

Volunteers versus non-volunteers: the role of motivational persistence

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Abstract: The authors analysed the concept of „motivational persistence” (Constantin et al. 2007, 2008) in non-profit organizations, as a specific organizational context. The research was conducted on a sample of 141 subjects, including both volunteers (71 Ss), and non-volunteers (70 Ss). The main hypothesis asserted that the volunteers would be more persistent motivationally than the non-volunteers. Additionally, the most important factors that predict motivational persistence were identified: the *determinants of the perseverance*, the *uncertainty orientation*, the *success orientation* and the *motivational dominants*. The collected data revealed the motivational persistence as a personality trait of the volunteers. A valid model meant to predict motivational persistence has been suggested, where *overcoming obstacles*, *effort*, and *focus* are significant factors. The *success orientation* and the *uncertainty orientation* seem to influence the motivational persistence, in spite of the fact that they are not predictors.

Keywords: motivational persistence, perseverance, volunteer, uncertainty orientation, success orientation.

The motivational persistence and the study of the topic

This study follows a series of studies (Constantin, Iarcuczewicz, Constantin, Fodorea, Căldare, 2007; Constantin, Macovei, Orzan, Nechita, 2008; Constantin, 2008; Constantin, 2009; Constantin T., Holman A., Hojbota A. M., 2011, *in print*) aimed at clarifying, operationalising, and validating the concept of motivational persistence.

We started from the observation that the most well-known motivational theories (Maslow, 1954; Herzberg, 1959 as cited in Constantin, 2004; Vroom, 1964; Alderfer, 1969 as cited in Scholl, 2002; Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Gollwitzer, 1999; Kuhl, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Locke & Latham, 2002; Meier & Albrecht, 2003; Carver și Scheier, 2005), except a few ones (Gollwitzer, 1999; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Oettingen, & Gollwitzer, 2001; Locke și Latham, 2002; Meier & Albrecht, 2003), focus on the soft, qualitative component of motivation, and analyse what pushes us into action and drives us to involve motivationally (*emotional involvement*), but neglect the other key component of motivation, which activates itself *after* the decision of involvement has been taken (*motivational persistence*).

In our view, *motivational persistence* is a complementary constituent of motivational involvement, a quantitative dimension, the hard nucleus of individual

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motivation, namely the preference /inclination of the person to behaviourally and motivationally persevere in their strive towards the long-term goals, to re-invest motivation in the effort of getting those objectives (Constantin et al., 2007; Constantin, 2008; Constantin, et al., *in print*). We believe that not the motivational involvement but the dominant motivational orientation (either intrinsic or extrinsic; egocentric, instrumental, internalist or social) makes the difference between „success” vs. „failure”, „normality” vs. „achievement”, but the *individual motivational persistence*, the capacity of the person to realiment their motivation in order to follow their long term goals. We have proposed and operationalized the concept of motivational persistence by combining the modern motivational theories (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Meier & Albrecht, 2003; Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2001), with the theories referring to long term planning and pursuit of goals (Sherman & Kim, 2004; Belschak, Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2006; Houser-Marko & Sheldon, 2006; Eniola & Adebisi, 2007).

After five years of research we have constructed two different instruments for the assessment of motivational persistence. The first questionnaire (FPM 310) assesses the perseverance determinants in task, meta-motivational abilities that mobilize individual supplementary resources in persistent goal striving (*effort, trust, perseverance, goal, organization, focus, obstacle and self-overcoming*). The second instrument (PMS 110) allows us to evaluate the motivational persistence, which provides the individual with the necessary support to resist for a long time, in spite of the routine, obstacles, tiredness and disillusionment. In parallel, we have built a questionnaire for the evaluation of the motivational involvement; starting from the theoretic model of Leonard, Beauvais and Scholl (1999), we synthesised the main motivational theories (Constantin et al., 2008).

