measured recognition with items from the study of Ackerman and Fisher (1998) at a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is: '< name organization> properly thanks its volunteer.' Also one item was used from the volunteer satisfaction index (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002): '<Name organization> acknowledges the work I do,' ($\alpha = .93$).

      Adequate communication quality was measured with items from the volunteer satisfaction index that were used by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002). The items were answered on a 7-point scale (1= very dissatisfied, 7 = very satisfied). An example of an item is: 'I am satisfied with the access I have to information concerning < name organization>,'($\alpha = .93$).

      Job embeddedness was measured with a scale that was composed by Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001). The original scale contains six dimensions, but three dimensions are about the community people live in, instead of the organization. Therefore we left those three dimensions out of this study. The three subscales that were important for this study, were: a scale that measures how well a person fits the organization (fit scale), a scale that measures the connections a person has within the organization (links scale) and a scale that measures the sacrifice one has to make if he or she quits the organization (sacrifice scale). Sablynski and Erez (2001) made an composite average of these dimensions, however in this study only the fit scale and the sacrifice scale were used because the link scale was not usable for the composite measure. The items of the scales were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). A sample item of the fit scale is: 'I like the members of my work group,' ($\alpha = .63$). A sample item of the sacrifice scale is: 'I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job,' ($\alpha = .69$).

At last for familiarity with the organization, we measured affective organizational commitment. To measure affective organizational commitment we used the Affective Organizational Commitment scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990) at a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is: 'I feel like part of the family at the organization,' (α = .86).

Next we measured role clarity with items developed by Steers (1976). The items were measured on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). A sample item is: 'I know exactly what I am supposed to do on my job,' (α = .87). The role ambiguity scale and the role conflict scale were also used. The scales were developed by Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970) and the items were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from very false to very true. An example item from the role ambiguity scale is 'I know exactly what is expected of me,' (α = .90) and an example item from the role conflict scale is 'I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials,' (α = .88).

The dedication of the volunteers was measured with four scales. First, it was measured by the work effort scale (WESC) from De Cooman, De Gieter, Pepermans, Jegers, and Van Acker (2009) on a 7-points scale (1 = fully disagree to 7 = fully agree). An example is: 'I really do my best in my job,' (α = .92). Then intent to remain was measured on a 5- point scale (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely), based on a scale from Miller, Powell and Seltzer (1990). An example is 'How likely is it that you will quit your work as a volunteer at <name organization> within the next 6 months?' (α = .83). Third we used a scale about the willingness to volunteer based on a scale from Simon, Sturmer and Steffens (2014), with 'I am willing to give education about <name organization> in schools' (α = .68) as an example item, measured on a 5-point scale (1 = very low, 5 = very high). At last we used a scale to measure voice behavior from Van Dyne and Le Pine (1998). Items were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). An example item is 'I develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect the volunteering work at < name organization>,' (α = .94).

To measure training opportunities, we used a scale of Price and Mueller (1986) to measure the possibilities for growth in the organization at a 7-point scale. An example item is 'The organization provides me the opportunity to improve my skills and knowledge,' (α = .63). In addition training was measured with the understanding scale of the volunteer function index (Clary et al., 1998). An example is 'I can learn more about the cause for which I am working,' (α = .89). The items were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all important/ accurate, 7 = extremely important/ accurate).

Supervisor support or mentorship available for volunteers within the organization was measured with an adapted version of the perceived organizational support scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986) previously used by other researchers for recording supervisor support for workers. The items were measured with a six-point scale (0 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) and a sample item is: 'My supervisor values my contributions to the well-being of our department,' (α = .99).

Finally we measured social contact within the organization with the social integration items of the volunteer function index (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002). With as an example question: 'I am satisfied with the friendships I made with other volunteers in < name organization>?'(α = .89). The

items were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all important/ accurate, 7 = extremely important/ accurate).

