

Does Gender Congruence Make a Difference in Female Members' Volunteering Behaviors?

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This article examines the association between gender congruence—the extent to which members and senior managers or leaders are of the same gender—and volunteering behaviors of members in membership associations. Recognizing several limitations, we find that greater gender congruence has a positive effect on the breadth of volunteering (number of activities) as well as the level of satisfaction associated with these activities among female members. However, gender congruence is neither significantly related to the likelihood of volunteering nor to the depth of volunteering. In other words, having female figures in leadership positions do not necessarily mean that female members will be more likely to volunteer or assume more intense volunteer responsibilities.

Keywords: Volunteering, Membership Associations, Gender Congruence

Introduction

Membership associations play a significant role in the United States and represent a large percentage of the nonprofit sector globally (Tschirhart & Gazley, 2014). Associations serve their members, promote a field or a profession, and provide public benefits (Tschirhart, 2006). Some associations also enforce rules and standards, control aspects of professional services, or serve as catalysts of knowledge diffusion and professional practices (Hager, 2014).

Existing research on membership associations focuses on member recruitment, retention, and motivations to join, give, and volunteer (Gazley & Dignam, 2008; Hager, 2014; Rich & Hines, 2006; Wang & Ashcraft, 2014). Research indicates that members' involvement in membership associations matters both for the organization and for society at large. Such involvement can increase the efficacy of the membership organization and motivate members to actively support the organization's mission and programs (Gazley, 2013; Tschirhart, 2006). Results of this engagement, research suggests, are improvements in organizational accountability, legitimacy, and effectiveness (Simmons & Birchall, 2005; Smith, 2010), and also members' civic and political engagement in the larger community (Quintelier, 2013; Schachter, 2011).

The impact of diversity in associations' governance structure on engagement and its subsequent outcomes have been less studied. In this article, we ask: How is gender congruence between female leaders and members associated with volunteering behaviors in membership associations? By gender congruence, we mean the extent to which members and senior

managers or leaders are of the same gender. We examine that association based on social role theory and theory on gender and leadership.

This research is important and timely. Women remain underrepresented in leadership roles and overrepresented in various other (lower level) roles (Pynes, 2000). 73% of nonprofit sector employees are women (Brew, 2017), while 42% of board chairs and 48% of board members are women (McCambridge & Suarez, 2017). While 75% of all CEOs are women (McCambridge & Suarez, 2017), substantial inequities still exist; female executive directors make 23% less than their male counterparts in a large percentage of nonprofits (Brew, 2017).

McCambridge and Suarez (2017) observe the relatively low priority nonprofit boards assign to diversity in their governance structures. On one hand, a diversity gap challenges organizational legitimacy and ability to fulfill the mission (Moore, 2000). On the other hand, scholars (Abzug & Galaskiewicz, 2001; Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013; Fredette et al., 2016) have argued that diversity can have positive implications on organizational and board performance, especially when it comes to fiduciary responsibility, organizational responsiveness, and stakeholder engagement, particularly those who are not typically engaged (Brown, 2005; Fredette & Sessler Bernstein, 2019; Jaskyte, 2012). We turn our attention to engagement.

Understanding Engagement

Various reasons drive members' engagement in and with professional associations. Hager (2014) and Ki and Wang (2016) highlight private or personal incentives or benefits members directly receive through their membership in these associations such as job searches, professional networking, or information sharing. These incentives have positive relationships with members' satisfaction and involvement in these organizations and consequently will positively implicate further and future engagements. In addition, public or professional benefits, such as greater appreciation of the profession or visibility of their employers, could also be positively related to members' engagement in or with their associations (Hager, 2014). And finally, Markova et al. (2013) refer to symbolic motivations. Membership associations allow members to define their professional identity; membership becomes "a sense of belongingness... along with feelings of personal connectedness" (Ki & Wang, 2016, p. 199). Such a connectedness can then drive voluntary financial contributions to membership associations (Wang & Ashcraft, 2014).

