



College Students' Engagement In Volunteer Work: Towards A Proposed Plan Of Action

Tao,Guangjun

Tarlac State University, Tarlac City, Philippines

Abstract: This study was to identify the college students' engagement in volunteer work. Questionnaires, interviews, and field trips will determine current college students' volunteer work. It identified the respondents' views, facets, motivations, and issues involved in their volunteer work. Altruism and social issues were the concepts for the students' views, while the type of volunteer work and contribution to the mentioned activity covered the facets. The results reported that the students highly value their concern for others; they view regional imbalances as an important issue along social issues; they are actively involved on community service; they prefer to use their skills as contribution in doing voluntary work; they volunteer to make new friends and to make them feel that they are needed; and the main reason why students is not fully engaged is the disorganized agency from the previous voluntary work they have attended.

Keywords: college student, volunteer, plan.

I. INTRODUCTION

The urgent demand is for volunteers to improve the significantly more extensive section of the population who have not yet earned the title of "partners" in progress. The United Nations has set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals that aim to improve the humanity of the billions of individuals across the globe who are living in extreme poverty. In contrast, the general assembly establishes goals to be achieved the same as the crucial dedication the civilized countries owe the rest of the world." Partnerships for the goals," the 17th and final SDG, acknowledges, empowers, and inspires many participants to take action and contribute significantly to improving the world for countless other disadvantaged people. Consequently, the UN community unequivocally accepts "volunteering" as a mechanism for effecting such transformation. The United Nations also acknowledges that volunteering creates good capabilities, promotes new agendas to gain a foothold, and is also a potent instrument for extending and cross-cutting ways of execution, saying that it "strengthens civic involvement, preserves social integration, develops solidarity, and solidifies ownership of development results." It further enlists and motivates people to work for their improvement (Devereux et al., 2017). Volunteering refers to the energy and time individuals are willing to contribute actively. As early as 1997, volunteer service activities have attracted the international community's attention. Volunteering is the epitome of social civilization and plays a vital role in social governance. At the 52nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, the year 2000 was declared "International Volunteer Youth" (Dennis, 2000). Volunteering has been essential in everyday living and responding to significant public health emergencies. Volunteers have participated in large-scale national sporting events such as the Olympic Games and day-to-day community administration (Parent & Foreman, 2007). There are many different sorts of volunteer service initiatives and volunteer groups. Among them are community volunteers, elderly volunteers, and professional volunteers from various industries. For contemporary college students, actively participating in volunteer service activities is an exercise to improve self-realization and

cultivate dedication. In addition to the professional skills learned in school, it is necessary to have specific organizational skills, expression skills, and dedication. Volunteer service activities provide a good platform for college students in the new era. Improving ideology and virtue and forming a good personality have a significant positive impact. Participating in volunteer service as a carrier is necessary to strengthen most young people's ideological and valuable guidance. Play a typical exemplary role, lead social fashion, and create a good atmosphere. Institutionalized construction improves students' social practice ability and enhances students' sense of social responsibility. From the national level, the university level attaches great importance to the volunteer service of college students. It has issued corresponding documents to support and encourage college students to volunteer. Therefore, it is significant to research students' volunteer service.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED STUDIES

The research on "voluntary behavior" first appeared in the West and developed more deeply. Cnaan et al. (1996) pointed out that four aspects can define the concept of volunteering: volunteers provide unpaid, organized, and personal behaviors that have nothing to do with beneficiaries. This behavior can benefit other members of society and greatly help social and economic development. Stuart (2009) believes that volunteering provides services to members of society for free, with a high degree of public welfare characteristics, and is a free act of dedicating volunteers' energy and time to serve other organizations or individuals to benefit them. Han et al. (2019) mentioned that volunteer service is an act of dedicating one's own time and money in exchange for the welfare of others. This is because volunteers do not seek financial remuneration and have a strong sense of social responsibility for socially disadvantaged groups and social welfare levels. Ho-Tang et al. (2016) proposed that volunteer service is a social activity in which volunteers dedicate their physical strength and time to promote social stability and ensure respect and fairness. "Beijing Volunteer Service Promotion Regulations" was issued by Beijing in 2007. In this document, the concept of voluntary service is put forward. Voluntary service must first meet the requirements of not getting paid and dedicate public service to social organizations or others (Wei & Cui, 2011).

