ABSTRACT

Servants or Saviors? Exploring the Impact of International
Volunteerism on Host Communities and Volunteers

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International volunteer service (IVS) has rapidly expanded in the last decade among its volunteer participants and sponsoring agencies. Scholars have diverse opinions on the efficacy and ethics of IVS. Proponents suggest that IVS brings a humanity to development that might otherwise be focused on merely economic growth. Critics, however, are concerned that IVS originating in the Global North and directed toward the Global South potentially reifies power differentials previously established through colonialism. Little research has explored the impact IVS is having on its stakeholders, namely, host communities who receive volunteers and international volunteers themselves. Distinct in focus, the qualitative and quantitative studies in this dissertation provide unique insight into the impact IVS has on its stakeholders and the intercultural relationship between volunteers and host community members. A phenomenological approach was used to explore Kenyans' experiences of international volunteers' behaviors and attitudes in their communities. While positive themes of skill transfer and honoring cultural practices emerged, so did negative themes that suggested international

volunteers had demeaning perceptions of Kenyans, controlled collaborative projects, gave Kenyans cursory roles to play, and departed hastily without empowering Kenyans, which led to project failure. Recommendations for strengthening IVS practices were described. The quantitative study explored the impact IVS has on volunteers (*n*=490). In the context of a worldwide refugee crisis, IVS organizations responded by sending volunteers to serve the critical needs of refugees. This study explored the extent to which IVS changed volunteers' perceptions of the refugees they served. Using paired samples *t*-tests, findings revealed a statistically significant mean difference in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees before and after service. Applying Mezirow's theory of transformative learning as a frame, the study sought to understand the change in perceptions that occurred in study participants. Finally, a qualitative study explored Kenyans' understandings of humility and how the virtue relates to IVS practices. Findings suggested humility is an attitude of appreciation and equality in relation to others, while humility in practice is a posture of listening and learning from others and not having a "know it all" stance. Recommendations for future research were identified.

Servants or Saviors? Exploring the Impact of International Volunteerism on
Host Communities and Volunteers

by

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Back in fall of 2015, I walked back to my car after lunch with Dean Singletary, my brain churning with the research questions that would be the focus of this dissertation. As I walked, my ears became attuned to God's leading within my heart, "Jennifer, I am calling you to do this work. This is My work and I will do it through you. Do not be afraid for I will be with you; I will be with you." God invited me into this academic exploration on a topic that is deeply personal and meaningful to me. God has been faithful to be with me step by step. From You, God, has come the strength to complete this endeavor and to You, be all honor.

DEDICATION

To Zoe Hope Dickey

CHAPTER ONE

Exploring the Impact of International Volunteerism: An Introduction

Introduction

International volunteer service (IVS) has rapidly expanded in the last decade among its volunteer participants and sponsoring agencies (Lough, 2014; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, & McBride, 2006). Defined as voluntary, structured service conducted across international borders with little to no financial recompense, IVS typically involves capacity and community development efforts fueled by altruism and often by religious faith (A. M. McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Margaret Sherrard Sherraden et al., 2006). In the United States alone, one million people volunteer internationally each year according to a conservative estimate (Lough, 2008; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen, & Brown, 2006). In 2008, 48 percent of those who volunteered did so through religiously oriented institutions (Lough, 2008). This robust response of international volunteers from the U.S. represents over 3.6 billion public and private dollars spent annually to support international volunteerism (Lough, Sherraden, McBride, & Xiang, 2014). Although good intentions generally motivate international volunteer activity, research exploring the impact international volunteerism is having on its stakeholders—namely, international volunteers, volunteer sending organizations, host organizations, and host community members—is scant. (Burns, 2014; B. J. Lough, 2014; Lough, 2014a; A. M. McBride & Sherraden, 2007; M. Sherraden, 2007; Margaret S. Sherraden, Lough, & McBride, 2008).

Scholars urge increased research on the impact of the service on its stakeholders and have diverse opinions on the efficacy and ethics of IVS (Devereux, 2008; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015; A. M. McBride & Sherraden, 2007). Proponents suggest that IVS is a strategic and cost-effective method for mobilizing skill and capacity development to parts of the world in need. Others tout that international volunteerism brings a humanity to development intervention that might otherwise be focused merely on economic growth rather than human development and enhancement (Devereux, 2006). Critics are concerned that international volunteerism originating in the Global North and directed toward the Global South potentially reifies power differentials previously established through the colonial period and might actually do more harm than good (Baaz, 2005; Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Perold et al., 2013). Indeed, the majority of international volunteers originate in the Global North, comprised of America and Europe, and conduct service with organizations and communities in the Global South, comprised of Africa, Latin America, developing Asia, and the Middle East (Lewis, 2006; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; VOSESA, 2010). Motivated by these concerns and the need for further research on IVS, the qualitative and quantitative studies in this dissertation provide unique insight into the impact IVS has on its stakeholders.

Chapter Two

In an effort to add to the scant literature base on the impact of IVS on host communities, this qualitative study studied Kenyans' perceptions of the attitudes and behaviors they had witnessed in international volunteers. Through this phenomenological study, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 13 participants, exploring the study's overarching research question: How have Kenyans experienced the behaviors and

attitudes of American and European international volunteers in their communities? To the

researchers' knowledge, no previous study has explored host community members'

perceptions of international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors in practice. The

researcher conducted this study in collaboration with Rose Wasike, a graduate of the

Garland School of Social Work, who is keenly interested in the subject matter of this

research project and collaborated in the research design and data analysis processes and

interviewed participants. Dr. Jon Singletary provided extensive consultation on the

research design and manuscript draft.

Chapter Three

In 2016, the Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian refugee crises drew international volunteers

to engage the needs of refugees and their families as they fled their home countries to

sheltering countries. The UN Refugee Agency, or UNHCR, reported that 131,724

refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in January 2016 and February 2016 alone,

warning that Europe was on the cusp of a humanitarian crisis as countries struggled with

the increasing number of arrivals (Warren, 2016). IVS organizations responded to the

international plea for assistance by sending international volunteers to serve the critical

needs of refugees and host communities alike.

The purpose of this study was to add to the limited research on the impact of IVS

on volunteers themselves. This study asked the question: To what extent did international

volunteer service (IVS) change volunteers' perceptions of refugees? If international

volunteers' perceptions of refugees shift as a result of IVS participation, these shifts in

perception might very well result in lifestyle changes of advocacy, increased financial

aid, or civic engagement on behalf of refuges upon return from service. Study findings

not only have the potential to inform international volunteers' intercultural relationship building skills but also to restore reciprocity and mutuality at the core of intercultural engagement. Additional authors of this study include Dr. Ken Young as statistician, and Dr. Dennis Myers, who contributed his expertise in research design and manuscript refinement.

Chapter Four

The complexity of building mutually beneficial intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host communities is daunting in light of historical misuses of power, yet crucial in light of globalization. In fact, some scholars critique international volunteerism originating in the Global North and directed toward the Global South as mimicking and perpetuating power distortions established through the colonial period and might actually do more harm than good (Baaz, 2005; Smith & Laurie, 2011; Perold et al., 2013). Nevertheless, little research attention has been directed toward the role the intercultural relationship plays between international volunteers and host community members in international volunteer service (Lough & Matthews, 2013; Perold et al., 2013) with insufficient research exploring restorative approaches that contribute to healthy intercultural relationships.

The virtue of humility has been found not only to help repair relationships but also aid in forming strong relationship bonds (Davis et al., 2013) and has the potential to repair and strengthen intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host community members. This article contributes to the scant literature base that studies host community members' perceptions of their relationships with international volunteers.

Specifically, this study explored Kenyans' understandings of humility and how that virtue relates to international volunteer practices.

Using a constructivist lens, a phenomenological approach was employed to explore Kenyans' understanding of humility and practice behaviors that depict the virtue as it relates to international volunteerism. Findings from this study have the potential to positively impact international volunteerism practices, resulting in reciprocal, healthy relationships between international volunteers and host community members. Much as in Chapter 2, additional authors in this study include Rose Wasike who interviewed participants and collaborated in the research design, as well as Dr. Jon Singletary who provided consultation on the research design and manuscript draft.

Findings from these studies have the potential to better IVS practice. Through increased self-awareness on the part of international volunteers, the relationship between international volunteer and host community members has the potential to become reciprocal in nature. As international volunteers adjust inaccurate perceptions to rightly see host community members with respect, the intercultural relationship has the potential to be mended. When co-learning and co-discovery occurs, an authentic relationship has the potential to emerge between international volunteers and host community members. If humility and mutual regard shape interactions, relationships between international volunteers and host communities have the potential to unlock restorative, synergetic practices that mend communities worldwide.

CHAPTER TWO

Listening to our Global Partners: Kenyan Perceptions of International Volunteers'

Attitudes and Behaviors

Abstract

Although international volunteerism is a common service practice among Americans and Europeans, research exploring host community members' perceptions of volunteers and their practice is lacking. In this phenomenological study, 13 in-depth interviews were conducted with Kenyan participants and their perceptions of international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors were explored. While positive themes of skill transfer and honoring cultural practices emerged, so did negative themes that suggested international volunteers had demeaning perceptions of Kenyans, controlled collaborative projects, gave Kenyans cursory roles to play. The study also suggests that international volunteers departed from service hastily without empowering Kenyans, which led to project failure. Recommendations for strengthening international volunteer practice are identified and described.

Keywords: international volunteerism, host community, perceptions, qualitative

Introduction

International volunteerism has rapidly expanded in the last decade among volunteer participants and sponsoring agencies (Lough, 2014; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, & McBride, 2006). In the United States alone, one million people volunteer internationally each year, according to a conservative estimate, with 48 percent doing so through religiously oriented institutions (Lough, 2008; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen, & Brown, 2006). This robust response of international volunteers from the U.S. represents over 3.6 billion public and private dollars spent annually to support international volunteerism (Lough, Sherraden, McBride, & Xiang, 2014). Although good intentions fuel international volunteer activity, little research has explored the impact international volunteerism is having on host agencies and communities that receive the volunteers (Lough, 2014a; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Sherraden, 2007; Sherraden, Lough, & McBride, 2008).

International volunteerism—the voluntary, structured service conducted across international borders with little or no financial recompense—typically involves capacity and community development efforts fueled by altruism and often by religious faith (A. M. McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Margaret Sherrard Sherraden et al., 2006). The majority of international volunteers originate in the Global North, comprised of America and Europe, and conduct service with organizations and communities in the Global South, comprised of Africa, Latin America, developing Asia, and the Middle East (Lewis, 2006; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; VOSESA, 2010).

Scholars have diverse opinions on the efficacy and ethics of international volunteerism. Proponents suggest that international volunteer service is strategic and

effective for global social and economic change, resulting in positive impact on the stakeholders involved, namely, the volunteer sending organization, the international volunteer, the host agency, and the host community (Devereux, 2010; Hawkes, 2014; Lough, McBride, & Sherraden, 2012). Critics, however, are concerned that international volunteerism originating in the Global North and directed toward the Global South potentially reifies power differentials previously established through colonialism and might actually do more harm than good (Baaz, 2005; Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Perold et al., 2013).

This qualitative study used phenomenological methods to explore host community members' crucial perspectives on interactions with international volunteers. The research question explored was: How had Kenyans experienced the behaviors and attitudes of American and European international volunteers in their community? Growing out of listening to and gathering experiences of Kenyan host community members, the findings of this study have the potential to contribute to international volunteer and organizational best practice methods, resulting in improved reciprocity between international volunteers and host community members.

Exploring the Impact of International Volunteerism

Despite the rapid increase of international volunteerism in the past decade, there is insufficient research on the impact of international volunteerism on all of its stakeholders, with most of the existing research focused on the impact volunteerism has on the volunteer (McBride & Sherraden, 2007).

International volunteer alumni report that their volunteer experiences were transformational and life changing, impacting volunteers' identities as global citizens. In

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a study of international volunteer alumni, 95 percent of the participants reported increased intercultural understanding and 75 percent claimed the experience was personally transformational (Lough, 2009). In a longitudinal study of international volunteers utilizing a comparison group of non-volunteers, international volunteers were statistically more likely to report a significant increase in social capital as well as concern for international affairs two to three years after returning from service (Lough et al., 2014). Similarly, a quasi-experimental study explored the impact of international volunteerism on volunteers' international awareness, international social capital, and international career intentions, revealing a statistically significant difference (McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012).

Through the few studies focused on the impact international volunteerism has on host communities, positive results have been identified. In a participatory research study conducted in Kenya among volunteers, host staff members, and community members, 70 percent (*n*=59) of the participants reported acquiring new skills from long-term international volunteers that would not otherwise be accessible in their nations, along with increased creativity and optimism (Lough, 2012).

