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A Cross-Cultural Examination of Student Volunteering: Is It All About Résumé Building?

Femida Handy

Ram A. Cnaan

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Lesley Hustinx

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Chulhee Kang

Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea

Jeffrey L. Brudney

Syracuse University, New York

Debbie Haski-Leventhal

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Kirsten Holmes

University of Surrey, Guildford, UK

Lucas C. P. M. Meijjs

Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Anne Birgitta Pessi

University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Bhagyashree Ranade

Marketing & Market Research Consultants, Pune, India

Naoto Yamauchi

Osaka University, Osaka, Japan

Sinisa Zrinscak

University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

This research adopts the utilitarian view of volunteering as a starting point: we posit that for an undergraduate student population volunteering is motivated by career enhancing and job prospects. We hypothesize that in those countries where volunteering signals positive characteristics of students and helps advance their careers, their volunteer

Authors' Note: Femida Handy, School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania, 3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214; email: fhandy@sp2.upenn.edu

participation will be higher. Furthermore, regardless of the signaling value of volunteering, those students who volunteer for utilitarian reasons will be more likely to volunteer but will exhibit less time-intensive volunteering. Using survey data from 12 countries ($n = 9,482$), we examine our hypotheses related to motivations to volunteer, volunteer participation, and country differences. Findings suggest that students motivated to volunteer for building their résumés do not volunteer more than students with other motives. However, in countries with a positive signaling value of volunteering, volunteering rates are significantly higher. As expected, students motivated by résumé building motivations have a lower intensity of volunteering.

Keywords: *volunteering, signaling, cross-cultural comparison, student, résumé building*

Introduction

The reasons why people volunteer have long fascinated academic researchers and other observers. Given that most volunteering activity is not compensated monetarily and imposes net costs on the volunteer, a strict cost-benefit analysis would suggest that such behavior will not be undertaken (Handy et al., 2000). Yet volunteering is ubiquitous around the world, and this begets research on the underlying motivations to volunteer (MTV) and its impact on volunteer participation. An extensive literature examines MTV in different locations and circumstances and concludes that individuals volunteer for a myriad of motives. Two classes of motivations dominate and are often found to coexist: altruistic or values-based motives and utilitarian motivations (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Altruistic or values-based MTV include religious beliefs, supporting an important cause, helping others, and so on. Utilitarian motives include enhancing human capital, for example, gaining work experience and job training, developing new skills, exploring career paths, enhancing résumés, or making contacts useful for paid employment. A third category of motivations also exist—social motives—which include extending one's social networks, volunteering because friends or colleagues do so, responding to social pressures to volunteer, and so on (Cappellari & Turati, 2004).¹

Among students, additional contextual MTV factors may influence volunteering activities. For example, the signaling role volunteering plays in the labor market and in admission into institutions of higher learning may also affect students' MTV. Economic theory has suggested that volunteering plays a unique role in the labor market through its use as a signaling device. Spence (1973) first proposed the value of signals in the labor market as well as in the educational market: applicants for jobs and admissions have to signal in a convincing manner why they should be the candidate of choice. Katz and Rosenberg (2005) showed that in an environment characterized by competition, volunteering serves as a signaling device through which the volunteer signals the (potential) employer that he or she possesses qualities that make him or her the candidate of choice.

The recruitment strategies used by volunteer coordinators worldwide are often based on North American studies that are rarely replicated across different cultural contexts. The present study may reveal that student volunteers cross-nationally have different motivations. Understanding these motivations and the differences across cultures is important to organizations that wish to recruit these volunteers. To appeal to altruistic motives as a recruitment strategy when volunteers are looking for career enhancement opportunities, or vice versa, is not useful for either party. By contrast, understanding the differences across cultures of the signaling value of volunteering can help to frame volunteer opportunities that benefit both organizations and the student volunteers they attempt—and need—to recruit.

Literature Review: The Payoff of Volunteering for University Students

Studies based in the United States have found that students who volunteer are more likely than nonvolunteers to have leadership ability, social self-confidence, and skills in critical thinking and conflict resolution (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Hence an employer faced with many suitable applicants may use volunteer experiences to infer skills, or even increased marginal productivity, thus enabling applicants to use their volunteering experiences as positive signals and to compete successfully, enhance career prospects, command higher salaries, and get better jobs (Freeman, 1997; Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987; Prouteau & Wolff, 2006).

Substantial theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence suggest that many people engage in volunteering activities to improve their employment prospects by increasing their human capital (e.g., Carlin, 2001; Day & Devlin, 1998; Gunderson & Gomez, 2003; Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987; Segal & Weisbrod, 2002); expanding their social contacts, which may be used to get better jobs (Wuthnow, 1998); or sending a positive (volunteering) signal to employers (Ellingsen & Johannesson, 2003; Katz & Rosenberg, 2005; Ziemek, 2006). In the literature volunteering serves as a signaling device through which volunteers signal the (potential) employer or admission officer that they are “desirable” candidates who are willing to incur net costs of their volunteering activities to serve the public good. Employers generally find them to be “good organizational citizens” who will be more productive employees and likely to forgo their private interests for the sake of the organization. Identifying these good citizens is crucial for the employer. Employers use an individual’s volunteering experience as a proxy or signal for the otherwise hard to observe characteristic, good organizational citizenship. It comes as no surprise that it is suggested that employers should “recruit individuals prone to engage in organizational citizen behaviors and avoid individuals who are egocentric” (Organ, 1988). Consequently, individuals with volunteering experience tend to be hired or command a higher wage (Katz & Rosenberg, 2005)

Empirical research for the most part supports this line of reasoning. Using Austrian data, Hackl, Halla, and Pruckner (2007) found evidence of a wage premium of 18.7% on average for volunteers. A Canadian study found a 6%-7% return on volunteering in annual earnings for Canadian workers (Day & Devlin, 1998). However, a recent contribution using French data by Prouteau and Wolff (2005) found no statistically significant wage premium for volunteers.

