

BCSARA Search and Rescue

**SEARCH AND RESCUE VOLUNTEER
MOTIVATION AND RETENTION
SURVEY**



Motivation

- Why do people join and remain with SAR?

Volunteer Functional Motivation Inventory

- Values
 - Volunteering allows people to demonstrate concern for others.
- Understanding
 - permits new learning experiences and the chance to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Social
 - volunteering offers opportunities to be with one's friends or to engage in an activity viewed favorably by important others.
- Ego Protection
 - protecting the ego from negative feelings, reduce guilt, or address one's own personal problems.
- Ego Enhancement
 - volunteering as a means of maintaining or enhancing positive emotions.

Volunteer Functional Motivation Inventory

VFMI	All Groups	High Response Groups
Values	4.40	4.43
Understanding	4.20	4.21
Social	3.21	3.19
Ego Protection	3.32	3.32
Ego Enhancement	3.92	3.92

High Response Groups = Groups with more than 10 survey responses
Scale 1= strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree

Retention

- Intent to Quit
 - The likelihood that a person will leave their SAR team in the near future (3-6 months)

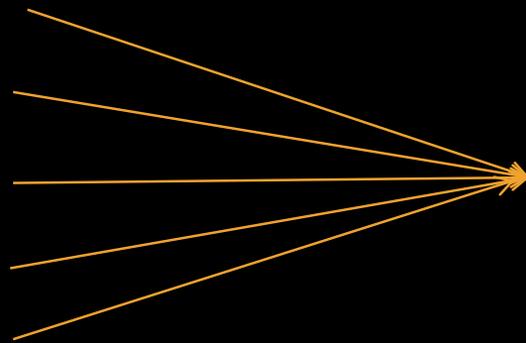
	All Groups	High Response Groups
Intent to Quit	1.63	1.64

Scale 1= very unlikely; 5=very likely

Motivation → Retention?

VFMI

- Values
- Understanding
- Social
- Protection
- Enhancement



Intent to Quit

No direct relationship found

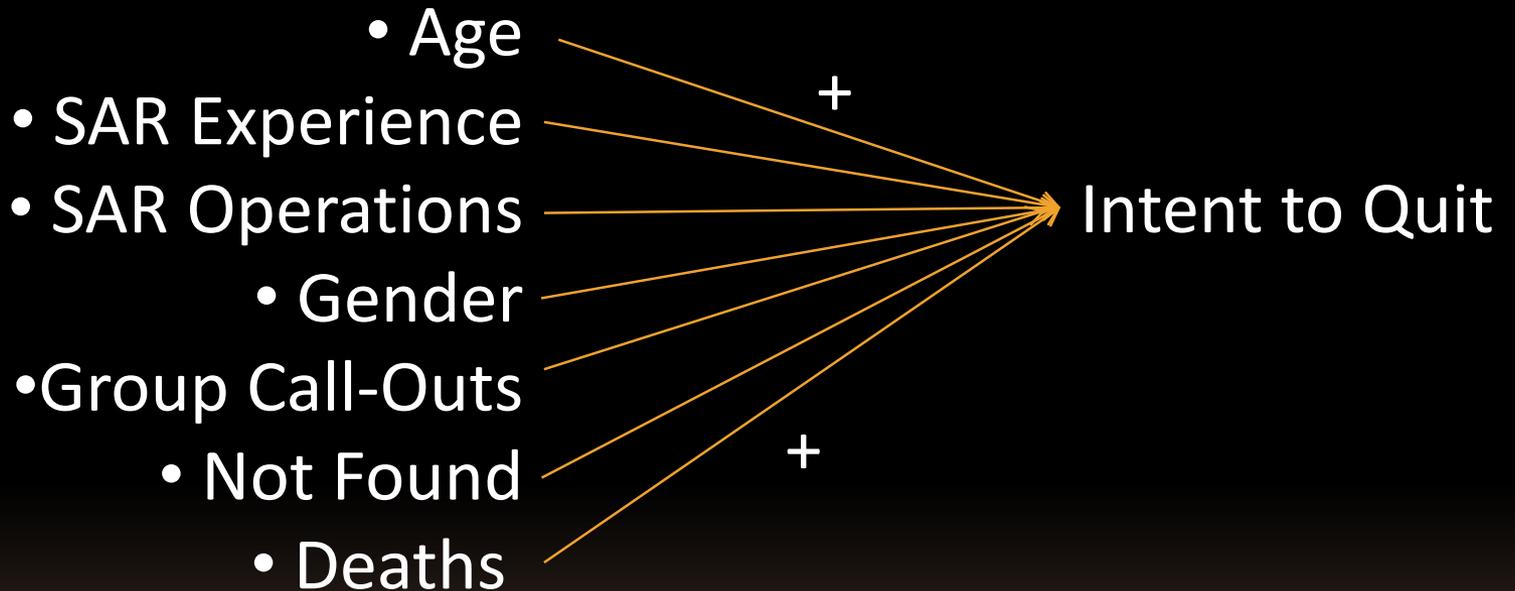
Yea, But (Control Variables)

	All Groups	High Response Groups
Age (years)	43.9	44.8
SAR Experience (years)	7.9	7.8
SAR Operations (past year)	11.6	10.5
Gender	74% M 26% F	73% M 23% F
Group Call-Outs (2015)	28.7	29.2
Not Found (2015)	2.6	3.1*
Deaths (2015)	2.7	3.1*

* = Significantly different from the average for groups with lower responses

Controls → Retention?

Yea, But



What predicts retention?

