Prediction of Burnout in Volunteers[1]

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This work studies the personal experience of volunteering and several antecedent and consequent variables. We studied the effect of the amount of time dedicated to the organization, motivation, social support, integration in the organization, self-efficacy, and characteristics of the work on a consequent variable of the volunteering experience; that is, burnout, with its 3 components of efficacy, cynicism, and exhaustion. The statistical analysis shows that the time dedicated to volunteering and the extrinsic motivations (i.e., social and career) predicts higher levels of burnout, whereas intrinsic motivations (i.e., values and understanding), life satisfaction, and integration in the organization are negatively related to burnout.

Many factors must be taken into account when studying volunteerism, including the antecedent factors that lead a person to devote part of his or her spare time to helping others, the volunteering experience itself, and the consequences of this experience on the person or on the organization. The volunteer process model (Omoto & Snyder, 1995) is a model of the volunteer process that identifies three stages (i.e., antecedents, experiences, consequences) and three levels of analysis (i.e., individual, organization, social system). At the *antecedents* stage, Omoto and Snyder identified personality, motivational factors, and characteristics of people's circumstances that predict the decision to be a volunteer. At the *experiences* stage, Omoto and Snyder explored the interpersonal relationships that develop between volunteers and the clients of the organization and the ways that these relationships lead to the continued service of volunteers and positive benefits to the clients. At the *consequences* stage, they studied the effect of volunteerism on the attitudes and behaviors of volunteers, the client, and their social networks. Thus, the volunteer process model explains the entire process of volunteerism, from initiation to maintenance over sustained periods of time.

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One of the most important antecedent factors in understanding volunteer work is motivation. In fact, the motivations behind volunteering explain most of the differences between volunteers and ex-volunteers (Hidalgo & Moreno-Jiménez, 2006; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). In 1991, Clary and Snyder created the functional approach to motivations in volunteerism to gain insight into the motivations influencing volunteering activity. Later, Clary et al. proposed six psychological and social motivations served by involvement in volunteerism: *values*, identified as the wish to manifest humanitarian and altruistic values; *understanding*, or the opportunity to undergo new and different experiences and the chance to exercise knowledge and skills; *career*, which indicates the benefits the participant might obtain from volunteer activity for his or her professional life; *social*, which involves volunteering reflecting motivations concerning relationships with others, social pressure from family and friends to become or to remain a volunteer; *protective*, which is centered on protecting the ego from negative aspects of the self (this could refer to reducing the guilt of being more fortunate than others or a way of coping with personal problems); and *enhancement*, which refers to self-development and improving one's self-esteem and state of mind (Clary et al., 1998).

Omoto and Snyder (1995) included social support as an antecedent variable of volunteerism, in the form of social support received by volunteers from their family and others in daily life, as well as the social support received by volunteers in an organization. Rewards and recognition for work done (Bennett, Ross, & Sunderland, 1996) are also of importance. The volunteer assesses this via the perceived social support given by the organization's staff.

Some studies have focused on the type of activities people follow to increase their life satisfaction by analyzing the relationship between life satisfaction and volunteerism (e.g., Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000). Wheeler, Gorey, and Greenblatt (1998) reviewed 37 studies related to the effects of volunteerism, and found a positive relationship between volunteerism and life satisfaction in elderly people. Dávila (2003) also found this relationship in a different age group: Life satisfaction appears to influence the decision to become and continue being a volunteer, while volunteerism modulates the level of life satisfaction in such a way that volunteers feel more satisfied. Hidalgo and Moreno-Jiménez (2006) found a higher level of life satisfaction in volunteers than in ex-volunteers.

There are other variables at the experiences stage, such as integration in the organization (so far explored very little), which may have an important influence on volunteerism. Following some authors (Chacón & Vecina, 2002; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008; Penner, 2002; Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio, & Piliavin, 1995), most research on volunteers is

still on the individual and has largely ignored the fact that most volunteering takes place within an organizational context. For instance, Grube and Piliavin noted that volunteers work for the same organizations, in the same structured roles, with some of the same people, often for years. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal observed the ambiguity usually shown by volunteers when facing their job and their lack of instruction and formal training, which leads to informal sources of socialization in the organization, such as colleagues, by trial and error, or client/user feedback.