Lough and Matthews (2013) found similar positive results after reviewing reports on 19 field research studies that investigated host communities' perceptions of international volunteers' impact in their communities. Lough and Matthews identified thirteen common positive outcomes of international volunteers, including increasing capacity building and skill transfer, strengthening innovation, building social capital, and linking to resourses, among others. Skill transfer included not only specialist expertise but also the teaching of basic skills that promoted general education. Innovation included

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the stimulation of new ideas as well as hopeful and optimistic perspectives of possible change. International volunteers were also identified as significant in "bridging" and "bonding" participants to resources and other relationships representing an increase in social capital. Finally, outcomes that impacted the relationship between host community members and international volunteers included increased intercultural understanding and trust, and friendship (2013).

Despite these positive findings, critics are concerned that international volunteerism negatively impacts host communities (Baaz, 2005; Smith & Laurie, 2011; Perold et al., 2013). Kothari asserts that as a result of the colonial period, the Global South has come to believe that it has a lower capacity for development as reflected by substandard science, technology, and resources, while the Global North represents strength, excellence, and wealth. He believes that this framework is woven into the relationship between international volunteer and host community member (2006).

In a study conducted among host community members, these observations were corroborated. Some respondents reported having experienced elements of imperialism and racism intertwined through their interactions with international volunteers, while others noted that the community perception is that "whites" are better and smarter than the community members themselves (Perold et al., 2013, p. 186). Other respondents identified power differences revealed through inadequate reciprocity between hosting and sending organizations (Perold et al., 2013).

More recently, a mixed methods study among NGO staff (n=24) and host community members (n=59) explored how race influences host community members' sense of power and agency. One respondent reflected, 'We have a community that is

prejudiced… Where you'd go to certain places with a *mzungu* ("whites") then people want to listen to you… As opposed to if you had uh…a black' (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015, p. 213). Findings also revealed that there was a strong association between participants' views of international volunteers' race and the volunteers' resources, expertise, knowledge and trust (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015).

In a qualitative study of 33 volunteers, local hosts, and community members in the Dominican Republic, perceptions of international volunteers were explored. The findings suggested that there was a misalignment between what was desired by the host community members and the actual skills delivered by the volunteers. Additionally, participants perceived international volunteers to possess superior knowledge and skills while seeing the local community as inferior and less capable (Loiseau et al., 2016).

These troubling findings signal the need for additional research to explore the relationship between international volunteers and host community members. More specifically, research focused on understanding host community members' perspective of interactions with international volunteers could contribute to mitigating power differentials by informing more effective international volunteerism practice methods (Lough, 2014; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Sherraden, Lough, & McBride, 2008). Studies have recommended increased research on more nuanced and subtle aspects of international volunteerism that contribute to community development, including indicators to assess interpersonal and relational concepts that shape social development outcomes (B. Lough & Matthews, 2013). Scholars acknowledge that there remains much to understand about the vantage point of the host community, which is primarily

exploratory in nature, and reveals the need for more in-depth research from this standpoint (Perold et al., 2013).

Accordingly, this phenomenological study explored Kenyan community members' perceptions of the attitudes and behaviors they had experienced in interactions with international volunteers. The research question was: How have Kenyans experienced the behaviors and attitudes of American and European international volunteers in their community? This study provides research findings on international volunteerism practices from host communities' perspectives, paying specific attention to the impact international volunteers attitudes and behaviors have on relationships with host community members.

Methodology

Through a constructivist lens and a phenomenological approach, the study explores the unique perceptions of Kenyan community members' interactions with international volunteers and identifies descriptions of the essence of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Acknowledging that each study participant has unique perceptions of international volunteers, informed by distinct backgrounds and personal experiences, the researchers chose a constructivist paradigm for this study (Rodwell, 1998). Concurrent with the individual perceptions of each participant, collective perceptions emerged, reflecting common themes of shared experiences (van Manen, 1990).

Utilizing a phenomenological approach allowed the researchers to take the descriptive accounts provided by participants and, through thoughtful analysis, transform the units of data into the language of social science (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) also depicts the meaningful impact the heuristic process has on the researchers. By

allowing them to understand "the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge" (1994, p. 17), as the researchers of this study experienced throughout the research process.

Utilizing constructivist inquiry, the researchers explored the constructed reality of each participant's perspective of interactions with international volunteers. These realities are unique to each individual and constructed through interpreted language, symbols, and cultural influences (Rodwell, 1998). The Kenyan experiences explored through this study reflect the participants' perceptions that are distinctly impacted by their unique standpoints in their social and historical contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b).

The researchers acknowledged that historical colonialism almost certainly sets the stage for power imbalances between international volunteer and host community member (Baaz, 2005; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015; Perold et al., 2013) and recognized its impact on the findings of this study as themes of power were occasionally reflected in participants' responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a). Insights from this study have the potential to shape Global North volunteerism practices and mitigate power differentials, resulting in mutually beneficial work between international volunteers and the host communities.

Method

The authors of this study endeavored to reflect the collaborative, mutual relationship that they believed to be possible between Global Southerners and Global Northerners. They met through the Global Mission Leadership initiative of the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work. In their different roles of program director and master of social work student, the researchers began a collegial and friendly relationship. They

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shared contextualized social work practice wisdom with one another, culturally informed perspectives on problem solving, and a common fuel of Christian faith. One researcher had spent fourteen years in practice related to international volunteerism, working as an international volunteer and administrator with an international volunteer sending organization in the United States. The other researcher was a significant contributor to community development in her home country of Kenya through her work in a non-governmental organization.

The researchers were aware that their personal familiarity to the topic had partly informed this study, and conscientious measures were taken to bring these biases into the light. At the same time, it was the researchers' exposure to international volunteerism, the mutual and reciprocal relationship they forged together, and the commitment to inform international volunteer practice that mitigates harm and strengthens partnership that led to their collaboration on this study.

Given that the researchers were interested in the lived experiences of Kenyans with international volunteers, phenomenological inquiry was used because it provides a framework for describing a phenomena of interest (Moustakas, 1994). Through this approach, the researchers' goal was to overcome personal bias and past experience in order to listen to and understand the perceptions Kenyans have of the attitudes and behaviors they have encountered in interacting with international volunteers.

Research Site and Study Sample

The nation of Kenya hosts a significant number of international volunteers from the Global North each year through its 4,200 registered non-governmental organizations (Brass, 2012; B. J. Lough, 2012; B. J. Lough & Mati, 2012; Thaut, 2009). As the context

for this study, Kenya was chosen and more specifically the agricultural city of Kitale with a population of 100,000 people. Kitale has extensive international volunteer activity due to its location near the Ugandan border. Kenya, a British colony from 1895 to 1963, has a complex history with colonizing countries. Choosing a research site like Kenya can provide insight into global North-South volunteer relationships as it is representative in many ways of the general relationship between Global North international volunteers and host communities of the Global South (Kothari, 2006; B. Lough & Matthews, 2013).

A convenience sample of individuals (n=13) was intentionally chosen who had collaborated and worked extensively with Global North international volunteers through professional roles in the community. More specifically, participants were employees of religious non-profit organizations (n=4), child protection officers (n=2), leaders in churches (n=2), employees of non-governmental organizations (n=3), and administrators in the local government (n=2), and all had interacted with international volunteers representing a spectrum of service duration and focus. A phenomenological research approach supports small, intentional samples for whom the research would be significant and relevant (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This study's sample size of 13 was partially determined by this value as well as by the sense of saturation assessed through the interviews.

Permission for the study was obtained through the Baylor University IRB (Appendix A). Participants were invited to participate on a strictly voluntary basis. Identifying personal information was replaced with initials and held confidentially on researchers computers.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers designed an interview protocol, informed by literature (Appendix B). The researchers vetted the topics and questions used in this protocol with a pilot group of Kenyan students at Baylor University to bring focus and clarity. Although the protocol was used in the interviews, the researchers endeavored to allow participants to collaboratively shape the direction of the interviews by discussing their responses in depth. During the interview process, two additional questions were added to the protocol when the need for them became apparent.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by one of the researchers in Kitale, Kenya. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. In an effort to minimize social desirability bias and to provide participants a supportive environment to speak truthfully of their experiences, the Kenyan researcher performed the interviews in the absence of the American researcher. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, with the commitment that identities and personal information would be kept confidential. All participants requested to use English, one of the national languages of Kenya, in the interviews.

Data from the interviews were digitally recorded, stored on computer files, and transcribed by a local Kenyan consultant. After each interview, the researchers independently listened to the recorded interview and memoed outstanding themes, key quotes, and initial impressions from the interview. They met via Skype weekly to discuss each initial interview. Then, the researchers joined together for three weeks in Kitale, Kenya, for a second round of interviews with study participants. In these interviews, the researchers conducted a member check to ensure initial data analysis accuracy.

Data Analysis Procedures

The aim of the analysis process was to understand Kenyans' perceptions of their interactions with international volunteers. ATLAS.ti was used to organize the data. In preparation for the second round of interviews and member check in Kitale, Kenya, the researchers re-read transcriptions, re-listened to the initial interviews, and identified key quotes to member check with participants in order to ensure accurate intentions of the participants. During each second interview, the researchers summarized their initial impressions of the first interview with the participant, reviewed key quotes, and checked for accuracy. After each interview, the researchers individually recorded impressions of the interview and then discussed the interview at length.

Deciding that using the participants' exact quotes would keep the data grounded in the lived experiences of the participants, the researchers independently open-coded each transcript and identified "significant statements" as narrow units of analysis (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). They deleted repetitive or nonessential statements and categorized the units into networks of codes that reflected the participants' perceptions of attitudes and behaviors of international volunteers. These networks of codes were analyzed from both a structural and textural vantage point (Creswell, 2013) to comprehensively yet clearly describe the "what" and "how" participants experienced international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors. After reviewing the networks of codes several times, we narrowed the data into five identified themes that reflected participants perceptions of international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors (Moustakas, 1994).

Several criteria for rigor were used in this study. To substantiate the trustworthiness of the study's findings, credibility was established through several means.

The American researcher visited Kenya for three weeks, which allowed for prolonged exposure to the Kenyan people and culture. This visit also provided the opportunity for the researchers to conduct a member check with participants to assure accuracy of participants' perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To strengthen the dependability and confirmability of the findings, the researchers sought peer reviews of the study development and data analysis process (Rodwell, 1998) with three international volunteer alumni and two qualitative researchers. To further substantiate the confirmability of the study, reflexive journals and weekly Skype calls were conducted by the researchers. These interactive methods allowed researchers to record and discuss ongoing impressions, recall impressions experienced during the data collection process, make course corrections, and bracket personal bias.

The researchers endeavored to establish the study's authenticity in several ways. Throughout the study, the researchers utilized reflexive journaling and discussions with one another to bracket personal bias from the analysis process. Additionally, realizing subjective agenda could cloud the analysis process, the researchers used participants' exact quotes when coding the interviews in an effort to represent the findings accurately and minimize personal bias. At each step of the research process from the interview protocol development, to the interviews, and throughout the data analysis process, the researchers diligently pursued authenticity to ensure the resulting themes truly emerged from the responses (Moustakas, 1994).

Findings

Participants in this study provided descriptive perceptions of their interactions with international volunteers. Much like an iceberg, initial descriptions were similar to

the view of the iceberg above the water. They were primarily positive, reflecting international volunteers' contributions of skills and innovation while honoring Kenyan culture. However, just as an iceberg carries most of its weight under the waterline, below the surface of these primarily appreciative descriptions Kenyans experienced international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors in negative ways. The researchers attempted to analyze and relay both levels of participants' descriptions. Above the waterline, Kenyans perceived international volunteers to contribute to their communities in salient ways and engage cultural practices. However, underneath this positive assertion, Kenyans perceived international volunteers to see Kenyans as lacking and see themselves as superior, maintain a position of control in the project, give Kenyans a cursory role to play, and leave hastily without empowering Kenyan leadership resulting in project failure.

International Volunteers Contributions

In the first of two positive themes, participants perceived international volunteers as contributing positively to their communities in a variety of ways such as the transfer of skills from areas of expertise, professional consultation, funding for projects, and access to social networks.

"They give us some techniques about some skills and how to tackle them and improve on them," commented a participant. One participant identified how international volunteers stimulate hope in the community in addition to providing expertise:

> The positive [of international volunteers] is transfer of technology, transfer of expertise, transfer of experiences and what I will call building hope. When they have come and participate in community activities it gives hope to the local community.

Participants also described international volunteers as providing connections for social and financial support. They acknowledged an increase in social capital as a result of interactions with international volunteers. One participant identified how international volunteers make social connections to access potential funding, despite their own financial need. "Sometimes you will hear them, they may not be having funds themselves but they may give us some contacts of the people they know who can assist our program."

Participants also identified international volunteers as bringing innovative ideas for positive growth in the community. One respondent described it this way: "we find it good because they bring in good ideas and different ideas from their international perspective. The organization grows very fast because of the ideas from different countries."

International Volunteers Engage Cultural Practices

Several participants identified the meaningful ways international volunteers honor their culture as a second theme "above the waterline." Participants were able to talk about how this was demonstrated by the way volunteers dress, eat, interact with others, and live. After studying the values, morals, and customs of the Kenyan culture, some international volunteers adjust their lives to incorporate new cultural ways, as expressed by one participant:

> They respect the majority and seek to know our value systems. In a way, you find them supporting and even arranging for certain things that may not be their international standard.

