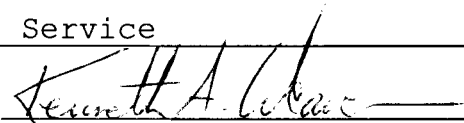


AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Jennifer Pitt for the Master of Science

in Psychology presented on April 10, 2001

Title: An Examination of the Relationship among
Personality Characteristics, Demographic Variables, and
Length of Volunteer Service

Abstract approved: 

The purpose of this study was to determine whether predictable differences existed between volunteers who completed their 1-year commitment to the Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BB/BS) organization and those volunteers who dropped out early. The participants consisted of 53 BB/BS volunteers (32 committed and 21 drop outs). The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) was administered to all the participants. The hypotheses were that committed volunteers would be warmer, more emotionally stable, more rule conscious, more sensitive, more extraverted, less vigilant, less anxious, older and more highly educated than the noncommitted volunteers. The results indicated committed volunteers were actually less warm, less extraverted, less vigilant, and more rule conscious than noncommitted volunteers. The results are discussed in light of the supported and unsupported hypotheses.

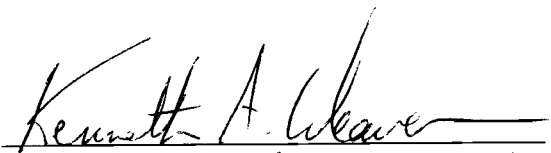
AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY
CHARACTERISTICS, DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, AND LENGTH OF VOLUNTEER
SERVICE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Department of Psychology and Special Education
EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

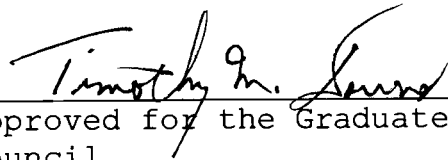
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
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Approved for the Department
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.	iv
LIST OF TABLES.vi
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION. . . . .	.1
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America. . . . .	.2
Volunteer Characteristics. . . . .	.3
Motivation to Volunteer. . . . .	.5
Longevity of Volunteers' Service.	8
Big Brother/Big Sister Studies. . . . .	.12
Summary.	14
Hypotheses. . . . .	.15
2 METHOD.	16
Participants. . . . .	.16
Materials.	16
Procedure.	18
3 RESULTS. . . . .	.21
Statistical Design. . . . .	.21
Hypotheses. . . . .	.22
Hypothesis 1.	22
Supplementary analyses.	23
Hypothesis 2.	30

4 DISCUSSION.	31
Hypothesis 1. . . . .	.31
Hypothesis 2. . . . .	.34
Implications. . . . .	.34
Conclusions and Future Directions.	34
REFERENCES. . . . .	.36
APPENDICES. . . . .	.40
Appendix A: Demographic Survey.	40
Appendix B: Form Letter. . . . .	.41
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form. . . . .	.42

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	Multivariate Outcome. . . . .	.23
2	Analysis of Variance for the Dependent Variable Extraversion. . . . .	.24
3	Analysis of Variance for the Dependent Variable Warmth. . . . .	.25
4	Analysis of Variance for the Dependent Variable Rule Consciousness. . . . .	.26
5	Analysis of Variance for the Dependent Variable Vigilance.	27
6	Means and Standard Deviations for Committed Volunteers and Noncommitted Volunteers. . . . .	.28
7	Means and Standard Deviations of Demographics for Committed and Noncommitted Volunteers.	29

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Most people will have the opportunity to become a volunteer for a school, church, hospital, or nonprofit organization. The choice of whether to volunteer or not will depend upon many factors, such as the individual's time constraints, situational demands and probably most importantly, personality characteristics.

In Webster's New World Dictionary (1984), a volunteer is defined as "a person who enters or offers to enter into any service of his own free will" (p. 1593). In 1993, 89.2 million adults, representing 48% of the American adult population, volunteered an average of 4.2 hours per week totaling 19.5 billion hours. Fifty-one percent of women and 44% of men volunteer (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1994).

Although these figures are impressive, volunteers are continually needed in different types of organizations around the country. In many nonprofit organizations, volunteers make up the majority of the staff and helpers. Nonprofit organizations rely heavily upon the generosity of the volunteers. Without the commitment of the volunteers' time and services, many nonprofit organizations would cease to exist.