Our previous studies, where we used our two sets of questionnaires, proved that persistence and motivational involvement are two independent dimensions (Constantin et al., 2007; Constantin, Macovei, & Nechita, 2008; Constantin, 2008; Constantin, 2009). Also, our studies afforded us to check the psychometric qualities of the two scales (for the assessment of the motivational persistence and for the verification of the construct validity of this concept) using the CFA (*Confirmatory Factorial Analysis*) analyses. In addition, we were able to verify its convergent validity pertaining to other relevant psychological constructs: dominant affectivity (PANAS, Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), strategies of cognitive coping (CERQ, Garfensky, Kraaji, & Spinhoven, 2001), the tendency of controlling emotional impulses (Affective Control Scale, Williams & Chambless, 1992), the need for cognition (Caccioppo Petty & Kao, 1984), tolerance to ambiguity (McLain, 1993), “Self-As-Doer” (Houser-Marko & Sheldon, 2006), dutyfulness (Constantin, 2008) and emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997).

The present study explores motivational persistence in a specific organizational context, namely volunteering associations and foundations; this way we could refer to volunteering, an activity appropriate to our methodological

requirements, thanks to its indefinite reward and long term goals. Volunteering means to accomplish an activity on its own initiative for the benefit of others, without receiving material consideration, in the domains like culture, education, medicine, science, religion, human rights protection or assistance and social services. The volunteers who participated in this study operated in the field of assistance and social services. Firstly, we intend to verify if being a volunteer implies a higher level of motivational persistence, comparatively with the persons who do not volunteer. Secondly, we want to test a predictive model of motivational persistence, with determinants of the perseverance and motivational dominants included in the analysis. Finally, we want to know if individual variables – *uncertainty orientation* and *success orientation* – significantly influence motivational persistence in the context of volunteer activities.

Perspectives on the success orientation

We think that the success orientation is a variable that sustains *motivational persistence*. The individual involves themselves and persist in a certain activity, or perform behaviour, if certain positive outcomes are expected. Unlike people who are oriented to the avoidance of failure, success oriented persons do not feel the same level of anxiety and uncertainty, produced by the anticipation of possible failure. As Lang and Fries found in 2006, success orientation correlates with persistence in a certain task, with the performance, enjoyment, yield and positive self-evaluation. And vice-versa, the orientation to the avoidance of failure significantly correlates with negative self-evaluation, with anxiety, the disturbance and the low level yield (Lang & Fries, 2006).

Other experiments offer a more nuanced perspective on the effects of success orientation or of the failure avoidance on the task persistence. In the Lench and Levine (2008) experiment, subjects aiming at failure avoidance proved to be more persistent when trying to solve unsolvable anagrams. On the other hand, the individuals that had assumed success orientation goals, chose to give up as soon as they had evaluated the aim as intangible; this way, they avoided both wasted energy and time as well as a feeling of anger and frustration. Therefore, the results suggest that the persons that assume goals of being successful know when they should give up in order not to experience the unpleasant states induced by failure (Lench & Levine, 2008). Other studies, where solvable anagrams had to be solved, reached the conclusion that the goals of getting performance conducted to higher level of persistence, and finally to success, versus the settings when the goals of a person were to avoid the failure (Dweck & Leggett, 2000, Norman & Aron, 2003, Sherman and al., 1981 as cited in Lench & Levine, 2008). Thus, the two types of results suggests that, generally, individuals who are failure oriented seem to be more persistent when the escalation of commitment is maladaptive (being supported by anger and frustration), while individuals who are success oriented succeed in accurately and quickly identifying the impossible situations, and then

disengage themselves, in order to avoid negative affectivity and waste of the important resources.

In conclusion, the empirical data of the cited studies show that success orientation correlates with persistence and other dominants of motivation, and also with performance and well-being, and a lack of anxiety. Moreover, success orientation and their related goals lead to an increased adaptability of behaviour, which means that the individual is more conscientious of the moment and the situations in which it is necessary to give up because persistence is not beneficial anymore.