Despite this, studies analyzing the effects of any of these variables on volunteerism are quite rare. This is especially amazing if we realize that situational/organizational variables, when considered, explain more variance than do sociodemographic, motivational, or attitudinal variables (Cnaan & Cascio, 1999). Cnaan and Cascio found that management practices of the organization (e.g., reinforcement, ways of contact, selection, training, supervision of volunteers) significantly explained variability on satisfaction, commitment, and continuance. The impact of these results on subsequent research has been small, and these variables quite often are ignored.

Other aspects of organizational integration, such as social relationships with members of the organization, have been explored less often. However, social networks set by volunteers when doing their tasks may significantly influence their willingness to continue their collaboration with the organization. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) found that people may start to volunteer for certain reasons (e.g., a desire to help others), and continue to do so for different reasons (e.g., strong affiliation with a volunteer peer group). These authors, by performing an ethnographic study with Israeli volunteers, concluded that relationships with the organization, peers, and recipients have an important part in the socialization process.

At the consequences stage in the volunteer process, some authors have included other variables. Burnout may be of particular relevance. Initially, the term *burnout* was used to explain the deterioration in service and care provided by volunteer organizations and health and social workers (Freudenberger, 1974). It mainly referred to volunteers lacking a fixed work schedule and who were not professionally trained, but who balanced this lack with high personal enthusiasm: After a period of 1 to 3 years, they tended to become unmotivated and lost interest in their work.

Later, the term was used mainly within the professional context. Maslach (1976) defined *burnout* as chronic stress produced by contact with clients that led to exhaustion and emotional distancing from them at work. Initially, the study of burnout focused on help professionals (Maslach & Jackson, 1982), and was conceptualized as an effect of the interaction between the professional and the service user. Based on this model, the Maslach Burnout

Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981a, 1981b) was created, but burnout was also soon observed in other professions that involved chronic stress but did not involve working with people. In later studies, the MBI was modified and became the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS), in which burnout was redefined as a crisis regarding one's work, but that did not necessarily imply a crisis involving relationships with people at work (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

The original questionnaire used to evaluate burnout, the MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1981b), took into account three factors or components: *emotional exhaustion*, which is a loss of energy, physical and psychic exhaustion, feelings of being worn out and powerless; *depersonalization*, which is a negative attitude toward others, distancing, irritability, and callousness toward the people one is serving; and *low personal accomplishment*, which involves feelings of incompetence, low assertiveness and self-esteem, ineffectiveness, and cognition focused on failure. However, later studies showed that when applied to jobs that did not involve serving people, the suitability of these factors became unclear. For example, the depersonalization factor is not appropriate in the kind of service where interaction with clients is not a priority or is lacking. Publication of the MBI-GS (Maslach et al., 1996) made up for these deficiencies because its items are more generic and nonexclusive to professionals serving people. The new version proposes to modify the three former factors slightly into exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy.

Currently, *burnout* can be defined as a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that may arise when a person is involved in situations of high emotional demand over a prolonged period. The burnout syndrome at work, as a response to chronic job stress, is increasingly gaining social relevance. Several socioeconomic and labor market changes have contributed to the increase in burnout, and greater involvement in volunteerism among the general population has further increased the incidence of this syndrome (Gil-Monte, 2002).

There are several studies that have demonstrated the existence of burnout among people doing volunteer work (e.g., Ferrari, Loftus, & Pesek, 1999; Ross, Greenfield, & Bennett, 1999; Snyder, Omoto, & Crain, 1999). The most common outcome is dropping out, which may be the reason for lower levels of burnout among volunteers than among professionals (Chacón & Vecina, 1999).