One interest of social scientists is what motivates

volunteers to devote their time without any material reward. More specifically, social scientists would like to know what personality characteristics differentiate volunteers from non-volunteers. If one could specify characteristics of those more likely to volunteer, organizational administrators could target these individuals when recruiting volunteers. In addition, once recruited, the retention of the volunteers becomes the challenge for administrators. In most cases, volunteers are free to discontinue serving without any repercussion. Therefore, beyond the simple knowledge of who volunteers are, the characteristics of volunteers who complete their commitment to the agency is of great importance. This study investigated characteristics of individuals who follow through on their volunteer commitment.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America

This study focused on volunteer mentoring programs, specifically the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program (BB/BS). BB/BS is the oldest and largest mentoring program in operation in the United States with 504 BB/BS agencies throughout the country (Furano, Roaf, Styles, & Branch, 1993). The BB/BS program matches a volunteer with a child from a low-income, usually single-parent home. The volunteer is required to make a one-year commitment of service and to meet with the Little Brother or Little Sister (LB/LS) once a

week for 3 to 5 hours. Many of these matches last for years with the pair going on to become lifelong friends. However, the majority of the matches terminate between 1 and 3 years. The goal of BB/BS is to provide an enduring, supportive, personal relationship between the volunteer and child. Therefore, the organization depends upon this relationship being a long-term one. Successful mentoring needs to occur consistently and reliably over time. Only after the child has come to trust the mentor can the relationship bloom and be helpful to the child.

Countless disadvantaged or "at-risk" boys and girls are on the waiting list of BB/BS. Consequently, the problem of recruiting volunteers and retaining them is of paramount importance. The selection and training of volunteers is a costly and time-consuming process. Predicting the longevity of a participant's service would be valuable to the organization, as well as to the community.

Literature Review

Volunteer Characteristics

What differences exist between volunteers and non-volunteers, and what motives do volunteers have for volunteering? Demographic data indicate that volunteers tend to be in their mid 20s to 30s and typically have a higher level of education (i.e., at least some college) than non-volunteers (Hettman & Jenkins, 1990; Nathanson & Eggleton,

1993). The margin of women to men who volunteer is declining as more men are becoming involved.

Certain personality characteristics distinguish volunteers from non-volunteers. Howarth (1976) compared a group of female volunteers from a wide variety of organizations with a normative sample and a sample of students. A personality questionnaire developed by the researcher was administered to the participants. The volunteer group was significantly less anxious than the student group but did not differ from the normative sample. The volunteers were also more persistent and trusting and had higher superego (conscientiousness) scores than either the normal or student population.

Ornum, Foley, Burns, DeWolfe, and Kennedy (1981) tried to determine whether students deemed "helpers" by their peers would score higher in empathy than a "self-interest group." The self-interest group was comprised of members of a biology honors club who were involved solely in activities intended to further their careers. The helpers were a group of students who were noted for their concern for the needy and underprivileged and who were involved with projects outside of their academic curriculum. The researchers measured empathy using Mehrabian and Epstein's (1972) Empathy Questionnaire. Students in the volunteer group scored higher on the empathy questionnaire. The researchers

concluded that personal qualities, such as empathy and volunteerism, are associated with being an "other-centered" person.

Similarly McClintock and Allison (1989) investigated the relationship between individuals' social value orientations and helping behavior. The participants were college students whose social value orientations were assessed using a game in which they were given choices. They were categorized as a cooperators, competitors, or individualist depending on what choice they made. Cooperators wished to maximize the welfare of others in addition to their own welfare. Competitors maximized the difference between their own outcomes and the outcomes of others in their social environment. Individualists maximized their own welfare independent of the welfare of others. The subjects were asked to donate from 0 to 10 hours on a project. The results indicated cooperators were much more generous in their helping response, offering twice as many hours as the other groups.