Although these studies do not deal specifically with any particular population, their findings may be all the more cogent for university students as they are more likely to be in transition from student life to the labor force or institutions of higher learning. Typically, they will be more engaged in producing résumés in which it is evident that they are desirable candidates. Given the scarcity of good jobs or limited admission to institutions of higher education, the competition for such positions will increase the need of signaling in this population as compared to the population at large. Indeed, in those countries where such signaling is an accepted norm (the United States and Canada) it is likely that the MTV for this cohort will reflect the utilitarian motives that are career related. Friedland and Morimoto (2005) have argued that many youth do volunteer out of self-interest, with the express purpose to “pad their résumé.” They write, “Much of this volunteerism . . . has been shaped by the perception that voluntary and civic activity is necessary to get into any college, and the better the college (or, more precisely, the higher the perception of the college in the status system) the more volunteerism students believed was necessary” (pp. 10-11).

Indeed, as mounting competitive pressures to obtain admission in institutions of higher learning and find good jobs rise, students are more likely to seek out the types of volunteering experiences that help résumé-padding. Marks and Jones (2004) found that volunteering increases among those who volunteer for episodic and less demanding purposes, rather than among those who view volunteering as an expression of their core values. This result does not imply that all volunteering is undertaken for instrumental reasons in the pursuit of résumé building, as many students are engaged for complex reasons with multiple motives. Motives such as altruism, religious values, and care for those less fortunate can coexist with that of résumé padding. However, due to increasing pressure and competition to achieve that youth face today, especially in North America, the payoff to volunteering and its use in résumé building may be a powerful drive that can dominate other motives in the decision to volunteer (Crosby, 1999).

Many popular web sites and publications in the United States and Canada exhort students to volunteer. Echoing a theme found in many sources, Mitchell and Doyle (2007) explained to students,

You know the dilemma: if you want to get a good job, you need experience; but to get experience you need a job. One solution, you’ve been told, is to enhance your résumé with descriptions of your volunteer activities and projects you’ve participated in and the responsibilities you shouldered for each one. There’s no doubt that the time you

spend as a volunteer or volunteer leader can be invaluable to you, not only for the often unique experiences you gain but also because it can help you secure a better job in summers and after graduation, open doors to networking opportunities with community and business leaders, broaden your knowledge base, and give you a feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Institutions of higher learning may face comparable problems of deciding how to select among equally qualified students. Additional information is often required or provided in personal statements or at interviews that helps decision makers to select students likely to succeed at the institution (Astin, 1998; Sax, 2000). Volunteering experiences are one mechanism used to screen applicants to identify appropriate individuals. For example, a medical school applicant who has volunteered in a hospice will likely be a better candidate for medical school than a candidate with a similar academic profile but no volunteer experience (Smith and Weaver, 2006). In this case, volunteering is signaling that the applicant cares about the health and welfare of people and is more likely to be compassionate and therefore a better doctor. Thus volunteering is used as a proxy for desirable personality characteristics. As a result, we argue, individuals who volunteer are more likely to be admitted or hired and to command higher salaries than nonvolunteering individuals.

National survey data for young people are limited and not available for all countries. Where such data do exist, however, higher rates of volunteering are observed for young people compared to older adults. In the United States volunteering among college-age students (19- to 24-year-olds) is fairly robust and rising. The rate was 20% in 2003, up from 18% the previous year, and in 2005 more than 30% of college students volunteered, exceeding the volunteer rate in the general adult population of 28.8% (Volunteering in America, 2008). Higher rates of volunteering are evident in data from the Freshman Survey conducted in 2002 in which a reported 82% of college freshmen volunteered for their community during their last year in high school. If indeed volunteering activities were to help them gain admission to college, the high rates of volunteering suggest a utilitarian purpose; it is not altogether surprising that national rates of volunteering for this population (including students and nonstudents) are much lower. Interestingly, college students are twice as likely to volunteer as individuals of the same age who are not enrolled in an institution of higher education (30.2% vs. 15.1%, respectively), again suggesting that volunteering may have greater benefits for students in institutions of higher learning. Sax (2004), however, maintains that these high rates of volunteering in college are related to service learning opportunities, the National Community Service Act, and to more high schools requiring community service for graduation—hence, not all volunteering may result from the student's free choice.

In Canada, Hall, Lasby, Gumulka, and Tryon (2006) substantiated increases in youth volunteering in 2004; more than half (55%) of all youth (15- to 24-year-olds) volunteered as compared to the national average of 45% of all Canadians aged 15

and older who volunteered. This research also examined the MTV of volunteering and showed that the decision to volunteer among youth differed from others: this group was three times more likely to volunteer to improve their job opportunities than were Canadians 25 years old or older (22%; Hall et al., 2006). Earlier national surveys of Canadians demonstrated similar trends (Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2001; Jones, 2000). The volunteering rate among 15- to 19-year-olds was 37%, a rate 42% higher than the average rate of volunteering for the population (26%). Moreover, these younger volunteers were much more likely (55%) to indicate that improving job opportunities was a reason for volunteering, than was the general population (23%). In addition, a greater proportion of younger volunteers (24%) reported that volunteering had at some point helped them to gain employment as compared to the general population (14%). As might be expected, the group most in need of labor market credentials volunteered at higher rates than any other segment of the population.

Signals are very context specific; however, not all labor markets or educational regimes interpret volunteering experiences in the same way. Although listing volunteering experiences on one's résumé is de rigueur in the United States and Canada, it may be quite novel, even inappropriate to do so, in the Netherlands (or other countries). One cannot but observe that using volunteering as a signal of a character type is culturally rooted, and it is likely that although this is true in the North American context, where much of the MTV literature is focused, it may not send similar signals in other contexts where volunteering may be seen as a religious duty or noblesse oblige. In this case, volunteering cannot be understood instrumentally, and altruistic MTV makes more sense in understanding volunteering. Thus, in contexts where employers and university admission officers need signals to assess and sort applicants, MTV will include résumé building; in other contexts where educational achievements such as grades, training certificates, or the like are sufficient to assess and sort applicants, we will expect altruistic MTV to dominate.

