

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND VOLUNTEER INTENTION TO STAY

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Introduction

Volunteerism - a crucial element for many organizations, especially nonprofit services-focused organizations (Vecina, Chacón, Marzana, & Marta, 2013)

Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is a nationwide volunteer organization with over 58,000 adult and youth members (Civil Air Patrol, 2014b)

CAP experiencing similar dynamics to the broader literature

- Declining membership with poor leadership often the stated reason for leaving (Civil Air Patrol, 2014a)

Problem Statement

Volunteer membership in CAP has been declining, and a frequently-cited reason for change in membership is poor leadership (Civil Air Patrol, 2014a)

The decline in membership may be due in part to inadequate skills of volunteer leaders

Characterizing and correcting shortfalls in volunteer leadership skills may lead to improved member retention and strengthened performance of CAP's three congressionally-chartered missions

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine CAP current adult and youth volunteer members' perceptions of the qualities of their squadron commander's servant leadership in order to determine the relationship between leadership style and volunteer retention.

Research Question 1

1. What is the relationship between leadership style and adult volunteer intention to stay?

H₁: There is a relationship between leadership style and adult volunteer intention to stay.

Research Question 2

2. What is the relationship between leadership style and youth volunteer intention to stay?

H₂: There is a relationship between leadership style and youth volunteer intention to stay.

Research Question 3

3. What is the relationship between the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) member status of leader, adult volunteer, or youth volunteer, and the scores reflected on the *Servant Leadership Scale*?

H₃: Adult volunteers and youth volunteers will rate their leaders in a similar manner as reflected by their scores on the *Servant Leadership Scale*.

H₄: Leaders will rate themselves at a similar level as adult volunteers and youth volunteers rate their leaders as reflected by their scores on the *Servant Leadership Scale*.

Research Design

Quantitative research design

- Correlational research approach for Q1 and Q2 (Salkind, 2012)
- Inferential research approach for Q3 (Salkind, 2014)

Instrument: 34 items

- *Servant Leadership Scale*: 28 items for 7 leadership factors (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008)
- Single item for intention to stay (Schneider & George, 2011)
- Demographics: gender, age, length of service, and race/ethnicity

Simple random sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013) to select 200 individuals from each of 3 groups: leaders, adult volunteers, and youth volunteers

Data Collection

Pilot study conducted to provide confidence that reliability and validity were not compromised. Same procedures as general study

Leaders and adult volunteers received email invitation to online survey

- Two month window to complete. Reminder emails at 4 weeks and 6 weeks
- Both groups incentivized with chance to win \$100 gift card

Youth volunteers received packages mailed to their home addresses

- Two month window to complete. Written reminder at one-month point
- Incentivization with \$100 gift card provided for youth volunteer group

Data Analysis

Research Questions One and Two

Correlational analyses were conducted between leaders and adult volunteers, and between leaders and youth volunteers

- Assess the correlations between the ratings provided by participants regarding the servant leadership categories

Spearman's Rho was utilized for correlational analyses between leadership categories and the intention to remain rating (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012)

Data Analysis

Research Question Three

Inferential analyses conducted by use of one-way ANOVA calculations

- Independent variables: member status (leader, adult volunteer, or youth volunteer) and the seven categories of servant leadership
- Dependent variable: The ratings of the seven servant leadership categories

Regarding gender, a factorial ANOVA was conducted with group and gender of participant serving as the independent variables and aggregated *Servant Leadership Scale* scores serving as the dependent variable

Findings – Research Question 1

Positive, statistically significant correlation between servant leadership and adult volunteer intention to stay at the aggregate level ($r_s(48) = .44, p = .002$) and for each of the seven servant leadership factors

Note: n = 48 **p < .05*

Servant Leadership Factor	r_s	p
Conceptual Skills	.51*	< .001
Empowering	.35*	.02
Helping Subordinates Grow and Succeed	.46*	.001
Putting Subordinates First	.38*	.01
Behaving Ethically	.38*	.01
Emotional Healing	.36*	.01
Creating Value for the Community	.33*	.02

Findings – Research Question 2

The correlation between servant leadership and youth volunteer intention to stay was not statistically significant ($r_s(42) = .25, p = .16$)

