

# MOTIVATION AND THE PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL REACTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN WAR-TIME

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim.** The aim was to study motivation functions and the psycho-emotional reaction to participation in volunteering in Polish and Ukrainian volunteers who assisted Ukrainian refugees at the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022.

**Methods.** For the empirical study of volunteers, the team of authors developed the questionnaire. The Volunteer Functions Inventory *VFI* and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales *DASS* were used. The significance of the differences between the mean results of the measured variables in the Polish and Ukrainian samples was tested using the Student's t-test. Volunteers' expectations of volunteer leaders were tested by analysing responses to the open exploratory question.

**Results.** The article reveals similarities and significant differences between Polish and Ukrainian volunteers in their motives and psycho-emotional reactions to volunteering. A common motive for both samples is that they are not helping for the sake of their professional careers. Ukrainian volunteers had higher rates of *protective, religious, and social* motivation functions of volunteering. Polish volunteers had higher rates of motivation based on *understanding and empowerment opportunities*. Ukrainian volunteers scored higher than Polish volunteers on the *depression, anxiety, and stress* scales. Volunteers' motivation expectations of leaders indicate the importance for volunteers of leaders' adherence to values, openness of intentions and actions, and attentiveness to volunteers' difficulties.

**Conclusion.** The survey results can be used in psychological training for volunteers, in planning the activities of volunteer leaders, and in developing new methods for studying volunteer motivation.

**Keywords:** volunteering, motivation functions, depression, stress, Russo-Ukrainian war

## INTRODUCTION

The modern era is characterised by the phenomenon of volunteering becoming a significant factor in the development and overcoming social cataclysms that threaten the existence of humanity. We live in a time when humanity has accumulated considerable intellectual experience but has not learned from past mistakes that have devastated the world. The most general characteristics of postmodernity are the rationalisation of all spheres of life, competition, emphasis on power, and weakening of ethical values. Against this background, the experience of volunteering and its sprouts should be nurtured and cultivated. In recent years, there has been a growing trend in foreign psychological discourse to focus on the issue of volunteering. This is not surprising, as every country has many difficulties in the humanitarian sphere that arise under the influence of natural disasters, economic crises, the consequences of authoritarian rule and wars. Volunteers are involved in overcoming the conse-

quences of these natural and social phenomena, and they are the driving force behind rescue and support.

Psychologists have studied the factors of attitudes towards volunteering and the effectiveness of volunteers of the so-called Z generation (Cho et al., 2018). Experts have studied the specifics of motivations (Stukas et al., 2016), means of supporting volunteers, their satisfaction with their own contribution, and well-being (Livi et al., 2020). Scientists have turned to clarifying the relationship between motivation and age-related characteristics (Hansen et al., 2018). Various links between volunteer motivation, volunteer satisfaction, and the impact of job satisfaction on employee burnout have been studied (Aranda et al., 2019). Large-scale studies of seven hundred volunteers have been conducted to examine the relationship between volunteer experience and effectiveness (Chacón, 2017; Vecina & Marzana, 2019). Researchers have linked the motivation for volunteering to the time perspective (length of service) and the life satisfaction of volunteers (Kee et al., 2018). A significant relationship between leadership behaviour and volunteer commitment to the organisation has been proven, and the role of volunteer satisfaction has been pointed out (Benevene et al., 2020). It has been found that volunteers with a high identity, commitment to their volunteer organisation, and no career ambitions are less likely to quit their jobs (Vecina et al., 2016). The influence of leaders on volunteers and their desire and intention to stay and work in non-profit organisations has been studied (Almas et al., 2020). Self-efficacy and post-traumatic symptoms were studied in young volunteers working in the emergency medical system (Roditi et al., 2019).

Ukrainian society is fighting for its freedom and the right to peaceful development in a war, so volunteering is a significant factor in the victory. For Polish society, volunteerism, in particular as assistance to Ukrainian refugees, is also an expression of solidarity, compassionate participation, humanitarianism, and is a marker of a democratic and free society. Volunteering has a high level of social significance, so there is a need to rethink and find new resources to strengthen volunteer motivation. It is necessary to think about strengthening volunteer organisations, maintaining the life of the organisation and the well-being of volunteers in the organisation. Therefore, the challenge for psychologists, educators, social workers, doctors, etc. is to build volunteer communities, grow volunteerism, and find new motivating forces for volunteerism. Without this, it is impossible to solve the acute social problems exacerbated in war times. Voluntariness, unselfishness, and charity characterise volunteers and volunteerism, which helps but also needs help as a social group. No matter how strong the desire of volunteer communities to help society is, it can diminish if the human resource of volunteers is not supported. Therefore, searching for and finding socio-psychological factors that strengthen volunteer organisations is important.

