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Volunteer recruitment messaging: A field experiment with Scouts Australia

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Introductions

Djurre Holtrop

- Postdoc researcher and teacher at UWA
- Background in I/O psychology
- Specialised in assessment and selection
- Scouts volunteer recruitment and retention project



The Scouts project: Retention and recruitment



The Scouts project

- Designing human resource practices that promote the attraction, engagement, and retention of volunteers
- Obtained funding for 2015-2019 (\$589,847):
 - Partner branches, Scouts: SA, TAS, VIC, WA
 - Supporting branches, Scouts: ACT, NSW, QLD
- Four senior researchers, one research fellow and two PhD students



The Scouts project

- Information collection
 - Continuous new volunteer surveys
 - Including personality questions
 - Volunteer engagement surveys in 2016, 2017
 - Including personality and turnover intentions
 - Several panel surveys to pilot our materials



Recruitment

- Recruitment starts even before you meet a potential volunteer
- Most volunteer organisations cannot be picky

“We’ll take anybody with a pulse.”

“A pulse is optional.”

- Investment of time and money to get a volunteer ready
- However, **poor fit** can lead to disengagement and turnover (or worse...)

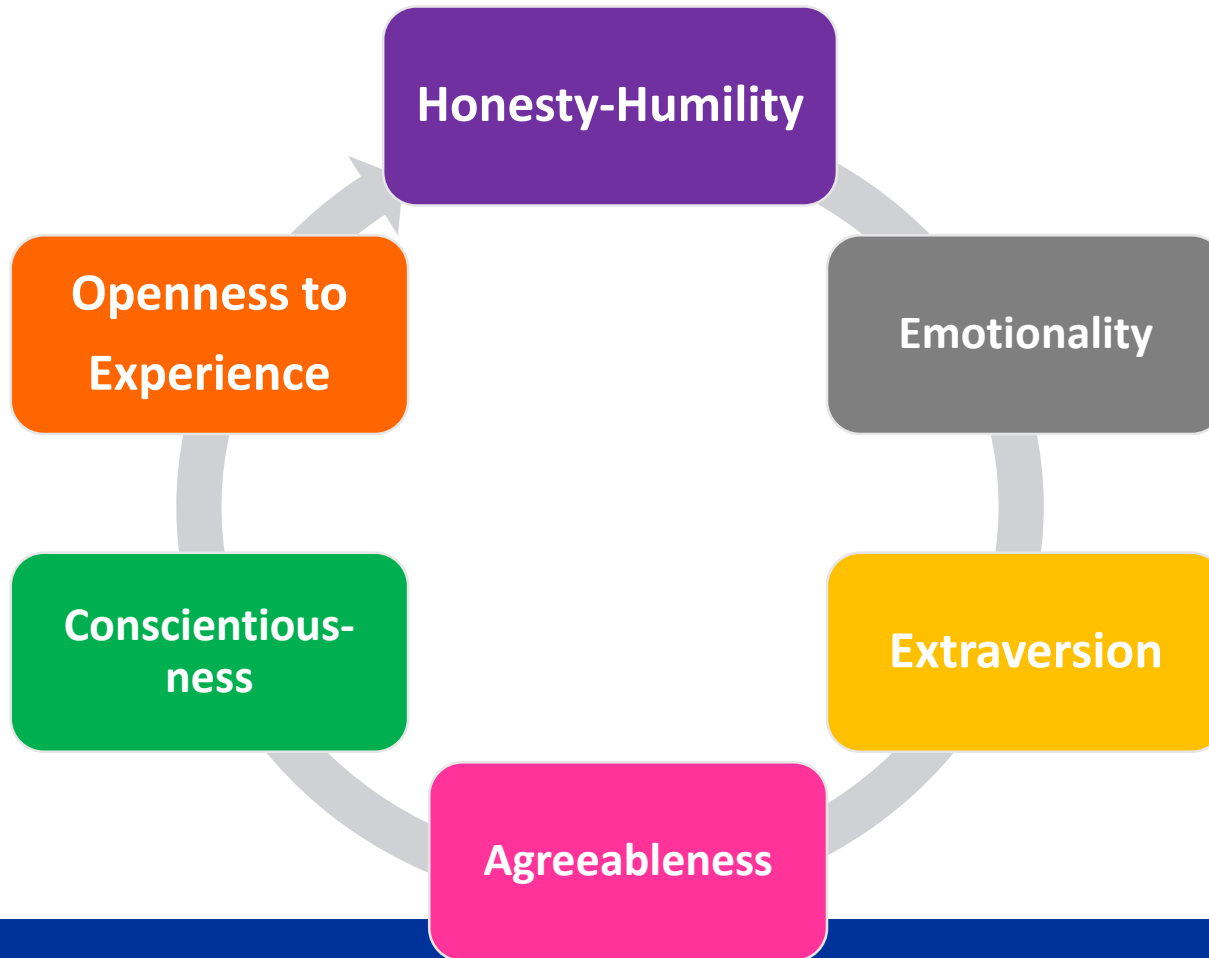


Targeted recruitment

- Actively recruit people who will fit well
- Requires to **understand** which characteristics make people thrive in in Scouts
- Design **accurate** messages to make volunteering **attractive** for people with these characteristics
- **Distribute** the materials widely and use them