Activities that induce higher levels of burnout include those requiring frequent contact with users (typically, ill people or those with serious social problems) who require great physical and emotional effort. Assuming that burnout is related to activities demanding a high degree of emotional involvement, some authors have investigated differences in burnout among

volunteers performing tasks with greater or lower degrees of emotional involvement. A study conducted with volunteers in an Italian hospital (Argentero, Bonfiglio, & Pasero, 2006) found that volunteers in the emergency service showed greater depersonalization (i.e., negative attitude toward others, distancing, irritability toward the people being served), but a greater level of personal accomplishment than did other volunteers in the same hospital, as well as a positive relationship between their length of service and satisfaction and personal accomplishment.

Dávila and Chacón (2004a) found no differences in burnout between the social volunteers who were involved in activities not requiring high emotional demands (i.e., administrative or teaching services) and environmental volunteers who, in theory, do not have a high degree of emotional involvement. However, in a previous study, we found greater burnout in environmental volunteers than in socio-assistential volunteers (Moreno-Jiménez & Hidalgo, 2006), which suggests that other variables related to the tasks themselves or to the characteristics of the organization may be influencing the level of burnout experienced.

Other authors have studied the level of burnout in volunteers and its relationship to the intention to stay in the organization. For example Dávila and Chacón (2004b) analyzed the influence of burnout in continuity of volunteers, who completed the MBI and three measurements to evaluate their intention of continuing for 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. They concluded that there is a negative relationship between burnout and intention to stay in the post.

Schwarzer and Schmitz (2004) included perceived self-efficacy and characteristics of the job among the variables related to burnout. *Perceived self-efficacy* can be defined as belief in one's own capacity to plan and put into practice courses of action needed to achieve a given target. Litwin and Monk (1984) highlighted the importance of the staff's attitudes, volunteers' perceptions about the clients, and volunteers' job characteristics in the burnout experience.

Thus, the way volunteers experience their service will affect their quality of life as volunteers and, consequently, will have an effect on their decision to leave or stay in the organization; hence, the relevance of identifying the factors related to volunteerism or having an effect on it. In the present study, we focus on one negative consequence of the volunteer experience: burnout, which includes the three components of professional efficacy, cynicism, and exhaustion. Based on prior research, the following independent variables are taken into account as being able to influence the degree of burnout of volunteers: time devoted to the organization, motivation, perceived social support, life satisfaction, integration in the organization, self-efficacy, and job characteristics.

Method

Participants

A total of 309 volunteers (176 females, 133 males) working in 56 social organizations in Málaga and Granada (Spain) participated in the present study. Participants did volunteer work with different populations from the community: immigrants, children, elderly people, drug addicts, and people with disabilities. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 77 years ($M = 34.5$ years, $SD = 14.8$). Of the sample, 57.9% were women, whose mean age was 34.4 years ($SD = 13.7$), while the men's mean age was 34.7 years ($SD = 15.9$).

The participants' educational level ranged from university (52.8%) to secondary (39.0%) and primary school (8.2%). Regarding their employment status, 31.3% of participants were unemployed, 36.8% were currently working, 20.6% were students, and 11.3% were retired. Household income was distributed as follows: 14.7% received less than 800 € ($1,088 US) per month; 45.3% received between 800 and 1600 € ($1,088–$2,176 US) per month; 25.5% received between 1600 and 2400 € ($2,176–$3,264 US) per month; and 14.4% received more than 2400 € ($3,264 US) per month. The average national is 1500 € ($2,040 US) per month.

Instruments

Personal questionnaire. The personal questionnaire gathered data regarding age, gender, marital status, number of children, education, employment status, and household income. In addition, we included questions on factors considered relevant to the participants' volunteer activity because of their potential influence on dependent variables: hours per month devoted to volunteer work, and time (in months) spent performing volunteer work in the organization.

Motivation to become a volunteer. We used the Volunteer Functions Inventory that was proposed by Clary et al. (1998) to evaluate the motivation behind becoming a volunteer. The inventory has six subscales, which include protective motivation, values, career, social motivation, understanding, and enhancement.