Those studies refer to task persistence, respectively disengagement from immediate goals, specific laboratory tasks with short-term outcomes. In this research we would like to isolate the relationship between success orientation and motivational persistence by making reference to difficult and distal goals, extended on longer periods of time. Thus, we chose the involvement in volunteering, a personal practice which – beyond the dominant need (to achieve success and avoid failure) which lies behind – promises personal benefits that cannot be guaranteed. The time, energy resources and personal sacrifices invested in volunteer activities may be obtained back, reflecting positively on the individual on the short term or long term, but the extent to which these outcomes will happen in a given time frame is hard to predict. Thus, the anticipation of positive results of the investments and the recognition of volunteering as a worthy of praise practice or as significant professional experience alimts the persistence of the volunteers but is, at the same time, doubled by uncertainty. This uncertainty related to the recovery and the discovery of the benefits of these investments, motivated the introduction in the research of the variable described below.

Perspectives on the uncertainty orientation

The uncertainty orientation is another important feature which sustains motivation, given the fact that, in the course of goal achievement, a person may often have to face uncertainty in different situations in which their beliefs can be questioned; new information about the self can emerge, as well as data regarding the abilities of the person. As we showed previously, the most long-term goals are characterized by uncertainty over the results. The individuals are frequently confronted with a decision dilemma, the decision between continuing – and maintaining the possibility of achieving the goal – and giving up, thus saving important resources from the risk of wasting them into intangible goals.

From the point of view of the self-regulation theory, Sorrentino and Short (1986) think that the orientation to uncertainty represents, in fact, the need to find out more things about self and surrounding world (Sorrentino & Short, 1986 as cited in Sorrentino et al., 2003). A similar definition is given by Passey (2009), as the tendency of the person to „search for situations that offer the opportunity to achieve a greater clarity of the self and the environment” (p.10). The individuals

oriented to uncertainty can solve their uncertainty looking for information; they like to discover the world, to understand different aspects about themselves and the environment they live in. On the other hand, the people oriented to certainty, given they possibility to choose, would prefer activities with a clear picture; in situations with a high degree of uncertainty would try indirect, heuristic methods of solving them (Sorrentino et al. 2003).

Sorrentino, Walker, Hodson & Roney (2001) develops three theoretical models complementary to the uncertainty orientation: a) the performance model; b) the information processing model; and c) the integration of the cognition and action model. *The performance model* is the one we prefer and is based on the interaction effect between success orientation and uncertainty orientation, integrating information from the self-actualization motivational theory. Therefore, the model claims that the subjects oriented to success and uncertainty have a better rate of performance than the ones oriented to avoiding failure in an uncertain situation. Moreover, the subjects oriented to success but also to certainty have a better performance rate compared to those who avoid failure in situations when the degree of certainty is very high. In other words, the success oriented subjects will always have a higher degree of performance, and the subjects oriented to avoiding failure will have a lower performance if the situation matches their cognitive orientation (those oriented to uncertainty in uncertain situations, those oriented to certainty in certain situations) (Sorrentino et al., 2001). In research conducted by Rosnow and Rosenthal in 1989, it was proved that success oriented people score higher on an intelligence test compared to the subjects oriented at avoiding failure when the situations matched their cognitive orientation (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1989 as cited in Sorrentino et al., 2001). Sorrentino and Short (1986) claim that the orientation to success or to the avoidance of failure include an affective value – the person feels good or bad about him/herself – while the orientation to certainty or to uncertainty is linked to a value of the information – the attempt to reach or maintain a clear picture about the self.

Interesting for the integration of the two dimensions analyzed previously are the other two models, which emphasize the idea of a match between the orientation of the individual and the situation as a source of persistence. The model of information processing (Sorrentino, 1996; Sorrentino & Roney, 2000 as cited in Sorrentino et al., 2001) includes data from both cognitive studies and the self-regulation theory, affirming that the situations which activate certain ideas or subject relevant for the cognitive orientation of a person (to certainty or uncertainty) will lead to an increase in the systematic processing of the information and to a decrease in the unsystematic information processing. In contrast, the irrelevant situations for the cognitive orientation of a person will lead to a decrease in the systematic processing of information and to an increase in the unsystematic processing of information (Sorrentino et. al., 2001). The model of cognition and action integration, as its name also suggests, includes both the performance model

and the information processing model. The individual has different cognitive and affective experiences depending on the active or non-active state of their cognitive orientation. The activation of the cognitive orientation not only leads to a systematic style of the information processing, but is also the source of motivation, in the case in which the motives match the cognitive and informational state of the person. In other words, if a person is oriented to uncertainty and to success and the situation is uncertain (the motivation is positive), the person will certainly engage in action and persist. The deactivation of the cognitive orientation not only shuts down the systematic processing of information, but also activates a second source of motivation. This means that the motivation is atypical compared to the situations in which this matches their cognitive orientation.

