

“For everlasting social services: volunteer retention in faith-based organizations”

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Abstract

Given faith-based organizations' (FBOs) reliance on volunteers, the high turnover of volunteers within FBOs is one of the problems that managers have to deal with. Current theories explain employee turnover by using theories of organizational commitment and job satisfaction which argue that volunteers would stay if they have higher personal commitment and feel satisfied with the unpaid job. However, the prevailing theories seem insufficiently capable to explain volunteer retention in FBOs. In this article, we review literature on FBOs and volunteer retention and we subsequently argue that we need to include "work calling" to understand volunteer retention, emphasizing how individuals may pursue their life purpose and spiritual achievement from their activities. Volunteers are likely to stay at FBOs when they have the feeling that they are contributing to larger goals pursued through these FBOs. In sum, this study contributes to the literature by linking work calling and volunteer retention in FBOs, resulting in a number of insights. First, volunteers in FBOs tend to be driven by religious teaching, personal goodwill, an inclination to assist the needy, and a call to serve god. Second, volunteers choose to work and stay in FBOs because they are engaged in meaningful work and, therefore, experience self-satisfaction and a meaningful life. Third, calling can be incorporated within various factors at individual level (e.g. commitment, satisfaction, and motivation) and organizational level (e.g. management practices, task-related, and organizational type) to conceptualize volunteer retention in FBOs.

Keywords: volunteer, retention, work calling, meaningful work, faith-based organizations

A. Introduction

The idea of volunteer retention in nonprofit organizations attracts attention of academics and practitioners, given that nonprofits depend on volunteers (Eisner, Grimm, Maynard, & Washburn, 2009). From an economic standpoint, volunteers are viewed as a unique labor force that accomplishes a variety of functions and tasks, such as administrative support, counselling, educational information, advocacy, project management and a just "shoulder to cry on" (Pearce, 1983; Trexler, 2014, p. 1).

Given many nonprofits' dependence on volunteers, some researchers stated that retaining volunteers is essential for nonprofits (Aldridge, 2003; Dorsch, Riemer, Sluth, & Paskevich, 2002; Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009; Stillwell, Culp, & Hunter, 2010). In fact, nonprofits have been trying hard to find a formula to make their volunteers stay longer and having an intention to remain active in their organization. Here, it is necessary to determine what the volunteer's distinct need is and, as said by McBee, as every person, including volunteers, seems likely "have a button that can be pushed" (see in Diamond, 2017, p. 47) and nonprofits' try hard to find such a button – if at all existing.

One typical category of nonprofit organizations are faith-based organizations (FBOs). Regarded by the World Conference on Religion and Peace as the largest and best-organized civil institutions in the world (see in Berger, 2003), FBOs represent a unique combination

of organizational, spiritual and moral capacities to transform communities in rural and desperate areas (G. Clarke, 2006; M. Clarke & Ware, 2015; Petersen & Le Moigne, 2016; Terry et al., 2015). By self-governing, FBOs work on a voluntary basis to resolve conflicts, service poor people, and promote “articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level” (Berger, 2003, p. 16; G. Clarke, 2007; Olarinmoye, 2012; Orji, 2011; Parsitau, 2011; Schneider, 2013a). Their distinctive role, as an organizational hybrid of religious beliefs and social activism (Leurs, 2012; Sider & Unruh, 2004), is to constitute a new breed of actors shaping global and local policy (Abdelsalam & Qassem, 2016; Atalay, 2017; Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013b; Stajura et al., 2012).

Similar to other nonprofits, FBOs also rely on volunteers, and they form their unique capital. Thus, also for FBOs, retaining their volunteers is a must. In particular, as FBOs, like other nonprofits (Eisner et al., 2009; Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009; Wisner, Stringfellow, Youngdahl, & Parker, 2005), have to deal with a high turnover rate among volunteers (Belcher & DeForge, 2007; Netting, O’Connor, Thomas, & Yancey, 2005).

This situation encourages researchers to study the topic of volunteer retention in-depth, especially as there is little research on this topic. Existing studies about volunteer retention have an inclination to focus on only a few isolated aspects of retaining volunteers, such as commitment, personal growth in a career path, work engagement, learning opportunities, job satisfaction, incentives, or other factors. At the same time, researchers only recently started to study aspects of FBOs’ (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013a; Schneider, 2013b) and most of them did not discuss human resource management and volunteer retention, although this topic is of utmost importance for developing FBOs.

Therefore, we first perform a literature review of all factors that influence individuals to continue their volunteering activities in FBOs. As the FBO literature is still sparse until now, we draw on the general nonprofit organizations’ literature on volunteer retention and apply that to the context of FBOs. This application of the general literature is warranted as FBOs and nonprofits are linked strongly, even though FBOs have their own distinctiveness (M. Clarke & Ware, 2015). The review shows that current studies usually explain high turnover by using theories of organizational commitment and job satisfaction which argue that volunteers would stay if they have higher personal commitment (Egli, Schlesinger, Candan, & Nagel, 2011; Sefora & Mihaela, 2016; Vecina, Chacón, Sueiro, & Barrón, 2012) and feel satisfied with the unpaid job (Cihlar, 2004; Egli et al., 2011; Hyde, Dunn, Bax, & Chambers, 2014; Lynch, 2000; Vecina et al., 2012). However, these prevailing theories seem insufficiently capable to explain volunteer retention in FBOs. They do not go deeper to discover on what would make volunteers more committed and satisfied. Next, building on this summative review, we argue that the study of volunteer retention, specifically regarding FBOs, could be significantly enriched by including the concept of “work calling”,

as part of the theory of meaningful work. Work calling emphasizes how individuals may get “a sense of life purpose and spiritual fulfilment from their careers” (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Molloy & Foust, 2017; Steele & Bullock, 2009, p. 273). In this perspective, volunteers are likely to join and stay longer at FBOs when they have the feeling that they are contributing to larger goals pursued through these FBOs.

