Volunteer Dedication: Understanding the Role of Identity Importance on Participation Frequency
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What is This?
The nonprofit sector is an important part of the economic system, one that relies heavily on volunteer labor. Understanding higher participation levels among volunteers, particularly volunteering marketing professionals, not only affects the performance of individual nonprofit organizations but also has profound impact on the entire nonprofit sector of the economy. Using identity theory adapted from the consumer behavior literature, the authors investigate the motivation of dedicated volunteers. Results suggest that organizational attachment, involvement, emotions, and identity importance are useful for understanding volunteers’ dedication. In this context, devoted volunteers make a significant impact on societal welfare.

**Keywords:** volunteer; identity; nonprofit; societal welfare

Macromarketing explores complex exchange systems where marketing and society interact (Dixon 1984; Meade and Nason 1991). Research has explored ways to improve quality of life (Shultz 1997), how altruism and helping behaviors can improve life of impoverished consumers (Mill 2002), how efficient marketing programs can lead to economic development (Vann and Kumcu 1995), how community culture and marketing strategy can be sources of economic development (McKee, Wall, and Luther 1997), the role of commercialization in cause-related marketing (Polonsky and Wood 2001), the external benefits of consumption (Cadeaux 2000), and how short-term tourist events can affect a community (Putsis 1998). However, there is little macromarketing research on how volunteers use marketing systems and their time and efforts to improve societal welfare.

Organizations in the voluntary or nonprofit sector of the economy often address societal needs that are not adequately addressed by the private or public sectors (Etzioni 1972; Kotler and Murray 1975; Pestoff 1992). For organizations in the voluntary or nonprofit sector of the economy, the altruistic act of volunteering is essential to their success and is a critical element of the nonprofit subsystem. If we desire to understand what makes the volunteer economy work efficiently, it is beneficial to understand the motivations of individual volunteers in this subsystem. The study of such systems and their effects on society are cornerstones of macromarketing research (Chaganti 1981; Fisk 1981; Heede 1981; Hunt 1981; Shawer and Nickels 1981; White 1981).

To understand volunteer motivations, the authors explore what drives individuals, who are marketing professionals, to volunteer as members of a civic organization of marketing professionals. These volunteers use effective and efficient marketing programs to host a Professional Golf Association (PGA) tour event annually. The tournament is a major entertainment and tourist event where spectators and corporate sponsors have significant expenditures related to their consumption at the event. The external benefits of this consumption and the organization’s helping culture result in significant economic development. The economic benefit is used to help children who are challenged by difficult circumstances. The efforts of the volunteers significantly improve the quality of life for a large number of children. Such a large professional sporting event also has a positive economic impact on the local community. The article begins with a discussion of the impact of volunteers, as a whole, on society. Next, it develops a theoretical model of what drives a devoted volunteer.

Volunteer labor is a mainstay of nonprofit organizations, enabling them to “sustain current services and expand both the quantity and diversity of services without exhausting the agency’s budget” (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen 1991: 272). In some instances, the nonprofit entity could not exist without substantial voluntary labor (e.g., little league sports and scouting). Therefore, maintaining a steady source of volunteer labor is critical to the ongoing success of nonprofit organizations and, in the aggregate, to the efficacy of the nonprofit sector.
entire nonprofit subsystem (Shawver and Nickels 1981). As such, understanding the enduring motivation of the most dedicated volunteers, those who dedicate more time and energy to the organization than other volunteers, is a subject of considerable interest for academics, marketing professionals, and professional managers of nonprofit organizations alike. The more effective individual organizations are at developing a more dedicated volunteer workforce, the more likely the nonprofit sector will have a stronger impact on the economy. It is important to note that not all nonprofit organizational agendas focus on enhancing societal well-being. In fact, many serve as political vehicles for groups whose narrow, self-serving goals may be counter that of societal well-being. However, the current work focuses on those nonprofit entities that strive to improve their societies.

According to the National Council of Nonprofit Associations (2006), there were 837,027 charitable nonprofits in the United States in 2003, with total assets of $1.76 trillion and expenditures of $945 billion. This represents 8.6 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product that year. Furthermore, these figures do not include foundations or religious congregations. This sector of the U.S. economy is larger than the entire economies of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Russia, and South Korea. The study of such subsystems or components of the economic system is an important topic for marketing research (Hunt 1981; Meade and Nason 1991).

During the year ending September 2005, 65.4 million Americans performed volunteer work at least once (U.S. Department of Labor 2005). This represents 28.8 percent of the civilian population age sixteen and older. As the baby boom generation reaches retirement age, this pool of free labor is likely to expand, as Handy and Srinivasan (2004) show that those over sixty-five average the highest number of hours of volunteer service. If nonprofits are able to increase volunteer participation, they can leverage their organization’s impact on societal well-being.

To understand what makes the voluntary or nonprofit sector of the economy work, it is important to understand why some individuals are frequent volunteers. A parallel situation is blood donation (Piliavin, Grube, and Callero 2002). By understanding why individuals donate blood, one can better understand the macro-issues of blood supply. This article examines individual marketers who volunteer. If one understands what drives frequent volunteers, one will better understand the macro-issues related to volunteering.