Some participants felt respected as international volunteers changed lifestyle habits to match Kenyan ways of dressing, cooking, eating, and speaking. Others perceived these

attempts as inauthentic. One participant expressed the tensions inherent in engaging cultural practices:

> I feel the international community, they must say that they honor but they pretend. I'm saying pretend because when we are there in the [community], they feel like the thing is so good. But when they come down and when we are discussing, they start talking about us being primitive.

Through analyzing the data, it was apparent that participants appreciated how international volunteers contribute to their communities in ways that respect Kenyan culture.

International Volunteers Perceive Kenyans as Lacking and Themselves as Superior

Below the waterline is a wider array of challenges in these relationships. Although some participants described relationships with international volunteers to be woven with respect, a strong theme emerged from the data that revealed international volunteers' disrespect toward the Kenyan people. Participants perceived international volunteers to view them as abjectly poor, even potentially dangerous. One participant disclosed the way international volunteers perceive Kenyans:

> International volunteers can assume that Kenyans live in trees or think everyone is Maasai. These assumptions might be light, but some can be very serious about their assumptions, expecting that Kenyans live in slums and poverty and pain and anger, and they think they might find a Kenyan who is in that state who might hurt them.

Other participants agreed, perceiving that international volunteers to see Kenyans as poor, a perception that is propagated by the use of their cameras. A participant described this well:

> They see children in the slums playing naked they take their photos. That shows that they look at us like people who are poor, who cannot sustain themselves. They take photos of bad things so that when they go back they go and start showing people how we are poor.

Other participants described international volunteers as seeing Kenyans as backward or uncivilized, as in one participant's description:

> When the volunteers come to Africa, their major attitude, they come to 'the colony' where these people are not informed. Normally they come knowing that there is nothing we know, I mean we are just there.

Negative perceptions held by international volunteers are far from the reality of who Kenyans are and what they bring to the intercultural relationship, yet they persist. A participant described how international volunteers seem to see themselves as the problem solvers and overlook Kenyan knowledge, expertise, and agency to effect positive change. Another participant described this dynamic as international volunteers viewing themselves as "knowing everything" and as Kenyans being "not good enough."

Although perceptions exist beneath the surface of everyday life, they seem to manifest through behavior. Specifically, negative perceptions of Kenyans might lead international volunteers to maintain control in collaborative projects, as described by a participant:

> Depending on how they perceive the specific community they are working, they are likely to ensure that they make every major decision and have the Africans the local community implement under their supervision.

The theme that international volunteers see themselves as superior and Kenyans as lacking in to intelligence, expertise, competency was clearly woven throughout participants responses in this study.

International Volunteers Maintain a Position of Control

A consistent theme among the findings was that international volunteers maintain a position of control when working in collaboration with other Kenyans. When asked how collaborative projects with international volunteers emerged, a participant described

how international volunteers conceive the vision of the project without the Kenyan

partners' input. He described it this way:

> They [international volunteers] come with a project which is designed outside the project area and when they come with that they come with a design which is not conducive to the local environment…It was designed without understanding the culture and the circumstances they found in those communities.

Another participant agreed that the international volunteer's project vision is not

always the priority of the community. He commented, "I've seen most of them coming in

with already set targets or already set projects which they're coming to do in our society.

Whether this is a priority to that community is another issue."

Participants voiced that international volunteers not only conceive of projects

outside of the Kenyan context and without Kenyan input but are particular about how

they want the project executed. This can be challenging as international volunteers come

with mindsets of "this is how we want to do this." The already determined vision seems

to be set in stone. One participant described it this way: "there are those who may want to

know what you think but in the end, they will execute what they have in mind."

When international volunteers conceive the vision and then implement it without

genuine input from the Kenyan community, the Kenyans do not own the project. One

participant said:

> When it (the goat given by the IV) becomes sick you'll see the farmer going to the IV and saying, "Your goat is sick." What this means is that there is no ownership. If you were talking about the vision, the vision does not belong to the beneficiary. The vision came with the donor.

The striking admission that the vision did not belong to the Kenyans but rather to

international volunteer is perplexing. Another participant agreed that when international

volunteers own the vision, the Kenyan community will not own the vision in the same way. He commented:

> They come in they decide we're going to put in a borehole for this community. So, they are pumping in a lot of money and everything like that but you see now the community has not owned up the borehole in itself. So, in many cases what we've seen is that people are not going to use that borehole because they say, "Hey, this is for Wazungus or this is for this particular church." So, they won't own up the program.

The theme that international volunteers maintain a position of control as it relates to project vision and execution was evident in the responses of the study's participants.

International Volunteers Give Kenyans a Cursory Role to Play

Another theme identified throughout the interviews was that international volunteers give Kenyans cursory roles to play in collaborative projects. This is demonstrated by the way they maintain control throughout the implementation of the project.

> In many cases, us locals we are given what to do, international volunteers come down here with an already programmed work and basically, they just want us to fit in and you are given a role to play.

Another participant described this cursory role in this way: "the community members are only taught to implement and some of the times they don't know why they are even implementing it."

This cursory role can be an expectation of how Kenyans are to work. One participant described volunteers coming up with a structure to which the Kenyan must conform, while another commented, "they come with the idea and say, 'Hey, let's do this like this.' Forgetting that this community has been in existence for all these years." Each of these quotes is laced with the sentiment that Kenyans experience international volunteers as managing collaborative projects and expecting Kenyans to implement the

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vision they have crafted beforehand for the community. Another participant conceded that international volunteers come with their own vision but need Kenyans to carry it out. Participants perceived that the Kenyans' role is to implement the vision but not assume leadership positions, which are traditionally held by international volunteers.

Some participants perceived that the dominating role international volunteers play and the subservient role given to Kenyans are fueled by funding. One participant commented: "Whoever has the larger share of resources makes the decisions. Every other person below is to implement that decision." Yet another participant made this statement: "Someone who ends up plugging in the cash becomes our voice."

Project Failure

A final theme identified was related to project failure. Participants described international volunteers as departing hastily from collaborative efforts, in which case projects fail due to lack of Kenyan ownership. Power-laden attitudes and interactions often result in a collaborative project not sustained once the international volunteer departs. As stated earlier, participants saw the vision for projects coming with the international volunteers and not belonging to the Kenyan community members. One participant described a common outcome when the vision is held only by international volunteers: "If international volunteers fail to sell their vision properly to the community, the projects will not be sustained after their exit."

Others perceived project failure is a result of international volunteers hoarding the vision and not readily inviting Kenyan ownership. One participant described it this way: "Many projects are failing in Africa because the project came with the international volunteers without the involvement of the beneficiary."

Another participant attributed project failure to international volunteers not developing Kenyan leadership within the project prior to their departure. Some participants noted hasty departure on the part of the that international volunteers prior to the community gaining momentum, economic growth, and stability leads to project failure

Despite these negative perceptions, it might be worth noting that when asked if international volunteers were welcomed in their community, all 13 participants in the study affirmed a desire for ongoing relationships and collaborative projects with international volunteers in their communities.

Discussion and Implications

The data from this study described Kenyans lived experiences with international volunteers. Participants described international volunteers as contributing to their communities in salient ways by transferring skills and knowledge, increasing social capital, and linking Kenyans to resources while simultaneously engaging in Kenyan cultural practices.

These themes are consistent with previous studies that identify skill transfer (B. Lough & Matthews, 2013; B. Lough, McBride, Sherraden, & O'Hara, 2011; Perold et al., 2013), innovative ideation (Devereux, 2008; B. Lough & Matthews, 2013; Perold et al., 2013) and increased international social capital (Devereux, 2008; B. J. Lough, Sherraden, & McBride, 2014a; B. J. Lough et al., 2014a; B. Lough & Matthews, 2013; B. Lough et al., 2011) as positive impacts of international volunteers on host communities.

Conversely, themes were identified that negatively impacted intercultural relationship between Kenyans and international volunteers. Participants perceived

international volunteers to see themselves as superior and Kenyans as lacking, maintain a position of control in the project, give Kenyans a cursory role to play, and leave hastily without establishing project sustainability. These themes were woven consistently through participants' responses, revealing how Kenyans perceive interactions with international volunteers (Creswell, 2013).

Underlying perceptions that fuel international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors are often not established through a conscious process and are therefore worthy of examination. Utilizing the iceberg analogy to consider these findings, the following discussion will focus on perceptions. Suggestions for improved international volunteer practice will also be identified.

The Power of Perception

This study sought to understand Kenyans experiences of international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors. A theme that became apparent was that international volunteers' attitudes toward Kenyans seem to be driven by their negative perceptions of Kenyans. Specifically, that international volunteers see Kenyans as lacking and themselves as superior. In turn, negative perceptions appear to fuel the overall relationship, according to the voices of this study's participants.

As seen through a phenomenological lens, international volunteers' perceptions of Kenyans are subjectively and individually derived (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), uniquely shaped by their Global North context. Perceptions are shaped by the language we use, cultural norms, and personal experiences, which reify one another. These perceptions function as a filter that allow for quick action. For example, it is common for various forms of media to portray communities in the Global South as impoverished, destitute,

and in need of intervention by the Global North. Global Northerners' perceptions of Global Southerners as poor are reified through impoverished narratives told through TV commercials, news stories, and social media depicting Global South as poor and needy. This implicit process shapes Global Northerners' perceptions of Global Southerners.

The perceived negative impact of picture taking and dissemination was identified by several participants in this study who described international volunteers taking and displaying impoverished photos of Kenyans resulting in creating Kenyan images of physical, intellectual, and emotional impoverishment. Lough and Carter-Black identified how degrading language and pictures that denote "helping" only strengthen a perceived framework of impoverishment (2015).

Simultaneously, international volunteers' superior attitude about themselves is also shaped by outside messages. Positive rhetoric is often used to describe the altruistic role of volunteerism through media and language. This can construct international volunteers' self-perceptions, causing them to see themselves as superior as described by the study's participants. Various forms of media and language highlight the international volunteer as strong, intelligent, economically savvy, powerful, and able to help. Dr. Jayakumar Christian (2011) described this subtle self-perception as the "god complex," in which the economically wealthy perceive themselves as superior and feel they have the right to make decisions for those who are poor and with "marred identity." Christian describes marred identity as the deep shame that one cannot change one's circumstances and that societal injustices will not permit change either. This results in distorted yet powerless self-perceptions. Through this study's findings, one could conclude that the

participants experience international volunteers to see themselves through the lens of the god complex and Kenyans through the lens of marred identity.

These "marring" perceptions harm the potential for a mutual and life-giving intercultural relationship. Attachment literature emphasizes the necessity of trust and safety for a healthy relationship to grow (Hoffman, Cooper, & Powell, 2017). Without these elements of a healthy relationship, superficial relationships built on "what's in it for me" grow from the soil of marred perceptions. In this way, the development of perceptions leads to international volunteers perceiving themselves as superior and Kenyans as lacking, and the disrespectful attitude toward Kenyans has the power to shape behaviors.

Perceptions Lead to Action

Perceptions are not visibly identifiable; rather, they exist within thoughts. Perceptions inform attitudes, which directly impact behaviors. In this study, participants were able to distinguish international volunteers' attitudes toward them by the way they were treated in collaborative projects. Although good intentions guide international service, international volunteers' perceptions of Kenyans, conscious or unconscious, resulted in actions that were oppressive in nature. These themes identified through this study suggest that international volunteers' subjective perceptions (Payne, 2005) of Kenyans as inadequate lead them to conceive of the vision of projects while outside of Kenya and then initiate and maintain control of the project once in Kenya. International volunteers' negative attitudes toward Kenyans might also cause them to treat Kenyans cursorily, yet another finding of the study. This substantiates that unchecked, inaccurate

perceptions harm relationships. One participant described the importance of international volunteers seeing members of the host community for who they are:

> "The main thing that would bring the difference is the perception of the volunteer as he comes. If he can say that even the locals they are not empty in their mind, and involve them in coming up with…programs."

Kenyans' voices heard through this study can contribute to correcting the course that has historically been taken by international volunteers. This can happen partially through international volunteers' growing in self-awareness prior to service, understanding the historical context of such a relationship, and growing in admiration of the host community.

Take a Look in the Mirror

The only way for international volunteers to know their own biases, self-perceptions, and perceptions of the host community is to explore them. Studies confirm that international volunteers need self-reflective practice that examines their unconscious bias (B. J. Lough & Carter-Black, 2015; Perold et al., 2013), and this takes intentionality. The courageous path to examine personal bias and motivations, and potentially "marring" perceptions of the host community, can involve awakening to constructed perceptions that unintentionally demoralize others.

International volunteers originating from America live among racial tensions that frame its national context. Some would argue that racial tensions are woven into the founding of America as a nation (De La Torre, 2014; Douglas, 2015) and therefore deeply impact all of its citizens. In light of this racially charged context from which international volunteers come, it is ignorant not to take intentional inventory of unconscious biases that may exist related to the race of the host community.