Results

Factor analysis and correlations

To check whether the different scales that were used, measured different constructs and to check on overlap between scales a factor analysis, PCA with varimax rotation, was performed. The PCA showed that almost each factor reflected one of the scales. Almost without exception, items of each scale loaded on one factor. This means that almost each scale measured a particular construct. The exceptions were recognition, adequate communication quality and embeddedness. Recognition and adequate communication quality were together in one dimension in the total factor analysis (14 factors), however this is a good thing, because it shows that these two components of familiarity with the organization can be measured as one construct, which gives support for the new concept familiarity with the organization. Embeddedness did not really fit in this factor analysis, however earlier research showed that the three dimensions of embeddedness are measurable as one construct (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Erez, 2001). That is why embeddedness will be used anyway.

We made average scores for all the scales to conduct correlation analyses. The variables related as expected. Affective organizational commitment related positively with role clarity ($r = .48$, $p < .001$) and negatively with role ambiguity ($r = -.53$, $p < .001$). The same goes for the other three components of familiarity. Having a mentor related positively with recognition ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), adequate communication quality ($r = .23$, $p < .01$), embeddedness ($r = .30$, $p < .001$) and affective organizational commitment ($r = .23$, $p < .01$).

Table 1
Correlations between averaged constructs

Construct	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Mentor	3.56	1.79	-													
2. Training	4.07	1.17	.263**	-												
3. Understanding	5.52	0.99	.100	.319**	-											
4. Social integration	5.30	1.05	.080	.101	.386**	-										
5. Recognition	3.54	0.92	.435**	.309**	.191*	.225**	-									
6. Adequate communication quality	5.09	1.24	.230**	.254**	.084	.218*	.589**	-								
7. Embeddedness	3.53	0.55	.297**	.321**	.392**	.397**	.449**	.353**	-							
8. Affective organizational commitment	3.03	0.73	.226**	.236**	.384**	.311**	.405**	.316**	.632**	-						
9. Role clarity	4.51	1.03	.338**	.261**	.254**	.309**	.437**	.441**	.512**	.477**	-					
10. Role ambiguity	2.78	1.15	-.285**	-.261**	-.282**	-.440**	-.502**	-.431**	-.600**	-.528**	-.774**	-				
11. Role conflict	3.27	1.07	-.277**	-.169*	-.091	-.159	-.470**	-.357**	-.300**	-.320**	-.383**	.447**	-			
12. Work effort	5.93	0.69	.192*	.251**	.454**	.293**	.212*	.235**	.513**	.311**	.382**	-.355**	.072	-		
13. Intent to remain	4.05	0.97	.121	.091	.204*	.250**	.312**	.118	.486**	.513**	.313**	-.440**	-.327**	.180*	-	
14. Willingness to volunteer	3.05	1.30	-.092	.149	.276**	.131	.147	.149	.200*	.317**	.139	-.189*	-.061	.313**	.335**	-
15. Voice behavior	5.03	1.18	.073	.084	.285**	.283**	-.038	.037	.300**	.301**	.245**	-.208*	.120	.473**	.307**	.278**

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

Direct effects

Before the multiple regression analyses were performed, an average was made of the four components of familiarity. The recognition scale, the scale of adequate communication quality, the fit scale of embeddedness, the sacrifice scale of embeddedness and the affective organizational commitment scale all had to be changed in a composite score from 0 to 100, in order to make this assembled average of familiarity.

Hypothesis 1a, among volunteers, familiarity with the organization relates positively and directly to role clarity and negatively and directly to role ambiguity and role conflict, was supported by the data. Familiarity ($\beta = .60$, $p < .001$) was positively and directly related with role clarity and predicted 35,9 % of the variance in role clarity ($R^2 = .36$). In other words the more familiar a volunteer feels with the organization the better he or she knows what tasks to perform. Familiarity with the organization had to be negatively related with role ambiguity and role conflict in order to support the hypothesis. Indeed familiarity ($\beta = -.66$, $p < .001$) was negatively and directly related with role ambiguity and predicted 43.1% of the variance in role ambiguity ($R^2 = .34$). Familiarity ($\beta = -.48$, $p < .001$) was also negatively and directly related with role conflict and predicted 23.1% of the variance in role conflict ($R^2 = .23$). The more familiar a volunteer feels with the organization, the less doubt and conflicts a volunteer has about the roll he or she fulfills within the organization.