While members join associations with expectations of a range of benefits, the way they value these benefits might differ. This would then be reflected in their commitment to these associations; here, we can talk about passive and active engagement. Passive engagement occurs when members pay membership dues only (Holmes & Slater, 2012). Active engagement occurs when members also take part in at least one or more key organizational activities such as donating and raising money, organizing meetings, testifying before legislators, recruiting and mentoring members, drafting standards and benchmarks, or serving on boards or governing committee (Gazley, 2013). Active engagement is a coproduction of organizational outcomes that Gazley (2013) defines as volunteerism.

While voluntary acts may be similar, individuals are motivated to volunteer for a number of different reasons (Clary et al., 1998). For example, volunteering maybe be driven by an individual's value system—constructed, developed, and nourished at home and by society—or by their need to make a difference or serve others (Christensen & Wright, 2011; Houston, 2005). In addition, individuals with certain characteristics or greater personal resources—including individual capacities, skillsets, and experiences—tend to volunteer and direct some of that 'wealth' towards the benefit of an organization (Wilson, 2000).

Two other reasons why individuals tend to volunteer are particularly important in the case of membership associations. First, exchange and expectancy theories indicate that individuals will contribute goods and services to others in exchange for a certain benefit or in expectation of an outcome they value. In some cases, individuals volunteer due to expected or actual personal benefit that comes along with volunteering (Chen & Bozeman, 2013; Son & Wilson, 2012; Wilson, 2012); signaling on a resumé can be an example here. Second, volunteerism is a way through which people can build their social capital. Volunteerism provides the opportunity to establish connections with others (Townsend et al., 2012), creates opportunities for relationships (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004), and helps to create healthy lifestyles (Son & Wilson, 2012). It seems possible, then, that the benefits of volunteerism may extend beyond the private sphere to having positive effects in the public sphere.

Yet, not everyone volunteers and some people volunteer more than others. As such, the focus can shift from individual to the organizational characteristics that might encourage people to volunteer. Organizational size is one of the organizational characteristics. Due to their size, smaller nonprofits often suffer from a lack of human and financial capital and thus tend to rely more on volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2011; Handy et al., 2008). In addition, organizations with small budgets might allow more volunteering opportunities, although managerial discretion may limit such opportunities (Verschuere & De Corte, 2014). These types of organizations might encourage passive involvement through soliciting monetary contributions and donations. While organizations with larger budgets tend to operate more programs which, in turn, potentially provide more space for volunteers, these organizations can instead afford to hire professional staff to carry out the work. We should also not ignore the potential impact of revenue volatility on the performance of nonprofits and, consequently, their need and ability to attract volunteers (Wicker et al., 2015). Focusing on membership associations in particular, Hager (2014) argues there are field differences that shape engagement motivations. Engineering associations, in their nature, are more bureaucratic than healthcare associations, which reflects on how members value the benefits they receive and, consequently, how they engage in these organizations.

In this article, we tie the individual and organizational characteristics to study volunteering behaviors. On one hand, we focus on the gender of members in membership associations as an individual characteristic; and, on the other hand, we treat leadership of these organizations as an organizational determinant. We specifically ask how is gender congruence between female leaders and members associated with volunteering behaviors?

Volunteering and Gender

Women are slightly more likely than men to volunteer, regardless of the status of employment (part-time or full-time, employed or unemployed) (Freeman, 1997; Taniguchi, 2006); in addition, women tend to volunteer more hours (Mesch et al., 2006). Relatedly, according to the social role theory, women and men are predictably different and similar due to the way they sort into various social roles in society (Eagly & Wood, 2016). For example, women are more likely to donate more money than men, being more empathic and enjoying higher prosocial values (Leslie et al., 2013; Mesch et al., 2011). As such, women may be more likely to volunteer because gendered stereotypes render them prosocial and sacrificing; we hypothesize that:

H1: Female members are more likely to volunteer compared to male members.

Gender Congruence

Scholars (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013; LeRoux, 2009a, 2009c) illustrate the importance of nonprofit leadership diversity and inclusive governance. Lee (2019) and Prouteau and

Tabariés (2010) find that nonprofits tend to hire female CEOs or senior managers when women lead the organizations or make up a ‘substantial minority’ of the board. In the Brazilian context, the percentage of elected officials that are women is associated with greater numbers of female bureaucrats in local government (Meier & Funk, 2017).