Self-exploration can be a corrective process. As an important step toward cultural humility, Tervelon and Murray Garcia emphasize the importance of the practitioner self-examining unconscious bias (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998) and that this step can lead toward relationships marked by mutuality. Lough & Black (2015) also make an argument that this critical consciousness raising on the part of the international volunteer has the potential to shift historical power differentials that have been present between international volunteer and host community members. Examining the ways that degrading words and media have impacted the image of the host communities while acknowledging glory related to volunteerism can lead international volunteers to practice that is dignifying and respectful.

Understand the Historical Context of the Host Community

International volunteerism is often situated within countries that have been historically colonialized. Although independence has been gained, previously colonized countries could experience development practice as a continuation of dominance (Escobar, 1995). Modernization approaches to international development, including structural adjustment programs, could be perceived by host community members as relatives of colonial practice (Perold et al., 2013). In light of the painful historical narrative of dominance and suffering experienced by many host communities, international volunteers need to heed the impact colonization has had on the host community and the impact it might have on the volunteer/host community member relationship.

Lough & Black (2015) propose that frank and sincere reflection on the oppressive role colonization has had on communities can result in honest conversations with host

community members. These conversations can provide a platform for international volunteers to identify struggles within their own countries, shifting power toward a more equalized relationship.

In response to the importance of international volunteers' exploring unconscious bias and understanding the historical context of service, strengthening international volunteer training is imperative. By fortifying international volunteer training to include this content, perceptions held by international volunteers of the host community, unconscious bias, and the historical context of service can be explored and more mutually beneficial approaches may result (B. J. Lough & Carter-Black, 2015; Perold et al., 2013)

Increased Respect

The international volunteer/host community member relationship can be strengthened as international volunteers admire the strength and capacity in the host community. As international volunteers acknowledge the resilience, power, creativity, and capacity in host communities to handle the challenges they experience in their communities, respect will grow. This desire for respect is heard in one of this study's participants:

> Volunteers need to come down here and try to understand what we are doing and let it be their now problem to fit into what we're doing because remember we were there before. This is not Tabula Rasa, you don't come and find nothing, an empty plate, people were living, people have structures. They have their own remote structures that support their day to day lives, they know how to solve their problems, they know how to interrelate, they know how to do business, people know how to work it out.

Respect can be conveyed to host communities when volunteers acknowledge that they, too, have benefited from their international service. In several studies, international volunteers have identified the personal growth that has occurred as a result of volunteer service (Lough, Sherraden, & McBride, 2014b; McBride et al., 2012). Highlighting the

mutuality and benefits that all parties receive through international collaborative partnership results in balancing power in the relationship. Conversely, if this true reciprocal relationship is not communicated, perceptions of inadequacy and inferiority will only continue (B. J. Lough & Carter-Black, 2015).

Ongoing participatory research from the vantage point of host community members can also communicate respect to the host community. Participants in this study independently acknowledged how being inquired of their opinions and lived experiences was empowering as it allowed them the opportunity to explore their experiences, voice them, and potentially contribute to better volunteer practices.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study which give pause for consideration. The participants of this study interacted with international volunteers that represented varying durations of service, preparatory training, character development, and sending organizations. These specific details of international volunteers were unknown by many of the participants yet potentially shaped their perceptions of interactions and responses to this study.

A challenge the researchers faced in this study was bracketing personal experience and bias. Aware of this threat, the researchers practiced reflexivity throughout the data collection and data analysis process, recording in journals and deliberating with one another. Additionally, participants' confidentiality was of utmost importance to the researchers, as participants in this study will most likely affiliate with one of the authors in community development efforts in their city and may not want to bring disruption to their working relationships with international volunteers.

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Nevertheless, participants might have experienced a pleasing bias, concerned of harming relationship. This might have hindered authentic responses. Finally, participants' responses may have been shaped by a cultural value of honor. A potential reluctance to offer negative experiences might impact the credibility and confirmability of the study's findings.

Conclusion

Through this phenomenological study, Kenyan participants' lived experiences of relating with international volunteers were explored. Some positive and several painful themes were identified. The identified themes related to participants' lived experiences have the potential to mitigate harm. Through increased self-awareness, the relationship between international volunteer and host community members has the potential to be mended. As co-learning and co-discovery occurs, authentic relationship has the potential to emerge between international volunteers and host community members. As humility and mutual regard shape interactions, relationships between international volunteers and host communities have the potential to unlock restorative, synergistic practices that restore communities worldwide.

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CHAPTER THREE

International Volunteer Service and Perceptions of Refugees

Abstract

In response to communities around the world facing dislocation due to war and poverty, international volunteer service (IVS) has been a vehicle for people to engage refugees. Accuracy of international volunteers' perceptions of refugees is an important factor in the ethics and effectiveness of their involvement. Unfortunately, misperceptions can hinder the impact they have. IVS can provide the opportunity for shifts in the accuracy of international volunteers' perceptions of refugees and has the potential to change how international volunteers discuss, engage, and advocate for refugees upon return after service. Therefore, this survey research examined how international volunteer service informs volunteers' changes in perception of refugees. The study utilized an online survey with international volunteers (n=490) who served through a faith-based non-governmental organization. Drawing on paired samples t-tests, the study revealed a statistically significant mean difference in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees before and after their service. However, change in perceptions were not found to be correlated with variables related to contact with refugees, which illuminates the need for further research on the topic. Applying Mezirow's theory of transformative learning as a possible frame to understand the change in perceptions that occurred in study participants, recommendations for future research are included.

Key Words: volunteer(ing-ism), perceptions, refugees, impact

Introduction

Americans representing all age groups, from college students to whole families, engage in international volunteer service (IVS). IVS is defined as voluntary, structured service conducted across international borders with little or no financial recompense (Sherraden et al., 2006). IVS typically involves capacity and community development efforts expressed through religious service, political activism, international solidarity, charity, or professional internships (Devereux, 2010). It is conservatively estimated that over one million Americans volunteer internationally each year (Lough, 2008; Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen, & Brown, 2006) through a range of IVS organizations including the Peace Corps, UN Volunteers, and international non-profit organizations. Forty-eight percent of those who volunteer do so through religiously oriented institutions (Lough, 2008), reflecting religious faith as the factor fuel that motivates many international volunteers to serve. Although IVS has rapidly expanded in the last decade, research on the impact of IVS on its stakeholders, including host communities, volunteers, and IVS agencies, has lagged behind (Lough, 2014; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, & McBride, 2006).

In 2016, the Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian refugee crises summoned international volunteers to engage the needs of refugees and their families as they fled their home countries to sheltering countries. The UN Refugee Agency, or UNHCR, reported that 131,724 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in January and February 2016 alone, warning that Europe was on the cusp of a humanitarian crisis as countries struggled with the increasing number of arrivals (Warren, 2016). IVS organizations have responded to

the international plea for assistance by sending international volunteers to serve the critical needs of refugees and host communities alike.

There is a robust discourse around the efficacy and ethics of IVS. Some scholars assert it is a strategic and cost-effective method for mobilizing skill and capacity development around the globe (Lough, 2009; Lough, McBride, Sherraden, & O'Hara, 2011). Others propose it is more personal than other development approaches that are focused on economic growth rather than human development and enhancement (Devereux, 2008a; Sherraden, Lough, & Mcbride, 2008). Critics, however, are concerned that IVS favors colonial practices (Smith & Laurie, 2011) as the majority of international volunteers are from the Global North, comprised of America and Europe, and conduct their international service in the Global South, comprised of Africa, Latin America, developing Asia, and the Middle East. Critics argue that IVS has the possibility to reify historic power differentials between the Global North and Global South (Lewis, 2006; McBride & Sherraden, 2007; VOSESA, 2010). The combination of the rapidly increasing prevalence of IVS and the ambiguity around the ethics of the practice calls for increased research to explore its impact on stakeholders (Devereux, 2008b; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015; McBride & Sherraden, 2007).

Of the few studies that have examined IVS impact on international volunteers (Lough & McBride, 2014; Lough, Sherraden, & McBride, 2014; Lough, Sherraden, McBride, & Xiang, 2014; Lough, 2011; McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012), the variables of interest have been primarily related to outcomes that have benefited the volunteer. The purpose of this study was to add to the limited literature on IVS efficacy by exploring a new angle of IVS impact. If international volunteers engage IVS with

unchecked perceptions of refugees that are unconsciously shaped by privilege and media

discourse, there is a chance that the IVS impact on refugees is reduced by international

volunteers' attitudinal bias and misperceptions. However, if international volunteers

develop personal relationships with refugees through IVS, formerly held erroneous

perceptions might potentially shift as a result of engaging in IVS. Therefore, this study

explored changes in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees resulting from IVS.

If international volunteers' perceptions of refugees shift as a result of IVS participation,

these perception shifts might very well result in lifestyle changes in advocacy, increased

financial donations, or civic engagement on behalf of refuges. Altruistic behaviors in

volunteers post refugee service could lead to changes in national policies and legislation

related to refugees in the volunteer's home country. Study findings also have the potential

to inform healthier intercultural relationships based on accurate perceptions, restoring

reciprocity and mutuality at the core of the volunteer-refugee relationship.

Literature Review

In an effort to provide an evidence-based context for this study, research related to

IVS outcomes, perceptions of refugees, and theories related to intercultural contact was

reviewed.

International Volunteer Service Outcomes

The scant research existing on IVS mainly explores the impact volunteerism has

on the volunteer (McBride & Sherraden, 2007). To boost research on these outcomes,

Lough, McBride, and Sherradan developed the International Volunteer Impact Survey

(IVIS) to evaluate the effects of international volunteer service on participating

volunteers (2009). Outcome dimensions of the scale included international contacts

(*a*=.81), internationally-related life plans (*a*=.91), international understanding (*a*=.81), intercultural relations (*a*=.80), global identity (*a*=.73), and community engagement (*a*=.87), among others. The survey was validated in a study on 1,769 IVS volunteer and non-volunteer survey respondents representing two different programs.

The IVIS survey has been used to explore several internationally related outcomes of IVS including volunteers' international social capital, as reflected in international networks of relationships, understanding of other cultures, and the intention to obtain an international career. In a quasi-experimental study using mixed regression modeling, international volunteers (*n*=145) were statistically more likely to report an increase in all three outcome categories as a result of IVS (McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012).

International volunteers' development of international social capital as an outcome of IVS was further explored in a longitudinal study among international volunteer alumni (*n*=245) using survey responses at three different points in time. Findings showed international volunteers to have a statistically significant increase in international social capital demonstrated by linking host community members to the volunteer's network of relationships and resources upon their return from service. Findings also revealed that the longer international volunteers served internationally, the greater the increase in international social capital (Lough & McBride, 2014).

Increases in IVS alumni's intercultural relations, international concern, and international social capital were outcome variables further explored in a quasi-experimental study of IVS alumni and a comparison group of individuals who were not international volunteers. The study found that international volunteers rated significantly higher in all three outcome variables two to three years after returning from service,

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supporting that IVS has lasting effects on international volunteers (Lough, Sherraden, McBride, & Xiang, 2014).

Proponents of IVS believe that volunteers grow in intercultural competence and understanding of global injustices as a result of international service which can potentially lead to advocacy upon return (Burns, 2014; Ericson, 2011). This theory was supported through a study by Lough (2009) of international volunteer alumni. Some 95 percent of the participants reported increased intercultural understanding and 75 percent claimed the experience was personally transformational which may result in volunteers' changing their lifestyles upon return.

Despite cross-sectional research evidence of IVS's positive impact, scholars and researchers encourage additional inquiry of the impact of IVS utilizing research design models measuring change over time (Powell, Bratovic, & Dolic, 2007). Without additional research that explores IVS impact over time, international volunteerism is propagated as a theoretically effective practice with little evidence to substantiate these claims.

Perceptions of Refugees

Americans perceptions of refugees are deeply influenced by the current political and social discourse on immigration. As rates of migration have increased globally (Murray & Marx, 2013), countries have engaged in torrid debates as to how to respond with compassion and jurisdiction. Situated within a precarious debate in the United States fueled by polarizing political rhetoric and media, Americans' perceptions of refugees are shaped by the larger debate on immigration. Language and images used in public and personal ways from news broadcasts to social media describe refugees and their plight.

Language shapes perception (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013), resulting in having a sense of knowing someone or something without having direct engagement. Negative perceptions can drive prejudice in thought and actions.

Scholars have identified certain predicting constructs that form perceptions of immigrants, including perceptions related to economic and cultural consequences and the size of the migrating population. Additionally, perceptions can be anchored in varying political ideologies and shaped by the strength of nationalistic attachment (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010).

Studies have explored Americans' perceptions of immigrants and refugees and their resettlement in the United States. In a study among 191 undergraduate students of varying ages, older participants reported a greater perceived threat of immigrants and refugees while younger participants reported more positive attitudes toward refugees and potential resettlement in the United States (Murray & Marx, 2013). Others have explored attitudes transnationally. Ceobanu and Escandell (2010) explored multi-national survey data from economically advanced countries and found negative overall sentiment in the studies reviewed. These negative attitudes toward immigrants seem to persist. Of nine previous studies, seven reported negative attitudes toward immigrants and refugees remaining stable or increasing.