In conclusion, the theoretical models and results of the researches described previously suggest that the orientation to uncertainty has numerous implications both at a cognitive and motivational level in everyday life of any individual. We are interested mostly in the relationship between these two motivational orientations, their interaction effect on motivational persistence and their relationship with the determinants of the perseverance. Secondly, we intend to confront these variables to an objective criterion: the involvement and continuity in the voluntary activities. Considering that the success orientation sustains behaviourally the persistent behaviour in a task and the orientation to uncertainty may be an strong point for a person who engages in the achievement of long-term goals (which happens in the voluntary activity, when results are not certain and the two factors interact, according to the performance model) we expect a positive effect of them on the motivational persistence.

Method

Objectives and hypotheses:

Our intention was to compare volunteers individuals with non-volunteers individuals, focus on the variables which are the best predictors for motivational persistence and investigate the relationship between these variables.

The main hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- A. The volunteer subjects will get higher scores at the motivational persistence scale, comparatively with the non-volunteers subjects.
- B. The seven determiners of perseverance, motivational dominants, success orientation and uncertainty orientation, will predict the scores at the motivational persistence scale.

The sample:

The study involved two samples, with a similar structure: the first one encompassed 71 volunteers from two non-governmental organizations (10 men and 61 women, 66 of them aged between 17 and 26 years and 5 aged between 27 and 36 years), and the second one had 70 persons that were not involved in volunteer

work at that time (13 men and 57 women, 63 of them aged between 17 and 26 years and 6 aged between 27 and 36 years). 32 of 70 non-volunteers were in the past volunteers, but they gave up this activity. The two non-governmental organizations develop activities in the social work field of child protection, and, respectively, in the field of elderly care. Most of the volunteers are students.

Measures:

We gathered our instruments in a battery of 5 standardized questionnaires: The *PMS110 Questionnaire*, The *FPM110 Questionnaire*, The *DM Questionnaire*, The *SO110 Questionnaire*, and The *SOS110 Questionnaire*.

- a) *The PMS110 Questionnaire* (Constantin et al., 2008) allows for the assessment of motivational persistence, namely the preference /tendency of a person to persevere behaviourally and motivationally, while striving to reach certain long-term goals, to re-invest motivationally in their effort to achieve these distal objectives. This questionnaire contains 20 dichotomised items (*True – False*) clustered in three factors: 1) ("current purposes pursuing" – CPP; 2) „recurrence of unattained purposes" – RUP; and 3) "long term purposes pursuing" - LTPP). In the process of the questionnaire construction (November 2009 thru April 2010), a group of experts (*E-team* group) was involved. The *Alpha Cronbach* value is 0.79.
- b) *The FPM110 Questionnaire* (Constantin et al., 2011, *in print*), was constructed with the help of the same *E-team* research group, and it measures meta-motivational abilities that mobilize individual supplementary resources in the context of pursuing the goal in a persistent manner. The questionnaire has 64 items with dichotomised answers (*True – False*) clustered in 7 factors which have been described in reference literature as facilitators of persistent behaviour: *effort, trust, goal, being organized, focus, overcoming obstacles, and self-overtaking (self-improving)*. Internal consistency for each factor is a satisfactory one: effort ($\alpha = 0.67$), trust ($\alpha = 0.72$), goal ($\alpha = 0.66$), being organized ($\alpha = 0.79$), focus ($\alpha = 0.70$), overcoming obstacles ($\alpha = 0.80$) and self-overtaking ($\alpha = 0.71$). Since the factors “effort” and “goal” have an Alpha Cronbach coefficient close to the optimal value of 0.70, we decided to keep this model with seven factors.
- c) *The DM Questionnaire* (Constantin, 2007) assesses the motivational dominants of the individuals, meaning the level of their incentives for *power, achievement, affiliation and existence*. The questionnaire asks subjects to evaluate the measure of their agreement /disagreement with the 32 statements which refer to their motivational needs, on a Likert scale of 7 steps (from 1. *I never agree*, to 7. *I always agree*). The four factors refer to *leadership skills* ($\alpha = 0.85$), *expertise* ($\alpha = 0.87$), *relationship* ($\alpha = 0.71$), *subsistence* ($\alpha = 0.76$).
- d) *The SO110 Questionnaire* (Smith & Bristor, 1994) measures the uncertainty orientation, meaning the preference for experimenting with new ideas, that

