

# Volunteer Motivations

for Working Middle-Age Adults

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## Introduction

Understanding why individuals seek out volunteer opportunities is a crucial step in recruitment and engagement of volunteers. When a volunteer coordinator knows why potential volunteers would like to help, they can aid in creating a satisfying volunteer experience and ultimately build a pool of committed volunteers to be called upon. Because of the lack of literature specifically focused on working middle-aged adults' volunteer motivations and habits, this study will seek to understand the volunteer motivations of this cohort.

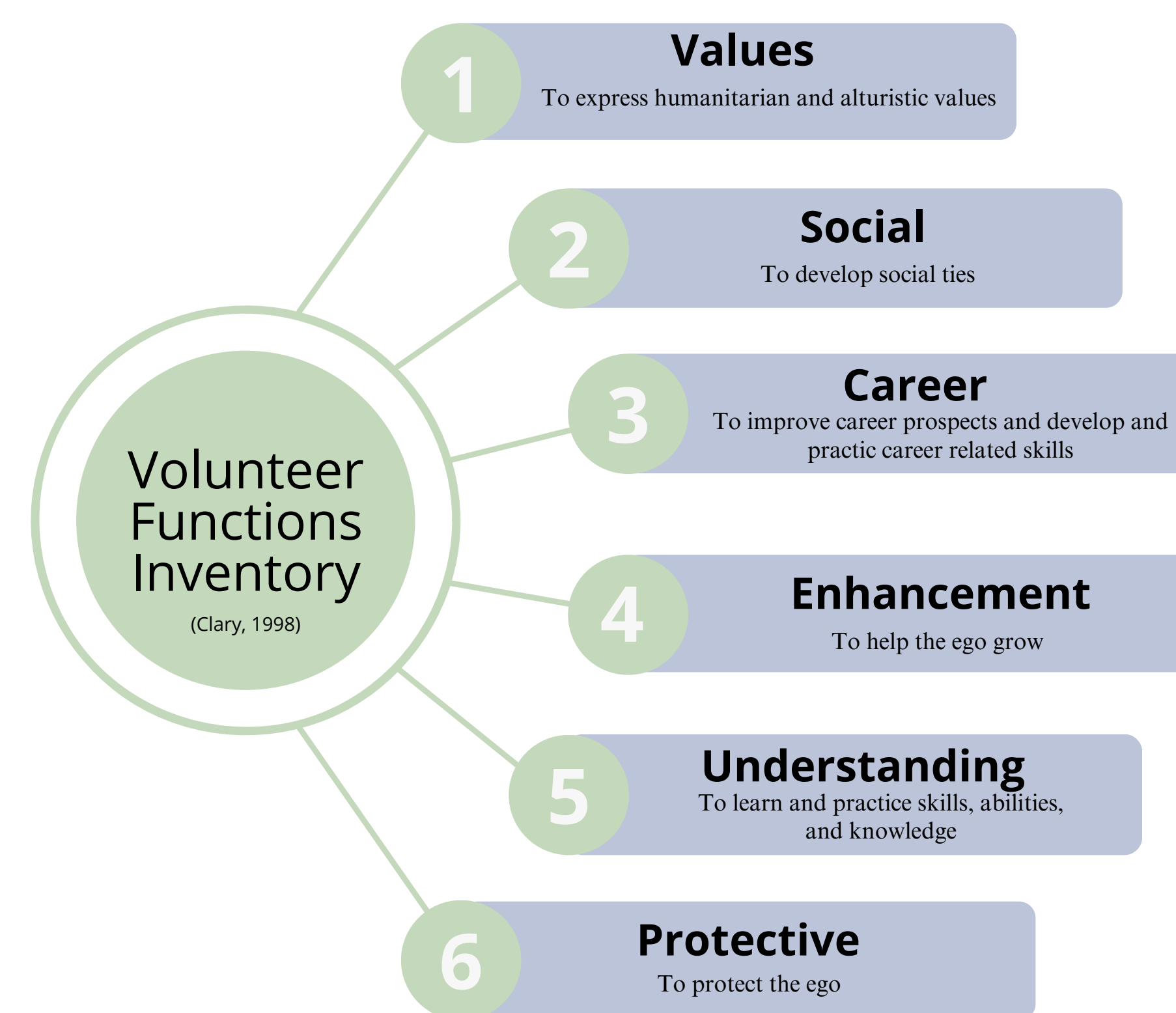
## Literature

### Demographics

- Most research on volunteer motivations focuses on young adults, students, and retirees (Brayley et al., 2014; Pearl & Christensen, 2017; Teye & Peaslee, 2020)
- Gap in information regarding volunteering in middle adulthood (Yamashita, 2019)
- Age is related to the volunteers' reason for participation (Yamashita, 2019)

### Career Functions

- Students and young adults' motivation often career function (Brayley et al., 2014)
- Retirees and older adults' motivation often continuity and generativity (Yamashita, 2019)
- All ages of adults identified career advancement, community service and well-being as important (Yamashita, 2019)
- Social networking motivated young and middle-aged adults (Yamashita, 2019)



## Research Methods

### Methods:

- Anonymous online survey
- Demographic information, Volunteer Functions Inventory, Volunteer Experiences
- Convenience and snowball sampling

### Participants

Research participants were evenly distributed between the ages of 30 to 60 years old. Of the 18 respondents, 17 identified as a woman. Time spent in profession was evenly distributed from less than five years to more than 25. Seven participants were not a caregiver to any children, four were the caregiver to one, six to two children and one to three children. Fourteen participants worked over 33 hours per week on average.