Scholars (AbouAssi et al., 2019; Foster & Meinhard, 2002; Gazley, 2010) associate between the gender of leadership and the likelihood of engaging organizational stakeholders. Across different contexts, organizations led by women are more likely to collaborate in comparison to those run by men. Within organizations, LeRoux (2009b) uncovers that female executive directors are more likely to allow agency clientele to engage in agency workshops, which may signal volunteering behaviors to members of their own organizations. AbouAssi and An (2017) find that Lebanese associations led by women are more likely to allow greater participation by members in decision-making.

One plausible explanation is the leadership or management style. Women tend to lead more democratically and less authoritatively than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990); women are more likely to be communal and consensus-building, and to use collective and participatory approaches for problem solving (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Female leaders empathize, have greater public spirit, and are less selfish (Themudo, 2009). Bradshaw and coauthors (1996) and Nielsen and Huse (2010) associate a higher percentage of women on boards with more power-sharing and ethical and social-responsibility practices. As a result, different leadership styles may have varying effects on prosocial behaviors beyond monetary contributions (paying dues) among members of membership organizations.

In this research, we hone in on the association between gender congruence and female members with volunteering behaviors. Gender congruence reinforces shared values between members and management and have positive implications on employees’ performance, commitment, and perceptions of leaders and their effectiveness (Grissom et al., 2012; Zhang, 2019). Marvel (2015) reaches similar but particular conclusions, studying teachers’ work efforts; gender congruence only matters among female teachers. In this research, we also only focus on female members.

In application, if there are more females in leadership positions (board or executive director), female members may be able empathize with organizational issues or goals and develop better connections. We expect this to impact their willingness to engage in volunteering. Thus, we hypothesize that,

H2: An increase in female members’ volunteering behaviors is associated with greater gender congruence between leadership and membership.

In this article, we go beyond looking at the likelihood to volunteer. In addition to engagement with volunteering, we look at the breadth and depth of volunteering behaviors, as well as volunteers’ satisfaction with their experience. We want to examine female members of associations’ tendency to volunteer in more activities (breadth) or in activities that are more intense and demanding (depth) and to be satisfied with their volunteering experience when the executive director of the organization is female, or if there is more female representation on the board of directors. Van Vianen et al. (2008) provide evidence that a fit between a person and an organization predicts satisfaction. We already know that individuals may volunteer in order to meet certain psychological and social needs, including values, belonging, and happiness (Gazley, 2013). Increasing the level of satisfaction with volunteering may also lead to greater lengths of service (Omoto & Snyder, 1995), which may help retain and recruit new members and volunteers. As members develop internal psychological feelings towards an association, they become more committed to that organization (Wang & Ashcraft, 2014). That commitment manifests itself in more engagement. As such, hypothesis 2 can be translated into the follow sub-hypotheses:

H2a: The tendency of female members volunteering in more activities (breadth) is associated with greater gender congruence between leadership and membership.

H2b: The tendency of female members volunteering in more intense and demanding activities (depth) is associated with greater gender congruence between leadership and membership.

H2c: Satisfaction of female members in volunteering experience is associated with greater gender congruence between leadership and membership.

Data and Method

We utilize survey data from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Foundation, supplemented by archival data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990. ASAE Foundation administered the *Decision to Volunteer* survey in 2007 in order to gauge members' behaviors in membership associations. Respondents were active members randomly selected from 23 organizations, including American Association of Orthodontists, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and American Society of Mechanical Engineers. A total of 26,305 members responded to the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 14%. From the IRS Form 990, we gathered various organizational characteristics, mainly the budget, size, and year of establishment of the organization. We also compiled the names of senior management including executive directors and governing board members.

We employ linear regression models to analyze the data. Since the data include both individual and organizational level information, ignoring the multilevel structure could bias the standard errors downward (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2012). We therefore used cluster-robust standard errors by membership associations. To overcome the issue of oversampling known volunteers in the survey, we used ASAE-provided survey weights that weighted responses for each organization participating in the survey based on the ratio of known volunteers to all members. The sample weights placed greater emphasis on organizations with lower levels of volunteering behavior.

To test our hypotheses, we employed Linear Probability models (LPM) (Aldrich et al., 1984). LPM may be inefficient, producing nonsensical values when using a categorical variable as a dependent variable. However, since our observations are not infinite, the maximum likelihood approach can also be inefficient and the estimates can potentially be inconsistent. Acknowledging these limitations, we first estimated our models with LPMs and standardize the coefficients with standardized beta coefficients since we use survey data.