In turn, this yields three key insights for future research and theory building about volunteer retention in FBOs. First, we are able to shed light on the drivers for doing volunteering in FBOs. Second, we explain what makes volunteers to stay longer in FBOs. Third, we provide an overview of the overarching factors influencing volunteer retention in FBOs. In general, the structure of paper starts with elaborating on the FBOs phenomenon and then turns towards the definition of volunteers, followed by a discussion of volunteering in FBOs. Next, the concept of volunteer retention is discussed and factors influencing volunteer retention in FBOs are reviewed. Subsequently, the concept of work calling is introduced into volunteer retention theories. The study finishes with discussing implications on future research.

B. Faith-based organizations and volunteers’ high turnover

One popular definition of FBOs comes from Berger (2003, p. 16) depicting FBOs as “formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level.” Berger's definition has been referred by most researchers in FBOs (Alyson B. Lipsky, 2011; Atalay, 2017; M. Clarke & Ware, 2015; Leurs, 2012; Orji, 2011; Thaut, 2009).

Researchers agree that FBOs make significant contributions in community development at local and international levels (G. Clarke, 2006; Lampkin & Raghavan, 2008; Tomalin, 2012). FBOs have been an effective “agent of transformation” (G. Clarke, 2007, p. 77) or “agent of sustainable development” (Arend, 2008, p. 262) which successfully disprove the common assumption that religion does not have an important role in societal development. It is recognized that FBOs have crucial contributions in developing for instance the health sector through their programs (Akintola, 2011; Alyson B. Lipsky, 2011; Arriola et al., 2016; Haakenstad et al., 2015; Okaalet, 2002), improving the education sector (Moyer, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2014; Pandya, 2016; Sider & Unruh, 2004), developing social welfare systems (Atalay, 2017; Göçmen, 2013), enhancing women empowerment in developing countries (Abdelsalam & Qassem, 2016), helping marginalized communities (Parsitau, 2011; E. Wilson, 2011), rebuilding rural agriculture and work toward

environmental sustainability (Cochrane, 2013), promoting humanized and entrepreneurial leadership (Brown, 2009; Hong, 2012a), building cross-cultural relationships and promoting civic participation (Kaiser, 2015; Lloyd, 2014).

Apart from such advantages, FBOs also have weaknesses that need attention. For example, a few studies indicate that FBOs are less qualified in applying for public funds compared to secular nonprofit organizations (Farnsley, 2001; Hong, 2012a). Another issue is about the amount of workload. Volunteers in FBOs have been provided limited training to develop their capacities while there is increasingly demand in jobs and this gap increases work stress. An empirical study quotes a volunteer who felt overwhelmed and said, “I love God, but this is too much” (Belcher & DeForge, 2007, p. 12). The work practice in FBOs also demonstrates role ambiguity among formal staff and volunteers who simultaneously hold multiple roles and sometimes it will lead to role conflict (Netting et al., 2005). Further, some FBOs indicate the lack of managing wellness and health of volunteers and employees. Wellness can relate to financial issues or a combination of emotional, physical, safety, and educational issues (Arend, 2008). For instance, financial issues in FBOs’ workforce deal with volunteers who live without fixed incomes and have difficulties in paying their own daily bills although they are still committed to work in FBOs (Belcher & DeForge, 2007). A few FBOs in rural areas have been also criticized to neglect health policies for their people, whereas they are even, ironically, working in health sector (Arend, 2008).

An important problem faced by FBOs is the retention issue among their volunteers. Jenner defined that a volunteer is “a person who, out of free will and without wages, works for a not-for-profit organization which is formally organized and has as its purpose service to someone or something other than is membership” (Jenner, 1982, p. 30). Some case studies on FBOs point to their situation of being short-staffed and too dependent on volunteers. Yet, the high turnover of volunteers seems to happen every time and this phenomenon really challenges FBOs’ human resource management practices (Belcher & DeForge, 2007; Netting et al., 2005).

FBOs can’t buy or pay volunteers to work. Volunteering is considered as the act of giving in the community development (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Stebbins, 2009), local environment (Everingham, 2016; Hunter & Rollins, 2010; McGehee, 2014), nonprofit organizations (Bortree & Waters, 2008; Drucker, 1989; Eisner et al., 2009) and also becomes an effective tool to raise social awareness (Leeman, 2006; Liu, Ching, & Wu, 2017). Due to its gracious nature, volunteering will benefit all aspects in human life, and because of that, it is important that it will be managed and retained properly for the future.

C. Volunteering in FBOs: Motives

There have been numerous studies that focus on the reasons of individuals to engage in volunteering. It seems that, as motivation studies would argue, volunteering always happens to satisfy social and psychological goals (Chacón, Menard, Sanz, & Vecina, 1998; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Rehberg, 2005; Sergent & Sedlacek, 1990). One of the famous works about functional reasons for volunteering comes from Clary et al. (1998) who claim that there are six reasons for people in doing volunteering. This finding, named the Volunteer Functional Motivation Inventory (VFMI), was refined from their previous study (Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992) and has been used extensively by the other researchers, supporting their work (e.g., Bang & Ross, 2009; Barnett & Flint, 2007).

According to the VFMI (Clary et al., 1998), individuals volunteer first of all because of their values; led by altruistic and humanitarian values they show concern to others. Religious belief is another example for this value factor (Einolf & Chambré, 2011; Mattis et al., 2000; Merino, 2013; Wymer, 1997). Second, according to the VFMI, people volunteer because of an understanding factor, as they get new learning experiences and opportunities through volunteering to build their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Also training programs and travel opportunities are relevant for this factor (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). Third, people volunteer because of a social factor. Through volunteering they obtain better social interaction and build friendship with others. Fourth, people can volunteer because of a career factor, as through volunteering they developing their career path. Gaining academic credits and obtaining employment status are some examples of this factor (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). Fifth, people may be led by a protective factor; volunteering can help them to escaping from negative feelings such as guilt over being more fortunate and more prosperous than others. Finally, the VFMI mentions an enhancement factor, which refers to promoting positive feelings such as the ego's growth and development.