Motivation to Volunteer

Studies trying to determine the motivations people have for volunteering have reported consistent results. Mahoney and Pechura (1980) compared the values of volunteers at a crisis center hotline to the values of a non-volunteer group. To determine values, participants were required to

fill out the Rokeach Value Survey (1973). The volunteers tended to be more altruistic, emotionally sensitive, and stable than the comparative group. Unger (1991) also reported evidence of an altruistic motive for many different types of volunteer jobs when testing Becker's (1974) interdependence hypothesis, which predicts that there is a direct relationship between volunteerism, socioeconomic status and community need. For Jenner's (1982) study, a self-administered questionnaire requesting information on the participants' volunteer activity was sent to 700 members of The Association of Junior Leagues. The results led her to conclude that altruism and self-actualization were equally important motivators to volunteering. Two other studies used American Red Cross volunteers as their participants. The results showed the overwhelming majority of Red Cross volunteers joined for altruistic purposes. When the results were adjusted for age, Frisch and Gerrard (1981) found young (18 or under) volunteers tended to put more emphasis on self-serving motives, often citing their reasons for joining as "career exploration and development," "to develop social contacts," "hobby or extracurricular activity," or to "learn how to relate to people" (p. 572). The adults (over age 18) tended to volunteer "to practice ideals and convictions," "to help others less fortunate," or "to be a good neighbor" (p. 572).

Gillespie and King (1985) sorted the responses people gave for volunteering across the three demographic variables of age, sex, and marital status. Significantly more respondents age 38 and older answered that they volunteered "to help others" and "to contribute to the community" than did the younger ones (p. 801). These findings may indicate that older people are more altruistic in their motives for volunteering. The only significant finding with regard to sex was that men responded twice as often as women to the category "to obtain job training" (p. 806). More individuals in the widowed category said "to help others" was their motive for joining the Red Cross (p. 807). The authors point out that this may represent a difference in the widows' social or economic circumstances rather than exclusively in a desire to help others.

Wiehe and Isenhour (1977) obtained contradictory results. The participants in this study consisted of individuals registered with a midwestern Voluntary Action Center. The participants were broken down into three age categories (i.e., 12-17, 18-59, and 60 and above). The researchers mailed participants a 16-item questionnaire in which they were asked to rate their motivation for volunteering. The 16 items in the questionnaire reflected the following four major motivational categories: personal satisfaction, self-improvement, altruism, and demands from

the outside. The results indicated that personal satisfaction was the most important factor for the participants' interest in serving as a volunteer. The authors recommend that a volunteer's interests and special abilities should be taken into consideration, thereby increasing personal satisfaction.

Longevity of Volunteers' Service

Volunteer or mentoring programs are significant because of the many children without a role model who could benefit from a one-on-one relationship. Although much is known about the different characteristics of volunteers and non-volunteers, little information exists on what distinguishes volunteers who follow through on their commitment versus those who drop out before the end of their specified time period. It is financially and emotionally expensive and time consuming to recruit, screen, and train volunteers. But, as Freedman (1992) stated, "Mentors are much better at signing up than showing up" (p. 48). Predicting volunteers' endurance could save time and money. In the case of mentoring programs, predicting the volunteer's commitment could save a lot of heartache on the part of the child. Terminating a relationship, no matter what the reason, can be detrimental to that child.

Kuehre and Sears (1993) analyzed characteristics and experiences of older adults who volunteered with Family

Friends, a program designed to assist families who have children with chronic illnesses or disabilities living at home. The volunteers' initial commitment was for 9 months, but some volunteers continued in this program even after their 9-month term. Compared to those who quit after 9 months, the volunteers who continued in the Family Friends program were more highly educated, had a higher annual income, were more likely to be involved as a volunteer at other organizations, and had higher life satisfaction scores as measured by the Life Satisfaction in the Elderly Scale (Salamon & Conte, 1984). These committed volunteers reported joining the organization because it was "good for humanity" or "to feel needed." Those who left when their time was up reported that their primary reason for joining was because they "love children" (p. 432).

Lammers (1991) wanted to determine what variables predicted volunteer commitment and duration. He found that education, gender, viewing volunteer work as having value, and having a desire to learn a new skill were significant discriminators among levels of involvement. However, the more positive the experience was, the longer the volunteers stayed involved, and the more education the volunteers had, the longer they volunteered.

Clary and Orenstein (1991) studied volunteers who either completed a 9-month commitment to a crisis counseling

center or dropped out before the 9-month period. Their results indicated that those who terminated their service early exhibited less altruistic motivation for volunteering than the volunteers who followed through on their commitment. The participants' level of altruism was assessed using a survey on which they listed their five most important reasons for volunteering.