In the present study, we applied Dávila and Chacón's (2003) adaptation of the Volunteer Functions Inventory into Spanish. The inventory consists of 30 items to which the respondent replies on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important*) to 7 (*extremely important*).

We calculated the reliability index of the adapted Spanish version of the scale and obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .911 for the complete scale. At the

Table 1

Reliability Indexes for Motivation Subscale

	Original English version	Spanish version	Present study's adaptation
Protective of self	.81	.81	.80
Values	.80	.58	.79
Career	.89	.91	.89
Social motivations	.83	.91	.68
Understanding	.81	.78	.76
Enhancement	.84	.80	.82

subscale level (Table 1), high values were obtained for internal consistency, whereas the lowest values were obtained for the social subscale ($\alpha = .68$). Correlations between subscales had a mean of .383 and were statistically significant ($p < .001$), except for the correlation between career and values.

Perceived social support. Perceived social support was evaluated using an original measure that was designed by the authors. Four potential sources of social support and two different contexts were taken into account to study volunteerism. The social support sources are family, friends, organization staff, and other volunteers in the organization. The context refers to the area where social support was perceived: *Support A*, perceived social support during volunteer tasks; and *Support B*, perceived social support in their overall lives. Thus, by combining source and context, the item used to evaluate perceived social support (which was rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 to 7) was as follows: "Please rate the social support or help received from the following people during (a) your volunteer tasks; and (b) in your overall life, family, friends, organization staff, other volunteers in the organization."

Cronbach's alpha was .803 for the eight-item scale. The mean obtained for each type of perceived support (range = 1–8) ranged from 4.42 ($SD = 1.77$) for support from the organization staff in their overall life to 6.08 ($SD = 1.22$) for support from the family in their overall life among all eight types of perceived social support. In their overall life, volunteers received greater support from friends ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.23$) and family members ($M = 6.12$, $SD = 1.22$). However, in their volunteer tasks, they received more support from other volunteers ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.34$) and the organization staff ($M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.41$).

Integration in the organization. Integration in the organization was evaluated using an original measure designed by the authors. We assessed four aspects that relate to volunteer integration in the organization: (a) training received to perform the tasks; (b) understanding of one's role as a volunteer and the organization's aims; (c) relationships with other members of the organization; and (d) future expectations as a volunteer in the organization. Each subscale was assessed with two 5-point Likert-type items with responses ranging from 1 (*totally false*) to 5 (*totally true*). Each of the four aspects was introduced separately in the data analyses.

Coefficient alphas were .43, .45, .51, and .53 for training received, understanding, relationships, and future expectations, respectively. The following means were obtained for the four factors related to integration within the organization as a volunteer: training received, 3.90 ($SD = 2.25$); understanding one's role and the aims of the organization, 4.23 ($SD = 1.45$); relationships with other members, 4.03 ($SD = 0.73$); and expectations for the future, 3.99 ($SD = 0.77$). Bearing in mind that the maximum score was 5, all of the factors achieved a good level, especially the factor of understanding one's own role and the aims of the organization.

Self-efficacy. The perception of self-efficacy was evaluated using four items from an adaptation into Spanish of the General Self-Efficacy Scale that was developed by Schwarzer (1999). The original scale had 10 items ($\alpha = .85$), which are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*incorrect*) to 4 (*true*).

Cronbach's alpha was .831 for the four-item scale. Mean correlation between items was .553, with all correlations significant at .01 (two-tailed test). Mean self-efficacy was 3.49 ($SD = 0.49$) on the 4-point scale ranging from 1 to 4.

Job characteristics. The characteristics of the job performed by volunteers were evaluated using a scale developed by Vecina, Dávila, and Chacón (2005). The characteristics were evaluated using eight items representing eight main characteristics:

1. The job involves several non-repetitive tasks.
2. The job involves a complete process.
3. Tasks are chosen by oneself.
4. Jobs have clearly defined objectives.
5. The ultimate purpose of the job is known.
6. The job is useful for others.
7. The job can be done with great autonomy.
8. The job requires cooperation with others.