This study focuses on marketers’ participation in community projects (i.e., volunteering their time and talents) that are sponsored by their professional organization. The importance of volunteering activities, on the behalf of marketers, for macromarketing lies in the benefit to society these activities deliver. This article addresses the question, “What drives some marketers to generously volunteer their time and talents to their professional associations’ community projects?” Past research on volunteerism has investigated altruistic and egoistic motivations to volunteer. This article’s approach to this question, drawing on the social-identity stream of research in consumer behavior, is that marketers whose social identities are strongly associated with their volunteer professional associations will be devoted volunteers whose time and marketing talents contribute significantly to improve the quality of life in their community.

This article is structured as follows: It first discusses past research on volunteer behavior and develops a social-identity-based theory of those who are dedicated volunteers. Next, it presents a study in which the authors test their hypotheses among a group of 280 marketers who volunteer their time and talents in a professional organization. Finally, it discusses the findings of this study and the implications for scholars, professional managers of nonprofit organizations, and society.

Theoretical Background

Previous research has identified several different motivational drivers of volunteer behavior. A common categorization schema for these motivations is to characterize them as either egoistic or altruistic. The former includes those motivations that satisfy the volunteer’s needs, whereas the latter are those associated with the satisfaction of the needs of society (Winniford, Carpenter, and Grider 1997). Altruistic factors, particularly the need to be doing something worthwhile, seem to be strong and sustainable drivers of helping behaviors (Hill 2002). For example, a study of volunteer firefighters found that 87 percent of the respondents had cited “making a real contribution to an important activity” as a very important motive (Thompson and Bono 1993: 330). This study also found that the significance of this work for the volunteer firefighters’ communities led to a sense of pride and self-esteem, which in turn motivated them to persist in their volunteerism.

Calder and Andereck (1994) found that purposive incentives (i.e., doing something useful and contributing to society) were the most powerful motivations for volunteers. Solidarity incentives, such as social interaction, group identification, and networking, were also found to be strong motivators. Finally, material incentives, such as perks and memorabilia, were significant motivators of volunteerism but weaker than purposive and solidarity.

Although there is consistency among the findings of past research, some scholars have discovered that volunteers’ motivations are dynamic. Over time, as the volunteer gains experience with the work, his or her motivation changes (Hibbert, Piacentini, and Dajani 2003). Initial involvement is often driven by altruistic and personal benefits that are consistent with the volunteer’s values. Enduring involvement (EI) is motivated by the volunteer’s experience of personal benefits, including social, service, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Broadening roles, especially regarding decision
Social-Identity Theory

Social-identity theory partitions the self into distinct identities. Social identities stem from the various social roles that individuals assume (e.g., volunteer, parent, golfer, professor). When a role is personalized and made one’s own, it is an identity. Identity importance is the relative importance of a particular identity in an individual self-structure (Stryker 1980; Callero 1985). In contrast to Belk’s (1988) view of the single, global self, the social-identity perspective partitions the self in different personalized roles. Social-identity theory is a useful way to better understand the activities in which people routinely take part and can be more useful than the global self-view (Kleine, Kleine, and Kern 1993). Empirical findings show a greater association between a particular identity and conduct than with the extended self (Kleine et al. 1993). This perspective has worked well to understand the sustained identity as a voluntary blood donor (Piliavin and Callero 1991) and volunteers for the American Cancer Society (Grube and Piliavin 2000).

Individuals have a relatively distinct social self for each role they routinely play (Stryker 1980). Important identities are those that are an important part of who we are and the roles that we enact repeatedly. Identity importance is the single most important predictor of repeated role-related behavior (Piliavin and Callero 1991). Likewise, Bhattacharya and Elsbach (2002) find identification is linked to personal experiences and action, in the context of social marketing initiatives.

A social-identity carries with it a set of knowledge and expectations about how one wants to enact that identity, including the use of a set of related possessions, identity-related social commitments, and medial commitments, all of which can influence identity importance. Possessions, media, and social commitments influence identity importance through appraisals (Laverie et al. 2002). Possession commitments are the material objects one possesses that are related to an identity. Medial commitments are the media one notices because they are related to an identity. Social commitments, or interactions with others, are the social ties one forms related to an identity. These enablers provide cues to the self and to others regarding how well one is doing at an identity-related activity. Others’ evaluations of identity-related behaviors and possessions may also affect identity importance. Hoelter (1983) demonstrated that identity importance increases with positive evaluations of identity-related behaviors. Likewise, Solomon (1983) suggested that a positive evaluation of possessions validates one’s role. Appraisals induce emotions (Reisenzein and Hofmann 1990). The study presented here reexamines these constructs but in the volunteer context.

Research has linked attachment and EI to identity importance (Laverie and Arnett 2000). To develop a better understanding of how organizational attachment, appraisals, involvement, and associated emotions mediate the relationship...
between identity importance and possession commitments, medial commitment, and social commitments, the authors propose a testable framework. By investigating the mediating variables, the authors hope to offer direction to nonprofit managers to help them cultivate dedicated volunteers. In particular, these nonprofit managers can take steps to influence the three key antecedents. Understanding the factors that drive devoted volunteers will enable nonprofits to build long-term productive relationships with their volunteers. This relational approach is likely to make a significant contribution to society (Hastings 2003). The following sections build the hypothesized model that appears in Figure 1.