Although several studies compare participation rates internationally (Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992; Hodgkinson, 2003; Ruiters & De Graaf, 2006; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2000), to our knowledge, only a few studies have offered cross-cultural comparisons of MTV. Using the World Values Surveys of 1991-1993, Hwang, Grabb, and Curtis (2005) compared MTV in Canada versus the United States. They found that volunteers in the United States see helping the poor and disadvantaged as part of their role as citizens and were more likely than Canadians to mention altruistic reasons for joining voluntary organizations. By contrast, Canadian volunteers see welfare needs fulfilled by their government and, hence, are less likely to report MTV for altruistic reasons. The differences are thus explained as a function of differing levels of social welfare provision by the government. A second study by Ziemek (2006) examined MTV across countries with different levels of economic development, namely, Bangladesh, Ghana, Poland, and South Korea. By clustering MTV into three categories, "altruism," "egoism," and "investment in human capital," Ziemek also tested the differences in MTV by the volunteer's perceived level of public spending. High public spending

was found to negatively influence altruistic MTV and positively influence investment motivation. Based on Social Origins Theory, Salamon and Sokolowski (2000) link primary MTV with different political and social regimes, suggesting that, for example, in countries where government is not involved in providing social services, those volunteering will be motivated to volunteer for altruistic reasons. As such, MTV is influenced by environmental and contextual factors, which may also affect volunteering. To date, however, no study has focused on the impact of signaling as a factor influencing student volunteering from a cross-national perspective.

Hypotheses

This study examines the impact of utilitarian MTV on rates of university students' volunteering in a cross-national context. We argue that rates of volunteering will reflect the signaling value of volunteering in the particular country. We hypothesize that the greater the positive signaling value of volunteering in labor markets and educational institutions, the more students will volunteer. We focus our cross-national comparisons on a particular population, university undergraduate students, for various reasons. First, we can hold constant the variations in MTV that can be ascribed to lifecycle and, thereby, focus on country variations. Second, MTV for this cohort will most likely include all types: altruistic, utilitarian, and social. Undergraduate students are at an age when it is important for them to maintain social relations; they are idealistic about making changes in society; and they are at a stage in their career at which, they most tangibly could benefit from using volunteering to enhance their career-related opportunities. Finally, more so than for other population groups, their MTV are more likely to result in padding their résumés either for graduate school or for better jobs.

In addition to the effect of MTV on rates of volunteering, we assess the impact of utilitarian MTV and the signaling value of volunteering on the nature of volunteer participation. Previous research has shown that MTV varies as a function of the intensity of involvement, with long-term active volunteers significantly more likely to reflect altruistic MTV than shorter-term episodic volunteers, who are likely to be satisfying more self-interested MTV such as résumé building (Handy, Brodeur, & Cnaan, 2006; Reed & Selbee, 2003). Given that in general, the costs of a long-term and time-consuming involvement are significantly greater than those incurred by an individual who volunteers sporadically or as a one-time activity (Cnaan & Handy, 2005), we expect utilitarian-driven volunteers to reduce their net costs by participating in more episodic volunteer opportunities that demand a smaller time investment and are sufficient in meeting their utilitarian goals.

If utilitarian motives are particularly prevalent among university students, it is highly relevant to examine whether this population also has a distinct style of involvement. Sax (2004), for instance, noted that college students are more likely than the

general adult volunteer population (27% to 23.4%) to be engaged in volunteering as “episodic” volunteers (volunteering fewer than 2 weeks per year with their main organization), a likely pattern for those trying to build a résumé rather than for those volunteering for other reasons (Dote, Cramer, Dietz, & Grimm, 2006).

Based on our discussion above, we frame several hypotheses and test them cross-nationally to see if contextual differences can help to explain student volunteering. The following hypotheses guide our empirical analysis:

Hypothesis 1a: Students who prefer résumé building MTV over altruism or social motives are more likely to volunteer.

Hypothesis 1b: Student volunteering will vary by country. That is, we expect the North American countries to show higher rates of résumé building MTV and enhanced volunteer participation.

We further explore the instrumentalist view on volunteering by using as our dependent variable the intensity of volunteer participation. We suggest that students motivated by résumé building motives are likely to engage for fewer hours and more episodic assignments just sufficient to enhance their résumés, whereas those with altruistic motives are likely to engage for longer hours and more frequently to satisfy their intrinsic needs. As such we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2a: Students motivated by résumé building motives versus altruism or social benefits will have lower intensity (hours and frequency) of volunteering.

Hypothesis 2b: The intensity (hours and frequency) of student volunteering participation will vary by country. We expect countries that have a high positive value of volunteering as a signal—such as the United States and Canada—to demonstrate lower intensity of volunteering.

Method

As the aim of the research was to examine student volunteering as a response to differences in MTV in a cross-cultural context, data were collected in 12 countries: Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, England, Finland, the Netherlands, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, and the United States. In each country a research team member distributed questionnaires to at least 600 university students, mostly in classroom settings. Data were collected in 2006-2007. Although surveys were not distributed randomly, the very high number of respondents can support the representativeness of the data.

As it was an international study, the questionnaire had to be translated and adapted to the local language and culture. The English version of the questionnaire was first piloted and revised. It was used in Canada, England, India, and the United States; in

all other countries the questionnaire was translated, piloted, and reviewed by a panel of experts before administration in the field.

Measures

A survey was designed for the purpose of the current study and included items that were related to volunteering habits. More specifically, we use the following three measures as our key dependent variables. First, to examine Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b we use students' participation in volunteering in formal organizations the past 12 months (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*).² Second, to measure intensity of participation (Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b) we use two measures: hours of volunteering per month in the past 12 months, and the frequency of volunteering (none, occasionally, monthly, or weekly).

To measure MTV students were asked to rate 14 possible reasons for doing volunteer work on a scale from 1 (*unimportant*) to 5 (*very important*). The items were chosen to reflect different dimensions of motivation to volunteer as recently used in the literature (Hwang et al., 2005; Liao-Troth, 2005; Ziemek, 2006). To determine the set of dimensions emerging from the combined data for the 12 countries, we conducted a principal components analysis. The results reported here are based on a principal components extraction with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization, which does not allow the factors extracted to be inter-correlated.

The first component incorporates four items that clearly represent the value of volunteering for résumé building and career-related motivations: to put it (volunteering) on the curriculum vitae (résumé) for admission to higher education; to put it on the curriculum vitae (résumé) when applying for a job; to get a foot in the door at a place where one wants to get paid employment; and to make new contacts that might help a business career. The second component reflects altruistic and value-driven reasons for volunteering based on the following five items: it is important to help others; to work for a cause that is important; to learn more about the cause for which one is volunteering; it gives one a new perspective; and it makes one feel better.³ The third motivational component is referred to as social and ego-defensive reasons for volunteering. It comprises the remaining five items: because friends volunteer; was advised to do so (i.e., volunteer); influenced to volunteer by people close to them; it relieves guilt over being more fortunate than others; and it is a good escape from one's own troubles.