The items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*I totally disagree*) to 7 (*I totally agree*). Based on the mean of the eight characteristics of the

volunteer's job ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 0.99$), a score was obtained called *positive task*. The reliability index was .79 for the eight-item scale.

Burnout. The MBI-GS consists of 16 items distributed in the dimensions of professional efficacy (6 items), exhaustion (5 items), and cynicism (5 items). *Professional efficacy* refers to the worker's expectations of success and takes into account the social and nonsocial aspects of the activity. *Exhaustion* refers to physical and emotional fatigue. *Cynicism* indicates indifference or distancing toward work as a coping strategy in light of excessive demands.

Some studies in Spain have validated the Spanish adaptation of the MBI-GS for professionals (Gil-Monte, 2002; Moreno, Rodríguez, & Escobar, 2001). In the present study, the Spanish version of Gil-Monte's inventory was adapted to the context of volunteerism by modifying all of the items and replacing those related to work with other aspects that are more relevant to volunteer work. Sample items are "I feel emotionally drained from my work as a volunteer in this organization," and "I have become less interested in my work as a volunteer since I started this job." Responses were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*).

Cronbach's alpha was greater than .75 for each subscale, indicating good internal consistency of the instrument's dimensions. The means are similar to those found in other samples of Spanish populations (Dávila & Chacón, 2004b; see Table 2).

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to extract factors. Items with factor loadings greater than .500 were assigned to the factors, and we obtained three factors that coincided with the original theory.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alphas for the MBI-GS Subscales Adapted to Spanish for Volunteerism

Subscale	*M*	*SD*	α
Exhaustion	0.96	1.37	.910
Professional efficacy	4.52	1.07	.763
Cynicism	1.01	1.15	.793

Note. Items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 to 6. MBI = Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a, 1981b).

Life satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale was originally developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) to evaluate the level of satisfaction people have with their overall life. The present study used a translation of the scale into Spanish in a format jointly agreed upon by the Eudemon Group (University of Malaga, Spain).

In addition to the five original items, we included a global one ("I feel happy") as well. The scale contains six items that were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*no, whatsoever*) to 7 (*yes, completely*). With the exception of one item ("If I were born again, I would change quite a few things in my life") all of the items are positive assertions, indicating aspects of life satisfaction. The values for this item were reverse-scored to obtain the overall mean for life satisfaction ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.04$; $\alpha = .839$). As predicted in the original questionnaire, a single factor explaining 60% of the variance was obtained following principal components analysis.

The scale items had correlations ranging from .282 (Items 2 and 5) to .734 (Items 3 and 6). Correlations were greater between each item and the global scale (rs = .728 to .861). There was a mean of 5.32 ($SD = 1.04$) in the volunteer sample. Bearing in mind that the scale ranges from 1 to 7, we obtained medium to high scores.

Procedure

The present study was part of a larger project whose main aim was to study the variables influencing the length of volunteer service. Data were collected from volunteers in social organizations. Questionnaires were distributed by volunteer coordinators at these organizations and were collected a few days later. The mean time required to complete the questionnaire was about 30 min.

Results

Table 3 shows the correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The independent variables were hours per month, time as a volunteer, family support, friend support, organization support, volunteer support, motives for volunteering, characteristics of the job, and life satisfaction. The dependent variables were the three factors of burnout.

Forward stepwise regressions were performed on the aforementioned variables. The other two components of burnout were not introduced in the regressions of each burnout component.