**Antecedents**

**Possession commitment.** Participation in identity-related activities requires a set of enabling possessions. The self is buttressed by the use of possessions (Belk 1988). Possessions can be directly related to identity importance, although research suggests the direct link is not common (Kleine et al. 1993; Laverie et al. 2002). The use of identity-related possessions provides cues that may precipitate attachment, reflected and self-appraisals, and EI as individuals evaluate the possessions that they own for the identity-related activity. Furthermore, because the use of these possessions is visible to others, it is likely that they will generate identity-related appraisals by others (Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1981; Belk 1988). Possession commitments provide cues for both reflected and self-appraisals, and they can be linked to identity importance. Likewise, possession commitments can be tied to EI and attachment.

*Hypothesis 1a:* The extensiveness of possession commitments is positively associated with organizational attachment.

*Hypothesis 1b:* The extensiveness of possession commitments is positively associated with favorable reflected appraisals.

*Hypothesis 1c:* The extensiveness of possession commitments is positively associated with favorable self-appraisals.

*Hypothesis 1d:* The extensiveness of possession commitments is positively associated with EI.

*Hypothesis 1e:* The extensiveness possession commitment is not associated with identity importance.

**Social commitments.** Interpersonal relationships that are contingent on the identity form identity-related social commitments. There is a great deal of evidence supporting the relationship between social commitments and identity importance (e.g., Stryker and Serpe 1982; Kleine et al. 1993). Social commitments tie the individual to the activity (Laverie 1998) and help to form attachment. These interactions cause individuals to evaluate their identity-related performance (i.e., self-appraisals). Social commitments provide opportunities for appraisals, attachment, and EI and can be linked to identity importance.
Hypothesis 2a: The extensiveness of social commitments is positively associated with organizational attachment.
Hypothesis 2b: The extensiveness of social commitments is positively associated with favorable reflected appraisals.
Hypothesis 2c: The extensiveness of social commitments is positively associated with favorable self-appraisals.
Hypothesis 2d: The extensiveness of social commitments is positively associated with EI.
Hypothesis 2e: The extensiveness of social commitments is positively associated with identity importance.

Medial commitments. Similar to social commitments, medial commitments may lead to identity importance (Laverie et al. 2002). Medial commitments include various forms of media exposure, such as magazines, television programs, books, newspapers, or videos, a person consumes because these media vehicles are specific to an identity (Kleine et al. 1993). Kleine et al. (1993) demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between the extensiveness of medial commitments and identity importance. Medial commitments serve to reinforce the individual’s identity and help form attachment (Ball and Tasaki 1992). One of the likely consequences of extensive medial commitments is appraisal, both self and reflected, in which the individual evaluates his or her social role. Media ties serve as cues to keep involvement levels high over time (Richins 1991). Medial commitments provide opportunities for appraisals, organizational attachment, and EI and can be linked to identity importance.

Hypothesis 3a: The extensiveness of medial commitments is positively associated with organizational attachment.
Hypothesis 3b: The extensiveness of medial commitments is positively associated with favorable reflected appraisals.
Hypothesis 3c: The extensiveness of medial commitments is positively associated with favorable self-appraisals.
Hypothesis 3d: The extensiveness of medial commitments is positively associated with EI.
Hypothesis 3e: The extensiveness of medial commitments is positively associated with identity importance.

Although a reciprocal relationship between the proposed antecedents and identity importance is a theoretical possibility, past research argues against this (Laverie et al. 2002). Based on past studies, including longitudinal research (e.g., Serpe 1987; Piliavin and Callero 1991), the authors argue that the antecedents influence identity importance more than the reciprocal effect.

Attachment

Traditionally, consumer researchers have focused on attachment to objects (e.g., Ball and Tasaki 1992). However, more recently researchers have explored how attachment is related to ongoing and loyal behavior. Attachment focuses on the emotional significance of an object, a role, or an organization to the self-concept. For example, attachment to an organization where one volunteers is related to the resources they bring, the rewards they receive, and the context of the work (Wilson and Musick 1999). This organizational attachment may also be manifested in the volunteer experiencing strong feelings associated with their volunteer role (Wilson and Musick 1999). Thus, the more attachment one feels toward their volunteer organization, the more important the identity becomes to their sense of self. It is important to note that there is a distinction between role attachment and identity importance. Likewise, identification and commitment are separate constructs (Bhattacharya, Roa, and Glynn 1995). All who identify with an organization are likely to be attached to the organization, but all of those who are attached need not identify with the organization (Bhattacharya et al. 1995).