Paradis and Usui (1987) examined traits of hospice volunteers who were most likely to find the work satisfying and thus stay in the program. Long-term volunteers were middle age or older, from stable economic backgrounds, and were currently employed. The authors suggested training for workers can be used to increase their sensitivity and to weed out those who may not find the work satisfying.

Morrow-Howell and Mui (1989) explored the reasons some elderly volunteers (over age 65) initiated and terminated their service for a self-help program. The researchers hypothesized that volunteers quit when their original motivations for volunteering are not satisfied. The majority of these individuals' initial motivation for volunteering was "to help others" and to meet their own social needs. The hypothesis was supported because the main reason for quitting was their inability to help as much as they thought they could.

Using scores obtained on the Minnesota Multiphasic

Personality Inventory (MMPI), Burke and Hall (1986) tried to predict the length of time the volunteers would remain in a Companion for Children Program (a program similar to BB/BS). The only significant finding was that there was an inverse relationship between the Hysteria scale and longevity, which would be expected. The Hysteria scale identifies individuals who react to stress with physical symptoms. Those volunteers staying the longest in the program scored low on this scale.

Through their study, Clary and Miller (1986) determined that for certain types of volunteers, altruism is controlled by external forces or situations (e.g., being involved in a highly cohesive training group). Volunteers in this study were categorized into two groups. Normative altruists were those from a family where altruism was rarely modeled. Autonomous altruists came from families where parents were more nurturant and frequently modeled altruism and thus it came naturally to the child. The researchers showed that putting volunteers in a "highly cohesive" and morale-building training group before they started performing the voluntary activity increased the participants' sustained altruism and duration of service to that comparable of naturally altruistic participants. The dependent variable for sustained altruism was whether they completed their 6-month commitment or not. The results showed that autonomous altruists maintained a higher rate of sustained altruism

regardless of group cohesiveness. Autonomous altruists exhibited sustained altruism 57% of the time in the low cohesiveness group and 62% of the time in the high cohesiveness group. In contrast, normative altruists in the low cohesiveness group were 30% less likely to exhibit sustained altruism, but in the high cohesiveness group, they exhibited sustained altruism 60% of the time.

Big Brother/Big Sister Studies

Hamilton and Hamilton (1990) undertook the considerable task of developing a demonstration program, called Linking Up, in which they matched adolescents with adult mentors. Through this experience, the mentors' perceptions of their purpose became critical to the establishment of the match. For example, those who viewed their primary purpose as developing a relationship with their child were the least likely to persist in meeting regularly. Those who saw their goal as introducing options to their protege' were more successful in meeting with the child and ultimately developing a strong bond. Volunteers who wanted to develop their child's character provided many challenges to the youngster and met more regularly than the other groups. Volunteers whose main purpose was to develop competence in their child saw their child more consistently and hence developed a better relationship. These volunteers engaged in activities with their child that involved specific areas of

knowledge and skill (e.g., playing ball, horseback riding, fishing, etc.). The mentor's idea of what his/her role should be played a big part in predicting whether the match would last. Mentors who seemed best able to overcome the frustrations of their task were those who combined competence and character-strengthening in their aims.

Herman and Usita (1994) wanted to determine the 16PF's usefulness in screening volunteers for BB/BS programs, as well as to identify personality characteristics associated with what they termed appropriate and inappropriate BB/BS volunteers. Over a 2-year period, 143 volunteers were given the 16PF during the screening process. Later, the staff rated each of the volunteers as "appropriate," "inappropriate" or withdrawn based on the success of their match. Inappropriate volunteers were characterized as rigid, anxious, apprehensive, and lacking judgement. Appropriate volunteers were seen as being self-assured, flexible, and intelligent. The 16PF correctly identified 79% of appropriate and inappropriate volunteers as determined by discriminant analysis. The researchers concluded that the 16PF was an appropriate tool to continue using in the screening process for BB/BS.

In another study involving a BB/BS agency, Spitz and MacKinnon (1993) aspired to distinguish the successful volunteers (completed commitment) from the unsuccessful ones

(dropped out). Again, the 16PF was administered during the screening process over a 3-year period. The volunteers were divided into two groups depending upon whether they had successfully completed their commitment or not. Volunteers who completed the program had higher scores on intelligence and trust, imagination and self-assurance, and lower scores on social inhibition. The successful volunteers also were older and more highly educated.