Nonetheless, when intercultural contact takes place between two people and perceptions are replaced with experience, perceptions can be altered. In a study on refugees and their resettlement process in the United States, particular attention was paid to Americans' experiences with and attitudes toward refugees. In a qualitative study among Euro-American volunteers in church-related refugee resettlement ministries, a

participant described his experience of getting to know an international person seeking refuge in his community in this way: "The whole thing has been transformative" (Fox, 2015, p. 77). Participants in the same study went on to describe their relationships with refugees resulting in informative, mutual, and generally nurturing, authentic friendships (Fox, 2015).

It could be argued that an outcome of IVS is the volunteer moving beyond perceptions of international populations to actually forming relationships through intercultural personal interaction. Intercultural contact, the intentional engagement with and exposure to people of different cultures over time (Allport, 1954; Lough & Oppenheim, 2017b; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), may impact perceptions. This poses the question: How does participation in IVS change volunteers' perceptions of refugees? Exploring international volunteers' perceptions of the people they serve and the impact IVS might have on these perceptions has yet to be explored. This study attempts to inform this question by exploring international volunteers' changes in perceptions as they relate with refugees through IVS.

Intercultural contact between different groups has been found to change perceptions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Allport's contact theory suggests that changes in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees might occur between volunteers and refuges under certain optimal circumstances, reducing prejudiced thoughts. First, both groups would need to perceive that they have equal status in the relationship and share common goals. Additionally, for an optimal contact scenario, there would need to be collaborative interactions between groups toward the common goal. Finally, both groups would need to feel supported by outside authority and social institutions (Allport, 1954).

It could also be argued that the context of relationship produced by international volunteerism is mutual in nature (Devereux, 2008a; Lough & Oppenheim, 2017a), fulfilling the conditions recommended by Allport. Amid diverse thought about the accuracy of this theory, Pettigrew and Tropp conducted a meta-analysis of over 713 independent samples from 515 studies and found that intergroup contact typically reduced intergroup prejudice. Findings also revealed that contact theory that was originally tested on racial and ethnic relationships can be extended to other groups as well. Important to this study, findings revealed that all four ideal conditions outlined by Allport were not essential for prejudice reduction (2006). For the purpose of this study, the researcher drew from Allport's contact theory to explore the relationship between international volunteers' intercultural contact with refugees and their change in perceptions of refugees.

Somewhat surprisingly, religion has been found to be related to prejudicial thought. Whitley (2009) conducted a meta-analysis on 61 studies and found frequency in attendance at religious services was positively correlated with racial and gay prejudice. Rowett et al. (2005) explored attitudes toward Christians and Muslims among predominantly Christian college students and found that high levels of religious fundamentalism were negatively associated with positive attitudes toward Muslims. Yet, other studies have found that religion might be correlated with compassion for immigrants and refugees. In one study, for those with greater religious service attendance, there were preferences for more liberal immigration policies (Knoll, 2009). This conflicting data supports Allport's (1954) thoughts: "The role of religion is paradoxical. It makes prejudice and it unmakes prejudice" (p. 444).

Research Question

This study explored the following questions: To what extent did international volunteer service (IVS) change volunteers' perceptions of refugees? If findings revealed a statistically significant change in perceptions as a result of IVS, then what relationship was there between international volunteers' intercultural contact with refugees and their change in perceptions?

Methods

Study Sample

For this study, the population consisted of international volunteers participating in a faith-based international volunteer organization based in the United States. Faith-based organizations (FBO) are "formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates [*sic*] on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas for public good" (Berger, 2003, p. 16). This international volunteer organization is situated under the leadership of a Christian denomination in a Southwestern U.S. state.

In response to the 2016 refugee crisis, this organization and its network of 36 churches across the United States sent volunteers to serve the physical, social, and spiritual needs of refugees migrating through Europe. The organization mobilized dozens of Impact Trips with volunteers serving less than one month, one to three months, and one year in duration. International volunteers were destined for eight different cities across Europe (N=1700).

The researcher was approached by the organization to explore the impact IVS had on volunteers. Therefore, a survey research design was chosen to understand the impact international volunteerism would have on participating volunteers (Babbie, 2007). A proposal was submitted to the university's IRB and permission was given to the researcher to pursue the study (Appendix C).

The sampling frame for this study consisted of international volunteers participating in the aforementioned refugee response volunteer program who were 18 years of age or older and vetted by the organization through application to the program. A nonprobability purposive sample was drawn from the identified sample frame. The demographic characteristics of the sample (n=490) are found in Table 1. The duration of service for volunteers was one week to one month (n=420), one to three months (n=67), and one year in duration (n=6). The mean length of service was 3.2 weeks.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample (n=490)

Characteristic	n (%)
Sex	
Female	323 (65.4)
Male	167 (33.8)
Race	
African-American	17 (3.4)
Asian	65 (13.2)
White	371 (75.1)
Multiracial	37 (13.24)
Age	
18-29	346 (70.6)
30-39	81 (16)
Education	
Bachelors Degree or Higher	290 (58.7)

Note. The listed numbers of respondents in each demographic category do not equal the sample size because of nonreporting by respondents.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

      Instrumentation. The perception of refugees scale measuring volunteers'

perceptions of refugees was developed by the researcher (see Table 2). The scale was

constructed with items reflecting volunteers' attitudes and perceptions of refugees (Knoll,

2009; Murray & Marx, 2013; Rowatt et al., 2005). The scale contained Likert-like scale

items based on a 7-point scale of agreement from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"

with "neither" at the center of the scale. Basic demographic questions were also included

in the instrument. The survey items were field-tested with a group of IVS administrators

and former international volunteers (*N*=25) who provided improvement to the survey

items and format in an effort to provide face and content validity to the newly developed

instrument items. Conceptually, the researcher was informed in developing the

perceptions of refugees scale for this research by the International Volunteer Impact

Survey (IVIS) (Lough et al., 2009). The IVIS is a self-reporting quantitative survey that

assesses the impact of international volunteerism on the volunteer in several outcome

areas.

      In an effort to determine the reliability of the scale measuring perception of

refugees, Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the composite variables' internal

consistency. Two items did not meet the reliability benchmark and were eliminated. The

remaining six items were used as a composite score for perceptions of refugees.

      For this research, the primary dependent variable under analysis, international

volunteers' changes in perception of refugees, represents the mean difference between

pre- and post-test scores.

Table 2

Perceptions of Refugees Scale Items (a=.628)

I could explain the difference between a refugee and migrant.

Countries should allow refugees to enter and secure long-term permanent residence.

Refugees present a security threat to the countries they enter.

Refugees should be able to take employment in other countries.

If I had to be honest, I feel fearful of interacting with Muslims.

I defend the needs of refugees with my family and friends.

Note. Items measure respondents' perceptions rather than objective levels of knowledge or skill.

If findings from the study's first research question reflected a statistically significant change in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees after IVS, then the relationship between the intercultural contact variables and international volunteers' change in perception would be explored. Intercultural contact, the intentional engagement with and exposure to people of different cultures over time (Allport, 1954; Lough & Oppenheim, 2017b; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), was measured using four separate variables. The first asked respondents how many previous weeks of IVS they had completed. The second asked how many weeks they had served in the current IVS experience. The third and fourth variables were composite measures constructed to estimate the total number of hours spent by volunteers in conversation and direct service with refugees during the current IVS experience. These two measures were constructed by multiplying the days of current IVS by: 1) the number of conversational hours respondents reported having with refugees each day; and 2) the number of service hours respondents reported having with refugees each day. Descriptive statistics for these variables can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables	n	M	SD
Baseline Percept. of Refugees	488	32.59	4.53
Post Percept. of Refugees	488	35.19	3.87
Prior IVS weeks	487	16.57	74.70
Current IVS weeks	474	3.20	3.32
Conversation hours with refugees X IVS days	433	66.38	136.24
Service hours with refugees X IVS days	451	44.44	71.36

Note. The listed numbers of respondents in each demographic category do not equal the sample size because of nonreporting by respondents.

Data Collection. The study was conducted through a self-administered Qualtrics online survey. Two weeks prior to the volunteers' service, the director of the volunteer organization emailed all volunteer participants to introduce them to the study (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). The survey was administered at three different points in time. The online pretest survey was presented to international volunteer participants during a two-day preparation training in Amsterdam prior to service. A formal invitation to participate in the study and a link to the survey was provided through Qualtrics to all participants (*n*=816). Post volunteers' international service, the online post-test survey was offered during a debriefing session (*n*=764). Finally, the online survey was administered through email three months post international volunteer service (*n*=359). In an effort to eliminate sampling bias, all of the volunteers serving through this IVS program were invited to participate (N=1700). For the purpose of this study, participants who completed both pre-test and post-test surveys were included (*n*=490).

Data Analysis

Data were downloaded from Qualtrics into Excel for initial cleaning purposes. A codebook with labeled variables was created. Each case was screened for missing data and outliers. Descriptive frequencies were computed for race, gender, age, and education attainment. The study's final sample reflected individuals who completed both pre and post surveys (*n*=490). Cronbach's Alpha was computed to determine the reliability of the perceptions of refugees' subscale. Paired samples *t*-tests were used to explore volunteers' change in perceptions of refugees prior to and after IVS. A correlation matrix was calculated to assess the relationship between the intercultural contact scores and the mean difference between the pre and post measure of perceptions.

Findings

To answer the first research question, a paired samples *t*-test was used to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between international volunteers' perceptions of refugees prior to and after IVS. Histograms and boxplots indicated that scores on the dependent variable were negatively skewed. Square root transformations failed to normalize the distribution. Because the departure from normality was not considered severe, parametric analysis was used. Participants' perceptions of refugees as assessed by the perceptions of refugees' scale on the pretest survey (*M*=32.59, *SD*=4.53) were different from their responses on the posttest survey (*M*=35.19, *SD* 3.87), a statistically significant mean difference of 2.59 points, 95% CI [2.93, -2.26], *t*(487)=-15.27, *p*<.001, *d*=-.69. The effect size (*d*=.69) for the pre- and post-tests, as indexed by Cohens *d*, revealed that the international volunteer service had a moderately strong effect on change in volunteers' perceptions of refugees.

An analysis was conducted on the second research question, the relationship between intercultural contact variables, and the mean change score variable (see Table 4). Surprisingly, no substantive correlations were discovered between the intercultural contact variables and the mean difference of perception scores.

Table 4

Bivariate Correlations between Intercultural Contact Variables and Mean Difference of Perceptions Scores

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Prior IVS weeks	--	0.08	.006	-.026	0.08
2. Current IVS weeks		--	0.50**	0.58**	0.09
3. IVS weeks X hours/day in conversation with refugees			--	0.36**	0.04
4. IVS weeks X hours/day in service with refugees				--	.009
5. Mean difference of perceptions scores of pre/post tests					--

Note. ** signifies statistical significance at the .01 level (2-tailed). * signifies statistical significance at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion and Recommendations for Future Research

Though the perceptions scale utilized in this study did not meet traditional reliability standards ($a=.628$), it still appears that IVS has a moderate effect on volunteers' perception change of refugees and raises several points of discussion.

Perception shifts in international volunteers as an impact outcome of IVS are an important finding. If volunteers' intercultural perceptions positively shift after IVS service, it might be reasoned that IVS is a method to deconstruct prejudiced thought in volunteers. If such thoughts decrease in international volunteers, there could be an increase in open-mindedness and more positively affected relationships between IVS alumni and their intercultural relationships. This could support an argument that IVS

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leads to stronger and healthier intercultural relationships rather than reifying historic power imbalances rooted in neocolonial frameworks that concern critics of IVS.

Shifts in international volunteers' perceptions have the potential to change how international volunteers deliberate upon, engage, and advocate for refugees upon return after service. In a study of international volunteers, findings revealed a statistically significant increase in volunteers' intercultural concern and involvement in international affairs and issues two years post service (Lough, Sherraden, McBride, et al., 2014). Study findings also have shown that relationships developed with refugees have lowered residents' readiness to expel refugees and immigrants from their country (McLaren, 2003). Therefore, as intercultural relationship exposure occurs through international volunteer service, prosocial support for intercultural relationships might result in international volunteers as they return to their countries. Clearly, additional IVS impact research is needed as it relates to international volunteers' perception shifts and the lifestyle behaviors that might ensue (Lough & McBride, 2014; Lough, Sherraden, McBride, et al., 2014; McBride et al., 2012).

The lack of substantive relationship between international volunteers' intercultural contact with refugees and their change in perceptions of refuges is perplexing in light of the extensive research on the positive correlation between intergroup contact and change in perceptions and attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, there could be several salient explanations for the international volunteers' statistically significant change in perceptions post IVS despite the contact variables having little relation to this change.