In short, individuals' entering volunteering activities because of various reasons, many of which refer to an inclination to seek meaning and meaningful work, which is a fundamental human need that satisfies their inevitable interests in being able to experience the constitutive values of autonomy, freedom and dignity (Yeoman, 2014). Another simple indicator that points at volunteering as meaningful work is that its practices are located outside the monetary system (Claes & Note, 2016). By making work central to a meaningful life, people tend to spend more time for the valuable goods of friendship, family, personal development and benefit for others (Levy, 2005). Here, volunteers have found the genuine purpose of work, which is to achieve a desire for significance and value in their lives (Rodell, 2013). Volunteers show higher levels of generativity and social commitment than the general population (Schnell & Hoof, 2012). That could be related to their meaning of life. "A life of meaning is a life with a purpose," (Yeoman, 2014, p. 246) and "a life has a point

when it is oriented toward goals which transcend the limits of the individual, goals which are more valuable than the subjective concerns of any one person” (Levy, 2005, p. 178).

Within FBOs context, based on VFMI’s six factors (Clary et al., 1998), the general reason for individuals to participate in volunteering is mostly motivated by a value factor, although there is still possibility of being affected by the other five factors. Yet, the value factor might have special relevance in the context of FBOs, as they contain a combination of spiritual-moral capacities and social activism. These typical organizations have generated a melding place where mind, heart and soul could work together (Marshall & Saanen, 2007). Building on the previous research, we infer that individuals who prefer volunteering in FBOs tend to be driven by four triggers namely religious teaching, personal goodwill, an inclination to assist the needy, and a call to serve god.

Religious teaching

First, as FBOs' activities are inspired by the principle of faith (G. Clarke & Jennings, 2008), individuals may become volunteers because they are directed by religious teaching (Brooks, 2003; Yeung, 2017). Such teaching basically guides individuals to make decisions, act and interact within society (M. Clarke & Ware, 2015). They think that volunteering is “the right thing to do” and “it is their duty to do so” (Son & Wilson, 2012, p. 475). FBOs then play their role as “a space for imagining and practicing an explicitly religious ethics” (Mittermaier, 2014, p. 519). For examples, within Christian-based FBOs, volunteers are expected to articulate the gospel as reason to bring hope, combat poverty and care for the suffering (Belcher & DeForge, 2007; Chiste, 2006). One of their missions is to live out the teachings of Christ in the world and a “fundamental motivating force in all activities is the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it pertains to the alleviation of human suffering, the development of people and the fostering of charity and justice” (Thaut, 2009, p. 338). Similarly, Islamic-based FBOs also rely on doctrines from both Qurán (the holy book) and Hadith (written documents depicting the speech, actions and habits of the prophet Muhammad) concerning human for instance the concept of Islamic charity to help others and manage social order (Cochrane, 2013; Tobin, 2015). In Islamic-based FBOs, Islamic classic texts such as “begin with yourself” (*Arabic: ibda’ bi nafsik*) has been circulated widely as a religious rhetoric to attract new volunteers (Mittermaier, 2014).

Personal goodwill

Volunteers in FBOs tend to have personal goodwill related to their will to do good deeds (Marshall & Saanen, 2007). This characteristic might be stimulated by religious teaching, participation in religious events, and parental voluntarism (Caputo, 2009; Grønbjerg & Never, 2004), or just stemming from innate personality. Moreover, before

joining in FBOs, volunteers often have an intention to bring the idea of peace and prosperity in their neighborhood. Mittermaier (2014) emphasizes how an individual's good intention (*Arabic: niyya*) could ignite a spirit to be a good person and frequently help the others. This intention might in turn be beneficial to maintain volunteers' commitment in the FBOs. In general, research shows that the decision to volunteer is mostly driven by personality traits such as empathy (Paterson, Reniers, & Völlm, 2009), which is often related to individual traits such as honesty, conscientiousness, temperance, et cetera. Almost all religions support these ethical traits (Ghazzawi, Smith, & Cao, 2016).

Inclination to assist the needy

It seems natural that volunteers have an inclination to assist the needy as this attribute of pro-social action is closely related to the work of volunteering. Different from profit sector, volunteers working in nonprofits might be motivated by preferences to help people and altruism (Bassous, 2014; Marshall & Saanen, 2007). In FBOs, volunteers have “feeling with society”, bringing empathy or care, and are very satisfied in putting a smile on the poor's faces (Mittermaier, 2014, p. 522). Here, one popular concept is compassion, referring to an emotion inherent in FBOs' work as a motive to implement a social program. Compassion is connected to Christian thoughts about duty and spirituality, which becomes an imperative factor in building long-term commitment of some FBOs (Chowdhury, 2011; Staral, 2004). Another concept could be seen in the Islamic tradition such as *'amal al-khayr* which refers to doing good deeds and being beneficial to others. This term has been applied widely in relation to charitable giving and volunteering work (Mittermaier, 2014).

