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Volunteer age, job satisfaction, and intention to stay

A case of nonprofit sport organizations

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Job
satisfaction
and intention
to stay

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the moderating role of Age in the relationships between leader-member exchange dimensions (Affect, Loyalty, Contribution, and Professional Respect) and Job Satisfaction and between Job Satisfaction and Intention to Stay among volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations.

Design/methodology/approach – A series of moderated hierarchical multiple regression analyses was conducted using the survey responses of 214 volunteers in 22 nonprofit sport organizations.

Findings – The results indicated that Age moderated the relationship between Professional Respect and Job Satisfaction such that it was stronger for younger volunteers, and Job Satisfaction had a greater positive influence on Intention to Stay for older rather than younger volunteers.

Originality/value – These findings provide valuable insights into how age may be an important factor influencing volunteers' job satisfaction and intention to continue to volunteer. Implications for practitioners and future research are also discussed.

Keywords Age, Volunteers, Job satisfaction, Intention to stay, Leader-member exchange, Nonprofit sport organizations

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Volunteers are crucial human resources in nonprofit organizations (Brown, 2007). In the current unstable economy, many nonprofits facing financial difficulties eagerly seek voluntary work contributions and try to retain existing volunteer workforce to carry out their organizational missions. In particular, nonprofit sport organizations that are staffed mainly by volunteers face a lack of appropriately skilled volunteers and board members (Hoye *et al.*, 2009). According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS, 2009), nonprofit recreation and sport organizations accounted for 8.8 percent (87,919) of all nonprofit organizations in the USA. As a crucial part of the nonprofit sector, nonprofit sport organizations provide a wide range of sporting and social initiatives, which contributes to the social capital of the society and the regeneration, better health, safer, more cohesive and inclusive communities, and lifelong learning (Gallagher *et al.*, 2012; Harris *et al.*, 2009). Increasing volunteers' willingness to work at a nonprofit organization for a long time is a cardinal task for managers. The Corporation for National and Community Service (2012) reported that the total monetary value of volunteer time in the USA alone was estimated at \$171 billion in 2011. This dollar value of volunteer activity is significant for nonprofit organizations given the limited resources with small operating budgets.

Considering the economic value of volunteer work in nonprofit sport organizations, it is important to understand factors that affect volunteers' job satisfaction and intention to stay in those organizations. One of these factors, volunteers' age, has been examined from a relational demography perspective (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2003). Relational



demography is defined as “an individual’s similarity to or difference from others in a group on specific demographic attributes” (Tsui *et al.*, 1995, p. 198). Organizational studies regarding age with regularity suggest that age heterogeneity of workplace may negatively affect communication and group cohesion (Tsui *et al.*, 1995). Thus, age seems to be a vital issue with respect to supervisor-subordinate dyads, on account of norms and expectations for supervisors to be older than subordinates (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2003). According to Okun and Schultz (2003), as age increases, career and understanding volunteer motivations decrease and the social volunteer motivation increases. Given the nature of volunteer work at nonprofit sport organizations where volunteers provide unpaid services, compared to older volunteers, younger volunteers’ satisfaction may stem more from the relationships with leaders and/or followers because they often expect to get some training and practical experiences.

To our knowledge there is no study that has examined how and why age of volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations may influence the ways in which volunteers react to job satisfaction as well as react to further intention to stay. In light of this projection, the present study examined the moderating role of *Age* in the relationships between leader-member exchange (LMX) dimensions (*Affect, Loyalty, Contribution, and Professional Respect*) and *Job Satisfaction* and between *Job Satisfaction* and *Intention to Stay* among volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations. Studying moderators helps us understand why there is a relationship between a predictor variable and a dependent one (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

The internal revenue service (IRS, 2012) distinguishes between nonprofit and not-for-profit. The term nonprofit refers to an organization that is not conducted or maintained in order to make a profit (Merriam-Webster, 2012). Nonprofit status may make an organization that is eligible for certain benefits (e.g. state sales, property, and income tax exemptions). In contrast, not-for-profit refers to an activity from which you do not expect to make a profit (e.g. a hobby or a farm you operate for recreation and pleasure) (IRS, 2012). This study was conducted in the context of small and medium sized “nonprofit” sport organizations.