We control for gender (1 = *women*; men treated as the reference category), age in years, and household income (1 = *high income class* and 0 = *middle or lower income class*). We excluded education as a variable as our cohort represents university students who have graduated from high school but not university, hence belong to the same category. In addition, we accounted for individuals' personal value systems by means of two additive scales: material values and nonmaterial values. We conducted

principal components analysis to extract two components with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. Individuals who score high on material values attach high importance to making a lot of money; being successful in one's studies or work; living a happy, comfortable life; and being able to do what one wants. Those who support nonmaterial values, by contrast, consider it more important to help people in need; make the world a better place; and have a religious faith.

We also control for the student's program of study (dummy variables for business and all other programs; business is treated as the reference category), as we believe that students in business programs are likely to be more competitive and career-oriented than those in other programs including social sciences (Astin & Sax, 1998; O'Brien, 1993). High schools and universities in some countries have volunteering as a formal or recommended requirement for graduation. This provision not only raises the awareness of volunteering among members of their cohort but also gives them opportunities to volunteer, thereby raising their rates of participation (Sundeen & Raskoff, 1994). Accordingly, control for volunteer requirements in high school and university (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*).

Heckman Selection Model and Ordered Logistic Regression Model

To examine our hypotheses we use a Heckman selection model and ordered logistic regression model.⁴ To analyze Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b we use probit analysis in the first stage of the Heckman selection model with participation in volunteering as the dependent variable. Our key independent variables are the three dimensions of MTV and country differences. We control for individual characteristics of students: age (A), gender (G), family income (I), personal values (V), program of study (P), and volunteer requirements in high school or university (R). Thus we model volunteer participation V, a binary variable (1 = *yes* and 0 = *no*), as

$$1. \quad V(0, 1) = F[\text{MTV, country effects, A, G, I, V, P, R-high school, R-university}].$$

To analyze Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b, we use OLS regression analysis in the second stage of the Heckman selection model and an ordered logistic regression model; in these analyses, we use as our dependent variable the intensity of participation, as measured by the number of hours of volunteering and the frequency of volunteering. In the second stage analysis (OLS regression) of the Heckman selection model correcting sample selection bias with Mills' ratio estimate, we analyze the number of hours volunteered as the dependent variable. Finally, employing the ordered logistic regression model we analyze the frequency of volunteering, an ordinal variable (degree of regularity), as the dependent variable. In each case, controlling for the same variables (except for age) as we do in the probit model, we examine

MTV and country effects on the dependent variables. The rationale for dropping the age variable in the OLS regression analysis and ordered logistic regression analysis is based on the requirement for model identification in the Heckman selection model and the limited variation of the age variable in predicting the intensity in our study population (college undergraduate students). The final two models are

2. $V(\text{hours}) = F[\text{MTV, country effects, I, G, V, P, R-high school, R-university}]$.
3. $V(\text{degree of regularity}) = F[\text{MTV, country effects, I, G, V, P, R-high school, R-university}]$.

Sample

In all, 9,482 students in 12 countries completed surveys with a minimum number of 600 in each country; nearly 70% (69.2%) reported volunteering in the past 12 months. The sample consisted of more females (55.2%) than males (44.8%). However, gender was significantly unequal across the 12 countries studied: in India, 62.5% were male, whereas the majority was female in the United Kingdom (71.4%), Finland (71.3%), and Canada (68.3%). Most students reported coming from the middle-income group (68.2%), with 17.1% reporting coming from the high income group and 14.7% from the low income group. The highest rates of students reporting their family as high-income were found in the Netherlands (41.3%) and Israel (35.6%). The highest rates of low-income families were reported in China (25.9%), Japan (22.1%), and Finland and Israel (20.1% and 20.0%, respectively).

The mean age of the students was 22.2 years (median = 22.4 years), with two-thirds (65%) of the students in the age group 18-22 years. Significant differences in mean age were found across the 12 countries. In Israel the mean age was highest (26.1), due to 2 to 3 years of obligatory military service, followed by Finland (24.6) and the United States (24.0). Belgium and Japan had the youngest mean age (20 years).

Students came from diverse disciplines: 24.9% from social sciences, 13.4% from natural sciences, 22.7% from business, 14.7% from humanities, 13.4% from engineering, and 10.9% from other disciplines. The distribution across disciplines differed by country, with substantial over-representation of some disciplines in Japan (79.9% from social sciences), the United Kingdom (45.5% from natural sciences), and Finland (43.4% from humanities).

Just over half of the students (53.7%) were exposed to some form of institutional service learning at their high school or university with volunteering or community service either being compulsory or optional. Students in Korea (81.0%), Israel (80.0%), and India (75.5%) were most likely to have such exposure, and students in China (9.9%), Croatia (15.5%), and Japan (18.0%) were least likely to experience some form of service requirement.

Findings

Volunteering and motivation to volunteer across countries

In Table 1 we present a descriptive analysis of the dependent variables by country. As we expect our utilitarian paradigm to apply most strongly in the North American context, we use the United States and Canada as our key countries of reference as these countries provide the strongest evidence of the value of volunteering as a signal among students (Katz & Rosenberg, 2005). Table 1 shows that with respect to the rate of participation in volunteering, India (86.2%) and China (84.5%) belong to the top tier, Canada (79.7%) and the United States (78.8%) belong to the second tier, and Croatia (51.2%) and Japan (39.1%) fall into the lowest tier. Across countries, Belgium, Canada, and the United States had the highest average number of hours of volunteering per month (15.74, 15.58, and 11.26 hours per month on average, respectively). In the United States, Finland, and the Netherlands, the highest percentage of students volunteered monthly (14.7%, 13.3%, and 12.5%, respectively). Belgian, Canadian, and Israeli students most often reported volunteering on a weekly basis (22.2%, 22.1%, and 19.2%, respectively).

The combined results for these volunteering features identify interesting patterns. First, the countries that have the highest rates of volunteer participation (India and China) are also the countries where students participate most frequently on an occasional basis and invest the lowest average number of hours volunteering per month. In these countries episodic volunteering is highly prevalent. Similarly, in India and China, most volunteers on average reported contributing less than 2 hours per month.

By contrast, the most regular and time-consuming volunteering can be found in Canada, the United States, and Belgium. In Canada, 8 out of 10 students reported volunteering, investing an average of 15.6 hours per month, and participating most frequently on a weekly basis. Although in Belgium slightly fewer students were involved in volunteering, their intensity of participation was similar to that of Canadian students. American students participated at similar rates as Canadian students but invested slightly fewer hours on average and were more likely to participate on a monthly basis. In spite of these nuances, these three countries distinguish themselves from other countries by displaying high rates of volunteering and a high intensity of involvement (i.e., a large number of hours and more frequent involvement).