Calling to serve god

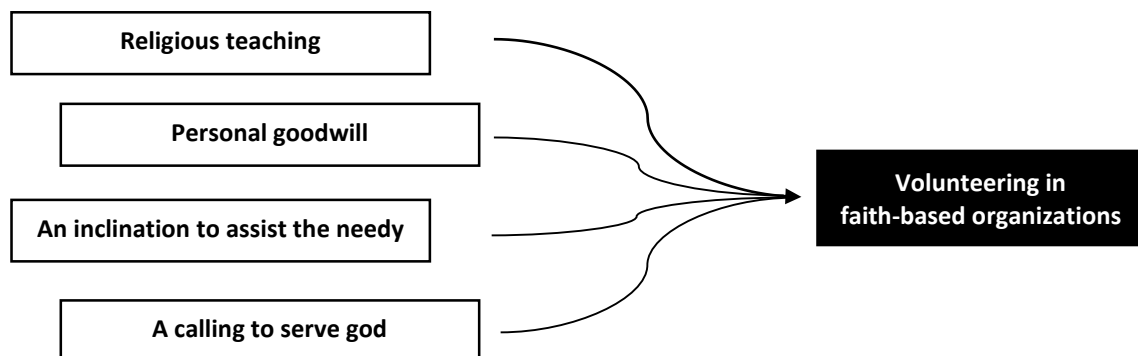
Volunteers in FBOs are not only motivated by others' needs, but often also by a call to serve their god (Marshall & Saanen, 2007). This motive is probably very common, but also very difficult to explain. It has been confirmed that the concept of god is fundamental for religious ethics, as in the Semitic religions (i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam), the relationship of god and man is of an ethical nature: “god acts towards man in an ethical way, that is, as god of justice and goodness, and man, correspondingly, is expected to respond to this divine initiative also in an ethical way” (Izutsu, 2008, p. 254). A calling to serve god relates strongly to the religious teaching as a trigger for volunteering in FBOs, yet goes beyond the teaching itself. It is a matter of personal faith and trust in god. Volunteering in FBOs thus becomes a kind of an extension of faith. A volunteer asserts: “I believe that god has commanded me to volunteer” (Belcher & DeForge, 2007, p. 12), so he devotes his work entirely to god. Others express: “We're all here because god loves us. He chose us for this visit” (Mittermaier, 2014, p. 524). This spiritual experience reflects that volunteering

in FBOs for them goes beyond caring for someone else out of compassion. In the Arabic word, volunteering has been frequently translated as *tatawwu'*, which means literally “being rendered obedient.” Thus, volunteering implies a pious relationship of obedience toward god (Mittermaier, 2014, p. 520). The purpose is to serve god in order to get closer, please, thank, or even just “bargain” with god.

Some volunteers consider social action as a method to get closer with god (Mittermaier, 2014). Volunteers try to worship god by caring for others. One said when he gives somethings to the needy: “It’s as if you were placing them directly into god’s hands” (Mittermaier, 2014, p. 526). Volunteers share that, “By just doing kind things, you are spreading the gospel through love. You’re spreading love, you’re spreading god” (Smith, 2017, p. 97). Another reason to serve god is that volunteers occasionally look to “a spiritual economy” in their good deeds. They do volunteering because they believe that their action will be rewarded by true happiness and material achievement in the current life as well as thereafter (Atia, 2012, p. 811; Rudnycky, 2009). As Atia said, some volunteers are “building a house in heaven” (see in Tobin, 2015). Thus, some volunteers see their actions as “trading with god” with the eschatological goal to “opening an account in paradise” (Mittermaier, 2014, p. 524).

Drawing on prior explanations, the value motives for volunteering in FBOs are multiple (see in figure 1). This article just focuses on the value motive of VFMI and argues that volunteers in FBOs are still related with the other five factors of VFMI to volunteer. By assessing their value, Individuals tend to register as volunteers in FBOs because they have values which are generally directed by their religion. Started from religious teaching, they form personal goodwill resulting in a pro-social behavior in helping the needy. Ultimately, volunteers have a great foundation as their motives are to responding a higher calling that comes from their god.

Figure 1: Value motives to volunteer in FBOs



D. The concept of volunteer retention

It is important for all organizations relying on volunteers to pay attention to attracting new volunteers and retain them for a long time. Regarding retention, it is necessary to attain to volunteers; high drop-out rates and workforce instability (Chacón, Vecina, & Dávila, 2007). Within volunteer organizations', volunteers could be metaphorically seen as "customers" and consequently must be treated in good manner. These typical customers will always seek, look at, buy and pay what organizations produce (Aubrey Wilson & Pimm, 1996). Further, after they bought something, what would make them buy again is loyalty to the organization (Wisner et al., 2005).

Retention emphasizes the continuation of service delivery or donation behavior by a volunteer. Here, a volunteer makes a conscious decision to work or not to work. Retention can be seen from finishing work duration and willingness to serve another social projects. McBride et al (2011, p. 852) define retention as "completion of the term of service and examining time commitment by the intensity and duration of the service." At its simplest level, volunteer retention is "purely a matter of making volunteers feel good about their assignment and themselves. If the experience is satisfying, the volunteers will continue to want to participate again" (Lynch, 2000, p. 1).

A problematic aspect in McBride's definition is the period of service performed by volunteers, which then becomes the indicator of retention. Researchers have different interpretation about this period. It is argued that retained volunteers are defined as a person who has volunteered at the same event or with the same organization for at least five consecutive years (Slaughter & Home, 2004). Others state that they must provide short-term service for three years or less, within the past five years, before they quit the volunteering program (Culp, 1997). Moreover, reducing the period even further, some suggested that retention is the "proportion of year-1 volunteers who also serve in the following year." (Trexler, 2014, p. 6). Yet, despite the range of volunteer duration, the important point here is that the volunteer repeats assignments or continuous to work for some time in a certain organization, program or activity.