Table 3

Correlations Between Independent Variables and the Three Factors of Burnout

	Exhaustion	Cynicism	Professional efficacy
Hours per month	.419**	.260**	.023
Time as volunteer	.144	.020**	−.061
Training (integration)	−.082	.032	.015
Understanding (integration)	−.146	−.364**	.392**
Relationships (integration)	−.109	−.292**	.326**
Future (integration)	−.072	−.167	.436**
Family			
Support A	−.072	−.021	.115
Support B	−.005	−.091	.159*
Friend			
Support A	−.008	.123	.065
Support B	−.082	−.127	.113*
Volunteer			
Support A	−.063	−.149	.223*
Support B	−.105	−.078	.241**
Organization			
Support A	−.158	−.229*	.220*
Support B	−.180*	−.091	.291**
Self-efficacy	−.248**	−.242**	.557**
Task	−.094	−.259**	.361**
Protective motivation$_{0}$	−.022	.126	.238**
Values motivation	−.278**	−.317**	.355**
Career motivation	.079	.121	.183*
Social motivation	.067	.065	.188*
Understanding motivation	−.224*	−.364**	.390**
Self-enhancement motivation	−.100	−.092	.350**
Life satisfaction	−.192*	−.334**	.429**
Exhaustion	—	.691**	−.253**
Cynicism		—	−.277**

Note. Support A = perceived social support as a volunteer. Support B = perceived social support in overall life.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 4

Hierarchical Prediction Models of Burnout: Exhaustion

Model	Beta	Adjusted R^2	R^2 increase	F
Step 1		.153	.160***	24.72***
Hours/month	.400***			
Step 2		.234	.086***	20.97***
Hours/month	.396***			
Values motivation	−.292***			
Step 3		.259	.030*	16.24***
Hours/month	.397***			
Values motivation	−.264**			
Staff Support B	−.177*			
Step 4		.285	.031*	14.03***
Hours/month	.368***			
Values motivation	−.334***			
Staff Support B	−.220**			
Social motivation	.198*			

Note. The significance of R^2 refers to the significance of the change in *F*.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

The results show that the variables explaining part of the variance in exhaustion were hours per month devoted to volunteer work, motivation related to values, support from the organization's staff in their overall life, and social motivation (see Table 4). The variables explaining part of the variance in self-efficacy were life satisfaction, future expectations regarding staying in the organization, values, and time spent as a volunteer. The cynicism regression analysis included the variables of understanding one's role within integration in the organization, life satisfaction, hours per month devoted to volunteer work, and the motivations of career, understanding, and social (see Table 5).

We initially included the variable of self-efficacy in the regression analysis with burnout professional efficacy as the dependent variable (see Table 6). The results show that self-efficacy was part of the first regression model (beta = .574, $p = .000$, adj. $R^2 = .325$). Given that both variables are conceptually similar, they were eliminated from the analysis to test which other variables could explain this burnout factor.

Table 5

Hierarchical Prediction Models of Burnout: Cynicism

Model	Beta	Adjusted R^2	R^2 increase	F
Step 1		.110	.116***	16.87***
Understanding (integration)	−.341***			
Step 2		.162	.059**	13.47***
Understanding (integration)	−.288***			
Life satisfaction	−.248***			
Step 3		.199	.043*	11.69***
Understanding (integration)	−.268***			
Life satisfaction	−.224***			
Hours/month	.209***			
Step 4		.230	.037*	10.65***
Understanding (integration)	−.263***			
Life satisfaction	−.264***			
Hours/month	.199***			
Career motivation	.195**			
Step 5		.252	.027*	9.69***
Understanding (integration)	−.172***			
Life satisfaction	−.228***			
Hours/month	.227***			
Career motivation	.215**			
Understanding motivation	−.196**			
Step 6		.292	.044**	9.88***
Understanding (integration)	−.156***			
Life satisfaction	−.245***			
Hours/month	.202***			
Career motivation	.178**			
Understanding motivation	−.310**			
Social motivation	.246*			

Note. The significance of R^2 refers to the significance of the change in F.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 6

Hierarchical Prediction Models of Burnout: Professional Efficacy

Model	Beta	Adjusted R^2	R^2 increase	F
Step 1		.178	.185***	27.49***
Life satisfaction	.430***			
Step 2		.309	.135***	28.22***
Life satisfaction	.390***			
Future (integration)	.369***			
Step 3		.337	.033*	21.63***
Life satisfaction	.347***			
Future (integration)	.334***			
Values motivation	.191*			
Step 4		.356	.025*	17.89***
Life satisfaction	.357***			
Future (integration)	.347***			
Values motivation	.210**			
Time spent volunteering	−.160*			

Note. The significance of R^2 refers to the significance of the change in *F*.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Discussion

The statistical analysis shows that the time dedicated to volunteering and the extrinsic motivations (i.e., social, career) predicted higher levels of burnout. On the other hand, intrinsic motivations (i.e., values, understanding), life satisfaction, and integration in the organization were negatively related to burnout.