We also hypothesized that trainings for volunteers, having a mentor in the organization and knowing people in the organization will increase the familiarity with the organization among volunteers (Hypothesis 2, 3 and 4). Multiple regression showed that having a mentor ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) and already knowing people ($\beta = .27$, $p = .001$) indeed were positively and directly associated with familiarity and so the data supported hypotheses 3 and 4. Training was measured on two scales of which one, the training scale of Price and Mueller (1986), ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$) showed a positive and direct relation with familiarity and of which the other, the understanding scale of Clary et al. (1998), ($\beta = .11$, $p = .199$) gave a positive, but insignificant relation with familiarity. These four measures together predicted 32 % of the variance in familiarity ($R^2 = .32$).

In sum these results give support for the hypotheses. Hypothesis 1a is supported because results showed that when the feeling of familiarity increased role clarity also increased, while role ambiguity and role conflict decreased. Hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 are supported because the results showed that when volunteers were more satisfied with their mentor, felt that they had good opportunities to learn new things in the organization or when they felt more socially included, volunteers felt more familiar within the organization.

Indirect effects

According to hypothesis 1b a feeling of familiarity with the organization increases the outcome variables (work effort, intent to remain, willingness to volunteer and voice behavior) via role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict. These indirect effects were tested with mediation analyses as

described by Baron and Kenny (1986). After checking whether the criteria that are necessary for mediation were met, three analyses remained. First, analysis showed that the direct effect of familiarity ($b = .02$, $\beta = .39$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .15$) on work effort, became less significant ($b = .01$, $\beta = .23$, p < .05) when role clarity ($b = .16$, $\beta = .25$, p < .05) was added as a predictor in the analysis. This is a partial mediation, because the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable mediated, but did not become non-significant when role clarity was added to the analysis. According to the Sobel test ($z = 2.28$, $p < .05$) the indirect effect of familiarity on work effort via role clarity was significant, meaning that volunteers work harder when they feel more familiar with the organization because they feel clearer about the role they play within the organization. As a final check, the bootstrap method of Preacher and Hayes (2004) also showed that the indirect effect was significant, because zero did not fall in the 95 % confidence interval. Second, the direct effect of familiarity ($b = .01$, $\beta = .17$, $p = .059$, $R^2 = .03$) on voice behavior became non-significant ($b = .00$, $\beta = .03$, $p = ns$) when role clarity ($b = .26$, $\beta = .23$, p < .05) was added in the analysis. This implies a full mediation and Sobel's test ($z = 2.08$, $p < .05$) was also significant. However, the bootstrap method (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) was not significant for this indirect effect. The zero fell in the 95 % confidence interval. Thus the effect was marginal significant (p < .10). Finally, the direct effect of familiarity ($b = .03$, $\beta = .44$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .19$) on intent to remain, became less significant ($b = .02$, $\beta = .26$, p < .05) when role ambiguity ($b = -.23$, $\beta = -.27$, p < .01) was added to the analysis. This is not a perfect mediation, but again significant according to the Sobel test ($z = 2.55$, $p = .01$). Also, the bootstrap method (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) showed significant support for this indirect effect. The zero fell in the 95 % confidence interval. This means that volunteers are more likely to stay a volunteer when volunteers feel more familiar with the organization, because the more familiar a volunteer feels, the less role ambiguity this volunteer experiences.

To conclude, we can say that the results of the indirect effects showed partial support for hypothesis 1b.

Discussion

In sum, this study indicates that when volunteers feel more familiar with the organization; so when they feel more recognized, embedded, emotionally involved and when they have adequate knowledge of the organization, volunteers will experience more role clarity, less role ambiguity and less role conflict. This in turn increases the volunteers' dedication to the organization. This study also shows that when volunteers have a mentor, know people within the organization and/or receive training for the volunteer work, they will feel more familiar with the organization.