During the first week of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022, more than four million refugees crossed the Ukrainian border, most of them arriving in Poland. In response to this humanitarian crisis, Polish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and volun-

teers were crucial in providing support (shelter, food, clothing, legal and other administrative services to Ukrainian refugees). In her article, Monika Lipiec-Karwowska (2023) rightly noted: “In those difficult times, Poland proved its value as a well-functioning civil society that acts when and where action is needed, without waiting for the government to issue special laws or regulations” (p. 101). In the Polish scientific discourse, there have been many studies devoted to the problem of volunteerism and assistance to Ukrainian refugees (Baszczak et al., 2022; Charycka et al., 2022; Domaradzki et al., 2022; Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, 2022, etc.).

Recent Ukrainian research (Horinov & Drapushko, 2022) has focused on the social and legal foundations of volunteering. The latter has intensified in a situation of war and the need to help refugees and residents affected by bombings, physical, material and psychological losses. Ukrainian authors have turned to the psychological foundations of optimizing volunteering (Hil, 2019; Kolomiets et al., 2019; Vashkovych et al., 2022; Zavadzka & Palyulko, 2022). Volunteer psychology and the cognitive component of student volunteers’ value orientations have been studied (Bulatevych & Batrakina, 2019; Podolyanchuk, 2021). There is insufficient research attention to developing new quantitative and qualitative methods for studying volunteer motivation, volunteers’ motivation expectations, and the adaptation of foreign methods. The various motivation functions and expectations of volunteers in organizations were not sufficiently noted. In times of war, the peculiarities of the psycho-emotional sphere of volunteers require constant attention. Although some aspects of the deterioration of mental health in Ukraine, Poland, and other countries during the first months of the war in Ukraine in 2022 were identified by scientists (Chudzicka-Czupala, Hapon, et al., 2023). Thus, this study, financed with funds from the Foundation for Polish Science in the framework of the DLA UKRAINY (FOR UKRAINE) programme, became relevant and aimed to fill the gap in psychological empirical research on Polish and Ukrainian volunteers’ attitudes, their motivations, psycho-emotional reaction for participation in volunteering, and expectations of leaders.

## METHOD

### **Procedure and Participants**

Ukrainian and Polish volunteers participated in the study. The study was conducted in November-December 2022. A total of 720 persons were surveyed, including 435 Polish and 285 Ukrainian volunteers. The survey participants were asked to answer online, i.e., fill out a questionnaire in the form of a Google form. The questionnaire was shared on social media (Facebook, Vibe, etc.) and distributed to Polish and Ukrainian citizens, including members of NGOs who volunteered for Ukrainian refugees during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Information about this study and the survey was posted

on social media. The survey was conducted using online platforms (Google Forms Online Survey on social media and the SWPS University SONA platform). The researchers received consent (in an online format) from all participants to take part in the survey.

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board of SWPS University, Poland (WKEB81/01/2023). The data collected was anonymous and confidentiality was maintained. The study used a questionnaire for volunteers who have helped Ukrainian refugees (since the beginning of the full-scale Russian attack on Ukraine in 2022). The questionnaire was developed by members of the Polish-Ukrainian research team (Chudzicka-Czupała, Chiang, et al., 2023) and included questions on socio-demographic data: information on gender, age, length of volunteer work, volunteer education, and professional status. The chosen characteristics of the study sample are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Characteristics of the study sample (N = 720)*

Characteristics	Poland N=435			Ukraine N=285		
	Mean / Median Number of/Percent	SD	Min/ Max	Mean / Median Number of/ Percent	SD	Min/ Max
Gender	F (379) 87.1%			F (221) 77.5%		
	M (51) 11.7%			M (64) 22.5%		
	Different (5) 1,2%			Different (0)		
Age (year)	26.54 / 22	8.86	18 / 67	30.04 / 28	10.72	18 / 66
Volunteer seniority (year)	4.50 / 3	5.30	0 / 43	3.81 / 1	5.89	0 / 42
Educational attainment	Primary school (2) 0.46%			Primary school (6) 2.11%		
	Middle school (1) 0.23%			Middle school (41) 14.39%		
	Basic vocational (0)			Basic vocational (2) 0.70%		
	Secondary (256) 58.9%			Secondary (14) 4.91%		
	Bachelor (64) 14.7%			Bachelor (106) 37.19%		
	Master's degree (112) 25.8%			Master's degree (104) 36.49%		
				Doctoral degree (12) 4.21%		