E. Potential factors influencing volunteer retention in FBOs

We already mentioned some factors which influence volunteer retention in nonprofits. To provide a summative overview, we classify those factors into four categories: 1) personal characteristics; 2) management practices; 3) task-related factors; and 4) factors related to the type of organization. The first category relates to individual level while the others are linked to organizational level, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Factors influencing volunteer retention

Level	Individual	Organizational		
Category	Personal characteristics	Management practices	Task-related	Organization type
Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commitment ○ Satisfaction ○ Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning opportunities (e.g. Mentoring, training and professional development) ○ Supporting personal growth in career path ○ Incentives program (e.g. Allowances, stipends and provision of transport) ○ Understanding volunteer motives ○ Effective supervision ○ Recognition and appreciation ○ Orientation program ○ Leadership ○ Fun factor ○ Communication and internal marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work engagement ○ Job design indicated by aligning volunteers' motives with the form of given tasks (e.g. working in the same neighbourhood, working with children, high quality task achievement, et cetera) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization reputation

1) Personal characteristics

Within the category of personal characteristics, important factors that impact volunteer retention are commitment, satisfaction and motivation. Those factors have been popular research subjects. In general, some empirical studies indicated that volunteers could remain longer in nonprofits if they have good personal commitment (Dorsch et al., 2002; Egli et al., 2011; Hoeber et al., 2005; Huber, 2011; Hyde et al., 2014; Sefora & Mihaela, 2016; Vecina et al., 2012). Organizational commitment is defined as “the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974, p. 604). Both personal and social environmental factors could affect the level of commitment (Dorsch et al., 2002). Organizational commitment can be characterized by at least three factors: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's values; a willingness to exert substantial effort on behalf of the organization; and a convinced desire to maintain organizational membership (Porter et al., 1974).

Another personal factor that could affect retention is satisfaction. According to some empirical papers, work satisfaction has been playing a significant role in maintaining

volunteer retention (Cihlar, 2004; Egli et al., 2011; Hyde et al., 2014; Lynch, 2000; Vecina et al., 2012). If the factor of commitment relates to the intention to remain for a longer duration, satisfaction tends to play in particular a role in the initial phase of volunteering. This also means that satisfaction is already important when organizational commitment is still low and developing (Chacón et al., 2007). For volunteers who work in nonprofits, work satisfaction does not only relate to monetary matters. Volunteers are seen to enjoy satisfaction from the work and the work context itself because it is aligned with their intrinsic values (Benz, 2005). For example, satisfaction can be obtained just through feeling connected with the organization. A sense of identification with a work group could consequently meet the need for connection and may result in healthier and happier volunteers who eventually want to continue their volunteering activities (Lynch, 2000).

Satisfaction has a strong linkage with motivation. Motivation is crucial in nonprofits. It is argued that someone with high altruistic motivation tends to do volunteering for a long time (Rehberg, 2005). This intrinsic motivation could arise from humanitarian values, from the non-profit's mission, from a desire to produce a quality service, from social factors, or even from career factors or from positive feelings of self (Barnett & Flint, 2007; Benz, 2005). Also religious tradition and belief systems provide intrinsic motivation (Rehberg, 2005), and some indicate that increases in religiosity and spiritual support are associated with increases in volunteer activities over time (Chao Guo, J. Webb, Abzug, & Peck, 2013; Kamanga, Bwalya, & Fumpa, 2014; Krause, 2015).

2) Management practices

The second category which impacts volunteer retention consists of management practices. As the category of management practices is very broad, the factors listed in this category are also quite diverse. They include learning opportunities like mentoring, training and professional development (Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009; Newton, Becker, & Bell, 2014), supporting personal growth in career path (Barnett & Flint, 2007), incentives program such as allowances, stipends and provision of transport (Aldridge, 2003; McBride et al., 2011), understanding volunteer motives (Culp, 1997; Anne Wilson, 2012), effective supervision (Flood, 2005), recognition and appreciation (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2005; Phillips, Little, & Goodine, 2002; Stillwell et al., 2010), orientation programs (Cuskelly et al., 2005), leadership (Aldridge, 2003; Carter, 2005; Trexler, 2014) and fun factor (Aldridge, 2003).

Also communication and internal marketing practices influence volunteer retention. Internal marketing is regarded as the task of successfully recruiting, educating and motivating employees so as to achieve the goals of organizations (Lee, Chan, & Kim, 2015). This factor also plays a crucial role in volunteer retention (Curran, Taheri, MacIntosh, &

O’Gorman, 2016; Little, 2004;Phillips et al., 2002). Through effective communication volunteers could perceive their organizations as the good thing for them, for now as well as the future.

3) Task-related factors

The third category that affects volunteer retention is the task itself. This includes factors such as work engagement (Vecina et al., 2012) and task or job design (Egli et al., 2011) by aligning volunteers’ motives with the form of given tasks (Clary et al., 1992; Erasmus & Morey, 2016; Hunter & Rollins, 2010; Slaughter & Home, 2004). Those factors essentially could ensure that volunteers can match nonprofits’ activities with their main motivational needs. An empirical study shows that this "matching principle" could satisfy volunteers' motives and seems likely to make them stay longer in the same organization (Stukas, Worth, Clary, & Snyder, 2009). For instance, the tasks that volunteers appear to love are delivering services in the residential houses which are in the same neighborhood as their sponsoring church (Barthle, Makar, & Hercik, 2008), activities that give an opportunity to work with the children (Huber, 2011), or tasks that acquire high quality task achievement (Gidron, 1985). These factors may influence volunteers’ satisfaction, and the most important determinants of volunteer satisfaction are the quality of job assignments volunteers receive. Moreover, it is important the task is conducted in a friendly atmosphere (Cihlar, 2004).

4) Organization type

The fourth category which influences volunteer retention is the type of organization. Due to many types of nonprofits, some volunteers have their own preferences among various nonprofits. The example of this category can be seen from organizational reputation (Curran et al., 2016; Dyck, 2011) which might be influenced by organization type. Organizational reputation is related to the concepts of identity, image, and status of the organization. It is an universal label for an individual’s information about an organization’s historical actions over time. High reputation is postulated to positively impact volunteers’ loyalty and their retention (Dyck, 2011). FBOs could be an example of specific type of nonprofit organizations supported by specific volunteers.