Appraisal

Oftentimes others evaluate us when we partake in activities, such as volunteering. The perceptions that we form of these evaluations are referred to as reflected appraisal (Felson 1985). The personal interpretations of appraisals lead to particular emotional reactions (e.g., Smith and Ellsworth 1985). If reflected appraisals are positive/negative, identity-related behaviors are confirmed/disconfirmed, resulting in positive/negative emotions and leading to a person’s further attraction to or avoidance of the activity. These appraisals may be more salient in societies where the culture values volunteer behavior. Individuals evaluate their own identity-related behaviors as well, in a process known as self-appraisal. An individual’s sense of how she or he is doing in an identity-related activity stems “not only from the reflected appraisals of others but, also from the consequences and possessions of behavior that are attributed to the self as an agent in the environment” (Gecas and Schwalbe 1983: 79). The two dimensions are related yet have been conceptualized as distinct. Thus, this article posits that reflected and self-appraisals will be positively related to the central identity-related emotion and identity importance.

EI

Involvement is a state of motivation, arousal, or interest toward an activity or product. Social marketing efforts, such as volunteering, are likely to be associated with high involvement (Hastings 2003). Involvement can be delineated into EI and situational involvement (Richins, Bloch, and McQuarrie 1992). For the purpose of studying dedicated volunteers, EI is more important as it represents an individual’s ongoing level of interest in an activity (McIntyre 1989), independent of situations, and is likely to be associated with an activity that offers hedonic benefits and is linked with the self (Kapferer and Laurent 1993). EI may seem similar to identity importance, but they are distinct. Identity importance is the significance of the role to the overall
self-concept. That is, identity importance reflects how much the role contributes to the global self. EI is a state of motivation, arousal, or interest, not part of the role identity. EI, an ongoing interest in volunteering, in this case, is likely to be associated with positive emotion that will affect identity importance.

**Emotion**

Positive evaluations of identity-related behavior, particularly volunteerism, lead to positive feelings and subsequently to continued interest in that behavior. Emotions are important predictors of voluntary actions, especially in the case of those with extensive experience (Allen, Machleit, and Kleine 1992). Emotions are an important key to understanding the social consequences of behavior (Barbalet 2001) and intentions to continue behavior (Cote and Morgan 2002). Ryan, Kaplan, and Grese (2001) found that volunteers felt a strong emotional connection to the cause they supported. It is likely that emotions arise out of attachment, appraisals, and EI. Richins (1997) states that work that examines the antecedents of emotions would be useful, but as yet there is no clear set of emotions that has been determined to be important in identity research. Rather, she suggests that researchers use judgment to select emotions that will likely be important in a given context, as different emotions may be more prominent in different roles. In the context of volunteering, the authors choose to focus on two of many possible emotions that are likely to be prominent: pride and optimism.

Pride has been related to identity importance (Laverie et al. 2002) and has been found to be a significant reason why volunteer firefighters persist in that role (Thompson and Bono 1993). Positive appraisals generate pride, thus the authors expect self- and reflected appraisals will be positively related to pride. Pride confirms an identity and will be positively related to identity importance.

- **Hypothesis 4a:** Favorable reflected appraisals are positively associated with pride.
- **Hypothesis 4b:** Favorable self-appraisals are positively associated with pride.
- **Hypothesis 5:** Pride is positively associated with identity importance.

The emotional link between attachment and identity importance is likely to be a positive feeling (Laverie and Arnett 2000). In a volunteer, another emotion is likely to be optimism about the agency’s mission. Optimism is likely to be related to the inherently altruistic nature of a volunteer activity, as hope and encouragement keep the volunteer going (Hibbert et al. 2003). Optimism leads one to look at the more favorable side of things and is related to the perception of favorable outcomes (Richins 1997). It is likely that one has EI because she or he believes things will improve, in part because of her or his volunteering. EI is an emotion that is related to continued participation in an activity (Richins 1997) and is likely to strengthen this optimism, which in turn positively influences identity importance. Thus, the authors posit that attachment and EI will be positively related to optimism.

- **Hypothesis 6a:** Attachment is positively associated with optimism.
- **Hypothesis 6b:** EI is positively associated with optimism.
- **Hypothesis 7:** Optimism is positively associated with identity importance.

**Identity Importance**

Identity importance, the intensity with which the person sees himself or herself in a particular role, is related to repeated participation (Kleine et al. 1993). High identity importance is related to repeated participation in the volunteer activity, and low identity importance is related to less repeated participation (Grube and Piliavin 2000).

- **Hypothesis 8:** Identity importance is positively associated with a volunteer’s frequency of participation.

**METHOD**

The authors conducted a study to evaluate the proposed nomological relations presented in Figure 1. Data were collected from Salesmanship Club of Dallas volunteers. Founded in 1920, the Salesmanship Club of Dallas funds a number of activities aimed at supporting children, to help children to succeed despite challenging circumstances. The organization’s mission, “helping transform children’s futures . . . create new possibilities for success” is served in three ways. First, the organization supports an outpatient family therapy program that provides treatment for children who are experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties and extends to their families. Second, the organization provides financial support to the J. Erik Jonsson Community School, which provides early intervention with children from less advantaged circumstances. Finally, extensive research and development is conducted by therapists, teachers, and staff. The annual budget for the Salesmanship Club Youth and Family Centers exceeds eight million dollars. Approximately two thirds of the annual budget is generated through a single event, the Electronic Data Systems (EDS) Byron Nelson Golf Classic, a PGA tour event. The organization has more than 500 volunteers, all of whom are marketing and sales professionals from the Dallas, Texas, area. Members volunteer their time and marketing talent throughout the year in various ways and especially in the time leading up to and during the golf tournament. Volunteers perform all of the duties to sponsor and manage a PGA tournament. The Salesmanship Club leads the PGA Tour in charity contributions of approximately six million dollars annually (Verdi 2006) and more than eighty-eight million
dollars since the inception of the tournament. The context was appropriate as all of the volunteers are marketing or sales professionals who use marketing strategies for the betterment of their community and society. Thus, the results will help to understand volunteer motivation within the marketing profession.