Characteristics	Poland N=435			Ukraine N=285		
	Mean / Median Number of/Percent	SD	Min/ Max	Mean / Median Number of/ Percent	SD	Min/ Max
Professional status	Student (242) 55.6%			Student (92) 32.28%		
	Employed (180) 41.4%			Employed (171) 60.0%		
	Unemployed (4) 0.9%			Unemployed (9) 3.16%		
	Housework (7) 1.6%			Housework (7) 2.46%		
	Farmer (0)			Farmer (3) 1.05%		
	Retired (2) 0.5%			Retired (3) 1.05%		

*Source.* Own research.

The average age of the Polish and Ukrainian volunteers was  $26.5 \pm 8.9$  and  $30.1 \pm 10.7$  years, respectively. Most of the volunteers were women with secondary and various levels of higher education. In the Ukrainian group, there were more people (60%) who had a permanent job than in the Polish group (41.4%). Moreover, there were more students in the Polish group (55.6%) than in the Ukrainian group (32.28%). Therefore, the general characteristics of the Polish and Ukrainian volunteers under study are as follows: the sample consists mainly of young women with several years of volunteering experience; secondary and bachelor's education; student and employed status.

## Measures

The results of the description of volunteer motivation functions were obtained using the Volunteer Functions Inventory or VFI (Clary et al., 1998). This methodology allowed us to assess six volunteer functions: value (volunteers' expression or acts based on the values that are important to them, for example, altruism); understanding (volunteers seek to learn about a certain situation, or phenomenon and apply new skills); empowerment (growth and psychological development in the process of volunteering); career (volunteers seek to gain experience for career development through volunteering), social experience (volunteering allows for the development of social relationships) and protection (volunteering is a way for a person to reduce negative feelings or solve personal problems). This methodology was supplemented with a scale of volunteer's personality religiosity (five questions). These questions were intended to identify the religious values that motivate volunteers in their activities.

The reliability of the *VFI* subscales was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In the Polish group of subjects, its values for the subscales are: *values* 0.77, *understanding* 0.86, *social motives* 0.86, *career motives* 0.89, *protection* 0.86, *empowerment* 0.87, *religion* 0.93. In the Ukrainian group of subjects, Cronbach's alpha coefficient had the following values for the subscales: *values* 0.75, *understanding* 0.87, *social motives* 0.86, *career motives* 0.89, *protection* 0.83, *empowerment* 0.84, and *religion* 0.95.

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale or DASS-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995; Antony et al., 1998) was used to determine the indicators of the volunteers' mood state. Symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety were measured. This methodology has been adapted to Polish (Makara-Studzińska et al., 2022) and has been successfully used in Polish research (Zawislak et al., 2020). It investigated the peculiarities of the emotional sphere, such as depression, anxiety, and stress of volunteers related to their participation in volunteer work to help war refugees. This scale consists of 21 items, 7 for each subscale. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale from 0 (never, not at all) to 3 (almost always, very often or mostly). The higher the mean scores on the subscales, the stronger the signs of emotional distress.

Polish and Ukrainian respondents answered the questions in their native language. Pre-designed Polish and Ukrainian versions of the questionnaires were used. These methodologies have been translated into Ukrainian for this study using the back-translation method and have been verified with due diligence.

For the group of Polish volunteers, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales were: *depression* (0.87), *anxiety* (0.89), and *stress* (0.89). In contrast, for the group of Ukrainian volunteers, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales were: *depression* (0.88), *anxiety* (0.88), and *stress* (0.87). The high values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each scale of the Polish and Ukrainian versions of the methodology convincingly prove its sufficient level of internal consistency and indicate that the methodology is sufficiently reliable for group analysis.

An open-ended exploratory question about volunteers' expectations of volunteer leaders that would increase their motivation was included. This allowed an additional look at the volunteers' perspectives on the issue.