If we apply those four general categories influencing volunteer retention in nonprofits to the context of FBOs, they are probably applicable as FBOs share essential characteristics with general nonprofits. Yet, there could be other factors which relevant in the context of FBOs. Since the reasons for volunteering in FBOs are mostly related to value factors, volunteers are probably more looking to focus on finding meaningful work (Claes & Note,

2016; Rodell, 2013) by accomplishing moral-religious duty and heeding god's calling. Once they find meaningful work in their volunteering tasks, they intend to maintain the level of happiness by working longer in FBOs to fulfil their calling for a longer period. Therefore, we argue that volunteers choose to work and stay longer in FBOs because of meaningful work and they are happy with the situation because they can feel self-satisfaction and meaningful life.

F. Retention in FBOs: Installing work calling concept

Current theories on volunteer retention are not just talking about individual factors as the predictor of retention. Management factors in the organizational level have been also discussed as potential causes. However, the existing studies about volunteer retention have an inclination to focus on few specific aspects of retaining volunteers. They were generally designed to study only one or two potential predictors in an isolated fashion such as recruitment and selection, personal growth in a career path, job design, work engagement, learning opportunities, incentives, etc. A holistic review about all factors, within both individual and organizational level, that influence people to continue their volunteering activities is required to portray the whole picture of volunteer retention.

The missing point: Work calling

Most people generally view their work through three lenses. First, a job is a way to get an income. Second, a career which plays a role to increase advancement needs. Third, a job can be a calling which plays a role in self-fulfilment and performing socially or environmentally helpful work (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Getting income and building a career in particular relate to the profit sector and focus on financial and status aims, while the third one, emphasizes an inner drive toward personal happiness (Duffy & Dik, 2013) and influencing society and environment positively. People refer to their calling in ways like: “You do it because you love what you do and you really have this sense of purpose and meaning, and that’s what’s driven me” (Molloy & Foust, 2017, p. 347). Or: “Well, I don’t know what they could do that would make me leave. Even if I wasn’t getting paid I would still be here” (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009, p. 35).

As an emerging concept to study, Molloy and Foust (2017, p. 351) define it as “an overarching sense of meaningfulness in one’s work, brought to awareness through a process of being compelled or a moment of reckoning instigated by a higher power or the internal self and enacted through the integration of the individual’s passion and skill-set in ways that positively contribute to society through one’s work.” Calling at least contains three components: an external summon suggesting an orientation toward action, the clarity of

meaning or purpose as well as personal mission, and pro-social motivation leading to societal action (Duffy & Dik, 2013; Elangovan, Pinder, & McLean, 2010; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012). These components distinguish calling from related constructs such as work centrality, work commitment, work engagement, and pro-social work behaviours (Duffy & Dik, 2013). Further, if connected to the idea of meaningful work, calling is considered as a subset or specific construct under the umbrella of meaningful work (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012) because the meaningfulness dimension is merely one part of calling (Molloy & Foust, 2017). Calling tends to emphasize personal authenticity to complete their unique purpose (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010) and require “a communicative perception and process between the called and the caller” (Molloy & Foust, 2017, p. 351).

The existence of communication among the called and the caller becomes a central issue in calling. This is the reason for the presence of the term of “a transcendent or external summon” (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427; Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 429) as a calling source, although there are still possible sources such as a sense of destiny, an awareness to suit with individual's passions, the needs of society, or other domains which have not yet been measured in academic works (Duffy & Dik, 2013). It is very likely that some individuals might have multiple sources for their calling (Dik & Duffy, 2009). In fact, the term calling originally refers to social practices in a religious context where individuals are called by god to perform good deeds (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). It exposes the meaningfulness in the work as a kind of obligation and personal responsibility that must to be accomplished (Molloy & Foust, 2017). Historically, calling was regarded by theologians as “the summons to Christian life and discipleship” or as “man’s outward station in life to which he is assigned by divine providence” (see in Elangovan et al., 2010, p. 430). Yet, nowadays, calling could be stimulated by religious interest or secular interest; many people sense a calling through secular cases like education, world peace and conflict studies, environmentalism, moral duty, public health, wildlife conservation and global biodiversity (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Elangovan et al., 2010). Moreover, due to secularization, the modern term of calling may has lost most of its religious linkage (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

Prior research on calling has demonstrated several benefits for individuals. If individuals believe that their work is a calling, they will be consequently more committed to their organizations and jobs, feeling connected personally with their jobs, and find it more easily to find their work meaningful (Duffy & Dik, 2013). Calling is even positively connected to organizational commitment in cases where the nature of the job could not satisfy individuals (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2015). Calling also has a strong relation with satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Satisfaction might arise because of increasingly

commitment and meaningful experiences (Duffy & Dik, 2013). At the same time, because the work is their passion and they perceive it as moral duty, individuals are willing to give more time and sacrifice anything at the workplace (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Wrzesniewski, 2002) and are better in teamwork when doing their activities (Steger et al., 2012). Often, individuals with a sense of calling would perceive that their work cannot be separated from their life. They work for the both self-fulfilment and social-fulfilment, not just for building a career or for financial aims (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Further, it is argued that they would often continue to work even though they were not getting paid. The goal of those with calling orientations is to obtain the profound fulfilment enjoyed while on the job and also to create a better place in the world (Wrzesniewski, 2002).

Reviewing these effects of calling, it is plausible that calling has severe impact on job turnover (Elangovan et al., 2010) as well as volunteer retention. However, calling has been not received much attention in the study of retention, specifically within the non-profit sector. Current theories on volunteer retention seem to focus on a static approach by understanding that individuals could keep working longer if they have higher commitment and job satisfaction. They do not go deeper to find out on what would make individuals more committed and satisfied. Therefore, in this study, we propose that the concept of calling is a significant part of the theoretical framework of volunteer retention. Moreover, by looking back at the historical background of calling, which relates to religious context, the integration of calling within volunteer retention in the setting of FBOs becomes highly relevant and applicable. To comprehend FBOs appropriately, the importance of “faith literacy” in every dimension of the organization is critical (Petersen & Le Moigne, 2016, p. 394). As calling generates truly meaningful work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), it has a great impact on fulfilling an individual's intrinsic motivation as the primary feature of calling experience (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012) which translates to shape greater commitment, higher satisfaction, more intense involvement in organizational citizenship behaviours, and in the end, to reduce the risk of high turnover (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Steger et al., 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003). If calling is important in the profit sector to encourage paid workers in finding meaningful work, calling is likely also very relevant in the nonprofit sector, not just for getting meaningfulness, but also for understanding the retention of volunteers.