The results show that the time devoted to the activity is one of the variables that more clearly contributes to burnout in volunteers. Thus, the number of hours per month devoted to volunteering predicts two negative components within burnout (i.e., cynicism, exhaustion). These results agree with those of previous studies. For example, Claxon, Catalán, and Burgess (1998) found that the time spent relating to the user is positively associated with emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. In addition, volunteers who work in more than one organization have shown greater signs of

burnout than those who work in a single organization (Chacón & Vecina, 1999).

Our results are related to findings in other studies where differences were found in burnout between volunteers and professionals working in the same field (Vecina et al., 2001), probably because the professionals spent more time working. Other factors may also be relevant, such as the characteristics of tasks performed and the level of responsibility in both groups. In any case, to optimize volunteerism and to minimize dropouts, it seems advisable to limit the time volunteers devote to the organization.

Similarly, the regression analysis shows that time spent as a volunteer in the organization negatively affected self-efficacy. This might reflect the fact that senior volunteers are aware of the difficulties involved in solving the kind of social problems with which they deal; therefore, they may feel less effective. Correlation coefficients indicate that the more time the volunteers spent in the organization, the greater were the levels of cynicism. Thus, the total time devoted to volunteerism—whether measured in hours per month or number of months in the organization—leads to feelings of being worn out in volunteers, which, in turn, gives rise to burnout.

On the other hand, of the six motivations to become a volunteer, four are positively or negatively related to burnout. Thus, values motivation contributes positively to self-efficacy, whereas it predicts low levels of exhaustion. Although the variable of cynicism was not used in the regression equation, cynicism and values motivation had a significant negative relationship with one another, which may indicate that volunteers who help as a result of their altruistic and humanitarian values develop fewer feelings of burnout.

This partly supports other research, Penner and Finkelstein (1998) found that the only motive that was significantly associated with length of service was the altruistic values motive. Chacón and Vecina (1999) found that regardless of the amount of time a volunteer had been helping, the most important motivation was values. However, Omoto and Snyder (1995) concluded positive relationships between self-centered motives and volunteers' longevity. Nevertheless, the motives evaluated in both studies are not exactly the same (e.g., career motives were not included in Omoto & Snyder's study).

In our case, social motivations predicted the level of cynicism and exhaustion. When one of the motivations to become a volunteer is social pressure from family and friends, the volunteer is not completely convinced of his or her involvement in volunteering, facilitating the appearance of burnout and finding the task more exhausting and less interesting.

Similarly, the career component predicted higher levels of cynicism, whereas understanding had the opposite effect. A possible explanation for these results is based on the nature of volunteers' motivations. Volunteers with extrinsic motivations (i.e., social, career) have expectations of added

personal benefits; thus, they might find their tasks less useful, and therefore less satisfactory, and of less value and interest (characteristics of cynicism in burnout). On the other hand, volunteers who are intrinsically motivated (i.e., values, understanding) find more meaning in the activities they perform and are less cynical, therefore experiencing lower levels of burnout. We cannot compare the consistency of our results on the relationship of volunteer motivation to burnout with other studies, as none are available. Thus, future studies are needed to confirm this relationship.

