# VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: A MOTIVATIONAL PROFILE

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Professional organizations rely on the commitment of their volunteers and volunteer leaders to manage the business of the organization. However, many of these volunteers are not trained in leadership and management strategies and have busy personal and professional lives. This research takes a functional approach to examine the motivations of these volunteer leaders in the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) through the analysis of Internet-based surveys. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998), the Personal Values Questionnaire (Hay Group, 1992; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953), and a non-standardized demographic survey were used to identify patterns in motivational characteristics typical to a volunteer leader.

Two results are significant. A high need for power combined with low need for affiliation, the Leadership Motive Pattern (McClelland & Boyatsis, 1982), predicts greater volunteer leadership hours amongst AOTA members. The demographic profile of dual-income earners, expert practitioners, and no care-giving responsibilities demonstrates a trend toward predicting greater volunteer leadership hours. These data suggest that volunteer leadership is a unique and distinct construct, not as a corollary to generic volunteerism or leadership.

Concepts such as gender, power and influence, cultural and ethnic characteristics, social status and the changing nature of work should be considered in future research in the area of volunteer leadership. If professional organizations can target people with certain characteristics, recruitment, retention and mentoring efforts will be more successful and long-lasting.

References:

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