The previous two studies used the 16PF to try to isolate characteristics and factors that would be good predictors of an individual's likelihood to remain in the BB/BS program until his/her commitment is finished. The results of both studies indicated that those volunteers who follow through on their commitment have greater self-assurance, flexibility, and trust than dropouts or "inappropriate" volunteers. The good volunteers also tend to be slightly older and more intelligent than the bad volunteers. Because there is very little research on BB/BS volunteers who stay committed versus those who drop out prior to their prescribed time period, more research needs to be conducted.

Summary

There are a wide array of characteristics associated with a committed volunteer, such as education level, age, gender, altruistic motives, empathy and understanding,

stability of economic background, self-assurance, flexibility, nurturance, and the way they perceive their mentoring role. To help agencies in recruitment, and especially in retention of volunteers, it would be useful to detect these desired qualities when screening volunteers.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there are recognizable and predictable differences between BB/BS volunteers who follow through with their initial one-year commitment and those volunteers who drop out of the program before the one-year time limit. Hypothesis 1 was that committed volunteers would be more warm, more emotionally stable, more rule conscious, more sensitive, more extraverted, less vigilant, and less anxious as compared to noncommitted volunteers. Hypothesis 2 was that committed volunteers would be older and more highly educated, as indicated by demographic information provided by all participants in this study.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

This study compared personality characteristics of BB/BS volunteers who had been matched to their child for over 2 years and those who failed to complete their volunteer commitment of 1 year. Fifty-three individuals completed the measures for this study. The sample was divided into two groups--32 Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteers who had been in the program for over two years and 21 volunteers who had dropped out of the program before their one-year commitment. All participants were over the age of 18 because that is the cutoff age to become a BB/BS.

Materials

The instrument used in this study was the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire--Fifth Edition (16PF). The 16PF was first published in 1949 and has since gained widespread prominence. One of the unique features of this personality questionnaire is the way it was constructed. It was constructed using factor analysis, which is a statistical technique that can narrow down a large set of variables and group them into smaller related categories. The author, Raymond Cattell, was interested in identifying the primary elements of personality. He began with an enormous list of adjectives (over 18,000) describing human

personality. The researchers then factor analyzed these personality traits and came up with the 16 personality traits which make up the primary traits of the 16PF. These 16 traits are also referred to as first-order scales. These factors are warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, dominance, liveliness, rule consciousness, social boldness, sensitivity, vigilance, abstractness, privateness, apprehension, openness to change, self-reliance, perfectionism, and tension.

Cattell then continued factor analyzing the first order traits and ended up with 5 global or second-order traits. The second-order factors are a combination of clusters of related first-order factors. They describe personality in broader, more general terms than the first-order factors. The global factors are as follows: extraversion, anxiety, tough-mindedness, independence, and self-control.

An advantage of the 16PF is its standardization. Nine sets of norms are available: men alone, women alone, and men and women combined for each of the three groups of U. S. adults, college students, and high school seniors. For this project, adult men and women (combined) norms were used. In addition, the test is obtainable in two parallel forms for each of three levels of vocabulary proficiency ranging from newspaper-literate adults to the mentally disadvantaged. Readability for the test that was used for this project was

estimated to be at the fifth grade level. Norms for the various forms are based on more than 15,000 subjects representative of geographic area, population density, age, family income, and race.

The test has adequate psychometric properties. Short-term test-retest (4-7 days) correlation coefficients for the 16 source traits range from .65 to .93. Long-term test-retest (1-3 months) reliabilities are not as good ranging from .21 to .64. However, Cattell is quick to point out one must keep in mind that traits fluctuate. The longer the interval is between testing sessions, the greater the chance for discrepancy (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1970). The median correlation coefficient across the various forms of the test is between .50 to .60. The construct validity for each form, how well the scale agrees with the concept it purports to measure, ranges from .35 to .92. Cattell et al., (1970) assert that these validity coefficients are as high as are typically reached for scales of their length.