Targeted recruitment: Understanding who thrives



Targeted recruitment: Understanding who thrives

- Used personality data from Scouts and looked at the relation with turnover intentions ($n = 2,680$)
- Volunteers who were extraverted, agreeable, and conscientiousness were significantly more inclined to stay

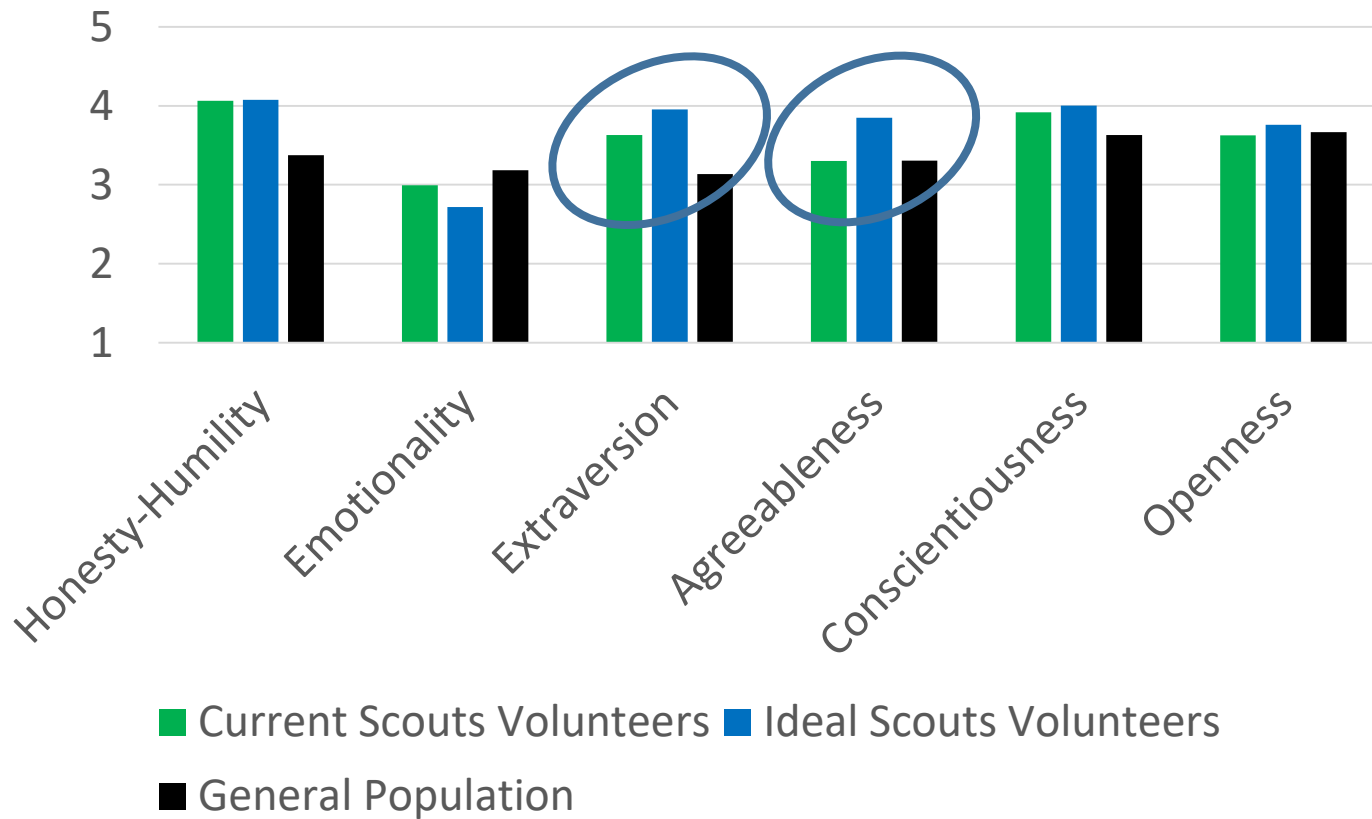


Targeted recruitment: Understanding who thrives

- We collected information on the [ideal Scouts Leader](#), “the volunteer” that Scouts should be interested in keeping ($n = 430$)
- We then compared the profile of the [ideal Scouts Leader](#) to the profile of the [typical Scouts leader](#)