LMX and job satisfaction

The LMX theory posits that the quality of the dyadic relationship is determined by the exchange between leaders and followers (Dansereau *et al.*, 1975). Successful leadership processes take place when leaders and followers create mature leadership relationships (Hoye, 2004). In particular, management in sport environments has its distinctive features related to the unpredictable outcome of sport services that need to be manipulated by immediate responses of an organization’s staff. Therefore, close relationships between leaders and members are required to provide quality sport services (Bang, 2011). The mature relationships in LMX may be particularly important in the context of nonprofit sport organizations for two reasons (Bang, 2011). First, given that leaders are often volunteers (e.g. presidents, board members), they may be motivated by truthful interest in members (e.g. volunteer coaches, parent volunteers) and the desire to assist in their advancement. Second, due to the unpredictable outcome of sport services, immediate responses are required of an organization’s staff, leaders, and members; all must take an active role. Although the concept of LMX has been attracting considerable attention in nonprofit sport organization settings, only a few studies have evaluated the effects of LMX on organizational outcomes in the context of nonprofit sport organizations. In one of those few studies, Hoye (2003) provided empirical support for LMX theory in the context of Australian voluntary sport organizations. He found that board chairs and

executives perceived the quality of their LMX to be higher than their respective relationships with board members, indicating that shared leadership existed within the board. A study by Bang (2011) also utilized LMX theory to examine the influences of LMX dimensions (i.e. *Affect*, *Loyalty*, *Contribution*, and *Professional Respect*) on job satisfaction and the influences of LMX dimensions and job satisfaction on intention to stay with nonprofit sport organizations from two perspectives: one of leaders and the other of members. She found that followers' *Professional Respect* and leaders' *Affect* have positive impacts on their job satisfaction and leaders' *Professional Respect* has an effect on their intention to stay with the nonprofit sport organizations as well.

Liden and Maslyn (1998) proposed the multidimensional model of LMX (LMX-MDM) including four dimensions: *Affect*, *Loyalty*, *Contribution*, and *Professional Respect*. *Affect* is mutual affection based primarily on interpersonal attraction such as friendship, rather than work or professional values. *Loyalty* describes expressions of public support for the goals and for personal character of other members. *Contribution* refers to perceptions of current level of work-oriented activity that each member puts forth toward mutual goals. *Professional Respect* describes perceptions of the degree to which each member of the dyad has built a reputation, within and/or outside the organization, of excelling at his or her line of work. The multidimensional construct of LMX more properly characterizes leader-member relations and allows for more complete explanation of its relationship with significant individual and organizational variables than does a unidimensional model (Greguras and Ford, 2006). Therefore, this study used the multidimensional model of LMX as the conceptual basis for determining the moderating role of age in the relationships between LMX dimensions and outcome variables.

Job satisfaction refers to the "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300) and has been identified as one of the most important outcomes associated with LMX. Mardanov *et al.* (2007) examined the relationship between LMX and overall job satisfaction, using a sample of restaurant employees. Their findings showed that a significantly high level of satisfaction with supervision and with the job was related to high-quality LMX. Members with higher quality LMX experienced greater support, attention, and sensitivity from supervisors. Those members enjoy more involvement in decision making, face less harsh work problems, and derive more overall job satisfaction (Graen *et al.*, 1977). In the context of nonprofit sport organizations, Hoye (2004) found that higher quality LMX was associated with higher levels of board performance among executives, board chairs, and board members. Although Hoye (2004) did not measure those voluntary workers' job satisfaction, his findings imply that high-quality LMX relationships would be important for voluntary workers to be highly satisfied with their roles in nonprofit sport organizations.

Job satisfaction and intention to stay

Turnover intention is defined as the intention of an organizational member to voluntarily quit the job (Dougherty *et al.*, 1985). If individuals are not satisfied with their jobs, they are less likely to stay with the organizations, which eventually causes turnover (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). Many studies have found that job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Given that the purpose of nonprofit sport organizations is to provide some charitable or community sport service, and not to make financial gain for a shareholder, they rely upon volunteer services. However, maintaining and replenishing the valuable set of human resources comprised of talented, skillful volunteers is an ongoing and often difficult process (Miller *et al.*, 2002). Individuals do not

volunteer for monetary support in nonprofit sport organizations because they do not get paid for their services. Therefore, other positive experiences in these organizations contribute to their satisfaction with volunteering. Their increased job satisfaction has been posited as leading to increased intention to stay (Bang, 2011).