## RESULTS

### **Motives and Psycho-Emotional Characteristics of Volunteers**

In our study, we used Student's t-test to compare differences in mean scores between Ukrainian and Polish participants. Data shown in Table 2 prove that there were no significant differences between Polish and Ukrainian volunteers in terms of *career* and *values*

motivations. This finding suggests that volunteers from both countries shared common values, and their motivation to help Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war was not related to their professional careers, i.e., not driven by professional interests.

**Table 2**

*Differences in motives on the VFI scales between Polish and Ukrainian volunteers (N=720)*

Variable	Polish volunteers N=435		Ukrainian volunteers N=285		t	p	dCohen
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
VFI_Understanding	24.28	7.024	22.69	8.054	2.80	0.005	0,213**
VFI_Career	14.74	8.037	15.03	8.411	-0.46	0.647	0,035*
VFI_Values	27.50	5.014	28.26	5.515	-1.92	0.055	0,146**
VFI_Protection	14.53	7.540	16.68	7.984	-3.65	0.000	0,279**
VFI_Social Motives	15.30	7.047	17.61	7.686	-4.16	0.000	0,316**
VFI_Empowerment	20.79	7.603	19.31	8.066	2.49	0.013	0,190**
VFI_Religion	8.69	6.332	13.85	9.485	-8.75	0.000	0,667***

*Note.* VFI Volunteer Function Inventory; Mean—mean values, SD—standard deviation and tests of significance of differences between groups (Student's t-test values); dCohen effect \*-no effect; \*\*-small effect; \*\*\*-intermediate effect (effect for variable VFI Religion is desired effect).

*Source.* Own research.

The results shown in Table 2 indicate that there were significant differences in the chosen motivation functions of volunteering between Polish and Ukrainian volunteers. Ukrainian volunteers reported significantly higher scores than Polish volunteers on *protection* (16.68 in the Ukrainian sample and 14.53 in the Polish sample), *social* (17.61 in the Ukrainian sample and 15.30 in the Polish sample), and *religious* (13.85 in the Ukrainian sample and 8.69 in the Polish sample) motivation functions of volunteering. This suggests that Ukrainian volunteers may have significantly reduced negative feelings and strengthened social networks and religious faith through volunteering during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Polish volunteers reported significantly higher levels of *understanding-based* motivation (24.28) and *empowerment* (20.79) than Ukrainian volunteers. The latter were scored in terms of *understanding* (22.69) and *empowerment* (19.31). This shows that Polish volunteers were much more willing to participate in volunteer activities to develop their skills and psychological resources.

Analyzing the Cohen's d (Effect size) in all pairs of variables, it can be seen that the greatest differences between the groups occur in *religiosity motives*. Effect size analysis showed a medium relationship ( $d=0.67$ ) between the *religious motives* of Pol-



ish and Ukrainian volunteers. In the case of *understanding, protection, social and empowerment motives* d-Cohen values exceeded 0.2, indicating a weak relationship between the nationality of the people and the mentioned variables. In the case of effects for *career motives*, there is almost no relationship. Meanwhile, in the case of *values and empowerment*, the d-Cohen effect is extremely low, indicating a weak relationship. This means that differences between the groups are present, but are relatively small (see Table 2).

Comparison of the indicators of the psycho-emotional sphere (depression, anxiety, and stress) of Polish and Ukrainian volunteers is shown in the Table 3. The data shows there are significant differences in the psycho-emotional sphere of Polish and Ukrainian volunteers related to their participation in volunteering.

**Table 3**

*Differences in psychological reactions to volunteering between Polish and Ukrainian volunteers (mean values, standard deviation and tests of significance of differences between groups)*

Variable	Polish volunteers N=435		Ukrainian volunteers N=285		t	p	dCohen
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Depression	5.07	4.457	6.51	4.782	-4.13	0.000	0,314**
Anxiety	4.65	4.739	6.73	4.777	-5.74	0.000	0,438**
Stress	7.33	5.193	9.48	4.959	-5.53	0.000	0,421**

*Note.* DASS-21 Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale; Mean—mean values, SD—standard deviation; tests of significance of differences between groups (Student's t-test values); dCohen effect \*\*-small effect (effects for variables Anxiety and Stress are desired effects).

*Source.* Own research.