### Construct Definitions and Measures

Possession commitments are measured by asking people to list all of the things that they own because of their participation in the activity (e.g., Kleine et al. 1993). Thus, this measure of the number of possessions owned captures the extensiveness of one’s identity-related possession commitment.

Social commitments are measured by a self-reported number of how many people the individual interacts with when he or she volunteers. Therefore, the social commitments measure taps the extensiveness of one’s social commitments.

Medial commitments (magazines, television programs, books, newspapers, and videos) are measured by asking the respondent to think of all the media information that they pay attention to that is related to volunteering (e.g., magazines, newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, television or radio programs, and videos). Then, the respondents list these items. The number of media items listed is summed for an indication of the extensiveness of medial commitments.

Organization attachment is measured using an adaptation of Ball and Tasaki’s (1992) scale. The original scale is nine items. As has been done in previous research (Laverie and Arnett 2000), the authors use an abbreviated three-item scale to keep the questionnaire at a reasonable length, with 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. The three items are as follows: (a) “If someone verbally attacked the Salesmanship Club of Dallas, I would feel a little bit personally attacked”; (b) “Probably people who know me sometimes think of the Salesmanship Club of Dallas when they think of me”; and (c) “If I could not go to Salesmanship Club of Dallas volunteering activities, I would feel a little bit less like myself.”

Appraisals are measured on a seven-point semantic differential scale. The authors developed and pretested a measure with multiple items. The adjective pairs are as follows: notable/ordinary, excellent/poor, and spectacular/terrible. These adjective pairs measure the reflected and self-appraisals of volunteering. For each type of appraisal, the prompt is varied.

### Table 1: Initial Measurement Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct and Indicators</th>
<th>Standardized Loading</th>
<th>t*</th>
<th>Item Reliability</th>
<th>Variance Extracted Estimates</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Attachment 2</td>
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<td>Attachment 3</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<td>Reflective appraisal (a = .88)</td>
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<td>Notable/ordinary</td>
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<td>12.30</td>
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<td>Excellent/poor</td>
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<td>15.22</td>
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<td>Spectacular/terrible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity 3</td>
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<td>13.36</td>
<td>.74</td>
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</table>

a. All t tests were significant at the p < .001.
b. Denotes composite reliability analogous to internal.
EI is measured using an adaptation of the EI Scale (McIntyre 1989). The authors use three of the nine semantic differential items (seven-point scales). The three items were selected because research has shown they are effective (McIntyre 1989) and because of the need to keep the questionnaire length reasonable. The adjective pairs are as follows: unappealing/appealing, boring/interesting, and not part of my self-image/part of my self-image.

**Pride and optimism.** The items used to measure pride are from Laverie et al. (2002). The optimism items are from Richins (1997). Respondents are asked to think about their attachment, self- and reflected appraisals, and involve with the Salesmanship Club of Dallas, and then they are asked to respond to the emotion items. The items for pride are as follows: self-esteem, self-regard, and pride. The items for optimism are as follows: optimistic, encouraged, and hopeful. Items are rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree and then summed. The items are as follows: (a) “Volunteering with the Salesmanship Club of Dallas is something I rarely even think about,” (b) “I would feel at a loss if I were forced to give up volunteering with the Salesmanship Club of Dallas,” and (c) “volunteering with Salesmanship Club of Dallas is an important part of who I am.” Participation frequency is measured with a simple scale that has been effective in past research (Kleine et al. 1993; Laverie et al. 2002). Respondents are asked to select the item that best represented their volunteering with Salesmanship Club of Dallas. The items are as follows: at least once every six months, at least once a month, at least once a week, at least three times a week, and at least once a day.

### TABLE 2
RESIDUALS AND CORRELATED ERRORS FOR IDENTICALLY WORDED ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Standardized Correlated Uniqueness</th>
<th>Unstandardized Correlated Uniqueness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appraisals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable/ordinary</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA – SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent/poor</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.03 (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA – SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectacular/terrible</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.02 (.01)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: RA = reflected appraisal; SA = self-appraisal.
a. Parameter estimates exceed twice their standard error.

### TABLE 3
LATENT AND MANIFEST VARIABLE CORRELATIONS MEASUREMENT MODEL WITH MANIFEST VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attachment</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reflected appraisal</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-appraisal</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Enduring involvement</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pride</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
<td>0.62**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Optimism</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Identity importance</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.58**</td>
<td>0.69**</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Medial commitments</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Social commitments</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Possession commitment</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Participation frequency</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
<td>0.57**</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M  5.65  5.24  5.40  5.11  6.04  6.01  5.99  11.68  21.06  33.35  3.48
SD  1.36  1.17  1.12  1.18  1.43  1.17  1.42  5.27  8.12  11.18  0.97

*p < .05. **p < .01.