Variables

Dependent Variables

We used a battery of survey questions from ASAE's 2007 Decision to Volunteer survey. From the survey questions, we extrapolated volunteering likelihood, breadth (diversity of volunteering activities), depth (level of intensity of volunteering), and satisfaction. To measure whether or not members volunteered in their membership association, respondents were asked, "Have you ever volunteered for [their membership association] the past?" (yes=1; no=0).

For breadth of volunteering, we used a survey question that asked respondents: "In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following as a volunteer (in person, online or in any other way) on behalf of [their membership association]?" Respondents could check all that applied

among twenty volunteering activities (see Appendix A1). We coded breadth of volunteering as the sum of all types of volunteering activities in which a respondent participated in their membership association for the last year.

To measure depth of volunteering, we created a dummy variable indicating whether or not an individual's volunteering activity (or activities) required more efforts or time compared to other types of volunteering activities.¹ As a measure of overall volunteering satisfaction, the survey provided 13 examples for guidance, such as receiving feedback or incentives, learning new skills, feeling respected, and working towards a common goal. In order to create a satisfaction measure, we ran an explanatory factor analysis. All thirteen satisfaction questions loaded onto one factor with Cronbach alpha and factor loadings.²

Key Independent Variables

The key independent variables are the gender of a member, female gender congruence between an executive director and a member, and female gender congruence between governing board members and a member. We obtained the gender of each member from the 2007 Decision to Volunteer survey (female=1; otherwise=0). The results herein pertain to female respondents.

The gender congruence measure is an interaction term for each combination. For the gender of governing board members and executive directors, we first obtained names of all key employees and governing board members from IRS 990 forms for the years 2005–2007 using the National Center for Charitable Statistics database. To verify the information, we referred to organizational websites and annual reports. We should acknowledge here that the terms of executive directors and boards could extend over multiple years and vary across organizations.

Next, we identified the executive directors and governing board members in our sample. We coded gender based on the names of these individuals.³ To increase inter-reliability, three coders worked separately and then compared their coding. We also utilized LinkedIn and Google Images and organizational websites for further verification.

Controls

A set of personal and organizational characteristics that are commonly used in existing studies were included in the analysis as control variables. At the individual level, we accounted for the number of children, household income, marital status, age, education level, and religious activities. At the organizational level, we controlled for organizational budget, age, and fundraising expenditures—using data from IRS 990 forms. Summary statistics are provided in Table 1.

We acquiescently accept several limitations here; these limitations were also encountered by Hager (2014) and Wang and Ashcraft (2014) using a similar but smaller dataset. The first limitation concerns the representativeness of the 23 organizations whose members responded to the survey. These organizations do not represent the 92,331 membership associations in the United States (in 2010) (Wang & Ashcraft, 2014). Two related issues are the low response rate of 14% and the nonresponse bias, which limits an accurate population estimate, despite applying a weight to balance the influence between cases. In the absence of an adequately representative sample that allows us to examine gender congruence, the results we report below should then be interpreted as suggestive and not conclusive or necessarily generalizable. The cross-sectional data are another limitation. Ideally, longitudinal data would be conducive to more causal analysis. We therefore do not claim any causality but hope this research sets the stage for future work that could address some of these limitations.

Table 1. Summary Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
Volunteer in general	12,547	0.854	0.354	0	1
Depth of volunteering	12,134	0.750	0.433	0	1
Breadth of volunteering	12,134	4.342	3.414	1	20
Satisfaction with volunteering	11,120	0.008	0.997	-3.638	1.801
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Gender of members	24,681	0.424	0.494	0	1
Gender of executive director	24,681	0.299	0.458	0	1
% female board members	24,681	37.794	31.030	0	91.667
<i>Controls</i>					
Members' education		2.484	0.846	1	4
Parental status	24,681	0.421	0.494	0	1
Marital status	24,681	0.843	0.363	0	1
Employment	24,681	0.953	0.211	0	1
Age of respondent	24,681	48.455	10.698	19	100
Organizational size	24,681	17.514	1.112	16.001	20.915
Age of organization	24,681	40.920	17.348	6	72

Results

Table 2 shows the effects of percentage female board members and female executive director on engagement with volunteering for women. The main and interaction effects reveal no statistical associations between gender of members and volunteering. The presence of female board members or gender of the executive director does not appear to encourage members' volunteering behaviors or to have a moderating effect on the relationship between gender of members and volunteering. As such, H1 is not supported.