Moderating role of age

164 This study proposes that the positive relationships between LMX and job satisfaction and between job satisfaction and intention to stay are more salient depending upon volunteers' age. The variable age refers to the process of physiological changes in terms of various emotional and psychosocial needs across an individual's lifespan (Avolio and Waldman, 1994). Comparing to older volunteers, younger volunteers would show high levels of job satisfaction associated with LMX factors, but less intention to stay with their nonprofit sport organizations. Two lines of theorizing provide support for this assumption. First, socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1995) presumes that limitations on perceived remaining life time lead to a prioritization of emotionally meaningful life goals. That is, old adults often perceive time as a limited resource, which causes them to focus less on preparing for the future and more on regulating their current affective states; young adults generally perceive time as expansive, motivating them to prioritize the acquisition of knowledge (DeWall *et al.*, 2006). It implies that older volunteers are likely to perceive their remaining time in their work-related future to be constrained and to focus on the emotional gains rather than educational and long-term pursuits. Accordingly, older volunteers' strong LMX may be less associated with their job satisfaction. In contrast, since younger volunteers are more likely to use the volunteer work to advance in their careers and develop business contacts and leads, their relationships with leaders or members at workplace could be an important factor that influences job satisfaction.

Second, the need for leadership developed by De Vries (1997) provides an adequate explanation for understanding the role of age in that relationship. Need for leadership is defined as "the extent to which an employee wishes the leader to facilitate the paths toward individual, group, and/or organizational goals" (p. 122) and ascribed as an acquired socio-contextual need (De Vries *et al.*, 2002). That is, the need arises in social and personal settings that involve expectations regarding hierarchical relations and demands for action and help and that make it beneficial for an individual to achieve personal goals (De Vries *et al.*, 2002). This need for leadership model is particularly predicted by personal characteristics such as age, education, expertise, and personality (De Vries *et al.*, 2004). For example, older employees have less need for leadership than younger employees (De Vries *et al.*, 2004). Gilbert Collins and Brenner (1990) found that younger supervisors are more involved in relationship-building activities whereas older supervisors are likely to be more prescriptive in their management style. Applying the concept of the model to a volunteer context, high-quality LMX relationships may have a greater impact on younger volunteers' level of job satisfaction than on older volunteers. Omoto *et al.*'s (2000) study using a sample of hospice volunteers found that the desire to be of service was primary motivation to volunteers age 55 and above whereas interpersonal relationships were more important to younger volunteers. Thus, younger volunteers' satisfaction may stem more from the relationships with leaders and/or members than that of older volunteers. Based on these theoretical perspectives, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1a. Age moderates the impact of Affect on Job Satisfaction, such that Affect has more influence on younger volunteers' Job Satisfaction.

H1b. Age moderates the impact of Loyalty on Job Satisfaction, such that Loyalty has more influence on younger volunteers' Job Satisfaction.

H1c. Age moderates the impact of Contribution on Job Satisfaction, such that Contribution has more influence on younger volunteers' Job Satisfaction.

H1d. Age moderates the impact of Professional Respect on Job Satisfaction, such that Professional Respect has more influence on younger volunteers' Job Satisfaction.

This study also proposed that the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to stay is moderated by age of volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations. According to socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1995), young individuals tend to focus on maximizing long-term payoffs in a nebulous future. That is, as compared to old volunteers, young volunteers may not have high intention to stay in their nonpaid volunteer work. Similarly, in contest to older workers, younger workers have more opportunities in other organizations and they may care less how their employment relationship ends (Hedge *et al.*, 2006). This seems to be more common in the nonprofit sector. Because volunteers do not get paid for their services, younger people may be more attracted by job opportunities where they get monetarily compensated for their work. Conversely, older workers tend to perceive that their current employer will be their last, which makes them feel more positive about the employer (Carstensen *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, older volunteers may want to continue to provide voluntary work for an organization as long as they have high job satisfaction:

H2. Age moderates the impact of Job Satisfaction on Intention to Stay, such that Job Satisfaction has more influence on older volunteers' Intention to Stay.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model for the mediation effects of *Age* in the relationships between LMS dimensions (*Affect*, *Loyalty*, *Contribution*, and *Professional Respect*)

