**Motivations for Mask Making and Donating**

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**Introduction**. Early into the coronavirus (or COVID-19) pandemic, the global demand for medical masks spiked and strained supply chains (Khazan, 2020). Hospitals and other organizations began requesting donations of cloth masks from the public. Additionally, consumers had difficulty purchasing masks to comply with local mask mandates. Major fashion brands such as Givenchy, Off-White, and Adidas either donated masks or a percent of the sales profit (Wernau, 2020) to the masking efforts. Designers like Ripley Rader, emotionally moved to help healthcare personnel, joined thousands of sewists making and donating masks using the hashtag #millionmaskchallenge (Philipkoski, 2020). A “sewist” is one who sews as defined in Kaipainen and Pöllänen (2021)'s research (as cited in Grammarphobia, 2016; Threads, 2012). This study seeks to understand what motivates individuals to make cloth face masks and donate them to others during a global health crisis.

**Literature Review.** This research will provide socio-psychological context on volunteering during a global pandemic. Both Zaki’s (2020) theory of ‘catastrophe compassion’ and Clary et al. 's (1998) functionalist theory are applied to understand this prosocial behavioral response to a calamity.

The extant research indicates the Clary et al. (1998) functionalist theory uses a six Voluntary Functions Inventory (VFI) model, comprising values, understanding, social, career, protective and enhancement, that can be exercised separately among volunteers who engage in ‘sustained planned helping’ (p. 1517). Previous research (Marta & Pozzi, 2008; Marta, Pozzi & Marzana, 2010) found some volunteers are inspired to serve in organizations where they can advance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Steffen and Fothergill (2009) note that for the 9/11 disaster volunteers who served for three years or longer, a strong sense of community was the inspiration. Individuals might also be driven to volunteer –as either an ego-defensive or an ego boosting mechanism –over an extended period (Clary et al., 1998). This study aims to understand what drives the volunteers to make and donate masks.

Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: The value of helping healthcare workers or the public is associated with individual’s motivation to sew and donate face masks

H2: The opportunity to gain new learning experiences is associated with

individual’s motivation to sew and donate face masks

H3: The opportunity to be with one’s friends or engage in activity favorable to one’s community is associated with individual’s motivation to sew and donate face masks H4: Business- or career-related benefits are not associated with individual’s motivation to sew and donate face masks

H5: Protecting oneself from feelings of guilt or discomfort is associated with individual’s motivation to sew and donate face masks

H6: Enhancing one’s self-esteem is associated with individual’s motivation to sew and donate face masks.

**Research Method.** The data of this study was collected from an online survey created by

Qualtrics. The respondents of the survey were recruited by a snowball sampling method. A questionnaire was developed based on the VFI model. 7-point Likert scale questions which were adopted from Clary et al. (1998) were used (1= “not at all important to 7= “a very important”). Survey responses were assessed initially based on the Pearson’s correlation coefficient and later a multiple regression analysis via SPSS.

 The data was collected in the U.S. from February 19, 2021 to March 17, 2021. After data cleaning and screening, a total of 112 among 218 responses were used for this study (n=112). Respondents were mainly female (97.3%); 2.6% were non-binary or declined to answer. The largest number of respondents were employed full-time (39.2%); 22.3% were retired; 22.3% were unemployed; 9.8% were employed part-time; 3.5% were disabled; and 1.7% were students. Annual household income for 55.4% of the respondents were between $40,000 and $150,000 while 12.5% earned over $150,000 and 15.2% earned under $40,000 annually. 17% of the respondents declined to state their earnings. 79.4% of respondents did not have careers related to sewing or apparel design. Over 49,000 masks were made and donated by the respondents.

Age ranges within the data set indicated that 29.5% of respondents were between 58-78 years; 28.6% were between 45-57 years; 25.9% were between 18-38 years; and 13.4% were between 39-44 years of age. Two of the respondents were 79 years or older, and one adult respondent declined to identify with any of the above categories. The vast majority (73.2%) of respondents reported more than ten years of sewing experience.

**Results and Discussion**. The Pearson’s correlation analysis showed no significant association between apparel volunteering and four functional indicators of motivations for volunteerism, social, career, protective and enhancement. Conversely, there was a small correlation between the participants’ values and their motivations, r (98) =.18, p= .056. Also, there was a statistically significant, small correlation between the understanding function (the quest to gain a new experience), and the volunteers’ motivations to make & donate masks, r (98) =.23, p= <.05. That is, the quest to gain a new experience statistically explained 23% of the volunteer behavior of apparel designers and sewists during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further testing of the relationship (via a multiple regression analysis) between the apparel volunteers’ motivations and two functional indicators, values and understanding, yielded statistically significant results. The R2 of the regression model was 5.5% with an adjusted R2 of 3.7%, which is a very small size effect. That notwithstanding, values and understanding can statistically be correlated with apparel volunteers’ motivations for making and donating masks, F(2, 106) = 3.090, p = 0.05. The multiple regression test was also run to predict apparel volunteers’ behavior based on both values and understanding. Although the values coefficient was statistically significant, (p= .023), the understanding coefficient was not (p= .664). Hence, the resulting model could not meaningfully predict with any statistically high confidence level the direction of the relationship between motivation and values & understanding.

Therefore, H1, H2, and H4 hypotheses are supported by the results. During the COVID19 pandemic, the apparel makers are motivated by the more altruistic functional motives of values and understanding than by personal goals of career advancement or protection.

Altogether, the current survey results indicate a correlation between the sewists’ motivations to volunteer during the COVID-19 pandemic and both their deep concern for the healthcare professionals and others needing masks (their values) as well as their desire for a new experience (their understanding). Ultimately, this study can inform organizations on how to recruit people for long-term volunteering to help their communities recover during future emergencies and natural disasters.

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