In Table 3, we look at the breadth of volunteering or the diverse activities members are involved in. We find that female members are 27 percentage points less likely to be engaged in more or diverse volunteering activities. This result is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. This negative relationship, however, is moderated when the percent of female board members increases.⁴ Female respondents are one percentage point more likely to engage in more or diverse volunteering activities when there is a one-unit increase in the percentage of female board members. This result is significant at the $p < 0.10$ level. The moderating effect of the executive director's gender is positive and much larger. Female respondents are 43 percentage points more likely to diversify their volunteering activities when there is a female executive director. This result is also statistically significant at the $p < 0.10$ level.

Table 4 shows the main and interaction effects for the depth of volunteering. Members' gender as well as percent of female board members do not have an impact when it comes to the level of intensity of volunteering; the interaction term is not statistically significant either. When we interact the executive director's gender instead of percent of female board members, the results show that female respondents tend to volunteer in less intense activities, though, this result is not statistically significant. Gender congruence between members and the executive director does not have an impact on the depth of volunteering (level of intensity of behaviors/activities).⁵ As such, H2b is not supported.

Table 2. Engagement in Volunteering

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender of respondents (female=1)	0.019 (0.017)	0.018 (0.026)	0.020 (0.013)
% Female board members	0.001 (0.000)	0.000 (0.001)	
Gender of executive director (female=1)	-0.030 (0.032)		-0.030 (0.033)
Gender of respondents X % Female board members		-0.000 (0.001)	
Gender of respondents X Gender of executive director			0.037 (0.030)
Education (Some college or less=1; MD/PhD=4)	-0.043*** (0.008)	-0.041*** (0.009)	-0.043*** (0.009)
Parental status (having at least one kid=1)	0.021** (0.009)	0.022** (0.008)	0.022** (0.008)
Marital status (married=1)	-0.005 (0.011)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.010)
Employment status (employed=1)	0.070*** (0.019)	0.072*** (0.019)	0.072*** (0.019)
Age	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Size of organization, logged	0.003 (0.018)	0.005 (0.017)	0.003 (0.017)
Age of organization	0.002** (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
Constant	0.987*** (0.314)	0.961*** (0.313)	1.009*** (0.312)
R-Squared overall	0.057	0.057	0.057
N	12,547	12,547	12,547

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; two-tailed test; standard errors are clustered by organizations

We look at the effect of gender on satisfaction in Table 5. After volunteering, female members were 20 percentage points ($p < 0.01$) more satisfied from their experience. Gender congruence between members and the executive director has a positive moderating effect. Female members were 28 percentage points more likely to be satisfied when the executive director was female. This result is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. When we control for percent of female board members instead of gender of the executive director, female members were still nearly 12 percentage points ($p < 0.10$) more likely to be satisfied. Percentage of female board members does not moderate the relationship between gender of respondents and satisfaction.

Gender Congruence and Volunteering Behaviors

This article examines the association between gender congruence and volunteering behaviors with a focus on membership associations. The results partially support the proposition that greater gender congruence leads to greater volunteering behaviors among female members. The presence of a female executive director and greater numbers of women on boards lead to greater breadth of volunteering (e.g., diversity of volunteering activities) for women (H2a). We also notice a positive moderating effect of a female executive director on satisfaction with volunteering for female members (H2c).