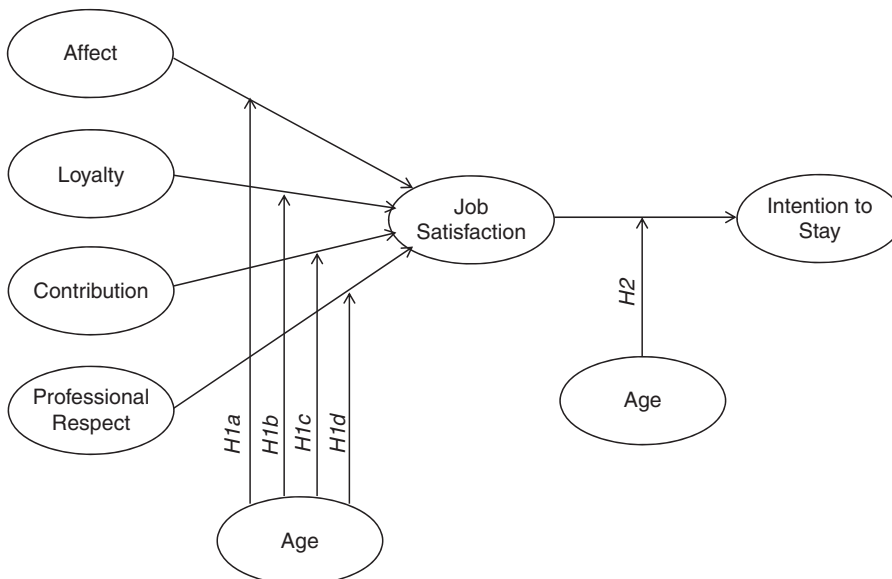


Figure 1.
Conceptual model for
the moderation
effects of age

Method

Participants

The sample was composed of 214 volunteer members (10.7 percent response rate) from 22 nonprofit sport organizations in a Midwestern state in the USA. Those nonprofit sport organizations included small- and medium-sized nonprofit sport organizations such as sports associations, sports clubs, and sporting event organizations. The participants ranged from 18 to 74 years old with the mean age of 41; 72.0 percent of the participants were married; 19.2 percent were single; 57.3 percent were male; 42.7 percent female. They volunteered in their organizations from 1 to 33 years with the average of seven years.

Procedures

This study employed a paper-based survey. The researcher contacted the president of each nonprofit sport organization to discover the availability of volunteers for participation in the study. Survey packages, including the questionnaire, cover letter, and pre-paid postage envelopes, were sent to each organization. The president or executive director of each organization then requested all volunteer members of the organization to participate in the survey and return completed surveys to the researcher using pre-paid postage envelopes. No incentive was offered to complete the survey.

Measures

The survey consisted of four parts - LMXs, *Job Satisfaction*, *Intention to Stay*, and demographic questions. The four dimensions of LMX were measured using a 12-item multidimensional LMX scale (the LMX-MDM; Liden and Maslyn, 1998): *Affect* (three items), *Loyalty* (three items), *Contribution* (three items), and *Professional Respect* (three items). Second, *Job Satisfaction* was measure by five items from the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) by Hackman and Oldham (1980). The JDS was developed in conjunction with the theory of job characteristics and continues to be the most widely used measure of the nature of jobs (Fields, 2002). According to Cook *et al.* (1981), the JDS is one of the tools that are generally accepted as psychologically sound and could be used by researchers measuring overall job satisfaction. All responses ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7), using a seven-point Likert-type scale. Third, *Intention to Stay* was measured by one question, "Will you stay and continuously work for this organization in your future?" Participants could respond Yes, No, or I do not know. Last, the demographic questions were questions about the participants' personal characteristics such as sex, age, marital status, and the number of years of volunteering in their organization.

As mentioned, this study used Liden and Maslyn's (1998) 12-item multidimensional LMX scale rather than the unidimensional LMX-seven scale (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). The LMX-seven scale has been considered validated and has been shown to have a high reliability and internal consistency (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, Liden and Maslyn (1998) criticized the unidimensional LMX-7 scale for three reasons: first, previous research validating the LMX-7 scale could be biased with its narrow data base confined to public sector organizations; second, LMX needs to be more differentiated with outcome variables as outcome variables sometimes appear to be alternative measures of LMX; and finally, the unidimensional conceptualization of LMX was too simple to provide a clear conceptual explanation or empirical justification for the

development of a unidimensional scale. Confirmatory factor analyses conducted by Liden and Maslyn's (1998) indicated that a multiple factor structure provided a significantly better fit to the data than did a unidimensional model. Other studies (George and Hancer, 2004; Greguras and Ford, 2006; Sparrowe and Liden, 2005) also suggest that LMX seems to be a multidimensional construct, which more properly characterizes the leader-member relationship and allows for more complete explanation of its relationship with significant individual and organizational variables. Therefore, the use of the multidimensional LMX scale was considered appropriate in this study.