Another significant, but positive variable in burnout is life satisfaction. The regression analyses indicate that higher levels of life satisfaction predicted greater burnout professional efficacy and less burnout cynicism. Furthermore, there was a significant negative correlation between life satisfaction and burnout exhaustion, although this was not significant in the regression analysis for burnout exhaustion. This seems to indicate that the experience of burnout is not only dependent on the job performed (either paid or as a volunteer), but that the level of satisfaction with other aspects of life as a whole has a favorable or unfavorable effect on this syndrome. Thus, higher levels of satisfaction with overall life predict lower levels of burnout, at least in the field of volunteerism.

We also studied the possible role of social support as a factor mitigating burnout. Omoto and Snyder (1995) included social support as an antecedent variable in volunteerism; especially social encouragement to become a volunteer. Out of the four types of support evaluated (i.e., family, friends, other volunteers, the organization), only support from the organization negatively predicted the exhaustion component of burnout, suggesting that support from the organization's members in the context of "support in overall life" is important for volunteers. This shows the need for participants to have a personal relationship with workers and managers in the organization.

Correlations between the three burnout components and the four types of social support evaluated in two contexts (i.e., overall life and as volunteers in the organization) indicate that social support from the organization in their job as volunteers correlated negatively with burnout cynicism and positively with burnout efficacy. Also, social support from the organization in overall life correlated negatively with burnout exhaustion and positively with burnout efficacy. Social support from other volunteers (in both contexts) correlated positively with burnout efficacy: The greater the perceived support from other volunteers in the organization and in overall life, the more professional efficacy was perceived. This may indicate that if the support and relationships with members of the organization outside work (both with other volunteers and with the staff) are good, then the level of exhaustion in volunteers will be lower and their performance will be more effective. A clear conclusion is that if the volunteer works among friends, with social support

in their overall life, it will be easier to feel useful and effective and to cope with a certain level of burnout.

Finally, the variable of integration in the organization could contribute to preventing burnout in volunteers. For example, future expectations of staying in the organization predicted higher levels of professional efficacy, while understanding one's role and the objectives of the organization predicted lower levels of cynicism and a positive correlation with professional efficacy. Their experience in relationship to others also correlated positively with professional efficacy and negatively with cynicism, although the fourth component of this variable (i.e., integration regarding training) did not correlate with any of the burnout components. In any case, these results highlight that integration in the organization—where volunteers accept and understand their role, have good relationships with other volunteers, and are committed to carry on with their role—may inhibit the burnout process.

On the other hand, contrary to the results found in a review of the literature, the characteristics of the job (positive task) were not predictors of any of the burnout components, although they had a positive correlation with professional efficacy and a negative correlation with cynicism. The research centered on burnout in the work context, based on the job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), to investigate if the variables of this model are predictors of burnout (Boada, de Diego, & Agulló, 2004). Thus, a worker will demonstrate high internal motivation, depending on the experience of key psychological states: experiencing the job as meaningful, taking responsibility for outcomes, and knowing the results. In our case, we investigated if the job characteristics were predictors of burnout. The results do not suggest that this was the case.

In professional work, the characteristics of the job can predict labor satisfaction and burnout. However, these variables are secondary in volunteer work, whereas other variables (e.g., social support, volunteer's motivations) are more relevant. When the characteristics specific to paid work are absent (e.g., salary, promotion), a pleasant environment, personal relationships, and extrinsic motivations become more important.

Knowing the factors influencing burnout is important if the aims of organizations managing volunteer work include improving the quality of volunteerism and increasing the permanence of volunteers. One of the consequences of burnout is emotional distancing by the volunteer, who will avoid getting involved with the user by means of depersonalization as self-defense. Therefore, we consider this type of research useful in psychosocial interventions to facilitate well-being and permanence of the volunteer in the organization. Future studies are needed to confirm our results, so the findings require care. It would also be useful to discover new variables that can help to prevent volunteers' burnout.

According to the present study, we recommend interventions in the volunteer context, employing the following guidelines: encourage intrinsic motivation in volunteers; improve relationships between volunteers and the organizational staff; and try to manage the time devoted to the organization better. If we are interested in quality volunteerism, we must prevent emotional exhaustion, improve communication skills between participants, reduce workload, and promote a perception of professional efficacy.

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