Targeted recruitment: Understanding who thrives

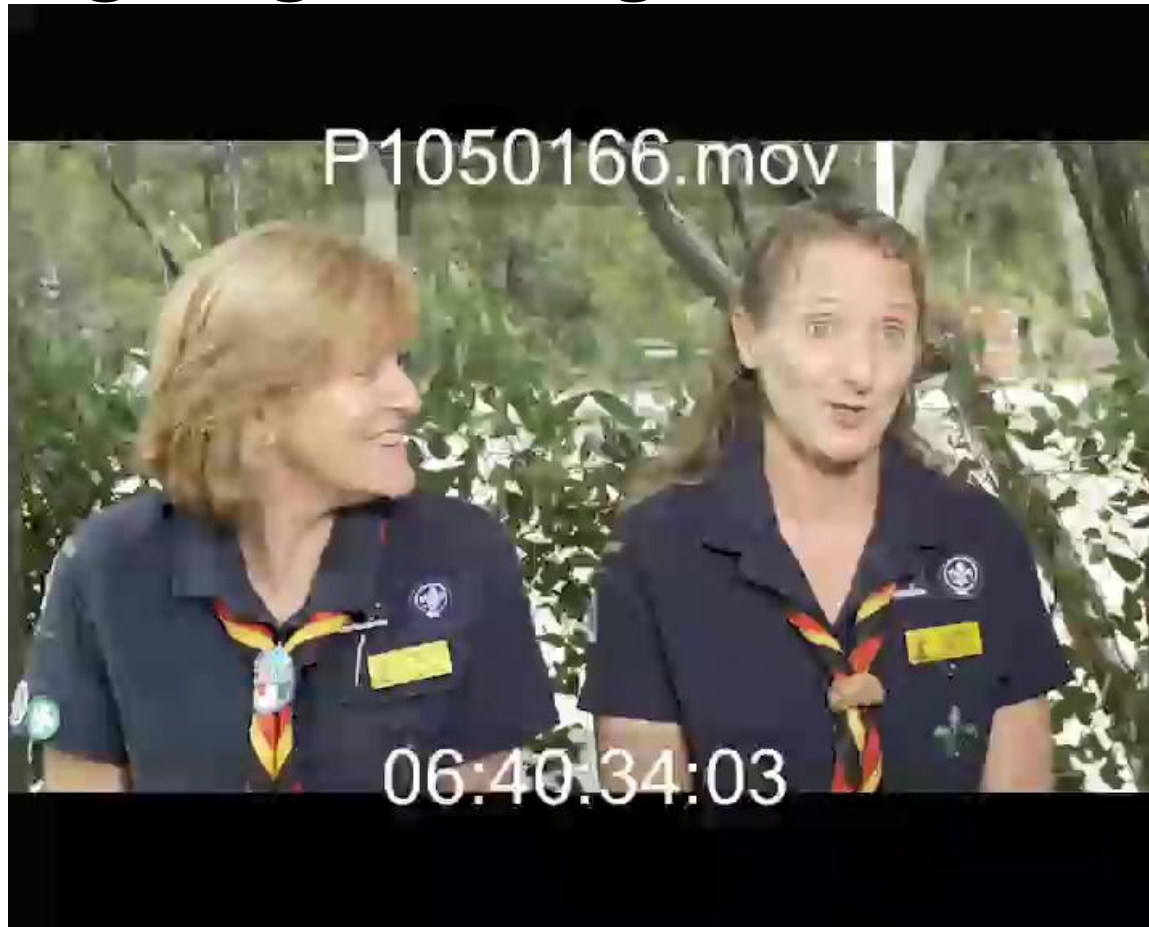


Targeted recruitment: Designing messages

- Scouts Victoria conducted interviews with 12 Leaders of Youth and gave us all the footage.
- We watched about 8 hours of videos and identified 111 attractive quotes, of which 52 were (potentially) related to the traits we had identified as desirable