Results

Reliability estimates

Cronbach's α reliability coefficients supported the internal consistency of the items within the LMX and *Job Satisfaction* variables as all Cronbach's α values ranged from 0.77 to 0.96, meeting the minimum level (0.70) recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The Cronbach's α 's for the four LMX factors: *Affect*, *Loyalty*, *Contribution*, and *Professional Respect*, were 0.85, 0.92, 0.84, and 0.94, respectively. The Cronbach's α for *Job Satisfaction* was 0.81. Table I shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations among these variables.

Hypothesis tests (H1a-H1d)

In total, four moderated hierarchical multiple regression analyses using SPSS 17.0 were performed to examine the moderating effect of *Age* on the relationship between LMX factors and *Job Satisfaction*, testing *H1a*, *H1b*, *H1c*, and *H1d*. The main effect variables were centered to reduce potential issues of multicollinearity by subtracting the mean from each main effect variable (Howell, 2002). Interaction terms were then computed as cross-products of the centered predictors (e.g. *Affect* \times *Age*; Kim *et al.*, 2001). Predictor variables (each LMX factor and *Age*) were entered first in the regression analysis where a criterion variable was *Job Satisfaction*, and then an individual interaction term was added in the second model.

Among the four regression analyses, only one analysis revealed a significant interaction effect between *Age* and *Professional Respect* on *Job Satisfaction*, supporting *H1d*. The first model including *Age* and *Professional Respect* was significant with an R^2 of 0.31 ($F_{(2, 86)} = 18.93, p < 0.001$). The second model with an interaction, *Professional Respect* \times *Age*, was significant ($F_{(3, 85)} = 15.90, p < 0.001$) with a significant R^2 change ($R^2 = 0.36$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.34$) (see Table II). Therefore, the second model with significant main effect of *Professional Respect* ($\beta = 0.52$) and interaction of *Professional Respect* \times *Age* ($\beta = -0.23$) was considered most acceptable. A simple slope analysis was further conducted to understand the direction of the interaction effect at younger (one

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Affect	5.65	0.90	–					
2. Loyalty	5.56	0.91	0.81**	–				
3. Contribution	5.70	0.88	0.83**	0.87**	–			
4. Professional Respect	5.61	0.96	0.78**	0.78**	0.78**	–		
5. Job Satisfaction	5.61	0.90	0.47**	0.47**	0.43**	0.57**	–	
6. Age	40.92	12.40	–0.03	–0.03	0.03	–0.18	–0.14*	–

Note: **, *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels, respectively, (two-tailed)

Table I.
Descriptive statistics
and correlations for
all variables

standard deviation below the mean) and older (one standard deviation above the mean) of the moderator variable, which is *Age* in this case (Aiken and West, 1991; Cohen *et al.*, 2003) (see Figure 2). Figure 2 graphically illustrates that the effect of *Professional Respect* on *Job Satisfaction* increases with decreased age. According to the results presented, *H1d* is supported; the younger the participants are, the more the impact of their perceived professional respect for one another on improving their job satisfaction.

Hypothesis test (H2)

Hierarchical multiple regression was employed to examine whether *Age* moderated the relationship between *Job Satisfaction* and *Intention to Stay* working in the organization. As for the “I don’t know” responses to the *Intention to Stay* question, existing research on the Job Descriptive Index has shown that a “?” response falls in between a Yes and a No (Hanisch, 1992). Although Hanisch (1992) notes that it is closer to a “No,” *Intention to Stay* could nevertheless be treated as a continuous variable (ordinal data). The “I don’t know” response was therefore placed between yes and no (i.e. 0 = no, 1 = I do not know, 2 = yes).

For the hierarchical regression analysis in which the criterion variable was *Intention to Stay*, the *Job Satisfaction* and *Age* variables were entered first. The interaction term of *Job Satisfaction* × *Age* was then included in the second model. According to the

Table II. Moderated hierarchical regression predicting job satisfaction from professional respect and age

Variables entered	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² change	F	df	B	β	SE	t
Model 1	0.31	0.29		18.93***	286				
Constant						5.67		0.08	72.33***
Professional Respect						0.50	0.55	0.08	5.98***
Age						-0.00	-0.34	0.01	-0.37
Model 2	0.36	0.34	0.054**	15.90***	385				
Constant						5.63		0.08	73.40***
Professional Respect						0.49	0.52	0.08	5.92***
Age						-0.00	-0.04	0.01	-0.45
Professional Respect × Age						-0.02	-0.23	0.01	-2.67**