Table 3. Breadth of Volunteering

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender of respondents (female=1)	-0.273*** (0.082)	-0.641 (0.200)	-0.376*** (0.104)
% Female board members	0.000 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.005)	
Gender of executive director (female=1)	0.116 (0.489)		-0.169 (0.229)
Gender of respondents X Female board members		0.011* (0.006)	
Gender of respondents X Gender of executive director			0.430* (0.215)
Education (Some college or less=1; MD/PhD=4)	0.159 (0.112)	0.177* (0.100)	0.158 (0.105)
Parental status (having at least one kid=1)	-0.015 (0.064)	-0.021 (0.063)	-0.020 (0.062)
Marital status (married=1)	0.145 (0.085)	0.138 (0.083)	0.140 (0.085)
Employment status (employed=1)	0.639** (0.244)	0.637** (0.249)	0.640** (0.248)
Age	0.029*** (0.005)	0.029*** (0.005)	0.029*** (0.005)
Size of organization, logged	0.143 (0.128)	0.160 (0.125)	0.147 (0.128)
Age of organization	0.005 (0.007)	0.004 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)
Constant	-1.709 (2.512)	-1.834 (2.443)	-1.727 (2.510)
R-Squared overall	0.024	0.025	0.024
N	12,134	12,134	12,134

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; two-tailed test; standard errors are clustered by organizations

The lack of a significant association between leadership's gender and gender congruence on one side and likelihood of volunteering on the other side is not surprising. Einolf (2011) already notes that although women may express greater intentions to volunteer, this oftentimes translates only into a slight difference in volunteering between women and men. Furthermore, Cable and Judge (1996) argue that a person's demographic similarity with organizational representatives is not always a good predictor of behavior; the focus should be on the congruence between one's own values and her perception of the organization's values, as Wright and Pandey (2008) also highlight. Furthermore, volunteering remains a personal action or choice motivated by a wide variety of reasons and contingent on individual capacity and resources (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Houston, 2005; Son & Wilson, 2012; Townsend et al., 2012).

The relationship between giving and volunteering might need to be considered here, especially in the case of memberships associations. While Gazley and Dignam (2010) consider the two as "complementary ways in which members express support for their associations" (p. 5),

Table 4. Depth of Volunteering

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender of respondents (female=1)	0.020 (0.016)	-0.008 (0.038)	0.013 (0.022)
% Female board members	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	
Gender of executive director (female=1)	-0.018 (0.090)		-0.042 (0.065)
Gender of respondents X % Female board members		0.001 (0.001)	
Gender of respondents X Gender of executive director			-0.024 (0.047)
Education (Some college or less=1; MD/PhD=4)	-0.006 (0.019)	-0.003 (0.017)	-0.007 (0.019)
Parental status (having at least one kid=1)	-0.006 (0.013)	-0.006 (0.013)	-0.006 (0.013)
Marital status (married=1)	-0.009 (0.018)	-0.010 (0.018)	-0.008 (0.018)
Employment status (employed=1)	0.041 (0.040)	0.041 (0.041)	0.039 (0.040)
Age	0.002** (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
Size of organization, logged	-0.016 (0.020)	-0.014 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.019)
Age of organization	0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Constant	0.812 (0.404)	0.799 (0.406)	0.778 (0.393)
R-Squared overall	0.004	0.004	0.004
N	12,134	12,134	12,134

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; two-tailed test; standard errors are clustered by organizations

Blake (1992) and Omoto and Snyder (1993) suggest a substitutive effect in that individuals volunteer less time when they make greater monetary donations. AbouAssi and coauthors (2017) reveal a positive correlation between paying a membership fee and a lack of volunteering among members of an organization. Paying that fee is perceived as a sufficient commitment; members feel as if they have fulfilled their obligation to reap the benefits from organizational affiliation. Our analysis does not account for potential substitution; it may be the case that gender congruence is associated with an increase in monetary donations by female members—beyond the required membership fee—instead of volunteering their time to the association.

It appears that greater gender congruence is associated with greater volunteering behaviors among women, especially when it comes to the breadth of and satisfaction with volunteering. In general, women tend to volunteer in fewer activities than men; however, gender congruence appears to reverse the situation. Female members tend to volunteer in more activities when women are in leadership positions such as board members or executive director. Regardless,