Theoretical implications

A problem for volunteers is that they often feel unfamiliar with the organization (Pearce, 1993). This enhances role ambiguity and role conflict. Low role clarity leads to less dedication to the volunteer work. Previous studies among paid employees showed indeed that role ambiguity and role conflict undermine positive job attitudes of workers (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Erez, 2001; Hassan, 2013; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). However these previous studies used paid employees as participants. Volunteers are different from paid employees, because for instance they spend fewer hours in the organization, they do not receive a salary for the work they do and they often do not sign a contract (Pearce 1993). The present research addressed this issue and showed that when volunteers feel more familiar with the organization, they perceive more role clarity, less role ambiguity and less role conflict. This leads to more dedication to the volunteer work. We also investigated how organizations can create more familiarity with the organization among volunteers. Having a supervisor within the organization increases the feeling of familiarity and also having a training for the volunteer work and knowing people within the organization increase the feeling of familiarity.

Although it is known that an important problem for volunteers is that they often feel unfamiliar with the organization (Pearce, 1993), this concept of familiarity with the organization was never defined before, nor were there any scales to measure this concept yet. Nevertheless there are already concepts investigated in the literature that have to do with familiarity with the organization (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002; Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Erez, 2001; Allen & Meyer, 1990). That is why we made a composed concept of familiarity out of these four components. This new concept, familiarity with the organization, was tested in our research on volunteers and familiarity with the organization indeed showed to be a predictor for role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and for dedication to the volunteer work. The feeling of familiarity also increased when volunteers had a mentor, attended a training or knew people within the organization. This new concept makes further research also simpler. Because now researchers do not have to use the four components in their studies, they can simply use the total score of the four components, according to the factor analysis. This will make future studies about this subject clearer.

Practical implications

This study also provides practical information. There is little research about volunteers and how organizations can increase their feeling of familiarity with the organization. This study shows that volunteers will feel more familiar with the organization when they receive a training, have a mentor or when they know people within the organization. Thus organizations should provide volunteers with a mentor, with training or they have to provide activities where volunteers can get to know each other.

Having a mentor within the organization gives the volunteers support. This support can be focused on the emotions of the volunteers and can also be focused on the task a volunteer has to

perform. For instance, a mentor can encourage the volunteers when they need it, this will make volunteers feel more appreciated and recognized by the mentor and by the organization (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). For this reason having a mentor enhances the feeling of being familiar with the organization among volunteers. The mentor also provides the volunteers with adequate knowledge about the organization, they can give an explanation about how to perform a task and they can give positive or negative feedback to the volunteers. This increases the adequate communication quality and thereby increases the feeling of being familiar with the organization.

Training also contributes to an increased feeling of being familiar with the organization. First, when volunteers have a training day, they have a lot of opportunities to socialize with one another and to get familiar within the organization. For instance, when they get exercises where they have to work together or during an acquaintanceship round in the beginning of the day. This day will give volunteers more connections within the organization and thus makes them feel more embedded within the organization (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Erez, 2001). Of course, a training provides the volunteers also with adequate knowledge about the organization and about the tasks they have to perform. This increases the adequate communication flow and makes the volunteers feel more familiar with the organization. Third, training will make volunteers feel appreciated by the organization. The organization invests in them and makes an effort to prepare the volunteers for their job, this increases the feeling of being recognized and thereby enhances the feeling of familiarity with the organization. At last training will contribute to the feeling of being emotionally involved with the organization. It is a warm welcome, which provides knowledge, connections within the organization and a feeling of being recognized. All that will give the volunteers a feeling of being part of the group already.

Third, knowing people in the organization will also contribute to a feeling of being more familiar with the organization. The new volunteers can consult their acquaintances for knowledge about the organization, which will increase the adequate communication flow. They will also feel more embedded within the organization, because of the people they already know. It is smart for organizations to hire new volunteers who already know people within the organization. They can do this for example by asking their paid employees and volunteers if they know people in their neighbor who would like to volunteer or to ask to their paid employees and volunteers if they want to spread advertisements about volunteer work within their organization in their surroundings.