One possible explanation for this change in perceptions could be rooted in Mezirow's transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978). Transformative learning takes place when there "is a deep, structural shift in basic premise of thought, feeling and action" (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 104). Mezirow first used the label *transformation* in his qualitative study of American women returning to postsecondary study or the workforce after an extended period of working from home (Mezirow, 1978). This drastic change in context and experience served as a transformative learning experience for the women, according to Mezirow. He concluded that the women had gone through a transformational process reflected through stages including a disorienting dilemma, self-examination, critical assessment of previously held assumptions, recognition that one's process of transformation is shared with others, exploration of new perspectives, a plan for course action, and altering present relationship and forging new relationships (Kitchenham, 2008).

The findings of this study informed Mezirow's theory of "habits of mind" as broad, orienting, and habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. These habits of mind shape "points of view," the constellation of value judgement and belief that shapes interpretation of the surrounding world (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). Mezirow proposed that habits of mind and points of view are established by the modeling done by primary care givers and surrounding cultural norms. When a person is presented with a disorienting dilemma, a context radically different than previously held habits of mind or points of view, an individual is then faced with a problem that can no longer be solved through previously held assumptions or beliefs. Mezirow proposed that this conundrum facilitated perspective transformation:

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The emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. (Mezirow, 1978, p. 6)

It appears that Mezirow believed that disorienting dilemmas puncture holes in previously held belief systems and allow for more inclusive thought and action. In particular, Mezirow believed that if a person engages in intentional, reflexive practice in the context of a disorienting dilemma, maturation and a change in one's worldview would result (2003).

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning could explain the findings of this study. The change observed in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees post IVS could be a result of disorienting dilemmas international volunteers encountered as they interacted with refugees face to face. International volunteers' previously held perceptions of refugees might have been challenged as they observed refugees' humanity, courage, and vulnerability. Additionally, they might have had conversations with other international volunteers that contributed to a transformation of perceptions. Finally, contemplation done through reflexively considering their learning while in a foreign context might have also impacted their shift in perceptions. Mezirow might argue that international volunteers experience this collective disruption as a disorienting dilemma resulting in a statistically significant change in perceptions of refugees and their rights.

To explore the possible connection between Mezirow's transformative learning theory and international volunteers' perception changes, further research could examine international volunteers' reflexive practices used during IVS and any change in perceptions that might occur. Also, future studies could explore this theory by controlling

for previous IVS experience to see if there is significant change in perceptions in those with and without previous IVS experience.

Previous study findings also suggest that the age of volunteers impacts their change in perceptions (Murray & Marx, 2013). Therefore, another possible explanation for international volunteers' change in perceptions could be related to the ages of this study's participants. Future studies could explore the variable of age with samples that represent a broad spectrum of ages to determine if age contributes to perception changes in participants post IVS.

Study Limitations

This research is the first study exploring the change in perceptions that occur in international volunteers as a result of IVS with a robust sample (n=490). However, there were limitations to this study's instrumentation and design. This collaborative study between the sponsoring IVS organization and researcher was initiated within a relief context. The sponsoring organization and researcher worked quickly to create an instrument that would measure change in international volunteers based on IVS within a short response window of the refugee crisis in the summer of 2016. Although the instrument was field-tested with 26 current and former international volunteers, the instrument needed to be piloted to explore its reliability and edited to strengthen its accurate measuring capacity. Future studies could explore the reliability of the perceptions scale with other samples.

The constructs measured in the instrument could have been more accurate. In particular, the independent variable, "intercultural contact," could have been honed to reflect the intended construct. In an effort to measure the construct with more accuracy,

several additional items could have been measured. For example, the quality of contact between international volunteers and refugees could have been studied (Tawagi & Mak, 2015). Additionally, the equity of the relation reflected in common goals, collaboration, and approval from outside authority could have also been included. These suggestions reflect original concepts introduced by Allport (1954). An additional limitation of the study is that self-response items can be unreliable (Yen, 1986). Particularly, the items related to international volunteers' conversation and service hours with refugees were self-reported and might have suffered in accuracy. In an effort to mitigate this bias in future research, international volunteers could be asked to keep daily logs reflecting hours of contact. Finally, international volunteers served in several different contexts, which might have had an impact on volunteers' responses, and including context of service and type of services offered could lead to more salient findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

Perception changes in international volunteers as a result of IVS had not been explored prior to this study. Consequently, additional research to study perception change as a positive outcome of IVS is needed. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore if international volunteers' perception changes as a result of IVS impact their prosocial behaviors toward refugees upon return and if they develop additional intercultural relationships in their home communities post IVS. Future studies should include comparison groups of those who did not participate in IVS and international volunteers who did not have contact with refugees, thus strengthening the generalizability of the study's finding. Utilizing a comparison group can minimize the selection bias found in this study as this study sample consisted exclusively of people who volunteered to serve

refuges and, therefore, could have been predisposed to perception shifts of refugees.

Future research can provide clarity to this study's finding by exploring if perceptions

shifts are related to IVS or are influenced by international volunteers' personality traits,

temperament, political leaning, and worldview. Additionally, future studies utilizing a

sample reflective of a wider range of ages could provide additional insight into the impact

of generational variables.

Conclusion

The finding from this study identifies another outcome variable of IVS.

Specifically, that international volunteers' perceptions of the people they serve change as

a result of IVS. Results from this study could indicate that IVS is worthy of consideration

as a practice method that fosters perception changes in the international volunteers who

serve. Prior to this study, exploring international volunteers' perception change as an

outcome of IVS had not been explored. This calls for additional research to study

perception change as a positive outcome of IVS, exploring how IVS potentially

stimulates healthy intercultural relationships between international volunteers and the

people they serve.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Exploring Humility in International Volunteerism: Kenyans' Understandings of Humility
and Humility Practices

Abstract

The complexity of building mutually beneficial intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host communities is daunting in light of historical misuses of power yet crucial in light of globalization. The virtue of humility, found not only to help repair relationships but also aid in forming strong relationship bonds, has the potential to repair and strengthen intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host community members. However, there remains a lack of clarity regarding the specific practice behaviors that exhibit humility. Through this phenomenological study, 13 in-depth interviews were conducted with Kenyan participants and their understandings of humility and how the virtue relates to international volunteer practices were explored. Findings suggest humility is an attitude of appreciation and equality in relation to others, while humility in practice is a posture of listening and learning from others before action is taken and not having a "know it all" stance. Recommendations for future research are described.

Keywords: international volunteerism, host community, humility, cultural humility

Introduction

Building healthy relationships across cultural differences is the cornerstone to international volunteerism efforts. The intercultural relationship can be likened to the vehicle by which anticipated service and change occurs. However, historic power imbalance, paternalism, and well-intended efforts characterize the context for the relationships between host community members and international volunteers.

The complexity of building mutually beneficial intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host communities is daunting in light of historical misuses of power yet crucial in light of globalization. In fact, some scholars observe that international volunteerism originating in the Global North and directed toward the Global South mimic power distortions established through the colonial period and might actually do more harm than good (Baaz, 2005; Smith & Laurie, 2011; Perold et al., 2013). Nevertheless, little research attention has been directed toward the role the intercultural relationship plays between international volunteers and host community members in international volunteer service (Lough & Matthews, 2013; Perold et al., 2013) with insufficient research exploring restorative approaches that contribute to healthy intercultural relationships.

The virtue of humility has been found not only to help repair relationships but also aid in forming strong relationship bonds (Davis et al., 2013) and has the potential to repair and strengthen intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host community members. This article contributes to the scant research that examines host community members' perceptions of their relationships with international volunteers. Specifically, this study explored Kenyans' understandings of humility and how the virtue

relates to international volunteer practices. Using a constructivist lens, a phenomenological approach was employed to explore Kenyans' understanding of humility and practice behaviors that depict the virtue as it relates to international volunteerism. Findings from this study have the potential to positively impact international volunteerism practices resulting in reciprocal, healthy relationships between international volunteers and host community members.

Literature Review

Humility as a Virtue

Humility has historically been overlooked in regards to social science research on virtues but is currently receiving due attention (Davis et al., 2011, 2013; Tangney, 2000a). Rejecting former definitions that humility equates to self-abasement or holding oneself in low regard, scholars are reframing a more accurate concept of humility. However, the virtue remains challenging to define clearly.

Scholars seem to agree that the construct incorporates an accurate view of self, other-orientedness, openness to difference, and acknowledgment of personal limitations (Wright et al., 2017). Tangney captures key characteristics of this humility construct: "accurate assessment of one's abilities and achievements; ability to acknowledge one's mistakes, imperfections, gaps in knowledge and limitations; openness to new ideas, contradictory information, and advice; and keeping one's abilities and accomplishments in perspective" (2000a, p. 73).

Some scholars have further defined humility by its internal and interpersonal attributes. The internal attributes are reflected in a moderate view of oneself, lack of self-preoccupation, and the self-acknowledgement that one is finite and limited in capacity.

This internal posture self-identifies as created and a part of the larger "whole" which is infinitely grander than oneself. Interpersonal attributes of humility are demonstrated through respect, empathy, appreciation for equality and the value for others (Davis et al., 2011; Tangney, 2000b).

However, some scholars challenge that these attributes fail to clarify the core of the virtue of humility and propose that humility at its core is aligning oneself epistemically and ethically. To be epistemically aligned is to:

> Understand and experience oneself as one, in fact, is-namely, as a finite and fallible being that is but an infinitesimal part of a vast universe, and so has a necessarily limited and incomplete perspective or grasp on the "whole" which is infinity larger and greater than oneself. (Wright et al., 2017, p. 4)

Humility as epistemically aligned suggests a worldview that one is both limited in capacity yet uniquely gifted to collaborate in the larger "whole."

Wright et al. further defined the ethical alignment of humility as the "understanding and experience of oneself as only one among a host of other morally relevant beings, whose interests are foundationally as legitimate and worthy of attention and concern as one's own state" (Wright et al., 2017, p. 4). The ethical component seems to emphasize the intrinsic value and necessity of others, while the interconnected constructs of humility as epistemically and ethically derived provide a robust definition of the virtue.

This conceptualization of humility is consistent with many religious and cultural traditions (Paine, Sandage, Rupert, Devor, & Bronstein, 2015). Specifically, the Christian faith tradition highlights the importance of humility in its followers through Jesus' modeling at the Last Supper (John 13:1-17). In the final interaction with his disciples prior to his death, Jesus poignantly depicts the posture of humility as He takes off his

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outer garment, wraps a towel around His waist, and lowers Himself to wash the dust from his disciples' feet. In this act, Jesus illustrates an epistemically and ethically alignment of humility through his self-sacrifice, valuing of others, and equality in relationship.

These conceptualizations of humility are in contrast to Dr. Jayakumar Christian's descriptions of god complex and marred identity (2011) that seem to disrupt the intercultural relationship between international volunteers and host community members. Dr. Christian describes the attitude of god complex as the economically wealthy's subtly superior attitude that they have the right to tell the economically poor how to live their lives. This directly impacts the self-perception of persons struggling with poverty who can perceive themselves with marred identity, the self-abasing sense that change is impossible from within themselves and is also hindered by unjust systems that do not permit advancement (Christian, 2011). This dynamic is often embedded between international volunteers and host community members and reifies power-laden relationships that hinder growth in both parties. Humility seems to be absent from both the superior attitudes of god complex and the self-abasing attitudes of marred identity reflected in Christian's concepts.

However, in contrast, the concepts that undergird humility might mitigate the harm of the god complex and marred identity relationship dynamic. The virtue of humility allows one to espouse an accurate view of oneself and have a willingness to recognize one's mistakes and limitations, while valuing the intrinsic value and unique contributions of others. There is the potential that seeking the virtue of humility could rightly correct the misconceptions of god complex and marred identity that negatively impact the relationship between host community members and international volunteers.

Cultural Humility Model

The cultural humility model proposes a hopeful way forward. First defined by Tervelon and Murray-Garcia, the model draws from the humility construct and extends it to the context of intercultural relationships (1998). The cultural humility model is anchored in a practitioner's "commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to attempt to redress power imbalances in the relationship, and to developing mutually beneficially and non-paternalistic work" (1998, p. 118). Scholars see this approach as others-oriented, acknowledging limitations in understanding of another's worldview and cultural background while engaging others with respect and openness to difference (Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015; Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013).

The concept of cultural humility has grown in popularity and has been used interchangeably with cultural competence. In response to a need for concept clarity, Foronda et al. analyzed the concept of cultural humility in over 61 published articles (2016). Through their analysis, they clarified that cultural humility was defined by self-awareness, openness to difference, supportive relationships, egolessness, and personal reflection.

The approach of cultural humility has been studied in clinical contexts, and positive relationships between clients and service providers have been identified. In studies conducted on cultural humility and therapy outcomes, findings revealed that clients viewed the counselors' cultural humility as important, and when present, it led to strong working alliances and improvement in therapy (Hook et al., 2013). Consistent with this study's findings, there is the potential for the virtue of humility embedded in culturally humble practice methods to positively impact the working relationship between

international volunteers and host community members. Furthermore, this approach may have important implications for mitigating power differentials between international volunteer and host members, resulting in mutually beneficial work.