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**SAMPLE, ANALYSIS, AND RESULTS**

### Procedures and Sample

The first author recruited respondents while they were volunteering at the EDS Byron Nelson Golf Classic. A booklet that included a cover letter, questionnaire, a raffle entry, and...
A return envelope was distributed in person to volunteers at the golf tournament. As an incentive for participation, those who mailed back a completed survey were able to enter a raffle for a gift certificate to a sporting goods store. Four hundred and twelve surveys were distributed at the Bryon Nelson Classic as potential respondents left the grounds after volunteering. The 280 returned surveys represents a response rate of 68 percent. Respondents ranged in age from twenty-six to seventy-seven ($M = 47$, $SD = 9.70$). Seventy-six percent of the respondents were male. Respondents reported a tenure of volunteering with the Salesmanship Club of Dallas ranging from as little as a month to as much as sixty years ($M = 10.65$, $SD = 9.18$). On average, the respondents volunteered nearly twice a week ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.97$). They declared an average of fifty ($SD = 16.21$) identity-related possessions, ranging from two to 361 possessions.

**Measure Evaluation/Purification**

*Measurement model.* Data analysis followed Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) two-step procedure: a measure purification stage followed by analysis of the proposed construct relations. A measurement model was fit to the data that included the four single-indicator constructs and the seven multiple-indicator constructs: attachment, reflected appraisal, self-appraisal, EI, the two emotions (pride and optimism), and identity importance. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that these constructs are unidimensional, and cross-loading analysis indicates convergent and discriminant validity among the constructs. The measurement model, estimated with maximum-likelihood estimation, fit the data well (see Table 1). The residuals were normally distributed. All parameter estimates had the expected sign and were within permissible ranges. All factor loadings and item reliabilities were statistically significant. Residuals for similarly worded items were permitted to covary so as to partition out common method variance. Covariances between all other residuals were set to zero.

The measurement model exhibits good overall fit ($\chi^2 = 248.280$, $df = 224$, $p < .001$, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .025, comparative fit index [CFI] = .99, non-normed fit index [NNFI] = .9993). The residuals were normally distributed and only 3 percent of the normalized residuals exceed 2.0. All parameter estimates are reasonable and within their permissible ranges. All factor loadings and item reliabilities were statistically significant. Residuals for similarly worded items were permitted to covary so as to partition out common method variance. Covariances between all other residuals were set to zero.

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constructs are sufficiently low to support discriminant validity for all constructs (Table 3).

**Structural Analysis of Proposed Construct Relations**

The structural model tests the hypothesized structural relations (see Figure 2). Global fit of this structural model is also good (χ^2 = 281.12, df = 247, p < .001, CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, RMSEA = .028). Residuals were normally distributed. The values of all path coefficients are reasonable and have the expected sign (see Table 4). Examination of the Lagrange multiplier tests reveals no additional causal paths that, if added, would improve model fit.

The discussion of the structural paths will begin with the antecedents of attachment, appraisals, EI, and identity importance, namely possession commitment, social commitments, and medial commitments. Next, the authors examine the relationships between appraisals and pride, and attachment and EI and optimism. Then, the authors explore how pride and optimism affects identity importance. Finally, the relationship between identity importance and participation frequency is discussed.

**Possession commitments.** The extensiveness of identity-related possession commitments was predicted to be positively related to attachment, to EI, to self-appraisals, and to reflected appraisals. These findings support Hypotheses 1a through 1d: possession commitment to attachment (β = .18, t = 3.39, p < .001), possession commitment to reflected appraisals (β = .22, t = 2.80, p < .01), from possession commitment to self-appraisals (β = .25, t = 2.84, p < .01), and from possession commitment to EI (β = .24, t = 2.82, p < .01). As all paths are statistically significant, the authors have evidence that identity-related possessions lead to attachment and EI and provide cues that precipitate identity-related appraisals, both self and reflected. As expected, the path from possession commitment extensiveness to identity importance is not statistically significant (β = .10, t = 0.14, p > .05), providing support for Hypothesis 1e. As this finding replicates Kleine et al. (1993), it furthers the challenge to the common assumption of a direct link between possessions and self.