As mentioned before, this is the first study that examines role clarity with regard to volunteers. Role clarity is studied with paid employees before (Hassan, 2013) and they found that role clarity influences turnover rates negatively. The present study found that role clarity influences the dedication to volunteer work positively within volunteers. So, it is important for volunteers to have clear roles. To make roles clearer for volunteers, the organization should not only make sure that they describe the roles to their volunteers, they also should verify if the volunteers understand the roles that they are expected to perform and the organization should explain her expectations to the volunteers. Perhaps the mentor of the volunteers could take the role clarity for volunteers into account, they can

explain the tasks to the volunteers and give the volunteers space to ask some questions and help them if they do not understand something.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

A limitation of the present study is that the data is only obtained from cross-sectional self-reports. To analyze the data only correlational techniques were used, which makes it difficult to conclude causality of the components in this study (Mahoney, 2001). However the theory of the present study was supported by our data and also other studies showed results in the same direction. For example previous studies showed that job turnover is negatively linked with embeddedness, adequate communication quality and affective organizational commitment for paid employees and volunteers (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Erez, 2001; Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002; Allen & Meyer, 1990). Fisher and Ackerman (1998) showed that the more volunteers feel recognized the more hours they are willing to donate to the organization. Furthermore, Hassan (2013) found that role clarity increases the intent to remain and job satisfaction, which is in line with the data of the present study. So, although the present study only used correlational techniques for analyzing the data, the results are in line with previous research, which makes the present research relevant for further research. Further research in an experimental setting is needed in order to make conclusions about the causality.

Another limitation is the generalizability of the outcomes of this study, because not every volunteer that we sent the questionnaire responded. The response rate of the volunteers of the two hospitals that participated was 28 percent together, the response rate of the volunteers of the third organization was unknown, because the manager of the volunteers did not know how many volunteers the organization has. The problem with a response rate under the 100 percent is that it might be that only the enthusiastic volunteers responded. The responders might think differently about the organization and their tasks than the non-responders, which lead to other answers on the questionnaires. In order to examine this limitation, non-responders should be asked a second time to fill in the questionnaire, thereafter responses of the non-responders should be compared to the responses of the responders. If the responses of the non-responders are similar to the responses of the responders there is no problem with the generalizability of this study. If not, there is a problem with the generalizability. However, if especially enthusiastic volunteers responded to the questionnaire it would be reasonable that these enthusiastic volunteers are the core of the volunteers working in the organization. Core volunteers are more involved, spend more time in the organization, are more informed about the organization (Dubin, Hedley, & Taveggia, 1976) and thus they are more representing the organization.

One suggestion for further research is to investigate the behavior of the volunteers. In this study only attitudes were measured through questionnaires. Attitudes are relevant to investigate, because they guide behavior, however they are not the same (Sorrentino & Higgins, 1986). In this study some important predictors for dedication to volunteer work were tested: familiarity with the

organization, role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict. But, future researchers should examine familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity and role conflict in experimental settings, so we can learn about the behaviors of the volunteers in these settings. Especially for familiarity and role clarity this is important because they are new concepts in the world of volunteers.

Secondly, the new concept of familiarity with the organization should be investigated further in future research. This is the first time that this concept was defined and that it was measured, because we composed a scale out of four components. These components have to do with familiarity, but it might be that there are more components that have to do with familiarity that also should be included in the concept of familiarity. Further research should also focus on the scale for familiarity with the organization: are there more questions that should be included in the scale or are there questions that are better to exclude from the scale? Is familiarity with the organization a predictor for more concepts besides role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication to the volunteer work?

In this study training appeared to be a predictor for the feeling of familiarity with the organization, however in the present research and previous researches (Fuller, Hester, Barnett, Frey, Relyea, & Beu, 2014) the different types of trainings and what type of training is most effective, were never investigated. Now that the present research has shown that training is an important predictor for the feeling of being familiar with the organization, it is also important to investigate which type of training is the most effective for increasing this feeling of familiarity with the organization. Training can focus for instance only on the skills of volunteers, only on information about the organization or on both. What type is the most effective? And is it more effective to let the volunteers practice their skills or will providing the volunteers with theory be sufficient. It should be investigated if the duration of the training influences the effect on the feeling of familiarity with the organization. A training can last a day, but it can also be spread over several weeks. Further research should examine different kinds of training and their effect on familiarity with the organization. When organizations know the most effective form of training they can introduce this type of training in their volunteer program.

To help organizations with volunteers, the effect of familiarity with the organization on the motivation of volunteers was investigated. We hope that organizations with volunteers will use the insights that this study provides.