Calling in FBOs' volunteer retention

One of unique attributes of FBOs is the religious issue which becomes institutionalized in FBOs activities. It is believed that religion could provide meaning, specifically regarding emotional support and inner relief (Horstmann, 2011). Volunteers therefore pursue this meaning through performing their volunteer work based on religious teaching and god's

calling. The calling could help volunteers to follow their “sense of life purpose and spiritual fulfilment from their careers” (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Molloy & Foust, 2017; Steele & Bullock, 2009, p. 273). This phenomenon strengthens workplace spirituality because volunteers endeavour to find meaning and bring their unique talents as well as spirits to the FBOs (Garland, Myers, & Wolfer, 2008; Hong, 2012b). The common goal then appears “where everyone from the top down shares a unified vision and sense of purpose beyond making money” resulting in “a happier workforce and real bottom-line improvements” (Leigh, 1997, p. 26). In the end, volunteers are expected to have an intention to remain in FBOs because they are personally satisfied with their self-fulfilment, and toward bigger purpose, they could achieve their meaningful life.

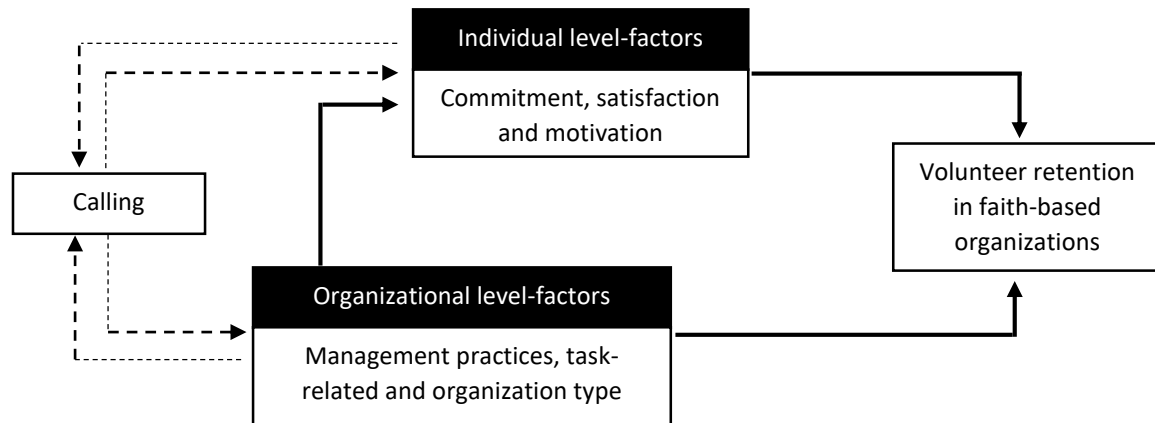
Another unique feature of FBOs is that volunteering in FBOs through work calling could potentially influence retention for a longer period. As volunteers are willing to work in FBOs to find meaningful work, this does not necessarily imply that they will cease volunteering after getting such meaningful work done. It needs to be considered that meaningful work, like the experience of happiness as a by-product of meaningful life (Bellin, 2015), is relatively dynamic: sometimes individuals could have it but sometimes they could lose it. Through a sense of calling, volunteering in FBOs could be like a never ending journey to seek and maintain meaningful work. There is an intense connection between spirituality and individuals’ morale as well as turnover intention. Individuals with high level of spirituality and meaning-finding behaviour tend to stay longer at the same organization (Hong, 2012b).

Having said this, FBOs can utilize the concept of work calling to manage and influence volunteer retention. FBOs must provide meaningful work for volunteers by matching the issue of calling not just within the initial phase of volunteering, but also in the middle and in the end of jobs to encourage volunteers continue with their organization. This process may require better understanding of how organizations could discover, influence and match a calling (Elangovan et al., 2010). By assessing various factors which potentially influence volunteer retention, calling can be incorporated within individual level (e.g. commitment, satisfaction, and motivation) and organizational level (e.g. management practices, task design, and organizational type) as a primary tool to encourage volunteers to stay longer in the FBO. Figure 2 integrates the different factors and relates them to calling.

At the individual level, it is already demonstrated that calling has strong impact on commitment, satisfaction and motivation (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Steger et al., 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Calling is a potential factor which could encourage volunteer to feel committed, satisfied and motivated, resulting in the intention to stay. Factors at the individual level could grow by personal circumstance

which means that calling has already blossomed within individual's, even before volunteers join an FBO.

Figure 2:
The intersection of calling and other factors influencing on volunteer retention



Calling may also partly be influenced by management intervention. Thus, organizational level could influence calling and in turn volunteer retention. Calling could be a feature addresses in FBOs' recruitment system in order to match volunteers' calling with the organization's goals, activities and culture. For instance, FBOs could select only volunteers having higher compassion and faith calling. Some empirical studies have valued volunteer recruitment effectiveness through close or same-faith ties and religious involvement because it could facilitate discussing faith teaching and developing spirituality among members (Merino, 2013; Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011).