Table 5. Volunteering Experience–Satisfaction (Factor Variable)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender of respondents (female=1)	0.201*** (0.040)	0.116* (0.060)	0.159*** (0.044)
% Female board members	0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	
Gender of executive director (female=1)	0.047 (0.127)		-0.077 (0.055)
Gender of respondents X % Female board members		0.002 (0.002)	
Gender of respondents X Gender of executive director			0.284*** (0.097)
Education (Some college or less=1; MD/PhD=4)	-0.015 (0.039)	-0.019 (0.037)	-0.021 (0.036)
Parental status (having at least one kid=1)	-0.027 (0.027)	-0.026 (0.028)	-0.026 (0.029)
Marital status (married=1)	0.032 (0.030)	0.027 (0.029)	0.025 (0.029)
Employment status (employed=1)	-0.045 (0.058)	-0.048 (0.059)	-0.045 (0.059)
Age	-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.002)	-0.005*** (0.002)
Size of organization, logged	-0.030 (0.026)	-0.013 (0.019)	-0.025 (0.026)
Age of organization	0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Constant	0.587 (0.438)	0.460 (0.384)	0.540 (0.418)
R-Squared overall	0.033	0.029	0.030
N	11,120	11,120	11,120

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; two-tailed test; standard errors are clustered by organizations

women are in leadership positions such as board members or executive director. Regardless, female members appear to be satisfied with the volunteering experience, and that is especially the case when they see an executive director of the same gender.

Borrowing from the field of public relations, relationship management theory indicates that organizations can foster loyalty among people when organizations create trust, demonstrate a stake in the outcome, and communicate straightforwardly with the public (Ledingham, 2003). Female leaders use democratic and participatory approaches and are open to members' input (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Their empathic and prosocial values may translate to better communication, more trust, and demonstrated investment with female members, which is likely to impact volunteering behaviors (Leslie et al., 2013; Mesch et al., 2011). Female leaders, then, may promote a variety of volunteering opportunities among members, which would be reflected in an increase in the number of different volunteering activities (Meier & Funk, 2016; Tabariés & Tchernonog, 2005).

By the same token, female volunteers derive greater satisfaction from volunteering when there is greater gender congruence. According to social role theory, women supposedly report greater levels of satisfaction from volunteering compared to men (Eagly & Wood, 2016). The results suggest that this baseline level of satisfaction is enhanced when the executive director is female. Wang and Ashcraft (2014) succinctly state that “through social identification, an individual perceives himself or herself as psychologically intertwined with the fate of the group [...] and] behave in a way that is congruent with salient aspects of their identities” (p. 64S). As such, social identity could provide an explanation for why female members might behave in a certain way when the leadership of the organization is female. This identity reinforcement asserts Markova et al.’s (2013) argument that “people identify with a group to the extent that they vest more of their self-concept in the valued persona represented by the group” (p. 494).

We should note that the association between gender congruence and depth of volunteering (level of intensity of an activity) does require two factors to materialize. The first factor relates to the availability of volunteering opportunities and the intensity of said opportunities. In general, membership associations offer their members plenty of opportunities to volunteer on a regular basis. Some of these opportunities, such as reviewing proposals, are short-term, which allow for a quick turnover among volunteers. More intense volunteering opportunities such as serving on boards or committees are time or term-bound and less available. The second related factor is the lag effect. Even with the presence of opportunities or interest among female members to volunteer, such involvement might take more time to coalesce than accounted for in the statistical models.

The results call attention to the issue of leadership. On one hand, there is enough evidence to demonstrate the direct impact or the moderating effect leadership has on engagement in organizations (Jaeger et al., 2009; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011). Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) expose the relationship between charismatic leadership and work engagement, and Alfes and coauthors (2013) condition behavioral outcomes—the resultant of such engagement—on the relations with leaders. Dwyer and colleagues (2013) find a positive association between transformational leadership and volunteer satisfaction in nonprofit organizations. Yet, the identification of charismatic or transformational leadership is challenging. We draw attention to this in order to highlight the potential limitation of the gender congruence between members and leadership of organizations. It is possible that some of the volunteering behavior could be explained by the gender congruence among members and non-executive staff/lower level managers; we leave this subject for future research.

On another hand, membership involvement might be impeded by the negative perceptions of leaders’ abilities. AbouAssi and coauthors (2019) and Suzuki and Avellaneda (2018) underscore traditional patriarchal structures that restrict the abilities of female leaders to lead their organizations or engage with organizational stakeholders. Such a setting might encourage a lack of active involvement if perceptions of constraints over the authorities or abilities of female leaders outweigh the expected benefits and impact. As such, the effect of gender may be mediated by other variables such as power and trust (Klenke, 2003). It is also plausible that male stakeholders become actively involved when an organization is run by a woman, as a sign of distrust in leadership or as a form of checks and balances (AbouAssi & An, 2017). Such an involvement cancels any statistically significant increase in engagement among female members.