Notes: ***p* < 0.01; ****p* < 0.001

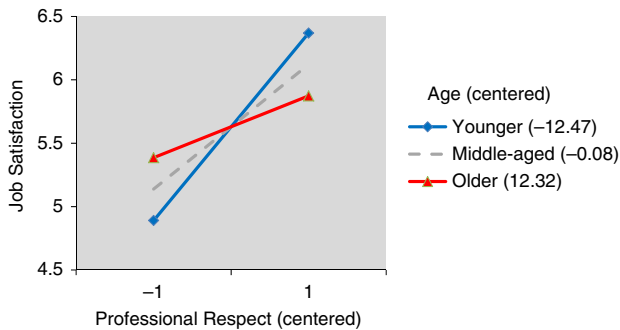


Figure 2. Simple regression lines depicting the interaction effect of age and professional respect on job satisfaction

Note: Job satisfaction is unstandardized predicted value

results, the variance explained by the first model was high ($F_{(2, 198)} = 6.79, p < 0.01, R^2 = 0.06$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.06$). The introduction of the interaction term yielded a significantly improved model ($F_{(3,197)} = 7.73, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.11$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.09$). The main effect of *Job Satisfaction* ($\beta = 0.20$) and the interaction of *Job Satisfaction* \times *Age* ($\beta = 0.22$) were both significant (see Table III). As shown in Figure 3, the results of simple slope analysis showed that the positive effect of *Job Satisfaction* on *Intention to Stay* is enhanced with age. The slope for older volunteers was positive whereas the one for younger volunteers was negative. The results thus supported *H2* that *Age* moderates the impact of *Job Satisfaction* on *Intention to Stay*, such that *Job Satisfaction* has more influence on older volunteers' *Intention to Stay*. In conclusion, the results supported *H1d* and *H2*, but not *H1a*, *H1b*, and *H1c*.

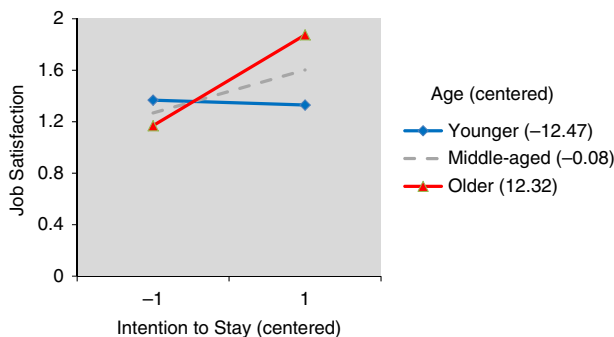
Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine the moderating role of *Age* in the relationships between LMXs and *Job Satisfaction* and between *Job Satisfaction* and *Intention to Stay* among volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations. The study revealed that the age of volunteers made a significant contribution to some of the relationships, suggesting that more attention must be paid to age in the context of nonprofit sport organizations, not as a descriptive variable or noise in the data, but as a variable of interest (Matthews *et al.*, 2010).

Variables entered	R^2	R^2 change	F	df	B	β	SE	t
Model 1	0.06		6.79**	2,198				
Constant					1.41		0.05	27.90***
Job Satisfaction					0.17	0.19	0.06	2.77**
Age					0.01	0.20	0.00	2.80**
Model 2	0.11	0.041**	7.73***	3,197				
Constant					1.44		0.05	28.61***
Job Satisfaction					0.17	0.20	0.06	2.86**
Age					0.01	0.12	0.00	1.70
Job Satisfaction \times Age					0.02	0.22	0.01	3.01**

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table III.
Moderated
hierarchical
regression predicting
intention to
stay from job
satisfaction and age



Note: Intention to stay is unstandardized predicted value

Figure 3.
Simple regression
lines depicting the
interaction effect
of age and job
satisfaction on
intention to stay

The role of age in the relationships between LMXs and job satisfaction

Supporting *H1d*, the relationship between the perceived professional respect for one another and job satisfaction becomes stronger the lower in age the subjects are. That is, younger volunteers were more likely than older volunteers to have high *Job Satisfaction* when they had high levels of respect for the knowledge, competence, and/or professional skills of leaders or followers. The findings are consistent with the socio-emotional selectivity theory that suggests as an individual ages, he/she tends to be more present oriented with the focus on satisfying emotional needs in the workplace but less concerned with future-oriented strivings (Carstensen, 1995). Conversely, younger volunteers might focus on knowledge-related needs rather than emotional regulating needs (Carstensen *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, in comparison to older volunteers, young volunteers' perceptions of others with regard to each other's professional expertise and accomplishments may lead to a big increase of their overall job satisfaction.