In order to ensure the sustainable development of students' volunteer services, it is necessary to improve the management, guarantee, and incentive mechanism of college students' volunteer services. There is also a need to mobilize enthusiasm for participation and make more college students dare and be willing to participate in volunteer service activities. Ren (2018) pointed out that it is necessary to manage volunteer behaviors orderly, learn from Western experience, improve mechanisms, improve volunteer service organizations, build a network management platform, and form the entire management process. Liu & Jiang (2019) pointed out that college student voluntary service organizations, as the commanders, planners, and coordinators of college students' voluntary service behaviors, should strengthen the organization's internal management, clarify the goals of organizational activities, and implement flexible training. Moreover, restrain the voluntary service behavior of college students. In the research, Cai (2020) pointed out that as an organization that coordinates college students to carry out voluntary service, associations should pay attention to the scientific nature of management and ensure the sustainability of college students' voluntary service behavior.

Further research aims to establish an effective student volunteer service mechanism, focusing on the tripartite cooperation between volunteers, schools, and volunteer service organizations. This was done to relieve the worries of college student volunteers participating in volunteer service activities and achieve a win-win situation for college student volunteer services.

Zhang (2019) believes colleges and universities should build a collaborative organizational system with the government and create an excellent system to ensure the development of volunteer services in colleges and universities. Liu & Wang (2019) suggested the management mechanism of college students' volunteer service from four aspects: propaganda, management, incentives, and guarantees. Intrinsic motivation can maintain the balance between the internal and external needs of the volunteer organization. Peng & Liu (2021) proposed formulating a relatively scientific organizational system for managing college students' voluntary service organizations and clarifying the specific organizational structure according to the organizational goals and scale. At the same time, a relatively standardized external and internal management system shall be formed, and the management of organization creation, organizational change, organization activity guidance, evaluation, reward, punishment, and the like shall be stipulated in the system. Knoke et al. (2017) believe that only by giving targeted incentives based on the characteristics of volunteers' interests, hobbies, personal values, and the like can the interests of volunteers be more closely aligned with volunteer service organizations. Cho et al. (2022), in their study titled "Compulsory Volunteer Experience in Singapore: Personality, Volunteer Motivation, and Continuance Intention to Volunteer." pointed out the relationship between two personality traits (extroversion, agreeableness), factors of volunteer motivation, and willingness to continue volunteering in the context of volunteering. Furthermore, it shows the importance of volunteer organizations adapting their recruitment process and experience to promote volunteer motivation and continued willingness. Although this study provides important insights into mandatory volunteering, it has limitations. First, this cross-sectional study measures volunteers' motivation to volunteer at sporting events and their intention to continue volunteering. Therefore, future studies could employ a longitudinal design to track changes in volunteers' motivation levels before and after volunteering. This provided further insight into whether participation in mandatory volunteer programs alters motivation levels for participation and the likelihood of continued volunteer participation.

Alkadi & Aldamer (2018) emphasized that volunteering is encouraged and common among Muslims in the Middle East. However, minimal studies have been conducted to determine why they volunteer. He uses multiple regression to explore what motivates male Saudi college students to volunteer. The results show that factors such as prosocial personality, value function, occupational function, social function, enhancement function, protection function, volunteer learning function, community identity, institutional convenience, and Islamic cultural motivation all impact volunteers in winter. The study also presents some findings that highlight the need for governments and NGOs to focus on the instrumental needs of volunteers. A limitation of this study is that it provides a focus for future researchers to explore the effects of gender and education on volunteer motivation. The study by Walk & Peterson (2022) researched that volunteer satisfaction is essential because volunteers have a lower exit threshold than employees and tend to leave nonprofits when dissatisfied. The researchers propose a multifaceted conceptualization of increasing job shaping in volunteer work, further extending job shaping research to non-work domains. Distinguish between behavioral and cognitive production and provide empirical support for the relationship between these forms of production and volunteer satisfaction and organizational identity. Nevertheless, as work-shaping research in the context of volunteers is just emerging, future research also needs to explore potential antecedents and volunteer outcomes and study volunteer motivations to find out which motivations are related to volunteer-creation efforts.

Shier et al. (2020), in their study titled "Characteristics of volunteer motivation to mentor youth," argues that organizations supporting youth development could benefit from mentors' direct insights into their motivations to volunteer better to help their recruiting and engagement of these programs. The authors found that motivation for participation falls into three themes: mentor social orientation, mentor psychological orientation, and dynamic organizational experience. While organizational dynamics are insufficient motivations, they combine with respondents' social and psychological tendencies and compel mentors to volunteer to join the organization. The implications of these findings are most relevant to organizational personnel recruiting volunteers who can support their efforts by highlighting the psychological benefits of volunteering, leveraging existing employee and volunteer networks, and promoting relevant organizational values and accountability structures. This provides a specific theoretical research basis for constructing college students' volunteer service guidance system.