Ukrainian volunteers scored significantly higher than Polish volunteers on the DASS-21 scale. For example, Ukrainian volunteers have higher average *depression* scores (6.51) than Polish volunteers (5.07). Ukrainian volunteers, compared to Polish volunteers, feel more depressed and gloomy, have more thoughts about the lack of meaning in life, are pessimistic about the future, feel less able to enjoy and show interest, and are less proactive. Ukrainian volunteers have higher average *anxiety* scores (6.73) than Polish volunteers (4.65). This means that Ukrainian volunteers are more anxious, more prone to panic attacks, have more limb tremors, experience heart palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, and difficulty breathing, and worry more about self-productivity. Ukrainian volunteers also have higher average scores on the *stress* scale (9.48) than Polish volunteers (7.33). This means that they are more tense and overexcited, have difficulty relaxing, are more easily offended and sad, are more

fearful and intolerant of delay and interruption, and are more irritable. This is quite understandable, as Ukrainian volunteers are living in the realities of war, bombing, and death. The care for the psycho-emotional health of volunteers should be significantly enhanced. This should be done through various means, including counseling, training, and recreational activities.

The calculated Cohen's *d* value in all DASS subscales exceeded 0.3, indicating a weak relationship between the two national groups and levels of anxiety, stress, and depression. Although the largest difference is observed for *anxiety* ( $d=0.44$ ) (see Table 3).

## Volunteers' Motivation Expectations of Volunteer Leaders

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) is fundamental to understanding volunteer motivation. The importance of the event for the employee (achievement of a certain result) multiplied by their expectation of a positive outcome determines the strength of the incentive to act. Understanding and discovering these motivating forces, or motives, aroused research interest in the last decade of the last century. Moreover, research on motivation factors was very popular (Clary et al., 1992; Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999). The authors believe that there are six factors that motivate individuals to volunteer. However, there are actually many more factors that motivate people to volunteer. It is important to find out these factors, especially in the context of researching the motivation expectations of volunteers. The latter, among other things, also reflects the volunteers' long-term vision of themselves in the organisation and their desire to serve a noble cause and help others for the longest time. The publication of Italian researchers (Vecina & Marzana, 2019) addresses an interesting methodological question: do well-known questionnaires reveal the same motives as open-ended questions? These authors studied ( $n=1007$ ) volunteers and examined the overlap between the motivations obtained using the VFI Volunteer Functions Inventory and an open-ended question. It became clear that the VFI questionnaire leaves no options and seems to force respondents to stay within these six motives. The limiting role of the questionnaire is obvious. In addition, measuring motivation with open and closed questions will yield very different results. For example, psychologists have proven that social and protective motives were found in almost all subjects, i.e., more than 90% of volunteers, if these motives are measured VFI. Significantly fewer volunteers (less than 5%) reveal social and protective motives when measured by open-ended questions (Vecina & Marzana, 2019). This does not mean that anyone doubts the reliability of the *VFI* methodology. This refers to the differences in motives found between closed-ended questions. Of course, open-ended questions allow for a greater variety of motives, sometimes quite unexpected.

The newly expanded list of volunteer motives was identified by researchers (Vecina & Marzana, 2019). The researchers complemented the six motives previously measured with one more. In addition to such motivation functions as a) *understanding* (cognition,

new experience through learning and gaining new knowledge); b) *career* (a volunteer seeks to secure a career, i.e., enrich their life story, gain professional status); c) *value* (volunteering reflects the moral values of a person's worldview, inclination to altruism); d) *protection* (volunteering quenches a person's inner feelings, reduces guilt or, in case of loneliness, helps to accept oneself); e) *social* (volunteering increases motivation to establish good relations with others, allows to become close, to make friends with others); f) *empowerment* (volunteering promotes growth and self-development, makes one feel useful) the religious motivation function was added. The authors (Vecina & Marzana, 2019) described a number of other motivation functions: *community involvement* (shows a person's interest in helping the community, a specific group or city); *pleasure* (relates to the need to have fun and enjoyment, to have a good time); *reciprocity* (to return all the good, knowledge and benefits received from others in the past, to show a sense of gratitude); *social obligations* (the obligation to contribute to building better social conditions, to reduce injustice); *interest* (shows a desire to be active, interest in the task); *personal growth* (indicates a desire to expand one's personal experience); *favorable conditions for volunteering* (indicates free time, the dynamic nature of the volunteer); *other reasons* (describes a variety of motives that are difficult to interpret). A study (Vecina & Marzana, 2019) showed that there is a discrepancy in the information obtained by the two procedures of closed and open questions. This necessitates the development of a more reliable methodology. The analysis of the differences in the results obtained by the two procedures (closed-ended questions and additional open-ended questions) and the identified motives shows the need to supplement and adapt the VFI questionnaire to new socio-cultural circumstances. It would be appropriate to supplement the description of volunteer functions with a number of new motives (e.g., «social obligations,» «social commitment,» «reciprocity,» «pleasure,» «personal growth,» «interest in the task,» etc.) New motivations can shed light on what really drives volunteer work. Of course, differences and commonalities should be analysed to better understand what motivates people to volunteer.