Moreover, the results support the age difference in need for leadership (De Vries, 1997), suggesting that a member wants the leader to facilitate the paths toward individual, group, and/or organizational goals. Okun and Schultz (2003) indicated that as age increases, motivations of volunteers regarding exploring career options and developing hands on experience decrease. That is, working with people who have excellent professional skills or knowledge would be one of the expectations of younger volunteers with the desire to earn career-related experiences and skills.

Age is found to play a significant moderating role only on the relationship between *Professional Respect* and *Job Satisfaction* over the relationships between other LMX factors and *Job Satisfaction*. It might be attributable to the recent trends in human resource management in nonprofit sport settings. In many cases nonprofit sport organizations recruit individuals without high levels of professional skills to join the organization (Taylor and McGraw, 2006). Frequently, sport organizations do not select but rather accept volunteers willing to offer their time and efforts (Taylor and McGraw, 2006). Hence, the apparent lack of highly skilled human resources and support in nonprofit sport organizations might have constrained some volunteers, especially young volunteers, from improving work skills and providing better services. Fortunately, today's nonprofit organizations have been attempting to have a systematic approach to improve individual and organizational management. Many nonprofit sport organizations (e.g. sports clubs, special Olympics, sports associations, and the governing bodies of sports) demonstrate that more professionals have been appointed in important roles (Bang, 2011). Thus, assuming that younger volunteers often set future-oriented goals such as knowledge gathering and career development, those who respect leaders or members for their professional capabilities might be more satisfied with their jobs than older volunteers.

Age did not measurably contribute to the relationship between *Affect* and *Job Satisfaction*. According to the data, volunteers' age and their length of involvement were likely to be significantly positively correlated (0.63). Because younger volunteers appear to be involved in their nonprofit sport organizations for a shorter period of time than do older volunteers, it might be premature for them to connect their feelings of affection toward others to their overall job satisfaction. Conversely, older volunteers who have longer organizational involvement, who might have already had experiences with their co-workers, may feel fewer benefits from their quotidian friendship with

leaders and members. Thus, *Age* would not affect the relationship between *Affect* and *Job Satisfaction*.

The nonsignificant moderating role of *Age* between *Loyalty* and *Job Satisfaction* and between *Contribution* and *Job Satisfaction* would reflect Dienesch and Liden's (1986) idea that LMX may develop in a distinct manner. *Loyalty* requires enough time and needs higher frequency of communication for both parties to show genuine public support of each other's actions and characters (Sin *et al.*, 2009). Similarly, *Contribution* takes time to evaluate each other's behaviors (Sin *et al.*, 2009). The *Age* factor in the study's context was highly correlated to volunteers' individual time consumption so that volunteers, especially younger volunteers, would be unable to have enough information to influence their feelings about loyalty and contribution toward other co-workers. Therefore, *Age* may not differentiate the relationships between the two LMX dimensions (*Loyalty* and *Contribution*) and job satisfaction.

The role of age in the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to stay

High levels of *Job Satisfaction* among older volunteers predicted *Intention to Stay* with their organizations whereas the relationship was found to be not as strong among younger volunteers. Younger volunteers who had less intention to stay in their organizations were likely to have even higher *Job Satisfaction* than those who expressed their intention to stay. This difference can be explained by the socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1995). In the nonprofit sector, it is plausible that younger volunteers may want to seek potential paid job opportunities even when they are satisfied with working at their current nonprofit sport organizations. They might have joined the organization just because they wanted to learn or improve practical experiences and skills to find better job opportunities. However, older volunteers are more likely to have high socio-economic status than nonvolunteers (Choi, 2003) with an increased likelihood of voluntary engagement after retirement (Erlinghagen and Hank, 2006), implying that an older volunteer may care less about finding paid employment. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the current study found a strong relationship between job satisfaction and intention to stay among older volunteers.