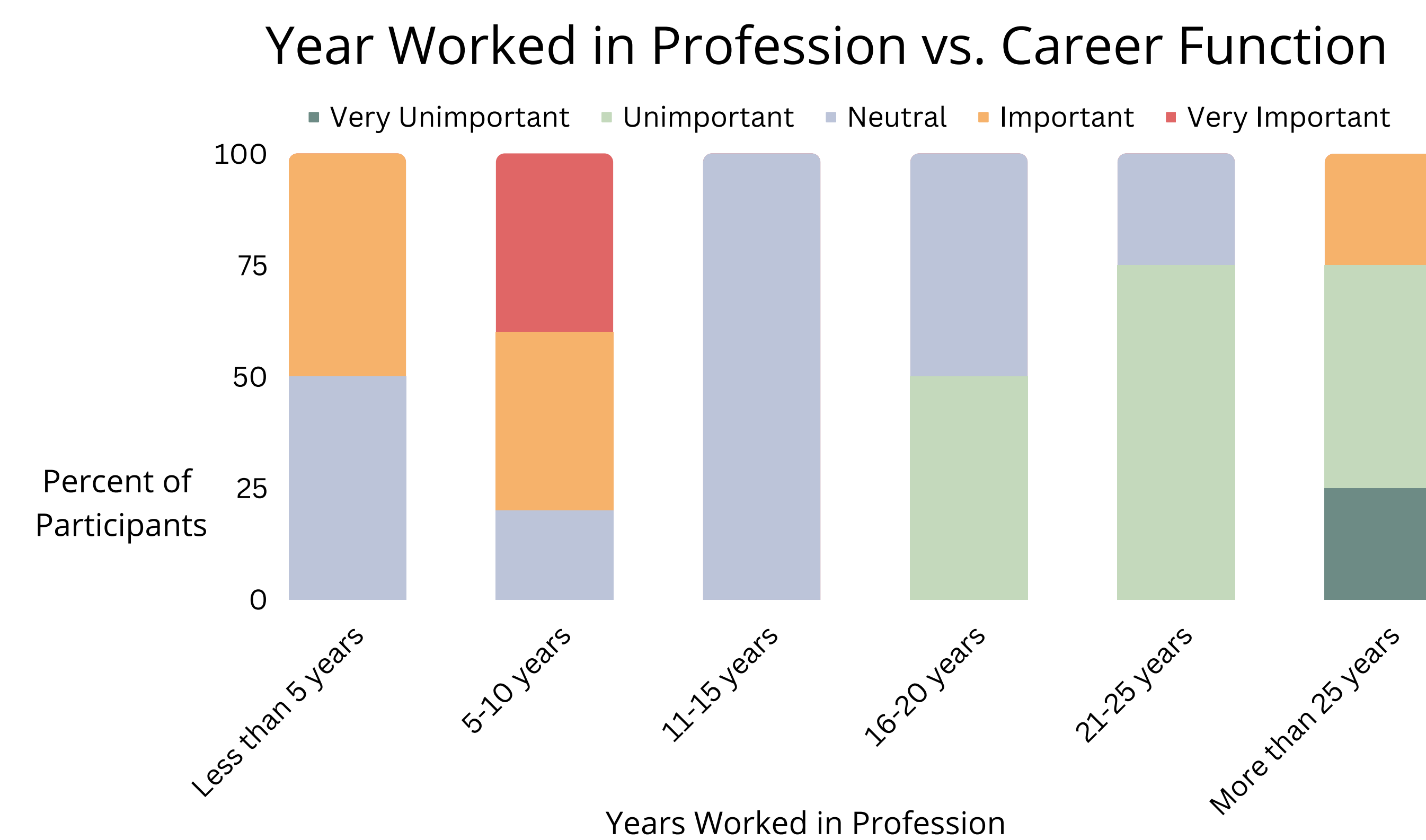
## Findings

### Volunteer Functions - Careers

- Fewer years worked in a profession related to a higher importance rating of the career function
- The career function trended toward 'unimportant' for this demographic of volunteers

### Volunteer Functions - Values

- The values function of the Volunteer Function Inventory was rated as the most important in this demographic of volunteers
- More hours worked per week is related to one off and non event related volunteering.