- challenge their competences and life visions, the enjoyment of discovering new things and how they happen. The questionnaire contains 7 items of the „true-false” type and has an Alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.74.
- e) The *SOS 110* Questionnaire (Lang & Fries, 2006) evaluates the success orientation of the subjects, in other words how they act in order either to achieve success, or to avoid failure. The subjects were asked to answer 10 statements, on a Likert 4 level scale (from 1. *I never agree*, to 4. *I always agree*). The Alpha Cronbach coefficient reveals an internal consistency of 0.77. Since the two scale items did not raise any cultural problems in understanding, the questionnaires were translated into Romanian and pre-tested on a smaller sample, similar with the analysed one. In the both cases, the internal consistency coefficient is higher than 0.70.
- f) In order to learn more data that we considered relevant about our subjects and their activity, we added at the end of the battery of questionnaires a section named *OIMP* (Other Information about the Motivational Persistence)³. The volunteers reported about their activity, mentioned since they had been working as volunteers, how frequently they had encountered uncertainty (ranging from 1. *Very seldom*, to 6. *Very frequent*), how important they feel that the volunteering is (ranging from 1. *Less important*, to 6. *Very important*), how many hours per week do they volunteer, and how hard or easy is it for them to maintain the motivation to keep volunteering (ranging from 1. *Very hard*, to 5. *Very easy*). The subjects who had not volunteer at the time of the inquiry were asked if they had ever done volunteer work, for how long, in what organization, why did they give it up, how much did they confront with uncertainty and how important was this activity for them.

Results and comments

Test t shows that our first hypothesis was confirmed, meaning that *volunteers had an overall score significantly higher at motivational persistence compared to those who were not volunteers at that moment (p=0,032)*. By analysing the power of the effect using the programme *PowerStaTim*, we can see that it has an average value ($d=0.39$), meaning that the effect is significantly constant and very important in a practical way (see *Table 1*).

Table 1: *Test t results for independent samples*

Dependent variable: motivational persistence

	Status	N	Mean value	Standard deviation	t
Persistence	<i>Non-volunteers</i>	67	12,35	4,70	
	<i>Volunteers</i>	65	13,87	3,24	-2,166

³ In Romanian, *AIPM (Alte informații despre persistența motivațională)*.

Initially, we expected that our volunteers were more persistent motivationally, compared to non-volunteers subjects, due to the fact that voluntary activity does not involve a direct reward and motivation is intrinsic. Considering that our volunteers are involved in activities helping other people and having goals with uncertain purpose, they need to be persistent in order to continue the activity and resist the temptation of giving up. The results confirmed our expectations meaning that, in the psychological profile of our subjects, is involved the factor that facilitates pursuing goals consistently, overcoming impediments and finding new strategies and energizing sources in order to attain the desired objective.

The second hypothesis says that *the determinants of the perseverance, the motivational dominants, the orientation to success and the orientation to uncertainty will predict the scores on a motivational persistence scale.*

By selecting all the variables, we determined a *step by step regression*, due to the fact that correlations between motivational persistence and the determinants of perseverance were strong and significant. After several stages of analyses and elimination of variables which didn't have a significant predictive effect, we finally got a valid predictive model ($F=16.331$, $p<0.001$), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.763. Our data shows that the model has a predictive power and can explain 76.3% of the real situations analysed. The factors that have a significant impact on motivational persistence (ranked by their significance, given by standardized Beta coefficient) are: *obstacle, effort and focus (concentration)* (see Table 2).