III. SAMPLING DESIGN

The researcher employed Cochran's formula to identify the sample size. Cochran's formula is a much appropriate method to determine samples in large populations (Statistics How To, 2022).

The specific sampling method used random sampling to select samples from all levels to ensure randomness and comprehensiveness. Because the author is an educator at Guilin Medical University, it was convenient to communicate with the respondents. It was easy to obtain the contact information of the respondents, which was conducive to the distribution and recovery of samples. The Guilin Medical University used in the study has 12,000 students. With a 5% margin of error and an estimated proportion of the population of 50%, a sampling of 385 rounded off to 400 college students were used as respondents for the study.

IV. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Questionnaires were used as the primary data collection tool for this study. The researcher developed a questionnaire guided by relevant literature and research. The researcher utilized the variables in the conceptual framework as part of the research tool. These variables provided relevant and essential information that informs ongoing research.

The questionnaire was shown to the adviser and critics, who were asked to evaluate, comment, and suggest. The statements and suggestions were considered to improve the first draft. After revisions, the second draft was completed and resubmitted to the adviser and validators. The validators who were provided with an evaluation tool measuring the face and content validity of the questionnaires were as follows: two faculty in-charge of volunteer work for five years, a student-leader for volunteer work, a school administrator, and an English expert.

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was used. The pilot sample had 30 respondents. The collected data was tested for reliability. The questionnaire is valid and reliable because the calculated Cronbach's coefficient (0.734) exceeds the allowable limit (> 0.700).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Results

This part of the paper shows the results and discussion of the study being investigated. The answers to the objectives posed in the research questions are presented.

Table 1 presents the students' views along altruism.

Table 1
Students' Views along Altruism

Items	Mean	Verbal Description
Should be concerned for others	4.35	Agree
Nothing is nobler than assisting others	4.27	Agree
Give time and money to charity	4.15	Agree
Should stick with own affairs	4.04	Agree
Enlightened self-interest	4.00	Agree
Live life of human service	3.51	Agree
Mean	3.93	Agree

As presented in the table, the participants' concern for others obtained the highest mean, which is 4.35. This is followed by an almost the same view along altruism, which is their belief of nothing is nobler than assisting other people.

The results support the Guidelines for Youth Volunteers Serving Communities (2022). The document pointed out that the community is the main scene of volunteer service and an important channel for young volunteers to participate in grass-roots social governance. In order to conscientiously implement the relevant work arrangements of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, carefully organize the "Youth Volunteers Serving the Community Action", extensively mobilize young volunteers to go to the grass-roots level, enter urban and rural communities, actively participate in grass-roots community governance, and continuously strengthen the function of volunteer service practice to educate people, vigorously Promote the spirit of volunteering, coordinate with the urban grassroots Communist Youth League reform and "community youth action" to help grassroots league organizations improve their leadership, organization, service and overall contribution, Youth Volunteer Action Guidance Center of the Central Youth League, China Youth Volunteer Association The secretariat formulates this working guideline.

Table 2 presents students' view along social issues.

Table 2

Students' Views along Social Issues

Items	Mean	Verbal Description
Regional imbalances	3.66	Agree
Digital divide	3.69	Agree
Coastal-hinterland imbalance	3.68	Agree
Rural-urban disparity and the wealth gap	3.60	Agree
Government and law	3.53	Agree
Tofu-dreg projects , meaning poorly built infrastructure	3.53	Agree

It could be seen from the presented table that the majority of the participants view regional imbalances as an important issue along social issues as it obtained general weighted mean of 3.66. They agree that digital divide (3.69), coastal-hinter land imbalance (3.68), and rural-urban disparity and the wealth gap (3.60) are the most pressing issues socially in China.

When urban reforms, particularly those relating to industrial products, were enacted in the mid-1980s, the urban-rural split began to widen. The urban-rural income discrepancy widened throughout the next decades, culminating in 2009, when urban per capita income was three times that of rural areas.

According to other study, the urban-rural income discrepancy can explain three-quarters of China's overall inequality. According to Zhang, the hukou system, a household record that prohibits most migrants from permanently relocating to cities, has played a major role in growing the wealth disparity between urban and rural areas.