However, there remains a lack of clarity regarding the specific practice behaviors that exhibit humility. Although the construct of humility and the cultural humility model are becoming more clearly defined, the practice behaviors that depict the virtue and model are ambiguous. Therefore, this study explored Kenyans' understandings of humility and practice behaviors related to the virtue. The potential for mutual impact and change resulting from healthy, reciprocal relationships between international volunteers and host community members is worthy of diligent pursuit, with conceivable effects on international volunteer organizations, volunteers, and host communities alike.

Research Question

This phenomenological study explored Kenyan community members' understanding of humility and their perceptions of what it resembles in international volunteer practice. The research question was: How do Kenyans understand the virtue of humility and how would they describe it in international volunteer practices?

Philosophical Assumptions

Through a constructivist lens and a phenomenological approach, Kenyan community members' unique understandings of the virtue of humility were explored. Kenyans' perceptions of international volunteers' humility practices were studied, and descriptions of the essence of their experiences were identified (Moustakas, 1994). The researchers chose a constructivist paradigm for this study acknowledging that each study participant has unique understandings of humility and humility practices, informed by

distinct backgrounds and personal experiences (Rodwell, 1998). Concurrently, collective perceptions emerged, reflecting common themes of shared experiences (van Manen, 1990).

Utilizing a phenomenological approach allowed the researchers to take the descriptive accounts provided by participants and, through thoughtful analysis, transform the units of data into the language of social science. Moustakas (1994) also depicts the meaningful impact the heuristic process has on the researchers, allowing them to understand "the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge" (p. 17). This happened to the researchers throughout the research process.

Utilizing constructivist inquiry, the researchers explored the constructed reality of each participant's understanding of the virtue of humility and humility practices. These realities are unique to each individual and are constructed through interpreted language, symbols, and cultural influences (Rodwell, 1998). The Kenyan understandings of humility explored through this study reflect the participants' perceptions that are distinctly impacted by their unique standpoints in their social and historical contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b).

Acknowledging that historical colonialism almost certainly sets the stage for power imbalances between international volunteer and host community member (Baaz, 2005; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015; Perold et al., 2013), the researchers recognized the impact this may have on the findings of this study as themes of power were occasionally reflected in participants' responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a). Findings from this study have the potential to shape Global North volunteerism practices with insight that might

mitigate power differentials, resulting in mutually beneficial work between international volunteers and the host communities.

The authors of this study endeavored to reflect a collaborative, mutual relationship between Global Southerners and Global Northerners. They met through the Global Mission Leadership initiative of the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work. In their different roles of program director and master of social work student, the researchers began a collegial and friendly relationship. They shared contextualized social work practice wisdom with one another, culturally informed perspectives of problem solving, and a common fuel of Christian faith. One researcher had spent fourteen years in practice related to international volunteerism, working as an international volunteer and administrator with an international volunteer sending organization in the United States. The other researcher was a significant contributor to community development in her home country of Kenya through her work in a non-governmental organization.

The researchers were aware that their personal familiarity to the topic had partly informed this study, and conscientious measures were taken to bring these biases into the light. At the same time, it was their exposure to international volunteerism, the mutual and reciprocal relationship they forged together, and the commitment to inform international volunteer practice that mitigates harm and strengthens partnership that led to collaboration on this study.

Methodology

Given that the researchers were interested in Kenyans' unique understandings of humility and their perceptions of international volunteer humility practices, phenomenological inquiry was used as it provides a framework for describing a

phenomena of interest (Moustakas, 1994). Through this approach, the researchers' goal was to overcome personal bias and past experience in order to listen to and understand Kenyans' understandings of humility and international volunteer practices.

Research Site and Study Sample

The nation of Kenya hosts a significant number of international volunteers from the Global North each year through its 4,200 registered non-governmental organizations (Brass, 2012; Lough, 2012; Lough & Mati, 2012; Thaut, 2009). Kenya was chosen as context for this study and more specifically the agricultural city of Kitale with a population of 100,000 people. Kitale has extensive international volunteer activity due to its location near the Ugandan border. Kenya, a British colony from 1895 to 1963, has a complex history with colonizing countries. Choosing a research site like Kenya provides insight into global North-South volunteer relationships as it is representative of the general relationship between Global North international volunteers and host communities of the Global South (U. Kothari, 2006; B. Lough & Matthews, 2013).

A sample of individuals (n=13) was intentionally chosen who had interacted extensively with Global North international volunteers through professional roles in the community. More specifically, participants were employees of religious non-profit organizations (n=4), child protection officers (n=2), leaders in churches (n=2), employees of non-governmental organizations (n=3), and administrators in the local government (n=2), and all had interacted with international volunteers representing a spectrum of service duration and focus. A phenomenological research approach supports small, intentional samples for whom the research would be significant (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

This study's sample size of 13 was partially determined by this value as well as by the sense of saturation assessed through the interviews.

Permission for the study was obtained through the Baylor University IRB (Appendix A). Participants were invited to participate on a strictly voluntary basis. Identifying personal information was replaced with initials and held confidentially on researchers computers.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers designed an interview protocol, informed by literature (see Appendix B). The researchers vetted the topics and questions used in this protocol with a pilot group of Kenyan students at Baylor University to bring focus and clarity. Although, the protocol was used in the interviews, the researchers endeavored to allow participants to collaboratively shape the direction of the interview by discussing their responses in depth. During the interview process, two additional questions were added to the protocol when the need for them became apparent.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by one of the researchers in Kitale, Kenya. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. In an effort to minimize social desirability bias and to provide participants a supportive environment to speak truthfully of their experiences with international volunteers from the Global North, the Kenyans performed the interviews in the absence of the American researcher. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, with the understanding that identities and personal information would be kept confidential. All participants requested to use English, one of the national languages of Kenya, in the interviews.

Data from the interviews were digitally recorded, stored on computer files, and transcribed by a local Kenyan consultant. After each interview, the researchers independently listened to the recorded interview and memoed outstanding themes, key quotes, and initial impressions from the interview. They met via Skype weekly to discuss each initial interview. Then, the researchers joined together for three weeks in Kitale, Kenya, for a second round of interviews with study participants. In these interviews, the researchers conducted a member check to ensure initial data analysis accuracy.

Data Analysis Procedures

The aim of the analysis process was to explore Kenyans' understandings of humility and humility practice behaviors related to international volunteer practice. ATLAS.ti was used to organize the data. In preparation for the second round of interviews and member check in Kitale, Kenya, the researchers re-read transcriptions, re-listened to the initial interviews, and identified key quotes to member check with participants in order to ensure the participants' intention. During each second interview, the researchers summarized their initial impressions of the first interview with the participant, reviewed key quotes, and checked for accuracy. After each interview, the researchers individually recorded impressions of the interview and then discussed the interview at length.

Deciding that using the participants' exact quotes would keep the data grounded in the lived experiences of the participants, the researchers open-coded each transcript and identified "significant statements" as narrow units of analysis (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). The data analysis process was conducted by the American researcher. Repetitive or nonessential statements were deleted, and units were categorized into networks of codes

that reflected the participants' understandings of humility and humility practices. These networks of codes were analyzed from both a structural and textural vantage point (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994) to comprehensively yet clearly describe the "how" and "what" participants understood of humility and humility practices. After reviewing the networks of codes several times, the American researcher narrowed the data into identified themes (Moustakas, 1994) and reviewed these themes with the Kenyan researcher to support the trustworthiness of the findings.

Several criteria for rigor were used in this study. To substantiate the trustworthiness of the study's findings, credibility was established through several means. The American researcher visited Kenya for three weeks, which allowed for prolonged exposure to the Kenyan people and culture. The visit also provided the opportunity for the researchers to conduct a member check with participants to assure accuracy of participants' perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To strengthen the dependability and confirmability of the findings, the researchers sought peer reviews of the study development and data analysis process (Rodwell, 1998) with three international volunteer alumni and two qualitative researchers. To further substantiate the confirmability of the study, reflexive journals and Skype calls were conducted by the researchers. These interactive methods allowed researchers to record and discuss ongoing impressions, recall impressions experienced during the data collection process, make course corrections, and bracket personal bias.

The researchers endeavored to establish the study's authenticity in several ways. Throughout the study, the researchers utilized reflexive journaling and discussions with one another to bracket personal bias from the analysis process. Additionally, realizing

subjective agenda could cloud the analysis process, the researchers used participants'

exact quotes when coding the interviews in an effort to represent the findings accurately

and minimize personal bias. At each step of the research process from the interview and

protocol development to the interviews, and throughout the data analysis process, the

researchers diligently pursued authenticity to ensure the resulting themes truly emerged

from the responses (Moustakas, 1994).

Findings and Discussion

Participants in this study described their understandings of the virtue of humility

and practice behaviors that reflect the virtue in international volunteerism. Key themes

were identified. Kenyans described humility as an attitude of appreciation and equality in

relation to others. They described humility in practice as a posture of listening and

learning from others before taking action. This also infers the international volunteers'

acknowledgement of personal deficiencies and their need for Kenyans' expertise and

collaboration.

Appreciation

The participants depicted humility as appreciation of one another. Participants

saw appreciation as acknowledging the unique and valuable contribution each human has

to make as a result of courageously living daily life. One participant put it this way:

> If you see a person is not dead remember there's something that is making him
> not dead. So, can you look at what is that is making him to survive? This person is
> poor but he's not dying, so what is making him to continue?

Another participant described humility as appreciating each person's expertise, honed

through the life journey and described like this:

> Volunteers need to come down here and try to understand what we are doing and
> let it be their problem to fit into what we're doing. Remember we were there

before. This is not *tabula rasa*. You don't come and find nothing. There are people who are living and who have structures. They have their own remote structures that support their day to day life. They know how to solve their problems, they know how to do business, they know how to work it out.

Through these quotes, participants described the virtue of humility as a deep appreciation for the strength, expertise, and capacity of Kenyans to navigate their daily lives. This requires the ability to recognize this power in one another and encourage each person to contribute their unique expertise to the relationship and common task.

Kenyans' understanding of humility as appreciation of others is consistent with scholars' definition of humility as moving beyond other-orientedness (Paine et al., 2015) to endorsing the unique capability each person has to offer (Wright et al., 2017) while having a low self-focus of oneself. If this is present in relationships, deep mutual appreciation and admiration of one another can result. One study participant saliently described this mutual appreciation like this: "Humility is when you look at me, you see the face of God. And when I look at you, I see the face of God." Seeing the Divine in one another is rooted in the belief that we are all important parts of a greater whole (Wright et al., 2017).

Without this appreciative attitude of one another where we see the resemblance of the Divine, competition and power struggle can prevail. One participant described the detrimental effects of lacking appreciation: "If they give the impression that you're stepping on their culture and looking down upon them, whatever you will do will not succeed."

Equality

Kenyan participants described humility as an attitude of equality. Humility as equality was described as each person seeing and valuing the humanity in one another

without the lens of race and wealth that discolor perception. Consistent with other studies, Kenyans saw that racism can negatively impact relationship development, contributing to an imbalance of power and the lack of true equality in relationship (Kothari, 2006; Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). In contrast, humility impacts the intercultural relationship as both parties engage one another from equal standing rather than a superior and inferior stance. A participant described the importance of equality in relationship as it relates to humility:

> Humble means you accept the way I am and I also accept you the way you are. So, from there we can share. But if you come from this higher position and I'm down here [pointing to the ground], we cannot meet. Because you are moving up and I am moving down. But humble means that we come to the same point, meet, and share.

This theme of equality was also woven into another participant's description of humility in practice:

> They (international volunteers) don't need to come in and say that they're the expert so we sit aside and listen to them or we sit aside and we watch them. It works when we have a horizontal type of relationship not the vertical type of relationship that there's one senior than the other one.

Humility as equality was depicted by another participant acknowledgment of the mutual learning and growing that takes place in both international volunteers and the Kenyan community members. He critiqued the way that international volunteers think they come to Kenya to "help" without also recognizing how much they learn and grow from the volunteer experience. He emphasized how international volunteers hide behind an inadequate narrative of "helping" does not adequately capture the mutual growth that happens in the intercultural relationship between international volunteer and host community member, thus hindering the equality in relationship that is inherit to the virtue of humility.

Kenyans' descriptions of humility as equality is fitting with scholars' description of humility as accurate self-perception and acknowledgement of personal limitations (Paine et al., 2015). When someone sees themselves accurately as a part of the larger whole, they realize their own personal limitations and the need for other's expertise and collaboration. It is also consistent with the modeling of Jesus for Christian followers. Although being in the likeness of God, Jesus emptied Himself, became human, and modeled equality in His relationship with others. Kenyans' voices in this study affirm this crucial attitude of equality in relationship, reflecting the virtue of humility.

Humility in Practice

Participants in this study were invited to describe what humility looks like in international volunteer practice. Several themes were identified through the data analysis process. Kenyans described humility in practice as a posture of listening and learning from others before taking action. They also defined humility in practice as the willingness to acknowledge self-limitations and recognize that one does not "know it all."