**Social commitments.** The results support the prediction that more extensive social commitments are associated with attachment (β = .17, t = 2.43, p < .01), with more favorable reflected appraisals (β = .12, t = 2.00, p < .05), and with EI (β = .11, t = 2.03, p < .05), supporting Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2d. Extensiveness of social commitments is not related to the favorableness of individuals’ self-appraisals (β = .07, t = 1.07, p > .05). Although this does not support Hypothesis 2c, this finding does replicate the findings of Laverie et al. (2002). Social commitments also had the predicted direct effect on identity importance (β = .27, t = 2.94, p < .01), supporting Hypothesis 3e. This supports a key tenet of social identity theory, which states that identity importance is socially derived,
Medial commitments. The extensiveness of medial commitments is positively related to attachment ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.80$, $p < .01$), reflected appraisals ($\beta = .12$, $t = 2.01$, $p < .05$), self-appraisals ($\beta = .21$, $t = 4.06$, $p < .001$), and EI ($\beta = .21$, $t = 4.04$, $p < .001$), providing support for Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d. Thus, the more extensive individuals' medial commitments, the greater their organizational attachment and EI. Extensiveness of medial commitments is also related to favorable appraisals, both self and reflected. This is consistent with the notion that people evaluate their possessions and perform identity-related activity. The authors also replicate Kleine et al. (1993) by demonstrating that the extensiveness of medial commitments predicts identity importance ($\beta = .17$, $t = 2.08$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 3e. Thus, the more identity-relevant medial commitments (the magazines, television programs, books, newspapers, videos, etc.) that a person consumes, the more salient the identity.

Organizational attachment $\Rightarrow$ optimism. The authors expected that organizational attachment will predict optimism. The statistically significant path, from organizational attachment to optimism ($\beta = .52$, $t = 6.90$, $p < .001$), provides support for Hypothesis 6a.

$EI \Rightarrow$ optimism. It is expected that EI will predict optimism. The statistically significant path, from EI to optimism ($\beta = .25$, $t = 9.37$, $p < .001$), supports Hypothesis 6b.

Appraisals $\Rightarrow$ pride. The authors expected that favorable self- and reflected appraisals will predict pride. The statistically significant paths, from reflected appraisals to pride ($\beta = .19$, $t = 2.62$, $p < .001$) and from self-appraisals to pride ($\beta = .78$, $t = 9.29$, $p < .001$), supports Hypothesis 4a and 4b.

Pride $\Rightarrow$ identity importance. As anticipated, identity importance is predicted by pride ($\beta = .22$, $t = 2.03$, $p < .05$). This supports Hypothesis 5 and the notion that emotions are signals to the self regarding how well one is doing at an identity-related activity. Pride is an emotion that signals to the self that things are going well. As individuals are motivated to pursue a pride generating activity, the salience of a person’s identity will tend to increase when they feel proud about themselves as one who performs the activity. Moreover, as predicted, pride mediates the relationship between appraisals and salience. Therefore, emotions enhance our understanding of the relationship between appraisals and identity importance.

Optimism $\Rightarrow$ identity importance. As anticipated, identity importance is predicted by optimism ($\beta = .51$, $t = 4.47$, $p < .001$). This supports Hypothesis 7 and the notion that optimism leads people to continue participation in an activity, in this case volunteering, because that activity becomes an important part of who they are. As individuals are motivated to pursue an activity that generates optimism, the salience of a person’s identity will tend to increase when they feel optimism about the impact of their volunteering. Thus, organizational attachment and EI lead to optimism, which affects identity importance. Moreover, as expected, optimism mediates the relationship between organizational attachment/EI and identity importance. Therefore, emotions enhance our understanding of the relationship between organizational attachment/EI and identity importance.

Identity importance $\Rightarrow$ frequency. Supporting Hypothesis 8, identity importance is positively related to frequency of participation in identity-related activities ($\beta = .74$, $t = 9.12$, $p < .001$). This is consistent with the findings of Laverie et al. (2002) and Kleine et al. (1993) and suggests that higher identity importance predicts more frequent participation. Furthermore, the model explains 55 percent of the variance in participation frequency, much higher than earlier studies (e.g., Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen 1991) that have volunteers categorize their own motivations. This approach explained 6 percent of the variance in participation frequency. Identity importance seems to be a better predictor of frequent volunteer behavior than respondent-reported motivations. Thus, this theory-driven approach offers more explanatory power.

DISCUSSION

The current work posits a symbolic interactionist relationship between the dedicated volunteers and the organization to which they donate their time through the importance of the volunteers’ identity with that organization. This study offers empirical support for the theoretical hypotheses that organizational attachment, appraisals, and EI are central mediators and in turn influence emotions and identity importance. These findings build on Kleine et al. (1993) and Laverie et al. (2002) and extend their work to include attachment and involvement. This expanded theoretical development replicates the findings of the indirect effect of possessions, social commitments, and medial commitments on identity importance. These variables provide opportunities for attachment, appraisals, and involvement. Second, the importance of emotions is replicated. Using different emotions, two that were appropriate to the context, the authors demonstrate the important role of emotions in self-definition. The authors believe their findings are generalizable to most nonprofit organizations that are dedicated to societal well-being.

This study is a good example of how marketing and society can interact in a manner that improves societal welfare. Similar to Vann and Kumcu (1995), the organization studied here uses efficient marketing to lead to economic development.
This model explores how to cultivate devoted volunteers, who in this case produce a major entertainment event where consumption leads to economic development that benefits society. Putsis (1998) and Cadeaux (2000) explored the economic impact of consumption and short-term events at the market level. This work extends previous work by looking at the individual level to understand how individual efforts combine to have a market- and societal-level impact. In the context of this study, the commercialization of the event is beneficial to the causes of the organization. The commercialization leads to income that directly benefits the community and cause. As Polonsky and Wood (2001) note, the overcommercialization of cause-related marketing can lead to harm. Perhaps in this context commercialization works because the commercializing entity is a nonprofit organization, not a corporation. In addition, these findings coincide with work that helping behaviors (Hill 2002) and quality of life (Shultz 1997) are important to macromarketing. The devotion of volunteers improves quality of life for many individuals associated with the causes the volunteers support.