In Table 2, we compared cross-nationally the importance of the three motivational dimensions, altruism, résumé, and social MTV. Across all countries, students express the strongest support for altruistic and value-driven reasons for volunteering. Résumé building motivations come second, and social and ego-defensive reasons for volunteering are considered least important. Notwithstanding the similarity in these general rankings, important country differences exist in the strength of these motives. As we expected, the résumé building MTV scores are highest in Canada and the United States as well as in England. "Résumé padding" is least important in Korea

Table 1
Participation in Volunteering, Hours of Volunteering and Frequency of Volunteering by Countries

Country	Participation in volunteering			Hours of volunteering			Frequency of volunteering								
	N	(%)	(SD)	M	Not at all		Occasionally		Monthly		Weekly				
					N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)			
United States	1020	(78.8)	(45.42)	11.26	288	(22.4)	608	(47.3)	189	(14.7)	200	(15.6)			
Canada	775	(79.7)	(59.01)	15.58	225	(23.4)	433	(45.0)	92	(9.6)	213	(22.1)			
Belgium	636	(71.4)	(57.07)	15.74	271	(30.5)	357	(40.2)	63	(7.1)	197	(22.2)			
China	777	(84.5)	(15.11)	2.44	113	(12.4)	644	(70.8)	94	(10.3)	59	(6.5)			
Croatia	307	(51.2)	(18.34)	3.45	346	(57.7)	197	(32.8)	15	(2.5)	42	(7.0)			
England	380	(63.3)	(24.80)	4.98	224	(37.5)	290	(48.6)	28	(4.7)	55	(9.2)			
Finland	466	(70.1)	(11.63)	4.07	219	(33.2)	269	(40.8)	88	(13.3)	84	(12.7)			
India	517	(86.2)	(5.34)	2.08	98	(16.3)	409	(68.2)	65	(10.8)	28	(4.7)			
Israel	398	(67.5)	(22.30)	7.24	202	(34.3)	216	(36.7)	58	(9.8)	113	(19.2)			
Japan	411	(39.1)	(4.10)	0.72	732	(69.9)	262	(25.0)	24	(2.3)	29	(2.8)			
Korea	508	(73.0)	(16.42)	4.34	246	(35.5)	286	(41.3)	55	(7.9)	105	(15.2)			
Netherlands	368	(61.1)	(19.47)	6.76	243	(40.6)	184	(30.8)	75	(12.5)	96	(16.1)			

Table 2
Motivations to Volunteer by Country (Means Scores on 5-Point Scale)

	Motivation					
	Altruism		Resume		Social	
	<i>M</i>	(<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i>	(<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i>	(<i>SD</i>)
United States	4.03	(0.86)	3.67	(0.93)	3.16	(0.78)
Canada	4.04	(0.81)	3.83	(0.96)	3.05	(0.85)
Belgium	3.78	(0.51)	3.22	(0.84)	2.97	(0.55)
China	3.81	(0.58)	3.55	(0.67)	2.74	(0.72)
Croatia	4.10	(0.62)	3.29	(1.02)	2.38	(0.80)
England	3.94	(0.72)	3.67	(0.85)	2.79	(0.74)
Finland	4.17	(0.57)	3.03	(0.93)	2.73	(0.76)
Israel	4.03	(0.61)	3.22	(1.07)	2.99	(0.85)
India	3.82	(0.93)	3.29	(0.89)	3.07	(0.90)
Japan	3.82	(0.68)	3.03	(0.92)	2.47	(0.81)
Korea	3.65	(0.62)	2.70	(0.84)	2.91	(0.60)
Netherlands	3.81	(0.52)	3.39	(0.85)	2.94	(0.58)

and Finland. Altruistic and value-driven MTV are most important in Finland and Croatia, followed by the United States, Canada, and Israel; this motive receives the lowest support in Korea. Social and ego-defensive reasons are most prevalent in the United States, India, and Canada and are least important in Croatia and Japan.

MTV and Participation in Volunteering

We hypothesized that students participate in volunteering to achieve outcomes that help them build their résumés and advance their careers. We also proposed that this relationship will hold most strongly in environments that value such volunteering experiences and see them as proxies for success in future employment and learning. On the basis of these assumptions we formulated two hypotheses. First, participation in volunteering will be higher if students are motivated by the résumé building motive (Hypothesis 1a). Second, this effect will vary by country, with the United States and Canada being the countries where the volunteering-as-investment paradigm most strongly and explicitly prevails (Hypothesis 1b).

The results of the probit analysis shown in Table 3 do not support the hypothesis that students who are more strongly motivated by résumé building motives have a higher probability of participation in volunteering. Although the résumé building motive attains statistical significance it has a negative impact rather than a positive impact as hypothesized. Instead, altruistic MTV has a positive effect on the probability of participation in volunteering with a high level of statistical significance. Social

Table 3
Probit Analysis of Participation in Volunteering—The
First Step in Heckman Selection Model

	Coefficient	SE	<i>p</i> value
Motivation to volunteer			
Resume	-0.0813948	0.0165335	***
Altruism	0.0988395	0.0166072	***
Social	-0.1172552	0.0165526	***
Countries (ref = United States)			
Belgium	-0.161519	0.0677237	*
Canada	0.0049831	0.0692249	<i>ns</i>
China	0.4037255	0.0715459	***
Croatia	-0.9078035	0.0743274	***
Finland	-0.4675916	0.0765609	***
India	0.053085	0.1054163	<i>ns</i>
Israel	-0.5303797	0.0798712	***
Japan	-1.027619	0.0672781	***
Korea	-0.2549429	0.0747513	***
Netherlands	-0.4380052	0.072438	***
United Kingdom	-0.4818365	0.0784688	***
Background characteristics			
Age	-0.0061779	0.0037414	<i>ns</i>
Gender	0.0157902	0.0320489	<i>ns</i>
Family income	0.1213484	0.0281142	***
Program (ref = Business)	-0.1746076	0.0375411	***
Individual values			
Material	-0.07354	0.0164193	***
Nonmaterial	0.1574626	0.0175303	***
Service requirements			
In high school	0.1191455	0.0390777	**
In university	0.2752176	0.0427672	***
_cons	0.631903	0.1212628	.000
Mills lambda	12.73469	6.617925	.054
Rho	0.70168		
Sigma	18.148741		
Lambda	12.734695	6.617925	

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

MTV is also statistically significant; but again in a negative direction. In sum, the results of the probit analysis do not support the first hypothesis in this study.

