

II.

THE MENCHIK AND WEISBROD MODEL

While labor supply involving a paid wage is traditionally viewed as a function of wage and available hours, volunteer labor supply is considered to be a different dynamic. Menchik and Weisbrod outline two considerations to test: (1) a consumption model, wherein volunteering takes place as the individual maximizes utility of leisure hours; and (2) an investment model, wherein the individual invests volunteer hours out of available leisure hours to maximize future income potential.

The authors look to some of the determining factors they attribute to volunteering to seek to assess the validity of each of the two models. For example, if volunteering increases with income, then volunteering would be a consumption good and higher income would lead to higher "consumption" of volunteering.³ If volunteering decreases as adults age, then investment motivations would be attributed to volunteering, because the prospect of higher potential earnings in the future would be greatest for persons with a long career ahead of them.⁴ (The theory underlying the models is explained in more detail below.)

Menchik and Weisbrod describe two separate volunteer labor supply models because some influencing factors (e.g., age, income) would be expected to function in different ways in their two models (and perhaps because they expect little or no tradeoffs to take place between volunteering as a leisure activity and volunteering motivated by increased future earnings). The investment model, they state, assumes that there is no consumption utility gained from volunteering.⁵ Nevertheless, the authors find that both their models factor into volunteering decisions.⁶

³ Menchik and Weisbrod, 160.

⁴ Ibid., 168.

⁵ Ibid., 162.

⁶ Ibid., 180.