Procedure

The first step of this project was for the Executive Director of BB/BS of Sedgwick County and two supervisors to identify files of all the volunteers from the past three years who dropped out of the program before their initial commitment of one year was finished. BB/BS caseworkers reviewed their caseloads and identified all the volunteers

who had been in the program longer than two years. This procedure yielded two lists--one with the names of dropouts, and one with the names of long-term volunteers. After these lists had been assembled, the researcher numbered the names and then used the table of random numbers to select 75 from each group.

The director sent a form letter to each selected individual stating that the agency was involved in a research project designed to help in selection, recruiting, and retention of volunteers. He mentioned that they were chosen randomly for possible participation. He also explained that the researcher would be contacting them shortly to discuss more about the project (Appendix B).

Approximately 10 days after the letters were sent, the researcher contacted the individuals by phone to give a brief description of the project and explain what was involved. The researcher tried to elicit each individual's help and interest by pointing out that participation would be of great benefit to the BB/BS organization locally and perhaps nationally. Additionally, the researcher informed them that if they completed the questionnaire, they would receive a sum of \$15. Those people who said they did not want to be involved were excluded. The individuals willing to participate were asked to come to the BB/BS agency at a specified time and date. The individuals who refused to come

to the agency were sent the test with a self-addressed stamped envelope and asked to return it within 10 days. After two weeks, a follow-up letter, including another copy of the questionnaire, was sent to those who had not yet returned the questionnaire. After 2 weeks, those who still had not returned the forms were dropped from the study.

The researcher met with groups of individuals at the BB/BS office and administered the test. The participants also filled out a short demographic questionnaire. This survey obtained information on age, gender, years of education, and race (Appendix A). After the data was collected, the researcher hand scored each 16PF test and tallied the demographics.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Statistical Design

Descriptive statistics were run on the demographics. A few of the participants left some items blank on their demographic survey. Two cases were missing gender, three were missing years of education, and two were missing race. The sample consisted of 21 men (41.2%) and 30 women (58.8%). Age varied from age 18 up to age 51 with the mean being age 29 (SD = 8.93). Years of education also varied widely with the mean being 16 years of education or college graduate (SD = 2.11). Forty-three (84%) of the participants were White and the other eight included two Hispanics, four African Americans, one Asian or Pacific Islander, and one "other".

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was run to examine differences between the committed group and the dropout group for the "commitment" independent variable. In this case, the dependent variable consisted of 7 of the 16 discrete personality characteristics (first order factors warmth, emotional stability, rule consciousness, sensitivity and vigilance, and second order factors extraversion and anxiety). t tests were run on the

demographics of age and years of education for the two groups.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. The omnibus MANOVA test was significant (Wilks' Lambda=.10) as shown in Table 1. Post hoc univariate ANOVAs showed that extraversion, warmth, rule consciousness, and vigilance were significant: $F(1,51) = 8.53, p < .01$ for extraversion (Table 2), $F(1,51) = 4.94, p < .05$ for warmth (Table 3), $F(1,51) = 9.11, p < .01$ for rule consciousness (Table 4), and $F(1,51) = 5.33, p < .05$ for vigilance (Table 5). The MANOVA test indicated that approximately 90% of the variance between the two groups (committed volunteers versus noncommitted volunteers) was attributed to the four personality characteristics of extraversion, warmth, rule consciousness, and vigilance. The means for these variables are found on Table 6. Thus, hypothesis 1 which predicted that committed volunteers would be warmer, more emotionally stable, more rule conscious, more sensitive, more extraverted, more trusting, and less anxious than noncommitted volunteers was partially supported rule consciousness and vigilance. However, the hypothesis was not supported for extraversion and warmth. They were significant but in the wrong direction.

Table 1

Multivariate outcome

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig
Pillai's Trace	.99	610.22	7.00	45.00	.000
Wilks' Lambda	.01	610.22	7.00	45.00	.000
Hotelling's Trace	94.92	610.22	7.00	45.00	.000
Roy's Largest Root	94.92	610.22	7.00	45.00	.000

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for the Dependent VariableExtraversion

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
	Extraversion	26.049	1	26.049	8.53
Error		155.707	51	3.053	
Total		181.755	52		

Table 3

Analysis of Variance for the Dependent VariableWarmth

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
	Warmth	17.701	1	17.701	4.94
Error		182.827	51	3.585	
Total		200.528	52		