In our study, we included an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire about volunteers' expectations of volunteer leaders. This made it possible to analyse the short narratives of the volunteers. In particular, the narratives of Ukrainian volunteers (n=224, mostly women) from two groups were analysed. The first group (n=100) consisted of participants who had a longer experience of volunteering (six months or more). The second group (n=124) consisted of participants with short-term (less than six months) volunteering experience. Before analysing the volunteers' narratives, we realised certain methodological limitations. On the one hand, the influence of the leader on the motivation of volunteering has been proven (Tuckey et al., 2012). The author examines the models of leadership behaviour and the relationship with employee engagement in volunteering and volunteer satisfaction with work in the organisation. On the other hand, the model of volunteer leader competencies and their impact on volunteer motivation has been studied only by a few researchers (Corso et al., 2019; Tuckey et al., 2012). Therefore,

our analysis was based on the common parameters of volunteer leaders' competencies identified by a number of authors (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014; Erdurmazh, 2019; Morrison & Greenhaw, 2018). These are the following competencies of volunteer leaders: *in agreement of values (honesty)*. This option was included in the expectations of a quarter (25%) of Group 1 volunteers and 10% of Group 2 volunteers. The parameter shows how well the leader's values and actions align with the organisation's mission, i.e., when the leader does not substitute the organisation's mission and values to realise personal goals. In their narratives, the volunteers say that a leader should «be honest,» «unselfish,» «sincere,» «not steal,» and «work transparently.» *Candour (authenticity)*: this parameter was included in the expectations of 20% of Group 1 volunteers and 20% of Group 2 volunteers. The parameter indicates how fully the manager transmits valuable information to others, has confidence in the sequence of work, sets deadlines for completing the case, and is transparent in actions and deeds. Volunteers write about the need to «create this transparency in relationships and work» and «kindness to subordinates.» *Collaboration*: this parameter was included in the narratives of 40% of Group 1 volunteers and 50% of Group 2 volunteers. Volunteers write: «We expect more communication from the manager», «there is a desire for more communication between volunteers». There are arguments in favour of increasing communication: «It's nice when volunteers create a community of like-minded people and organise joint leisure activities», «Should we pay attention to the interaction of volunteers with each other?». *Quality of management*: this parameter was included in the expectations of 13% of Group 1 volunteers and 20% of Group 2 volunteers. In their narratives, the respondents emphasised the importance of «competent distribution of work so that everyone is involved and there is space for communication and relaxation.» The volunteers' expectations included the possibility of «clearer coordination of activities» and a «clear action plan.» Opinions were expressed about the need for «better distribution of tasks within the organisation» and «more adequate time management.»

It is important to further study the motivation functions of volunteers to develop new methods and adapt old ones to the changed socio-cultural conditions. This is necessary. It is appropriate to look at motivation expectations from the perspective of age, as motivation expectations differ between young and old people. Engaging older people in volunteering also requires understanding their motivating factors for volunteering.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, the social and psychological discourse of volunteering has expanded enormously. The research began to cover various aspects of volunteers' activities and personalities: worldview, relationships with the environment, well-being, happiness, religiosity, mental health, length of service, professional burnout, expectations of leaders, and psychological climate in the team. It became obvious that those who help others

also need help. Volunteers need psychological assistance because they use their human resources for the benefit of others, do not receive a salary, and have to combine family responsibilities and professional roles with volunteering. In order to provide quality and effective assistance to the population and refugees in times of war, it is important to constantly monitor the dynamics of old motives and record the emergence of new motives for volunteering and their strengthening among citizens.