To test the second hypothesis (Hypothesis 1b), we examine country effects on participation in volunteering with the United States as a reference category, controlling for MTV and background variables. All countries show statistically significant differences except for Canada and India. These two countries thus provide a similar contextual effect for participation in volunteering as the United States. The direction

of effects indicates that in comparison to the United States, students in China are significantly more likely to participate in volunteering; these positive country influences indeed reflect the higher rates of participation we observed in these countries. All other countries show a statistically significant negative effect. Thus, the probabilities of participation in volunteering, in these countries are significantly lower than in the United States. In sum, the results of the probit analysis support the assumption that important cross-national differences in rates of student volunteering exist. The findings also show that the United States and Canada produce similar country effects on rates of volunteering and that a majority of other countries have a negative impact when compared to the United States. These results support Hypothesis 1b; however, India is also similar to the North-American countries, and China has a significant positive impact, thus suggesting the need for further study with respect to this hypothesis.

The results of the probit analysis also demonstrate that family income and the requirement for volunteering in high school and university are statistically significant in a positive direction. When students come from a higher-income family and are exposed to some form of service requirement, the probabilities for participation in volunteering increase. As we anticipated, students in business programs have a significantly lower probability of participation in volunteering in comparison to students in other academic programs. Finally, students' personal value systems also have an effect: the stronger their support for nonmaterialistic values, the higher their likelihood of volunteering. The effect of material values is negative: the stronger their support for materialistic values, the lower their likelihood of volunteering.

MTV and Intensity of Volunteering

Based on our utilitarian investment model, we expected not only differences in the probability of participation but also in the intensity of volunteering. We hypothesized that students motivated by résumé building motives are likely to engage for fewer hours and particular assignments (episodic) just sufficient to enhance their résumés (Hypothesis 2a), and again, that significant differences would be found cross-nationally (Hypothesis 2b). Table 4 shows findings from the OLS regression analysis (the second stage of the Heckman selection model) with hours of volunteering as the dependent variable. Table 5 reports results of the ordered logistic regression with frequency of volunteering as the dependent variable.

The results in Table 4 and Table 5 support the hypothesis that students who are more strongly motivated by résumé building MTV have a lower intensity and regularity of volunteering. Students who more strongly support résumé building MTV participate less in volunteering, but if they do so, they are significantly more likely to invest fewer hours and to volunteer in an episodic way. By contrast, students who embrace altruistic MTV invest more hours and participate more frequently, and these effects have high statistical significance. Support for social MTV is also statistically significant albeit with negative effects on both measures of intensity of

Table 4
OLS Regression Results For Hours of Volunteering per Month—The Second Step in Heckman Selection Model

	Coefficient	SE	<i>p</i> value
Motivation to volunteer			
Resume	-0.828138	0.3577239	*
Altruism	1.478026	0.4029654	***
Social	-1.686851	0.434903	***
Countries (Ref = United States)			
Belgium	2.164631	1.059672	*
Canada	1.06366	0.9611411	<i>ns</i>
China	-4.499022	1.578796	**
Croatia	-12.17645	3.279251	***
Finland	-8.518054	1.867819	***
India	-7.159495	1.318765	***
Israel	-3.238326	2.079404	<i>ns</i>
Japan	-15.35996	3.855059	***
Korea	-4.960189	1.330824	***
Netherlands	-2.607123	1.768898	<i>ns</i>
United Kingdom	-6.146754	1.907352	***
Background characteristics			
Gender	0.9152708	0.4962525	<i>ns</i>
Family income	1.030109	0.5843579	<i>ns</i>
Program (Ref = Business)	-3.230599	0.8084478	***
Individual values			
Material	-1.298161	0.346961	***
Nonmaterial	1.693678	0.5617984	**
Service requirements			
In high school	-0.2847695	0.7204122	<i>ns</i>
In university	1.452676	1.037956	<i>ns</i>
_cons	2.339703	3.743431	.532

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

volunteering. In sum, the results of OLS regression analysis and ordered logistic regression analysis support the third hypothesis (Hypothesis 2a). We also found that high school and university exposure to required volunteer participation is significantly related to volunteering regularly but not to the number of hours volunteered per month.

Comparing country effects on the intensity of volunteering (Hypothesis 2b), most countries show statistically significant differences. With regard to the estimated number of hours of volunteering per month, most countries differ significantly from the United States, except for Canada, Israel, and the Netherlands. These three countries produce similar contextual effects on students' number of hours of volunteering as in the United States. When the United States is used as a reference category and controlling for other variables, Belgium is the only country that has a significantly greater positive

Table 5
Ordered Logistic Regression of Frequency of Volunteering (None, Occasionally, Monthly, Weekly)

	Coefficient	SE	<i>p</i> value
Motivation to volunteer			
Resume	-.1206533	.0231294	***
Altruism	.1734136	.0231669	***
Social	-.2017991	.0225901	***
Country (ref = United States)			
Belgium	0.0243352	.0910638	<i>ns</i>
Canada	0.0726325	.0882171	<i>ns</i>
China	0.165158	.0862093	<i>ns</i>
Croatia	-1.747988	.1082809	***
Finland	-0.7236631	.1041274	***
India	-0.5662574	.1146263	***
Israel	-0.5086273	.1070413	***
Japan	-1.998731	.0981957	***
Korea	-0.445404	.1006196	***
Netherlands	-0.3789245	.1034897	***
United Kingdom	-0.7088527	.1057338	***
Background characteristics			
Gender	0.0981409	.04403	*
Family income	0.1900554	.0393529	***
Program business	-0.3137958	.0520327	***
Material	-0.2123703	.0229129	***
Nonmaterial	0.3082511	.0246404	***
Service requirements			
In high school	0.1324964	.0524919	*
In university	0.2639354	.0562586	***
/cut1	-0.7846437	.1037221	
/cut2	1.410885	.1045318	
/cut3	2.062481	.1062412	

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

impact on the number of hours of volunteering. All other country deviations from the United States are in a negative direction. Thus the time devoted to volunteering in these countries is lower than in the United States.