Dedicated volunteers strongly identify with the organization to which they donate their time and energy. Therefore, it is essential that professional associations and nonprofit organizations strive to develop an identity importance in their volunteers. At the most tangible level, a professional association or nonprofit entity can take steps to increase the volunteers’ possession commitments, social commitments, and medial commitments. Possession commitments might include such items as a little league coach’s jacket, an embroidered golf shirt, season tickets to the theater, a recording of the symphony orchestra, or special tools used in volunteering. Having events to encourage social interaction between volunteers creates ample opportunity for the volunteers to interact with each other, with the staff, and with the organization’s constituents. Media commitments also lead to attachment, EI, and both self- and reflected appraisals. Extensive medial commitments also lead directly to identity importance. One result of increasing these antecedents, possession commitment, social commitments, and medial commitments is the opportunity for appraisals, attachment, and EI with the organization. These in turn increase the volunteer’s optimism and pride, which influences identity importance. All of these tactics build a relationship with volunteers, and this long-term approach is likely to benefit society (Hastings 2003). Although the above suggestions are practical in nature, the authors believe they embody the interaction of marketing and society and thus macromarketing (Dixon 1984). These suggestions can stimulate social transaction mechanisms. The activities of individual volunteers can be stimulated by the theoretical model offered here. The significance of these volunteers’ activities for macromarketing rests in their relevance to society.

This study demonstrates the importance of emotions in understanding devoted volunteers who improve societal welfare. Similar to Allen et al. (1992) and Laverie et al. (2002), emotions enhance our understanding of behaviors, beyond what cognitive variables explain. The authors believe these findings are generalizable. Pride is likely to be tied to identity importance in all contexts, as it is a self-related emotion. Optimism is likely to be an important emotion in contexts where the identity is related to trying to make a positive change in society. Emotions enhance our understanding of volunteer behaviors in this context and likely in many contexts. These findings support Holbrook’s (2000) argument that the affective and experiential components are important in macromarketing. The experience of volunteering puts in process experiences that provide opportunity for appraisals, attachment, and EI. These experiences are self-expressions that lead to emotions and identity importance. Self-expression affects the meaning of volunteering and improving societal welfare (Flanagan 1996).

Much of the previous research into volunteer motivation has been descriptive, involving a categorization of motives based on the respondents’ understanding of their own motivation (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen 1991). Furthermore, relatively few of these studies have been based on empirical investigations, and many had relatively small sample sizes (e.g., Liao-Troth and Dunn 1999; Uriely, Schwartz, Cohen, and Reichel 2002; Hibbert et al. 2003). Although this article departs from the traditional categorization of volunteer motivation to investigate the role of identity importance in this process, the authors view this departure as a complement to the earlier work. Beyond identifying the various volunteer motivations, the current work demonstrates how the volunteer’s identity supports volunteer behavior to the point of dedication. By studying the volunteerism of professional marketers, this research furthers the understanding of how to cultivate a volunteer identity and frequent participation. Identity importance speaks to the importance of this component to the global self. The mean of identity importance was approximately six on a seven-point scale. Thus, being a member of the profession is an important part of who the individuals are. They interact on a regular basis and develop an organization culture (Balmer and Wilson 1998). Similar to McKee et al. (1997), the authors find that the culture and marketing strategy can be combined to create economic development that benefits society.

This study of 280 members of a local professional marketing association indicates that the importance of the members’ identities influences their propensity to freely give their time and talents in support of the service efforts of their organization to better their community. Other professional marketing associations, including national and global organizations such as the American Marketing Association or the Academy of Marketing Science, could encourage their members to contribute their time and talents to worthy efforts in communities around the world. Marketing professionals could be part of a target marketing strategy to acquire more volunteers. By contributing this way, professionals can improve societal well-being. In this particular case, through its community service efforts, the organization strives to
The nonprofit sector is a major subsystem of the U.S. economy and the economies of many other nations. The organizations that compose this sector rely heavily on donated labor and expertise. The better these nonprofits can develop dedication among their volunteers and the more nonprofit organizations that are able to do this, the more effective the entire nonprofit sector is likely to become. Understanding volunteer dedication is an important step in this process of benefiting society through the application of marketing skills and principles to the development and leveraging of voluntary human resources.

Volunteerism among professionals can have a positive impact on society, as they lend their time and professional talents to serve the nonprofit organizations that positively affect societal well-being in turn. Volunteer labor is a critical success factor for most nonprofit organizations. This article demonstrates that social-identity theory can explain the behaviors of dedicated volunteers in the professional context of marketing. The results provide suggestions for cultivating devoted volunteers to provide service to their community. These devoted volunteers use their marketing expertise to generate economic development that improves the quality of life for many individuals and the community.

**CONCLUSION**


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