Listening and learning posture. Several of the participants described humility as the practice of understanding and learning from the community, thus demonstrating respect for the community. This posture of listening and learning was an important action to fulfill before giving expertise. One participant described it like this:

> When someone is humble, they first learn from you before they make a decision. It's not that they want to come tell you, 'go this way' or 'go that way'. No, they learn from you before they advise you.

This listening and learning posture is rooted in a deeper foundation of respect of the host community. One participant described humility in practice like this:

> Even if it's a program that they (international volunteers) feel they have a lot of expertise in, the ones (international volunteers) who are really good with us come

and sit and try to understand what the issue is and get our input. From there they try to give their expertise in a sort of way that also gives respect to what we know.

It appears that if the international volunteer appreciates the expertise of the host community and acknowledges the need for collaborative engagement by Kenyans, he or she prioritizes the essential role of listening and learning from the host community prior to taking action. Another participant described the importance of learning the ways of the community: "When they come, they need to first understand how the community is working and the dynamics of the community before they bring their skills and their expertise."

Participants further identified humility in practice as not coming to the country with an already set plan for service but to come and learn from the community, fitting into the work the host community members are already doing.

> They should come and engage in community programs which might have been generated by the community themselves. Once the community feels that you're coming to join in their program, they will know you are not there to impose. Rather, you have come to assist me to remove the pressure of my load, the burden I have. You're not bringing a program and imposing it on me.

Kenyans described humility in temporal constructs, depicting that humility entails a slow, respectful approach to collaboration. This can be challenging for many international volunteers whose American and European cultural values encourage speed, anticipatory planning, and producing results that are quantitative in nature. In contrast, a humble approach might demand a countercultural approach for many international volunteers, rooted in listening, learning, and reflecting before action is taken.

"Not a know it all" posture. In addition to maintaining and listening and learning posture, Kenyans saw humility in international volunteers who acknowledged

their limitations and did not pretend that they knew all the answers. One participant described it this way, "When they come, they should not be a "know it all." When they don't know the answer, they should admit, 'I don't know.'" Several other participants identified the importance of asking Kenyans for their input and expertise when problems or challenges emerged.

Kenyans' descriptions of humility in practice are consistent with scholars' conceptualization of humility. Study participants captured the necessity for international volunteers to have an accurate view of self and personal limitation while concurrently viewing Kenyans through the lens of respect as capable and necessary contributors (Davis et al., 2011; Tangney, 2000a; Wright et al., 2017). Participants' descriptions of humility in practice can also been seen as precursors to Tervelon and Murray Garcia's Cultural Humility Model (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). In order to develop mutually beneficial work as detailed in the model, international volunteers must first perceive the community with respect, be willing to listen and learn from the host community, and acknowledge their own limitations and need for collaboration. Humility displayed through these attributes has the potential to pave the way for mutually beneficial work to result, consistent with the cultural humility model.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Study participants expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity to explore the virtue of humility and how it relates to international volunteer practices. They eagerly expressed recommendations for enhanced humility practices that could result in more effective intercultural relationships. Therefore, it seems important to continue to explore how differing host communities around the world understand humility and the practices

they perceive best demonstrate the virtue. Specifically, choosing countries like Kenya, which have had extensive international volunteer efforts, might be salient locations to continue the exploration.

Further studies exploring the virtue of humility have the potential to bring increased clarity on practice behaviors that reflect the virtue. These have the potential to directly inform international volunteer organizations and training of volunteers. The social work profession is positioned to contribute to international volunteerism best practices with its sensitivity to cultural humility, equality, and empowerment (Lough, 2014). Likewise, study findings can also enhance relationships held between practitioners and clients that are central to social work education and practice.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study which give pause for consideration. The participants of this study interacted with international volunteers that represented varying durations of service, preparatory training, character development, and sending organizations. These specific details of international volunteers were unknown by many of the participants, yet potentially shaped their perceptions of interactions and responses to this study.

The researchers faced a challenge of bracketing personal experience and bias. Aware of this threat, the researchers practiced reflexivity throughout the data collection process by recording thoughts in journals and deliberating with one another. Another limitation to the study was the potential for participants' pleasing bias that might skew responses. Although participants' confidentiality was of utmost importance to the researchers, the participants in this study will most likely affiliate with the Kenyan

researcher in community development efforts in their city and may not have wanted to bring disruption to their working relationships with international volunteers. This might have hindered authentic responses.

Conclusion

International collaborative efforts for communities around the world to thrive hinge on the essential component of the intercultural relationships. More recently, some attention has been given to examining international volunteer methods that reflect good intentions on the part of international volunteers, yet have resulted in hurtful outcomes to the intercultural relationship between host community members and international volunteers. The virtue of humility has the potential to restore strained intercultural relationships. This phenomenological study found Kenyans' understandings of humility to be an attitude of appreciation and equality of others while defining humility practices as a posture of listening, learning, and acknowledging one's limitations. Findings from this study provide a hopeful first step toward strengthening intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host community members. If international volunteer practices are anchored in humility, they have the potential of restoring intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host community members to be mutually benefitting, stimulating, and community enhancing relationships they were originally intended to be.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Introduction

Although international volunteer service (IVS) has grown significantly in the number of volunteers and sending organizations in the last decade, research exploring the impact of IVS efforts has received minimal attention (Lough & McBride, 2014; McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012; Devereux, 2008). Though some research has explored the impact IVS has on the volunteer, less research attention has been paid to understand the perspective of host community members' evaluation of IVS in their own communities (Perold et al., 2013). Woven through the plea for more intentional research exploring the impact of IVS is the concern that IVS practices reify historical power imbalances between Global Northerners and Southerners (Lough & Carter-Black, 2015). The purpose of this dissertation was to contribute to this research deficit by not only exploring the impact of international volunteerism from the vantage point of host community members and international volunteers but also by proposing a restorative way forward leveraging the virtue of humility. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative research methods, this dissertation adds to the small but growing literature on the impact of IVS on all of its stakeholders.

Qualitative Study

The qualitative study discussed in Chapter Two explored the crucial vantage point of Kenyan participants as host community members of international volunteers. The

study explored Kenyans' perceptions of international volunteers' attitudes and behaviors. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, 13 in-depth interviews were conducted with Kenyans who had extensive interactions with international volunteers. Several positive themes emerged including international volunteers contributing skill transfer and honoring cultural practices. However, negative themes also emerged that suggested international volunteers had demeaning perceptions of Kenyans, controlled collaborative projects, gave Kenyans cursory roles to play, and departed from service hastily without empowering Kenyans which led to project failure. In the discussion section of this chapter, the crucial role international volunteers' perceptions play in building respectful and reciprocal relationships with host community members was explored.

Quantitative Study

Building off of this key finding in my qualitative study, the quantitative study in Chapter Three studied the impact IVS has on volunteers' perceptions of the people they serve during IVS service. Specifically, this survey research examined how IVS informs volunteers' changes in perception of the refugees they served. The study utilized an online survey with international volunteers (n=490) who served through a faith-based non-governmental organization. Using paired samples t-tests, study findings revealed a statistically significant mean difference in international volunteers' perceptions of refugees before and after their service. However, change in perceptions were not found to be correlated with variables related to contact with refugees, which illuminates the need for further research on the topic. Applying Mezirow's theory of transformative learning as a possible frame to understand the change in perceptions that occurred in study

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participants, the study informed recommendations for future research (1997). Study findings might support the assumption that IVS can provide opportunity for shifts in the accuracy of international volunteers' perceptions of refugees and has the potential to change how international volunteers deliberate upon, engage, and advocate for refugees upon return from service.

Qualitative Study

To provide a restorative way forward for relationships between international volunteers and host community members, the virtue of humility has been found not only to help repair relationships but also aid in forming strong bonds in relationships. Therefore, IVS practices rooted in humility might have the potential to repair and strengthen intercultural relationships between international volunteers and host community members. The phenomenological study in Chapter Four explored Kenyans' understandings of the virtue of humility and the way it is demonstrated in IVS practices. Study findings suggest humility is an attitude of appreciation and equality in relation to others, while humility in practice was described as a posture of listening and learning from others before acting and not having a "know it all" stance. Findings from this study have the potential to inform international volunteer preparation and self-awareness, which might result in increasing mutual growth and reciprocity between international volunteers and host community members.

Recommendations for IVS Practice and Research

Findings from these studies have the potential to adjust IVS practice methods and research alike. IVS practice methods have been influenced by international volunteers' subtle, inaccurate perceptions of host communities and at times overglorified self-

perceptions of "helping." Findings from these studies have the potential to shift IVS preparation and training by exposing international volunteers' incorrect perceptions of self and others that lie dormant under volunteers' eager willingness to do good, and this correcting of perceptions may lead to deeper reciprocity. Findings can also shape IVS practice that has historically originated in the United States and has targeted host communities yet is void of host communities' desires, cultural norms, and leadership. Drawing from these study findings, international volunteers can intentionally grow in respect for host communities and commit to listen and learn before acting as reflected in the virtue of humility described by study participants.

Drawing from the international collaborative research design utilized in these qualitative studies, future research should explore other host communities' perspectives of international volunteers to determine if the phenomenological descriptions made by participants in Kitale, Kenya, are shared in other regions close in proximity. New research can also study other host communities' understanding of humility and humility practices as described by study participants and expound on the concepts outlined in this study. Future longitudinal research related to the perception shifts in international volunteers post service can explore if IVS impacts how international volunteers discuss, engage, and advocate for refugees upon return from service.

Conclusion

IVS will only continue to expand in the decade to come fueled by the human desire to intervene in the plight of others, a Divine call to love one's neighbor, and a desire on the part of host community members to collaborate. With increased research studies that inform IVS practice, there is a potential for a restorative way forward. As

IVS practice is sourced in humility and accurate view of self and others, the power of

reciprocal and intercultural collaborative problem-solving can be unlocked. What can

result is mutual transformation and growth in international volunteers and host

communities alike.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Baylor IRB Approval

Please note that Baylor University Institutional Review Board has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [858801-1] Listening to our Global Partners: Kenyan Perceptions of International Volunteers' Attitudes, Behaviors, and Humility Practices
Principal Investigator: Jennifer Dickey, MSW

Submission Type: New Project
Date Submitted: January 20, 2016

Action: EXEMPT
Effective Date: January 26, 2016
Review Type: Exempt Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Deb Penney at

debbie_penney@baylor.edu.

Thank you,

The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for Qualitative Studies

For the following questions, please circle your answer.

1. Which language(s) are you comfortable using in this interview? Circle all that apply
   a. Swahili
   b. English
   c. Tribal language _____

2. Your age: _____ years
   a. 18-22
   b. 23-29
   c. 30-39
   d. 40-49
   e. 50-59
   f. Older than 59

3. Your gender:
   a. Male
   b. Female

4. What is the highest educational degree you obtained?
   a. High School Degree
   b. Bachelor's Degree
   c. Master's Degree
   d. Doctorate Degree

5. How long have you worked at your present employment?
   • Less than one year
   • Less than two years
   • Between 2 years and 5 years
   • Longer than 5 years

6. In your opinion, how long do international volunteers tend to serve in your community?
   • Less than 1 month
   • Less than 3 months
   • Less than 6 months
   • Less than 1 year

- Less than 2 years
- Longer than 2 years

7. What type of international volunteers have you most interacted or collaborated with the most? Circle as many as apply.
   - Disaster relief
   - Community development
   - Missionary
   - Medical personnel
   - Teacher
   - Consultant
   - Other _____

Interview Protocol:

1. When you hear the term "international volunteer", what comes mind?

2. In what capacity have you worked with international volunteers from America or Europe?

3. I want to ask you several questions about your experience with interacting with international volunteers in your community or on a collaborative project.

   a. How does the vision and implementation plan of the project come about?

   b. Who makes the decisions for these projects?

   c. What happens in the long run to projects started by IV's vs. projects started by Kenyans?

   d. Do you experience international volunteers to ask for your input and expertise?

      i. If so, can you describe how the international volunteer does that?
      ii. If not, why do you think they don't ask for your input?

4. How would you describe your relationship with the international volunteers you have interacted or worked with?

5. How would you describe the attitude international volunteers have towards you and your community?

6. How would you describe the virtue of humility?

7. When you think of someone being humble, how do they interact with you?

8. If IV's were humble, how would they interact with you and your community?

9. In your opinion, do international volunteers engage in your cultural ways or honor your cultural norms?
    a. If so, how?
    b. If not, why?

10. What positive and negative impact do you perceive international volunteers having on your community?

11. In light of our past experience of being colonized by countries who now send international volunteers, what actions do IV's need to have to mend and strengthen their relationship with us?

12. Is there anything you would like to add to this interview?

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board

Please note that Baylor University Institutional Review Board has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [898170-1] Measuring Impact: International Volunteers' Lifestyle Changes Post International Volunteer Service
Principal Investigator: Jennifer Dickey, MSW

Submission Type: New Project
Date Submitted: April 16, 2016

Action: EXEMPT
Effective Date: April 21, 2016
Review Type: Exempt Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Deb Penney

at debbie_penney@baylor.edu.

Thank you,

The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

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