The analysis of country effects for students' frequency of volunteering shows that Canada, Belgium, and China do not differ statistically from the United States. All other countries have a statistically significant negative effect; hence students in these countries are more likely to volunteer episodically.

In sum, the results of OLS regression and ordered logistic regression analyses indicate that, as expected, country context significantly affects students' intensity of volunteering. However, students in North America have a higher likelihood of participating

on a regular and more time-intensive basis, which is contrary to our fourth hypothesis (Hypothesis 2b). A number of countries show similarities in varying ways. Although students in Israel and the Netherlands are likely to volunteer less frequently, they invest a similar amount of time. In Belgium and China, students volunteer as frequently as those in the United States and Canada, but Belgian students tend to spend more hours and Chinese students are likely to invest fewer hours.

The findings also indicate that family income has a statistically significant positive effect. Thus, students from higher-income families are more likely to spend more hours volunteering and to participate more frequently. Volunteer requirements in high school or university do not affect the number of hours devoted to volunteering, yet they exert a positive impact on the frequency of volunteering. By comparison to students in other programs, students in business have a lower intensity of volunteering. Finally, both material and nonmaterial values are statistically significant in predicting the intensity of volunteering. Students supporting material values participate on a less intensive basis, whereas students who embrace nonmaterial values invest more hours and participate more frequently.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of our empirical analysis reveal that not only is our first hypothesis on résumé building MTV as a positive predictor of student volunteer participation not supported, but also résumé building MTV has a statistically significant negative impact as indicated in Table 3. Instead, altruistic MTV has a positive effect on the probability of participation in volunteering with high statistical significance. This finding does not support our hypotheses about the expected impact of résumé building MTV or the overall influence of the “investment model.” However, when we add to this finding the fact that results from Table 4 and Table 5 support the thesis that students who are more strongly motivated by résumé building MTV reported volunteering less frequently and investing fewer hours in volunteering, some intriguing explanations arise.

There can be various explanations to our findings. First, volunteering is not the result of one aspect of MTV alone. People who volunteer often do so because of a comprehensive set of interrelated motives (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Those who are mostly motivated by résumé building MTV may in turn be less interested in volunteering as compared to students motivated by all three dimensions of MTV. If one is primarily motivated to enhance his or her future career, it is likely that this individual lacks other motives and is thus less likely to volunteer. Indeed, résumé building MTV may help increase one’s chances of volunteering, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient MTV to volunteer, as significant personal costs must be weighed against the probability that such activity would favorably influence an employer or university admission officer. Yet if one were also motivated to make friends (a social

MTV), and enjoyed helping others (an altruistic MTV), the benefits would increase so that the student may be more likely to accept the costs of volunteering and hence participate.

Second, students were asked to report why they volunteer, that is, whether they agreed or disagreed with each one of a listing of possible reasons that might motivate them to volunteer. In all countries, students agreed more strongly with altruistic reasons as their motivations to volunteer than any other motivations. Although they did not reject the other motivations, résumé and social MTV, they ranked second to altruistic MTV. This finding is telling, for it explains what students most commonly believe about volunteer activity: it is to help others at a personal cost to themselves, so that they respond strongly to altruistic MTV. Indeed, this finding conforms to the net-cost theory of volunteering wherein individuals perceive volunteers as those who undertake an activity at net cost to themselves, despite certain private benefits they may realize along the way (Handy et al., 2000). Although students in our sample do not reject résumé or social MTV, these MTV are overshadowed by altruistic MTV. Notwithstanding that they receive private benefits (résumé, social), students see that they give their labor at some cost to themselves, and hence regard their volunteering as an altruistically motivated activity.

Third, another possible explanation for the lack of support for the individual “investment model” may be social desirability. Most students find it difficult and embarrassing to admit that they are volunteering only to enhance their private benefits. It is socially accepted that volunteering is an altruistic behavior, and that private benefits to the volunteer are inappropriate. It is possible that many students, who may have strong self-serving motives (résumé building or social), over-emphasize their altruistic MTV along with downgrading their résumé building and social MTV. This possibility calls for future studies in this area to incorporate measures of social desirability and/or to supplement surveys with open-ended interviews to probe self-serving motives. Such advice may prove equally fruitful for studies of MTV among other population groups.

Fourth, because our data are cross-sectional, we cannot determine what first motivated students to volunteer, and if MTV changed over the course of volunteering. It may be likely that résumé building MTV has a strong impact on the initial decision to volunteer, but once students get involved they learn about other meanings and values of volunteering through their experience. Although the initial MTV may have been more exclusively focused on private benefits (for example, building their résumé or making friends), once the students became involved they gradually developed different insights and explanations for continuing to volunteer. To explore change or motivation in MTV calls for a longitudinal research design.

Another methodological issue may be related to the fact that we found lower rates of volunteering among students highly motivated by instrumental MTV. We inquired about participation in volunteering only over the 12 months immediately preceding the survey. As a result, we cannot exclude the possibility of a higher incidence of

volunteering activities among instrumentally motivated students though over a longer period of reference. Given that we found résumé building MTV to be positively associated with more episodic involvement, the likelihood of reporting any type of volunteering in the past 12 months is lower than that for regular (ongoing) volunteers. In addition, because at the time of the survey many respondents were not facing a job search or admission into graduate school (especially those in the early years at university), they had no immediate instrumental benefit to participating in volunteering, a situation that further explains why instrumentally oriented students reported lower rates of volunteering in the preceding 12 months.

Finally, it may be that our population of university students was too homogeneous to find pronounced differences in the effect of résumé building MTV. Other studies have established that the effect of instrumental MTV on volunteering is stronger for youth, especially college students, in comparison to older age cohorts (Hall et al., 2006; Sax, 2004). A comparison of our sample with young people outside university and/or in other stages of the life course may provide stronger support for our hypothesis.

In addition to the hypothesized impact of individual MTV on the rate and nature of volunteering, we also expected the value of volunteering to be culturally rooted and country specific. We predicted the influence of utilitarian MTV to be particularly strong in the North American countries, where it is an accepted norm. We indeed find that the United States and Canada provide a highly similar context for volunteering in this respect; no differences in country effects between the United States and Canada are observed on any of the dependent variables (rate, hours, and frequency of volunteering).