Targeted recruitment: Designing messages



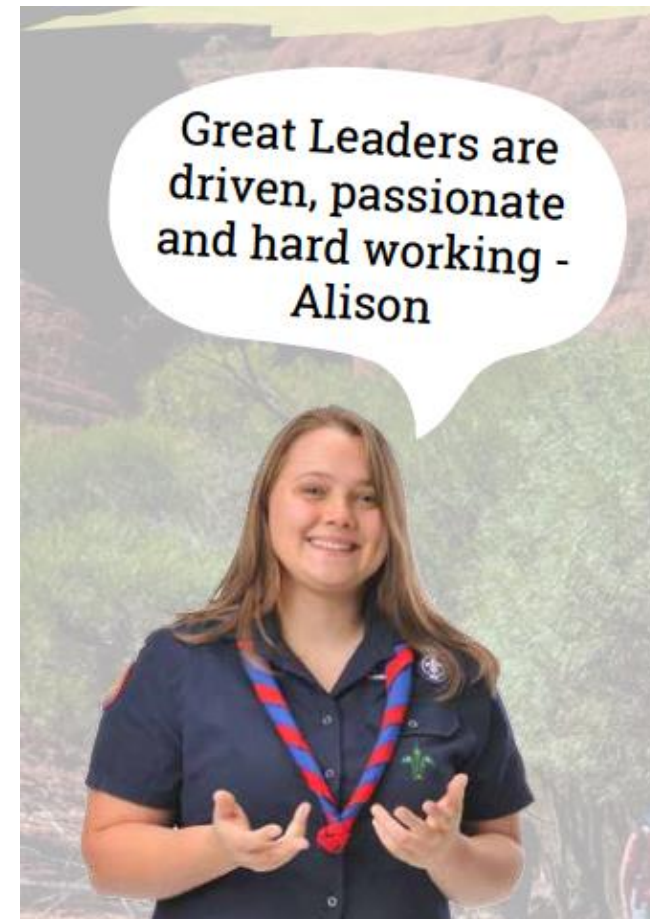
Targeted recruitment: Designing messages

- “Most Leader are very open, trusting and friendly”
agreeableness
- “Through Scouting, I've learned a lot of organisational skills that allow me to implement programs and events”
conscientiousness



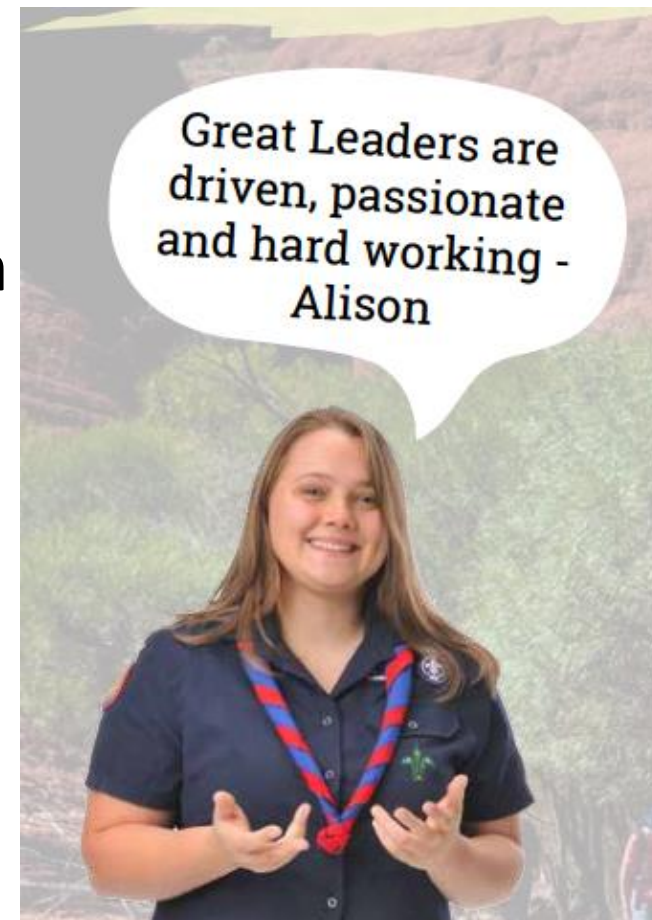
Targeted recruitment: Designing messages

- We then gave these quotes to a panel of Scouts volunteers ($n = 164$):
 - Are the messages attractive?
 - Are they also accurate?
- and a community panel ($n = 174$):
 - Are the messages attractive?
 - We also gave them a personality inventory (!)



Targeted recruitment: Designing messages

- Using the community panel data we double checked if the quotes were indeed attracting people with the traits we were looking for



Targeted recruitment: Designing messages

The final quotes were selected on four criteria:

1. Accuracy by the Scouts panel
2. Liked by the Scouts panel
3. Liked by the community panel
4. Related to traits that relate to higher chances of retention



Targeted recruitment: Designing messages

- Subsequently, Scouts designed videos, brochures, and posters to make the role of Leader of Youth extra appealing to people who have these characteristics





Targeted recruitment: Distribution

LEADER BUILD

- Scouts designed a script for a meeting of one hour called LeaderBuild
- The plan:
 - Invite the all people a Group knows for a meeting
 - Talk to them as per the script
 - Show all the materials
 - Pop the question: Would you like to be a Scouts Leader for one year



Targeted recruitment: Distribution

- Scouts Victoria trained all the Group (i.e. unit) Leaders and one other charismatic delegate per Group in using the script
- 50 training sessions and over 800 people
- Using the new volunteer survey, we are tracking if these meeting indeed attract more people with the desired traits



The Journey of Volunteering – Recruitment



JOIN THE ADVENTURE
www.scoutsvictoria.com.au



Thank you on behalf of the
entire team!

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