Organizational Factors

- **Perceived Organizational Support**
 - A member's generalized perception regarding the extent to which the SAR group values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2015).
- **Leadership Autonomy**
 - Member perceptions about autonomy provided by SAR managers (Williams & Deci, 1998) Ex: My SAR group managers give its members choices and options

What predicts retention?

Individual Factors

- **General Attitude**

- A member's generalized affective-cognitive perception toward SAR activities

- **Engagement**

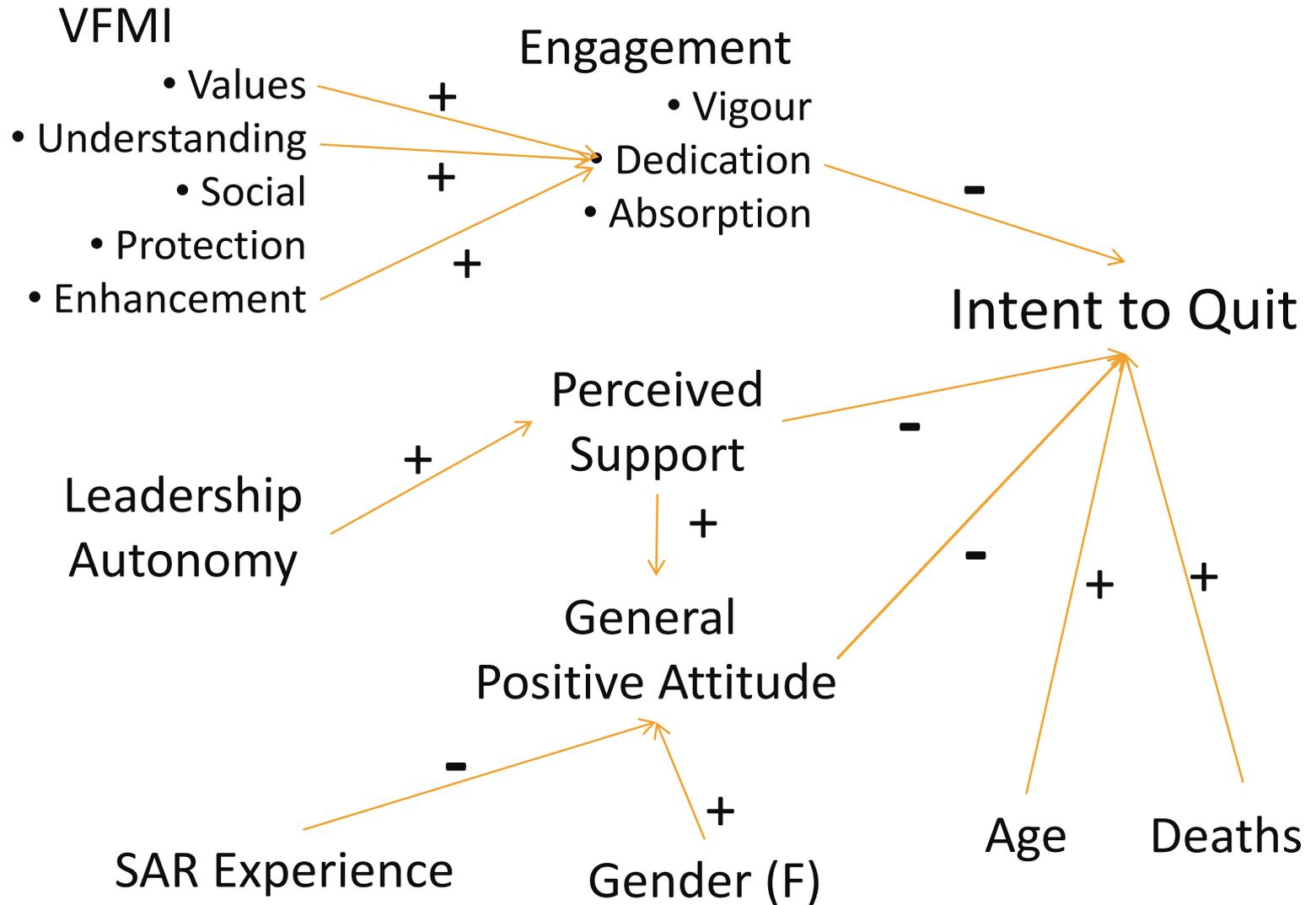
A more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior. (Schaufeli, et al., 2006)

- **Vigor** is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience and persistence even in the face of difficulties.
- **Dedication** refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge.
- **Absorption** is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly.

Predictor Variables

	All Groups	High Response
Perceived Organizational Support	4.16	4.13
Leadership Autonomy	3.90	3.87
General Attitude	4.22	4.23
Engagement – Vigour	3.84	3.83
Engagement – Dedication	4.43	4.45
Engagement – Absorption	3.69	3.92

Motivation → Retention: Full Model



What can groups do?

- Measure the level of leadership autonomy, perceived support, and general attitude among members
 - You can't manage what you don't measure
 - Take steps where possible to increase autonomy, perceived support, and ego enhancement
 - Give members appropriate choices and options where possible
 - Increase feelings of control and choice
 - Make people feel that their contribution is valued
 - Explain reasons for task assignment and connect to overall scope of the search
 - Find ways for members to connect to positive search outcomes

What can groups do?

- Use measures for selection
 - Select members who join SAR for reasons related to knowledge and values
 - Use VFMI as a selection tool
 - Use Life Orientation Tool to select for higher levels of optimistic outlook among applicants
 - General Attitude is partially shaped by a person's general orientation toward life. Optimistic people tend to have more positive attitudes.
 - Also helps increase perceived support, dedication engagement , and ego enhancement