Implications and limitations

To practitioners, this study offers valuable insights regarding volunteer retention in nonprofit sport organizations. There may be some parallels between paid employees in the for-profit and volunteers in the nonprofit sectors (Wisner *et al.*, 2005) in that younger workers in both sectors tend to be more focussed on their careers than their older peers. However, little research has been conducted on relational age demography for unpaid workers in nonprofit workplaces (Caldwell *et al.*, 2008). This study suggests that volunteers' leader-member relations associated with job satisfaction are distinguished by age. Green *et al.* (1996) noted that differences in relational demography may cause misunderstandings between the leader and member, reduced communication, and a greater social distance, which could hinder the development of high-quality leadership exchanges. Thus, nonprofit administrators should understand the age differences and use those for developing effective recruitment and training strategies. For example, administrators may develop relevant and persuasive recruitment messages to younger audiences to focus on learning skills and accomplishing goals whereas messages to older audiences may focus more on helping and belonging (Clary *et al.*, 1998). Job satisfaction of

younger volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations may not predict their intention to stay because they may be given many other job opportunities. Nevertheless, younger volunteers' high job satisfaction may still enhance their job performance in nonprofit sport settings. Thus, encouraging leaders to present professional feedback and share their skills and knowledge (e.g. technical training sessions by co-workers) to those younger volunteers may be effective in enhancing their job satisfaction and performance.

This study acknowledges some limitations. First, when compared with other volunteer studies, the sample characteristics of the current study are inconsistent with those from other studies. Specifically, the gender distribution of the sample, where 57.3 percent of the participants were males, was different from previous volunteer studies (e.g. Boezeman and Ellemers, 2007; Brudney and Nezhina, 2005; Greenslade and White, 2005; Parsons and Broadbridge, 2004; Tidwell, 2005). These previous volunteer studies indicated that volunteer work in nonprofit organizations is usually carried out by a majority of female volunteers. However, given that the sample of the present study included more male volunteers, there is a potential for the sample to be not representative of volunteer workers of nonprofit sport organizations in general. Many of nonprofit sport organizations that participated in this study were ice hockey associations and clubs, which might affect the gender distribution of the sample. Given that ice hockey has been traditionally viewed as men's sport, more male volunteers may work for those ice hockey organizations. Therefore, future studies should include a more diverse nonprofit sport organization base. Second, literature suggests that volunteers' motivations regarding perceived benefits are factors that are strongly related to individuals' job satisfaction in the context of nonprofit organizations (Bang *et al.*, 2013). However, the present study did not measure volunteers' motivation concerning their social interactions. Future research that includes the volunteer motivation variable would provide a better understanding of the patterns of job satisfaction and intention to stay by age. Finally, the quantitative data in this study provide limited depth. In addition to the quantitative research, a study using qualitative research methods might provide a better understanding of the issue and help reach a broader audience. Such study could collect data through focus groups and interviews concerning volunteers' leader-member relations, job satisfaction, and intention to stay by age and length of involvement.

Conclusion

This study examined the moderating role of Age in the relationships between LMX factors (*Affect, Loyalty, Contribution, and Professional Respect*) and *Job Satisfaction* and between *Job Satisfaction* and *Intention to Stay* among volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations. The study found that the moderating effects of *Age* in the relationship between *Professional Respect* and *Job Satisfaction* and between *Job Satisfaction* and *Intention to Stay* were significant. Specifically, as volunteers are younger, their perceived professional respect for leaders and/or members is likely to influence their levels of job satisfaction. However, as volunteers are older, their job satisfaction has more influence on their intention to stay. The findings indicated that the age of volunteers in nonprofit sport organizations can be an important factor in increasing organizational success. Therefore, nonprofit sport organizations need to put considerable effort into developing strategic approaches to the recruitment and retention of volunteers, reflecting the needs of volunteers at different life stages.

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Appendix. Items included in the study questionnaire

Scale items

Affect

- I like my supervisor very much as a person.
- My supervisor is the kind of person I would like to have as a friend.
- My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with.

Loyalty

- My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.
- My supervisor would come to my defense if I were attacked by others.
- My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake.

Contribution

- I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job descriptions.
- I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my supervisor's work goals.
- I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor.
- Professional respect
- I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job.
- I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job.
- I admire my supervisor's professional skills.

Job satisfaction

- Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.
- I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.
- I frequently think of quitting this job (R).
- Most people on this job are very satisfied with the job.
- People on this job often think of quitting (R).

Note: R, reverse coded.

About the author

Dr Hyejin Bang received her PhD in Kinesiology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in the USA. She is teaching in the Department of Leadership and Professional Studies at the Florida International University in the USA. Her primary research areas of interest include organizational behavior, human resources, volunteerism, and brand marketing in sport. Dr Hyejin Bang can be contacted at: bangh@fiu.edu

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