Table 4

Analysis of Variance for the Dependent VariableRule Consciousness

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
	Rule Consciousness	18.971	1	18.971	9.11
Error		106.161	51	2.082	
Total		125.132	52		

Table 5

Analysis of Variance for the Dependent VariableVigilance

Source	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
	Vigilance	15.127	1	15.127	5.33
Error		144.685	51	2.837	
Total		159.811	52		

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Committed Volunteers and
Noncommitted Volunteers

	Committed		Noncommitted	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Extraversion*	5.40	1.96	6.83	1.34
Warmth*	5.44	1.92	6.62	1.86
Rule Consciousness*	6.94	1.39	5.71	1.52
Vigilance*	4.81	1.49	5.90	1.95
Emotional Stability	6.22	1.68	6.10	1.55
Sensitivity	5.41	2.21	6.05	2.04
Anxiety	4.97	1.69	5.22	1.88

*significant characteristics

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of Demographics for Committed
and Noncommitted Volunteers

	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Committed Volunteers		
Age	30	9.11
Years of Education	16	2.17
Noncommitted Volunteers		
Age	28	8.64
Years of Education	14	1.68

Hypothesis 2. t tests were run on the two groups with age and years of education as the variables. No significant differences were found for age, $t(49) = .78$, $p < .05$. No significant differences were found for years of education $t(49) = 1.33$, $p < .05$. The means for these variables can be found in Table 7. In addition, the number of males and females in each group was calculated. There were 15 males and 15 females in the committed group, and 6 males and 14 females in the noncommitted group.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 was that the committed volunteers would be warmer, more emotionally stable, more rule conscious, more sensitive, more extraverted, less vigilant, and less anxious than the noncommitted volunteers. This hypothesis was partially supported in that significant differences were found in four out of the seven tested personality characteristics. The results showed that committed volunteers were more rule conscious and less vigilant (more trusting). Surprisingly though, the noncommitted volunteers were warmer and more extraverted than the committed volunteers (opposite of what was hypothesized). In other words, warmth and extraversion had an inverse relationship to the "met commitment" independent variable.

The present study's results were somewhat consistent with those of Herman and Usita (1994) and Spitz and MacKinnon (1993) in that committed ("appropriate") volunteers were more intelligent and more trusting than noncommitted ("inappropriate") volunteers. Noncommitted volunteers were also shown to be more anxious than committed volunteers.

Some differences were also found between the present study and the aforementioned studies. For example, Herman and Usita (1994) found that their "appropriate" volunteers scored lower on rule consciousness, whereas in this study, the committed volunteers scored higher on rule consciousness. Spitz and MacKinnon (1993) found their successful volunteers to be less socially inhibited (more extroverted) than the unsuccessful volunteers. However, this study found that the noncommitted volunteers were actually more extroverted than the committed volunteers.

In the present study, there were only slight differences in personality traits between the two groups of participants, most notably rule consciousness. As would be expected, those individuals who completed their commitment to BB/BS scored significantly higher on rule consciousness than those who dropped out of the program. One explanation for this could be that the more volunteers adhere to rules, the more they take responsibility for their actions, or has an internal locus of control. People who are less influenced by rules tend to blame outside forces for their lack of success (external locus of control). In this case, they may blame the LB/LS, the agency, or their caseworkers. In the end, they may get so frustrated that things are not going perfectly in their match that they just drop out. If

these type of people could be pinpointed when they volunteer, they could be given more support by their caseworker. Being a BB/BS is often a thankless job; to succeed as a BB/BS, one must have an internal driving force. A person who needs lots of pats on the back, will have a difficult time and probably end up dropping out of the program.

Another difference between the committed volunteers and the noncommitted volunteers was that the completers were less vigilant, and hence more trusting, whereas the dropouts were already less trusting. Because of this lack of trust, when things started to go wrong in the match, they tended to bail out. It almost turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The noncommitted group also scored higher on warmth. Because of their warm, outgoing personalities, they may tend to jump right in to commitments without really thinking it through. The committed group might initially take longer to sign up, but once they do, they tend to stick with it because they are bound by those rules. The more extraverted people (noncommitted) might have a lot going on in their lives and be involved in many different activities, and because they are less rule conscious, they just drop out.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 was that the committed volunteers would be slightly older and more highly educated than the noncommitted volunteers. This hypothesis was not supported.