Assuming that the signaling value of volunteering is strongest in the North-American context, our findings show an opposite effect of the utilitarian value of volunteering at the macro and the micro levels. This result may intimate that the association between résumé building MTV and actual volunteering is not at the individual level but at the societal level. In the analysis students responding high on résumé building MTV participate less in volunteering. However, in countries, such as in North America where résumé building is a normative expectation, large number of students—even if they are unaware of it or loathe to admit it—respond with high rates of volunteering. Given that North American students also participate on a more intensive basis, with more frequent involvement and longer hours of volunteering, our findings would suggest—contrary to our theoretical assumptions—that regular volunteering is a more credible signal of volunteering than is episodic volunteering, which is a less costly engagement. It is possible that those reading the résumés are more savvy and are looking for more intensive volunteering.

India and China, the two emerging economies, showed comparable or higher rates of volunteering as North America. These countries, more than the other countries in the study, are culturally more influenced by the United States, and students there often aspire to come to study or work in the United States. Thus, it is not surprising that they learn the norms and value of volunteering.

However, three other countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Israel, in which the signaling value of volunteering is supposed to be weak, showed similar effects on the intensity of volunteering as the North American countries. Given this finding, it seems that at the country level a more complex set of dynamics is at play, which affects various aspects of volunteering differently in different contexts. Presumably, the country effects observed are not attributable solely to the utilitarian value of volunteering for university students, but perhaps more importantly to the broader social and cultural origins of the nonprofit sector in these countries (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). In this respect, the relationship between MTV and differences in welfare regimes that was demonstrated in earlier research (Hwang et al., 2005; Ziemek, 2006) might offer a more adequate explanation.

In addition, the effects of MTV and country differences, the finding that the existence of required volunteering in either high school or university has a positive effect on participation in volunteering and in volunteer regularity, but not on hours volunteered begs for special discussion. It is likely that either service requirements could have a positive effect on students' propensity to volunteer, or that students report a higher rate of volunteering because they also consider service requirements as volunteering.

Our hypotheses were derived from the micro-economic model emphasizing the importance of the (résumé) investment motive for volunteering, and the returns to this investment. Although studies show that such benefits exist, they do not ask whether volunteers also get a return on the social and altruistic MTV, and whether these latter benefits are more important to the volunteer as compared to the returns to their résumé MTV. Our findings suggest that students are more influenced by the benefits of the altruistic and social MTV than the benefits of resume building MTV, which we have argued may lead to a better job, a higher wage or admission into a particular university or program. Furthermore, as Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) noted, the combination of MTV is the stronger predictor of volunteering rather than its various parts.

At this writing, cross-national studies of volunteering have not used MTV to predict differences in volunteer participation or in its intensity. As a point of departure to examine the impact of the investment model, we propose that research focus on the decision to volunteer, i.e., what actually triggers individuals to take the initial step to participate. In addition, the complexity of our findings calls for more systematic research to disentangle the multiple individual and contextual effects on the nature of volunteering. Existing research has looked at differences in rates of volunteering, however, it has not yet taken up the challenge of explaining cross-culturally the multidimensional nature of volunteering, that is, the highly diverging interactions between rates and intensity of volunteering. The present research is but a first step in this ambitious research agenda.

Notes

1. It may be argued that these motives are utilitarian as well because they serve a purpose to further the volunteer's social position and/or meet his or her social needs.

2. In our instrument we ask only about volunteering in formal organizations. Sorting capability based on individuals' volunteer experiences requires that it should be verifiable that what an individual claims is indeed done. This realization makes formal volunteering through organizations a better signal than informal volunteering. In the questionnaire we defined volunteer experiences as "giving *freely* of your time to help others through organizations" and presented a list of eight types of organizations (religious organizations, human service organizations, sport or cultural organizations, community organizations, student clubs or other university organizations, neighborhood organizations, local activist groups, and youth organizations) and one generic volunteer activity (on-line volunteering).

3. Although this motive can be interpreted as an ego motive, we believe that it is more a value-driven motive as interpreted in our survey, given its factor loading with other items on altruism and values. It is reasonable to infer that volunteering will only make a person feel better *if* he or she values helping others.

4. The Heckman selection model or Heckman correction (Heckman, 1979) is a two-stage method to correct for selection bias in samples in which the dependent variable is only observed for a restricted, non-random sample. In this study, we examine participation in volunteering—our dependent variable—and a considerable part of the student population does not take part. Given that the decision to volunteer was made by the individual students, those who choose to volunteer constitute a self-selected sample rather than a random sample. And thus, estimating the determinants of participation from the subpopulation who choose to volunteer may introduce bias and lead to erroneous conclusions. Indeed, by running an OLS regression we would automatically exclude students who have zero hours of volunteering, that is, we remove students who did not volunteer with the same condition (age, gender, etc.). The Heckman selection model is a two-step statistical approach that corrects for nonrandomly selected samples by estimating the self-selection decision by using the independent conditions with inclusion of all students. Thus, Heckman's solution adds a "decision equation" to the "outcome equation." First, we formulate a model for the probability of volunteering (a probit regression). In the second stage, we correct for self-selection by including a transformation of the predicted individual probabilities as an additional explanatory variable (OLS regression). In the tables we report the unstandardized coefficients of the probit model (Step 1) and the OLS model (Step 2).

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Femida Handy is a professor at the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania, United States.

Lesley Hustinx is a postdoctoral fellow of the Research Foundation—Flanders at the Centre for Sociological Research, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

Chulhee Kang is professor at the Yonsei University Graduate School of Social Welfare in Seoul, South Korea.

Ram A. Cnaan is professor and associate dean at the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania, United States.

Jeffrey L. Brudney is the Albert A. Levin Chair of Urban Studies and Public Service at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs.

Debbie Haski-Leventhal is a NAB research fellow in the Australian School of Business at the University of New South Wales, Australia.

Kirsten Holmes is research fellow at the School of Management at Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

Lucas C. P. M. Meijs is professor of volunteering, civil society and business at the Rotterdam School of Management at Erasmus University, Netherlands.

Anne Birgitta Pessi is an adjunct professor and academy research fellow at the Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Bhagyashree Ranade is the founder and managing trustee of the Institute for Women Entrepreneurial Development in Pune, India

Naoto Yamauchi is professor of public economics at Osaka School of International Public Policy at Osaka University, Japan.

Sinisa Zrinscak is professor of social policy and head of department for social work at the University of Zagreb, Croatia.