A statistically significant relationship existed for only one of the seven servant leadership factors and youth volunteer intention to stay

*Note: n = 42 *p < .05*

Servant Leadership Factor	r_s	p
Conceptual Skills	.28	.08
Empowering	.27	.09
Helping Subordinates Grow and Succeed	.25	.12
Putting Subordinates First	.20	.22
Behaving Ethically	.32*	.04
Emotional Healing	.29	.07
Creating Value for the Community	.28	.07

Findings – Research Question 3

A series of one-way ANOVAs indicated statistically significant differences in the means in the ratings of leaders, adult volunteers, and youth volunteers in six of the servant leadership factors

* $p < .05$

Servant Leadership Factor	F	p	η^2
Conceptual Skills ($n = 178$)	2.18	.12	.02
Empowering ($n = 177$)*	3.56	.03	.04
Helping Subordinates Grow and Succeed ($n = 178$)*	22.69	< .01	.20
Putting Subordinates First ($n = 178$)*	26.26	< .01	< .01
Behaving Ethically ($n = 178$)*	12.28	< .01	.02
Emotional Healing ($n = 177$)*	21.21	< .01	.19
Creating Value for the Community ($n = 178$)*	8.15	< .01	.08

Findings – Research Question 3

Post hoc testing conducted to determine where the differences in means existed

Hypothesis 3: Statistically significant difference in mean in only one of the six servant leadership factors for adult volunteers and youth volunteers

Hypothesis 4: Means of leaders' scores were higher at statistically significant levels than adult volunteers for five of the seven servant leadership factors

Hypothesis 4: Means of leaders' scores were higher at statistically significant levels than youth volunteers for four of the seven servant leadership factors

Findings – Research Question 3

A factorial ANOVA was performed to determine if there were gender-based differences in the scores of the three membership categories

- Gender effects canceled out at the aggregated level of all three groups ($F_{(1,180)} = .203, p = .653$)
- Effect of gender on groups was statistically significant ($F_{(2,180)} = 4.31, p = .015$)

Group	Gender	Mean	<i>n</i>
Leaders	Male	6.05	76
	Female	6.02	14
Adults	Male	5.30	40
	Female	4.46	8
Youth	Male	5.40	32
	Female	6.01	10

Conclusions – Research Questions 1 and 2

Hypothesis 1 was supported

- A positive relationship existed between leadership style and intention to stay for adult volunteers
- Past studies have revealed similar findings (Schneider & George, 2011; Stirling, et al., 2011)

Hypothesis 2 was rejected

- There was not a statistically significant relationship between leadership style and intention to stay for youth volunteers
- The literature on the effects of youth volunteers is extremely limited (Montgomery, 2006)

Conclusions – Research Question 3

The analysis generally supported Hypothesis 3

- No statistically significant differences in how adult volunteers and youth volunteers rated their leaders on six out of seven servant leadership factors

The results did not support Hypothesis 4

- Leaders did not rate themselves at similar levels as adult volunteers and youth volunteers rated their leaders
- One past study revealed similar findings to the current study (Bang, 2011)

Regarding gender, the results did not support Hypothesis 4

- Statistically significant gender-related differences were found between how adult volunteers and youth volunteers rated their leaders
- One past study revealed similar findings (e.g., Waters & Bortree, 2011)

Implications

Adult Volunteers

CAP should modify its leadership training to equip its leaders to operate using the principles of servant leadership; focus on local leaders

Youth Volunteers

Test design may be the reason for no relationship between youth volunteer scores on the *Servant Leadership Scale* and intention to stay

Leaders had a much higher opinion of their leadership qualities than what the adult and youth volunteers thought

Gender-based differences in responses to leadership

Recommendations

Cluster sampling to examine directly the relationship between leader self-report and volunteer assessment of the leader

Longitudinal studies to understand whether volunteers' assessments of servant leadership traits or intentions to stay change over time

Investigating other types of volunteer organizations would be insightful; CAP is highly structured and bureaucratic

Limited literature on youth volunteers – more research is required

Further research is needed to characterize differences that may exist in how male and female volunteers respond to leadership style

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Questions?



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