The results of the study showed higher overall scores for Polish volunteers in motivation functions of volunteering. However, only one VFI scale, *religion*, had a d-Cohen value indicating medium effect and is significantly higher for Ukrainian volunteers. The higher rates of Ukrainian volunteers' «religious» component of *VFI* motives are probably due to the fact that this motive enhances the function of ontological security in the situation of realistic war circumstances.

In the case of *understanding, protection, social, career, and empowerment motives* d-Cohen values indicated a weak or very weak relationship between the nationality of the people and the mentioned variables. Confirmation the significance of the differences would require further empirical verification in the future.

If the results of this study were confirmed, this might mean that the Polish volunteers were more eager to acquire skills and strengthen their psychosocial development through volunteering when they helped Ukrainian refugees and that Ukrainian volunteers were characterised more by «social motives», «protection» and «religion». This might mean a strengthened socialisation of Ukrainians in times of military threat. The motive of protection allows one to unconsciously «escape» from the psycho-traumatic situations of war with its victims and death.

The results of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales or *DASS-21* indicate that Ukrainian volunteers had higher scores than Polish volunteers on the *DASS-21* scales (depression, anxiety, stress). As the effect size for all these variables is weak, the results should be interpreted with caution and the significance of differences between the groups of Polish and Ukrainian volunteers should be confirmed during further studies.

Regardless the significance of the obtained results there is the need to think about the implementation of the strategy for overcoming depression, anxiety, and stress among volunteers. These strategies should be developed at different levels. At the theoretical level, it may be advisable to study the risk factors for depression, anxiety, and stress in volunteers in the context of military operations. At the practical psychological level, it is necessary to identify the dynamics of changes in the states of depression, anxiety, and stress in volunteers. At the medical and institutional levels, assistance to volunteer organisations (consultations with mental health professionals and clinical psychologists) should be strengthened to alleviate the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. It is appropriate to assess the risks of mental illness promptly and familiarise volunteers with psychological relaxation techniques and optimal strategies for overcoming anxiety and stress.

The personality of the volunteer group leaders and their competence can be a significant motivating factor. In the narratives (in response to an open question in our questionnaire), volunteers expressed their expectations regarding the competencies of leaders. Among experienced members of volunteer communities, more of those expect the leader to align their values with the organisation's mission than among volunteers with less experience. The latter have higher expectations regarding cooperation with the leader and the quality of the leader's management. As for the criterion of «candour,» the significance of the parameter was the same for volunteers with more and less experience. Volunteers want to see the leader's organisational commitment, transparency of intentions and actions, awareness of psychological climate issues, and better management, including the planning of tasks and time of ordinary volunteers.

## LIMITATIONS, RESEARCH PROSPECTS AND FUTURE STUDY DIRECTIONS

Limitations of the study include the fact that the survey sample only partially represents the Polish and Ukrainian volunteer communities. In the study, we did not consider characteristics that may be relevant to reactions to participation in volunteer activities, such as temperament. In the future, other personal qualities should be taken into account.

One of the important limitations of the study, which dictates interpreting the obtained results with great caution, is the weak effect size for most variables. Therefore, it would be necessary to repeat the study and check again the significance of differences between the groups of Polish and Ukrainian volunteers. However, such a study would already have to take place in a different context and time, and the results could also be different for this reason.

The challenge of the war is not only to help the victims and refugees from the territories where the fighting is taking place. We need to look for sources of strengthening volunteerism, which should never run out. The prospects for research to support volunteer motivation are to find out the organisational expectations of volunteers working in various volunteer groups and non-governmental organisations. Moreover, expectations can show the necessary changes and innovations that will increase the motivation of volunteers to join and stay in volunteer groups and work for the benefit of war refugees. Expanding the volunteer circle, quantitatively and qualitatively growing volunteer organisations, and strengthening motivation are extremely important tasks in times of war. In addition to counseling, psychotherapy, and recreational support for volunteers, important methodological work should be done to research and formalise the content of organisational expectations of volunteers. The prospect of the study is to create new and socioculturally sensitive qualitative and quantitative diagnostic methods. They will be used to determine the motivation expectations of volunteers,

the strength of their motives for community involvement, and social obligations. In addition, it is promising to study the differences in the competence model of volunteer leaders between older and younger volunteers. All of this needs to be implemented in psychological practice to increase the number of volunteers, strengthen people's desire to volunteer and bring invaluable benefits to others.

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