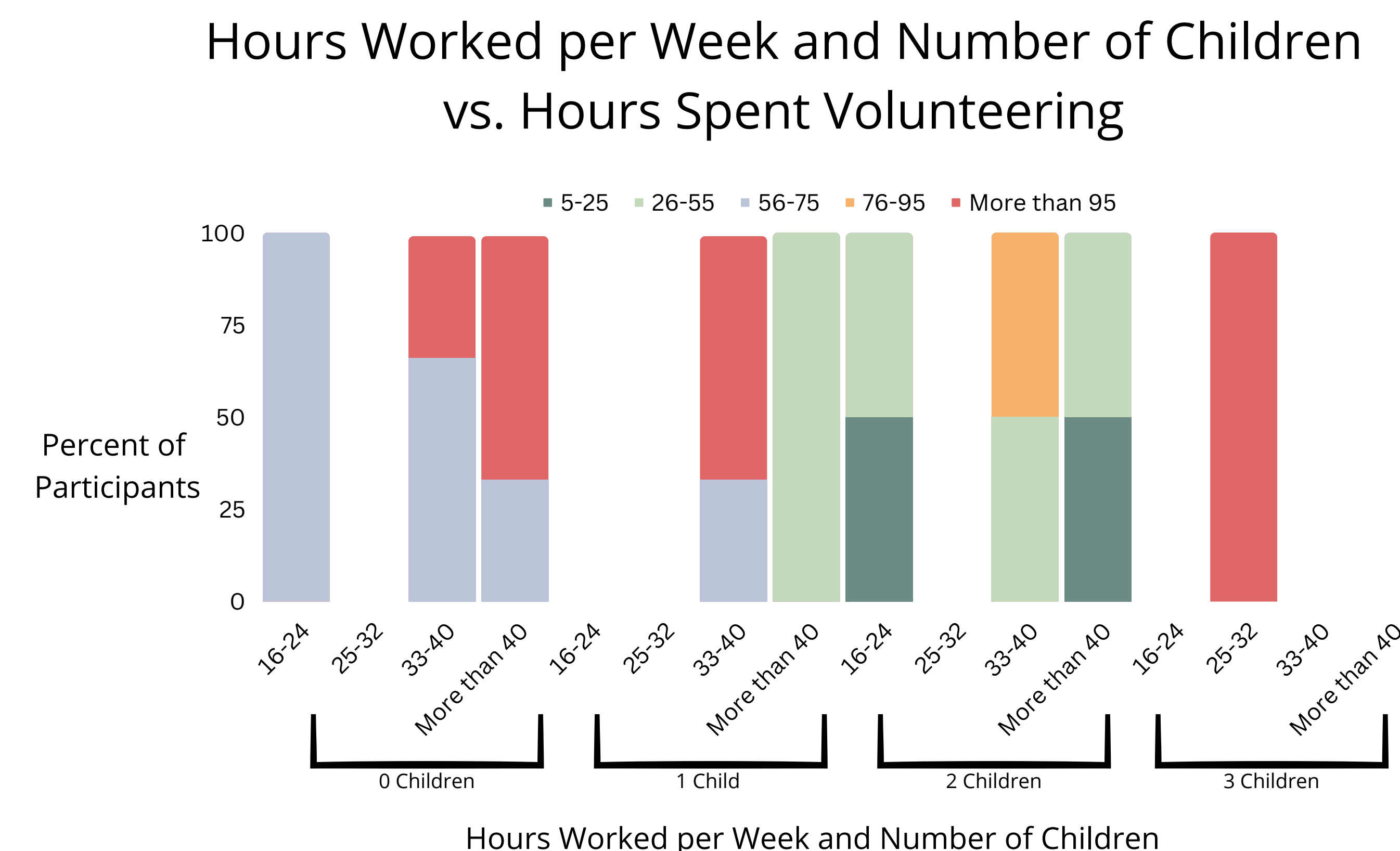


### Volunteer Experiences - Volunteer Opportunity Type

- More hours worked per week is related to one off and non event related volunteering.
- Overall, volunteers did not have a preference for opportunity type.

### Volunteer Experiences - Time Spent Volunteering

- Higher level of education is related to more time spent volunteering.
- More hours worked per week and more children is related to less time spent volunteering.



## Discussion

- Students tend to be young adults, so it can be assumed that **career** motivation is related to age. This research found careers function related to time spent in profession not necessarily age.
- Expression of one's altruistic and humanitarian **values** are the most important motivation for this demographic regardless of all other values.
- The volunteer experience the type of "non-event related" was added during analysis. However, most respondents did not have a type preference.
- Time commitment to other responsibilities is related to the time commitment to volunteering

## Recommendations

### For practitioners:

- Advertising volunteer opportunities as a chance to gain knowledge, experience and connections will attract volunteers early in their profession
- Volunteers who already volunteer will likely want to participate in more volunteer opportunities because of their values
- Recruit volunteers who work less and have fewer children as they will likely have more time to commit to volunteering

### For future research:

- Explore motivations for event vs non-event related volunteering
- Explore preferred and effective recruitment strategies
- Compare volunteer motivations and experiences for men versus women
- Consider grouping functions and the effect other functions have on the career function
- What field of work do these volunteers work in? Are those who work in helping careers more likely to volunteer?

## References

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