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Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

Appendix

Measurements:

Recognition

The organization properly thanks you as a volunteer

The organization shows its gratitude to the volunteers

How often the organization acknowledges the work I do

Adequate communication quality

As a volunteer I am satisfied with:

The access I have to information concerning the organization.

The amount of information I receive about what the organization is doing.

The degree in which the organization communicates its goals and objectives to volunteers.

Embeddedness
Fit to Organization

I like the members of my workgroup.

My coworkers are similar to me.

My job utilizes my skills and talents well.

I feel likel I am a good match for this company.

I fit with the company's culture.

Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

Links to Organization

How long have you been in your present position?

 How long have you worked for this company

How long have you worked in this industry?

How many coworkers do you interact with regularly?

How many coworkers are highly dependent on you?

How many work teams are you on?

How many work committees are you on?

Organization-Related Sacrifice

I feel that people at work respect me a great deal.

I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job.

The benefits are good on this job.

Affective organizational commitment

I feel like part of the family at [organization].

[Organization] has personal meaning to me.

I feel as if the problems of [organization] are my own.

I feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization

I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization

Role clarity

I know exactly what I am supposed to do on my job.

I understand fully which of my job duties are more important than others.

Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

My responsibilities at work are very clear and specific.

Role ambiguity

Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.

I am able to act the same regardless of the group I am with.

I know what my responsibilities are.

I have just the right amount of work to do.

I know that I have divided my time properly.

I know exactly what is expected of me.

Explanation is clear of what has to be done.

I perform work that suits my values.

Role conflict

I do not know if my work will be acceptable to my boss

I have to work under vague directives or orders.

I work on unnecessary things.

I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.

I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.

I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.

I have to "feel my way" in performing my duties.

I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.

Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.

I have to do things that should be done differently.

Lack of policies and guidelines to help me.

Work effort scale

I do not give up quickly when something does not work well.

I really do my best to get my work done, regardless of potential difficulties.

When I start an assignment I pursue it to the end.

I do my best to do what is expected of me.

I am trustworthy in the execution of the tasks that are assigned to me.

I really do my best to achieve the objectives of the organization

I think of myself as a hard worker.

I really do my best in my job.

I put a lot of energy into the tasks that I commence.

I always exert equally hard during the execution of my job.

Intent to remain

How likely is it that you will quit your work as a volunteer at [organization] within the next 6 months?

How likely is it that you will continue your work as a volunteer at [organization] for the next 2 years?

Willingness to volunteer

Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

I am willing to raise money for <name organization>.

I am willing to give education about < name organization> and <mission organization>.

I am willing to distribute flyers and posters about <name organization> and <mission organization>.

Voice behavior

As a volunteer I:

Develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.

Speak up and encourage others in this group to get involved in issues that affect the group.

Communicate my opinions about work issues to others in this group even if my opinion is

different and others in the group disagree with me.

Keep well informed about issues where my opinion might be useful to this work group.

Get involved in issues that affect the quality of work life here in this group. Speak up in this

group with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures.

Training scale (Price and Mueller)

The organization provides me the opportunity to improve my skills and knowledge

The organization requires me to do the same things over and over again (R)

The organization requires me to keep learning new things

Understanding scale

Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

I can learn more about the cause for which I am working.

Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.

Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.

I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.

I can explore my own strengths.

Mentorship

My supervisor values my contributions to the well-being of our department.

My supervisor wants to know if I have any complaints.

My supervisor takes my best interests into account when he/she makes decisions that affect me.

Help is available from my supervisor when I have a problem.

My supervisor really cares about my well-being.

If I did the best job possible, my supervisor would sure notice.

My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favor.

My supervisor cares about my general satisfaction at work.

My supervisor shows a lot of concern for me.

My supervisor cares about my opinions.

My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments.

My supervisor tries to make my job as interesting as possible.

Familiarity, role clarity, role ambiguity, role conflict and dedication among volunteers

Social inclusion within the organization

I am satisfied with:

My relationship with other volunteers in the organization.

The friendships I have made while volunteering here.

The amount of interaction I have with other volunteers in the organization.

The amount of time spent with other volunteers