We reprise here the limitations of the data including the sample and measurements of the variables and reemphasize that we are not making any claims of causality. It is also important to recognize the age of the data (2007) as another limitation. Societal attitudes and beliefs on gender, which affect individual behaviors, are not static and have probably changed. Furthermore, while we look at board composition, we draw attention to two important issues. First, the nature of positions (e.g., prestige and tenure) women assume on the boards of these organizations matter. Men usually assume the technical jobs that are more intense in nature

(board president or treasurer) while women do jobs that tend to utilize soft skills (board secretary) (Elkinawy & Stater, 2011; Prouteau & Tabariés, 2010; Pynes, 2000). We did not account for the nature of board positions.

Second, the percentage of female board members reflects gender representation, which sends a positive signal to female members; however, the signal might be weak and lacks encouragement. Fredette and Sessler Bernstein (2019) succinctly state, “Diversity is neither constant nor linear in its impact [...] moving from homogeneity to low levels of ethno-racial diversity will likely not generate anticipated gains and may, in some cases, generate adverse impact” (p. 933). While the authors focus on ethno-racial diversity, the same argument can be made regarding diversity in general; there could be a ‘tipping point or critical mass threshold’ at which the full potential of diversity and its implications on stakeholders’ engagement would be unlocked.

To conclude, Bradshaw & Fredette (2013) and Fredette et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of policy, culture, and processes in engaging members in meaningful ways in nonprofit organizations. We also suggest that, in the context of membership associations, the length of membership, the association being one’s primary association, and the congruence of professional or epistemological identity (for example, urban affairs or feminist theory) could play a mediating or moderating role in the relation between gender congruence and volunteering behaviors. We leave these as questions to future research.

We hope this article lays the foundation for future research based on much-needed panel data; qualitative research could also help illuminate the role of gender congruence in the decision to engage in and be satisfied with a variety of volunteering activities. We encourage scholars to consider the effect of gender congruence on other forms of stakeholder involvement, such as donations, and the consequence on organizational performance. We also urge scholars to take a step further. Identity is not monolithic; gender is one of multiple identities that individuals and leaders have. Intersectionality affects personal attitudes and behavioral outcomes.

Notes

1. The forms of volunteering activities are listed in Appendix A1. Those we identify as more intense than others are bolded.
2. The results hold the same even if we only use a single-item question that asked about the overall volunteering satisfaction.
3. Our coding only accounts for binary representations and does not capture those who may identify as nonbinary genders.
4. To overcome the negative gender effect, it requires the percentage of female board members over 40. However, when we plot the relationship, we do not have much statistically significant findings that actually overcome the negative relationship; it becomes insignificant before the percent of female board members reaches 40 percent.
5. We also looked into the number of hours as a measurement of depth of volunteering as well as the likelihood of volunteering again, but the results were not statistically significant.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Acknowledgment

The author acknowledges the support of Dr. Seung-Ho An, Catherine Herrold, and Mr. Alberto Jacinto for this work and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback.

Funding Source

This work was partially supported by the ASAE Foundation Scholarly Research Grant Program (SRGP).

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Appendix

Table A1. Depth of Volunteer–Intensity of Activities

Provided mentoring, coaching or tutoring for members, students or others

Provided professional advice

Raised funds

Recruited a member or members

Reviewed applications as part of accreditation, certification or competitive program

Reviewed a paper or proposal for a publication

Reviewed proposals for conferences or projects

Reviewed research, conducted literature review or resource reviews or analyzed data

Spoke or presented a paper

Submitted a paper or manuscript for publication

Wrote proposals, grant applications or business plans

Served on a committee for a local chapter or section

Served on a committee for the parent organization

Served on a technical committee or reviewed standards and practices

Served on the Board for a local chapter or section

Served on the Board for the parent organization

Made a presentation or testified on behalf of the organization to any legislative body (local, state, national or global advocacy)

Moderated or facilitated discussion groups at meetings or elsewhere

Participated in a discussion group, expert panel or report

Prepared background for regulators, the press or others

Note: Intense volunteering activities are in bold font.