Implications

The primary and most defeating limitation of the study was the small sample size. The researcher was not able to obtain the proposed number of participants (75 committed and 75 noncommitted volunteers). Only 53 subjects (32 committed and 21 noncommitted) agreed to take the test. This project went on for over 3 years with numerous attempts to obtain subjects, but to no avail. When this project began, the researcher was dubious about getting the required number of noncommitted volunteers to participate. After all, they had dropped out of BB/BS. But the researcher had no idea it would be quite this difficult, with being able to obtain only a limited number of committed volunteers as well. Since time was of the essence, the researcher decided to cease the project and just analyze the obtained data. A much larger sample size would have been preferred.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Recommendations for further research would be to do a longitudinal study where the 16PF would be administered as

part of the application process. Then the researcher could follow these volunteers through 2 years and see which ones continue into the second year and which ones drop out. This kind of study might show better which personality characteristics are good predictors of follow-through. Of course, the sample size would need to be very large to get a good measure.

Summary

This study tested the hypothesis that there would be large differences in personality characteristics as measured by the 16PF between volunteers who dropped out of the BB/BS program before their commitment of 1 year had elapsed and volunteers who had completed their year-long commitment. There were significant statistical differences in the personality characteristics of warmth, rule consciousness, vigilance, and extraversion. The demographic variables of years of education and age did not show significance. Because the sample size was so small, a replication of this study with a much larger sample size would be needed to confirm these results.

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Appendix A
Demographic Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS

SEX: M F

AGE (at the time you volunteered for BB/BS:

Years of Education (at the time you volunteered):

RACE: White, not of Hispanic origin Hispanic

Black, not of Hispanic origin

Asian or Pacific Islander American Indian or Alaskan native

Other_____

EDUCATION: High School College Post-Graduate

Appendix B

Form Letter

March 20, 1997

Dear personalized,

You have been randomly selected to participate in a project to study personality traits and their role in Big Brother and Sister service. We are asking 150 active and former volunteers to take half an hour to complete a true/false test about personal preferences and feelings. The goal of this research through the Emporia State University Graduate Psychology Department is to improve the quality of our matching process and the service we provide boys and girls.

The following times have been scheduled for taking the test:

March 27 11:30 to 1:30

March 31 11:30 to 1:30 or 5:00pm to 7:pm

April 3, 11:30 to 1:30 or 5pm to 7pm

April 5, 9am to 12pm

April 7, 9am to 12pm or 5pm to 7pm

April 12, 9am to 12pm

or we can schedule an individual appointment if none of these times work.

Jennifer Pitt, researcher for this project, will be contacting you within the week to answer any questions you might have.

To recognize your efforts in helping with this project, you will receive \$15.00 and a gift certificate at a local restaurant.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Nick J. Mork
Executive Director

Appendix C
Informed Consent Form

PARTICIPATION CONSENT LETTER

You are invited to participate in a study on characteristics associated with BB/BS volunteers. All you will need to do is fill out a personality questionnaire called the 16PF. The researcher will then analyze the results and provide the feedback to BB/BS.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to terminate your participation, you are welcome to do so at any point in the study. There is no risk or discomfort involved in completing this study.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, feel free to ask the researcher, Jennifer Pitt at 682-3103.

Thank you for your participation.

I, _____, have read the above
(please print name)
information and have decided to participate. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should I choose to discontinue participation in this study.

(Signature of Participant)

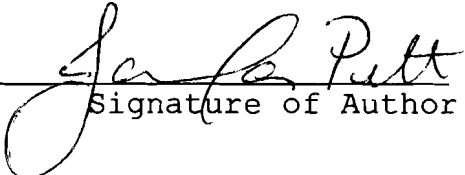
(Date)

(Signature of Experimenter)

(Date)

**THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.**

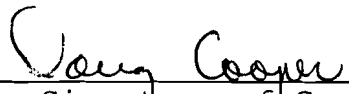
I, Jennifer Pitt, hereby submit this thesis to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.


Signature of Author

5-03-01
Date

An Examination of the
Relationship among
Personality Characteristics,
Demographic Variables,
and the Length of
Volunteer
Service

Title of Thesis


Signature of Graduate
Office Staff Member

May 5, 2001
Date Received

original