Table 2

Beta and standardized Beta coefficients of the valid predictive model for motivational persistence

Dependent variable: motivational persistence

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	St. error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.284	0.610		5.387	0.000
Obstacle	0.731	0.115	0.449	6.332	0.000
Effort	0.629	0.119	0.302	5.264	0.000
Focus	0.523	0.129	0.285	4.041	0.000

Thereafter, the more a person has the capacity to overcome any obstacles, has more energy and will put more effort into achieving his/her goals and focuses more on the task, the more motivationally persistent they will be.

The mixture of those factors can be easily explained. Firstly, in the process of achieving their goals, the individual will face several obstacles, and that will require some ability to overcome those, to persist and find solutions, to be flexible and solve the problem in a constructive manner. Furthermore, it is obvious that one cannot achieve a goal without putting some effort into it. This factor is the one

which gives the person the energy and resources necessary to continue. Therefore, the individual would not be capable of achieving his/her goal unless they concentrate on the task, focuses on what is essential and on main activities, and ignores the disturbing factors.

In order to predict the level of motivational persistence, we introduced data in a regression equation and we came up with the following formula:

$$\text{Motivational persistence} = 3.284 + (0.731) \text{Obstacle} + (0.629) \text{Effort} + (0.523) \text{Focus}$$

Consequently, the main factors which have a significant impact on motivational persistence are the above mentioned. However, our constant has a value of 3.284, which means there can be variables affecting the motivational persistence, an aspect which should be explored in future studies. We can conclude, on the basis that our second hypothesis has been partially confirmed, that our results indicate the effect of three determinants of perseverance out of seven and without including the orientation to uncertainty or to success and the motivational dominants. Perhaps this could be explained by average or an insignificant correlation of the motivational persistence with the above mentioned variables.

Other significant results

Even though orientations to uncertainty and to success have not been established as predictors of motivational persistence, we tried to monitor the main effects and the interaction on this variable (see *Table 3*)

Table: *The results of the Anova Univariate Analysis*

Dependent variable: motivational persistence

	Means	Df	F	Sig.
Success orientation	11.70			
Orientation towards avoiding failure	14.10	1	11.036	0.001
Uncertainty orientation	11.62			
Certainty orientation	14.19	1	12.635	0.001
Interaction		1	1.173	0.281

By examining the *Table 3*, we remark that *there is no effect of interaction between the orientation to success and that to uncertainty ($p=0.281 > 0.050$)*, but the main effects of the variables are significant. In other words, *subjects oriented to success are significantly more persistent compared to those oriented at avoiding*

failure ($p=0.001$). Moreover, those oriented to uncertainty obtained a significant higher score on motivational persistence, compared to those oriented to certainty ($p=0.001$). In other words, the desire of a person to discover new things about themselves and the environment, the pleasure of exploring new horizons, the need to confront their ideas and visions and the tendency to believe in success will positively influence one person's motivational persistence.

Therefore, we considered a necessity to verify the correlations between the motivational persistence and perseverance determinants, the dominants of motivation, success orientation and uncertainty orientation. There are high significant correlations between the motivational persistence and the perseverance components "focus" and "obstacle". The motivational persistence correlate in an average manner with the perseverance components "effort", "self-improvement", "confidence", "goal", and "organization", with the motivational dominants "expertise" and "leadership" and with the success orientation. There is also a low significant correlation with the uncertainty orientation (see Table 4).