Moreover, task design within FBOs can be related to calling by matching social-work with volunteers' individual callings. Prior studies supported that volunteers having tasks which could meet their basic motivations tend to remain longer in the same organization because they are most likely satisfied (Clary et al., 1998; Stukas et al., 2009) and more committed (Alfes, Shantz, & Saksida, 2015). The form of task itself seems likely paired with the purpose of volunteers' calling. Some empirical studies reveal that common tasks in FBOs could be food distribution, eviction assistance (Belcher & DeForge, 2007), youth activities, abuse counselling, educational assistance, business development, and health treatment (Littlefield, 2010).

In addition, another way to integrate calling in retention management might be by designing a training and personal development program which emphasizes religious teaching about god's calling and volunteering. Relying on the proposition that "the most consistent finding is that volunteers are more highly educated and more religious" (Son & Wilson, 2012, p. 473), training programs in FBOs could potentially create educated-

religious people with high desires in a sustainable volunteering work. It is perceived that religion has a great pedagogical impact over volunteering activity (Brooks, 2003). Through the training program, volunteers will be regularly called, reminded, and educated about the idea of doing good deeds for the common good.

G. Discussion and implications for future research

This article reviews insights on volunteer retention and applies it to the context of FBOs. Next, we introduced the novel idea of calling, as part of meaningful work, to better understand volunteer retention in FBOs. This in turn yields important insights. First, volunteers in FBOs tend to be driven by religious teaching, personal goodwill, an inclination to assist the needy, and a call to serve god. Second, volunteers choose to work and stay in FBOs because they are engaged in meaningful work and, therefore, experience self-satisfaction and a meaningful life. Third, calling can be incorporated within various factors at individual level (e.g. commitment, satisfaction, and motivation) and organizational level (e.g. management practices, task design, and organizational type) to conceptualize volunteer retention in FBOs. These insights can be attended to in future studies, and we specify five important avenues for further research.

First, it is necessary to investigate the idea of calling in relation to volunteer retention through empirical studies in both developed and developing countries. Empirical work can yield deeper understanding of the management practices of FBOs related to volunteer retention. Empirical research can specifically explore some management practices related to volunteer retention causes such as recruitment, training and development, reward systems, evaluation programs, task design or other practices which relate to some cues of calling.

Second, although the calling concept originates from religious traditions, it has been developed further and is now mostly understood from a secular perspective. Many studies tend to see calling as a secular phenomenon even though there are organizations phenomena (e.g. FBOs, religious organizations, etc) that require different perspectives on calling. Hence, it is noticed that calling needs to be seen from multiple perspectives. At least, it is necessary to distinguish calling in relation to three types of organizations: business organizations, nonprofit organizations, and FBOs. Work calling in the first case is the popular-secular one which generally prevails in the majority of current research. These organizations can try to shape careers as calling by “funneling all paid work toward calling” because it can provide “the means to achieve transcendent fulfilment” (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 163). Second, calling in nonprofits usually also does not connote to religious matters, but at the same time is different from calling in a wage-earning setting.

Third, this article discussed calling in FBOs, which is derived from religious values. Prior studies have used different names to label it such as spiritual calling (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2015), vocational calling (Kent, Bradshaw, & Dougherty, 2016), and sacred calling (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015; Rosso et al., 2010). Comparative research can be empirically conducted to further explore and conceptualize the differences between these multilayered facets of calling within organizations.

Third, to enrich our study on calling, it is also essential to have an improved conceptualization of calling, including insights from other religious traditions outside Christianity. So far, calling has been developed from the Christian tradition. It may generate novel insights if future research will focus on extracting calling ideas from other religions such as Judaism and Islam, which are still part of the Semitic religions, and also from Buddhism, Hinduism or even Confucianism and other less prominent religious traditions. Conceptual studies are highly anticipated to augment the existing conceptualization of calling.

Fourth, most research on calling discusses the impact of calling on individuals, organizations, or societies. Yet, they do not concern the main sources of calling, which are however of key importance to answer the question how to create and find a calling. A study has suggested that calling might appear from four conditions: an urge to find meaning in one's life, attentiveness, willingness to experiment with new paths, and a growing understanding of the self (Elangovan et al., 2010). However, this assumption has never been tested, nor have studies evaluated if these four conditions are comprehensive. Empirical studies are thus required to find out how organizations could successfully create or influence calling. In fact, by conducting empirical research in various types of organizations, including FBOs, prospective new sources of calling might be discovered in order to complement these four conditions.

Fifth, calling could become a better concept if we do not only discuss its positive side, but also concern the dark side of calling. A few studies have indicated that calling might trigger an exploitation from managers and also the prevalence of workaholism resulting in work and life imbalance (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015; Duffy & Dik, 2013). Especially within FBO, which relate tightly to people's innermost religious feelings, the exploitation or even abuse might potentially emerge because through using religious arguments and feelings people can be easily abused. A 12th century theologian, Averroes, rhetorically wrote "If you want to control the ignorant, you must cover every falsehood in religious guise" (see in Al-Asmar, 2015). If the falsehood could be considered good because it was wrapped with religious issues, then especially exploitation can happen if the work itself is basically already good such as is the case in most volunteer activities. Bad managers could take advantages from this situation. Empirical studies are required to uncover this dark side of calling and

accordingly to offer creative ideas of problem solving. FBOs might be among the best places to study and understand this issue.

H. Conclusion

A 13th century Persian poet, Rumi, said: “Respond to every call that excites your spirit” (Rumi, 1997, p. 157). This article contributes to understanding the spirit of volunteerism by focussing on volunteer retention in FBOs. Retaining paid workers is already difficult, and retaining unpaid workers is even more difficult. We conclude that individuals tend to do volunteering in FBOs because of religious teaching, personal goodwill, an inclination to assist the needy, and a call to serve god. Volunteers have often a significant purpose, and through finding their volunteer work meaningful they may decide to stay longer in FBOs. In turn, FBOs can design management practices and a workplace that matches with individuals’ calling and provides meaningful work for volunteers. Ultimately, this could contribute to promoting everlasting social services performed by FBOs in the third sector.

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