Table 4: Significant correlations between the motivational persistence and the examined variables

	Motivational persistence	d	Sig.
Motivational persistence	1	-	-
Effort	0,556	1,33	0,000
Confidence	0,530	1,25	0,000
Aim /Goal	0,506	1,17	0,000
Organization	0,410	0,89	0,000
Obstacle	0,729	2,12	0,000
Focus	0,671	1,80	0,000
Self-improvement /Self-overtaking	0,555	1,33	0,000
Expertise	0,419	0,92	0,000
Leadership	0,539	1,27	0,000
Success orientation	0,509	1,18	0,000
Uncertainty orientation	0,398	0,86	0,000

This way, significantly high and average correlations between motivational persistence and the determinants of perseverance are being accentuated, demonstrating that there is a strong link between the person's profile as described by those seven dimensions and the persistent behaviour. There are significant correlations between motivational persistence and dominants such as expertise and leadership, demonstrating that the more persons are motivated to self-fulfil, to excel in a particular field and to have the power to control people around them, the more persistent they are. Motivational persistence correlates with the orientation to

success and there exists an average correlation with the orientation to uncertainty. This means that success orientation, together with cognitive orientation to uncertainty, can facilitate motivational persistence. The power effect of the correlation shows a statistical and practical safe effect, all coefficients being placed over 0.86.

Another aspect observed is the fact that the *volunteers consider the voluntary work significantly more important (p<0.001) and less uncertain (p<0.001), compared to those who are not volunteers at the present but had been in the past.* We can conclude that our results are correct; the size of the effect has an average value for perceived uncertainty and close to average for the importance of voluntary work (see *Table 5*).

Table 5: *The results of the t Simple test for comparison between the means*

	Status	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	Sig.	d
Importance	<i>Volunteers</i>	70	5.28	0.91	4.604	0.000	0.35
	<i>Non-volunteers</i>	32	4.78	1.40			
Uncertainty	<i>Volunteers</i>	71	2.49	1.36	-5.242	0.000	0.57
	<i>Non-volunteers</i>	32	3.34	1.47			

Dependent variables: importance and perceived uncertainty in the volunteering.

It seems that the importance given to voluntary activities plays a major role in maintaining the motivational persistence and this aspect has been demonstrated by the volunteers who believe that these activities are more important, comparatively with those who volunteered in the past but have stopped. We consider that the latter withdrew from the voluntary activities because they had moved their focus to another objective, due to a variety of reasons. Another factor could be the degree of the perceived uncertainty. Perhaps these situations of uncertainty, real or perceived, which the volunteers encountered, determined a degree of discomfort which led them to disengage.

In conclusion, besides examining our hypotheses, we obtained some other worthy data about the characteristics of our subject (uncertainty orientation, success orientation) and the correlation of the variables with motivational persistence.

Conclusions and discussion

The results of the study confirmed our expectations, although the second hypothesis was confirmed only partially. The main aspect of the study is that it has shown that volunteers are more persistent compared to the other subjects and therefore have a motivational pattern different than the rest of our subjects. However, the study does not include aspects such as time spent in voluntary work,

consistency, frequency and period of time allocated or criteria on which the voluntary work is based on. It would be interesting, for the future research, to make a longitudinal study regarding volunteers, which could give us a bigger picture.

We identified a valid useful model to predict the motivational persistence which could be predicted by three factors: overcoming obstacles, effort and focus /concentration. On the other hand, even though the correlation with motivational persistence is a significant one, neither the dominants of the motivation nor the orientation to uncertainty or to success are part of the prediction. This conclusion is not a random one, considering that our study focused on motivational persistence as a constant personality trait, independent from the dominant type of motivation which leads people's efforts and is not an integral part of a tendency such as the model of performance motivation (Schuler, Thornton, Frintrup, & Mueller-Hanson, 2004). Even though the way people choose their dominant aim is dependent on constant tendencies (orientation to success / uncertainty), it is also influenced by the situations they encounter. This makes the effects of the cognitive factors such as orientation to uncertainty or the personal factors such as orientation to success on the motivational persistence ambiguous. The two variables seem to have an effect on motivational persistence which has been demonstrated in the analysis of the main effects.

To conclude, we could say that our study answered a few questions regarding the association between motivational persistence, its determinants and involvement in the voluntary work. However, we think other similar studies should deepen these outcomes, in order to offer a complete understanding of motivational persistence and its determinants.

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