Table 3 presents the types of volunteer work engagement of the students.

Table 3

Students' Types of Volunteer Work Engagement

Items	Mean	Verbal Description
Community service	4.30	Frequently
Education (support teaching, tutoring, etc.)	3.95	Frequently
Human Services (Red Cross, Hospitals, Social Assistance, etc.)	3.86	Frequently
Environmental protection	3.11	Sometimes
Cultural protection/inheritance	2.66	Sometimes
Politics (policy advocacy)	2.62	Sometimes
Mean	3.42	Sometimes

Table 3 reveals that the participants are actively involved on community service. It obtained a mean of 4.30. This is followed by their volunteer engagement in education through activities like support teaching or tutoring (3.95). However, they are least involved on volunteer activities that deal with politics (2.62).

The results has shown similarities from the findings of Yang (2020). He pointed out in the research that in 2018, the "China Youth Daily" article showed that there were more than 50 million registered young volunteers in China, mainly active in the community, respecting the elderly and loving the young, helping the poor, helping students and the disabled, etc. social welfare field. By October 2019, more than 2,000 colleges and universities in China had established volunteer organizations such as youth volunteer associations, with more than 70 million registered volunteers. With the joint efforts of the whole society, government and colleges and universities, the main body of college students' volunteer service has been expanding.

Table 4 presents the students' contribution to volunteer work.

Table 4

Students' Contribution to Volunteer Work

Items	Mean	Verbal Description
Skills (physical labor, expertise, etc.)	3.89	Frequently
Time (Attend meetings, sit on a committee, fundraising drives, etc.)	3.75	Frequently
Money (donations, annual dues, etc.)	3.37	Sometimes
Resources (allow the use of your tools, vehicles, property, etc.)	3.18	Sometimes
Leadership (hold office, chair a committee, act as a team leader on a project, etc.)	2.53	Sometimes
Mean	3.34	Sometimes

The students prefer to use their skills as contribution in doing voluntary work as it obtained a mean of 3.89. This is followed by extending their time to attend activities of volunteerism with a mean of 3.75. Very few among them would like to contribute as leaders of the volunteer work since it only garnered a mean of 2.53.

With the evolution of digital technology and the promotion of digital development strategy, the expansion and embedding of digital technology in the fields of economy, politics, culture, society and ecological civilization show very distinct characteristics: on the one hand, digital empowerment brings significant governance benefits, economic benefits and social benefits; On the other hand, there is obvious unbalanced distribution of digital empowerment, which brings a negative effect that can not be ignored -- a huge digital divide has emerged between different regions and different populations. Objectively, digital empowerment depends on certain digital literacy. Depending on the specific basis and conditions, social groups with weak digital literacy are often in a vulnerable position in the face of constantly online, digital and delocalized commercial resources or public resources, social services or government services. The gap in digital literacy between social groups may eventually turn into a digital divide, resulting in the disadvantaged groups facing many disadvantages in the fields of education, employment, medical care, old-age care, social security, labor, tourism and so on, which may eventually affect the overall sense of fairness of the people.

Table 5 presents the students' reasons that prevent them to fully engage in doing volunteer work.

Table 5

Students' Reasons that Prevent them to Fully Engage in doing Volunteer Work

Items	Mean	Verbal Description
Volunteered previously-- disorganized agency	4.33	Frequently
Lack of institutional support	4.32	Frequently
Cannot find a suitable project	4.25	Frequently
No volunteer projects nearby	4.21	Frequently
I'm not sure how to get involved	4.12	Frequently
Do not have much to offer needy people	4.02	Frequently
Lack of information	3.99	Frequently
Would like to, yet too busy	3.94	Frequently
Volunteered previously-- couldn't help people	2.57	Sometimes
No encouragement by family and friends	2.31	Seldom
Negative attitudes about volunteer	2.18	Seldom
Takes too much time	2.07	Seldom
I just don't want to volunteer	2.06	Seldom
Needy people should help themselves	1.92	Seldom
Dislike working with needy people	1.87	Seldom

Table 5 presents the reasons what makes students do not fully engage themselves to volunteering activities. The main reason is the disorganized agency from the previous voluntary work they have attended. It gained 234 responses or 58.50%. Came second is the lack of institutional support. There are 225 who agreed to this statement or 56.25% of the total population.

The most effective strategy to increase the success of your volunteer program is to retain participants. Volunteer managers will be able to focus on more meaningful tasks instead of spending time recruiting year after year. At the same time, the expertise, enthusiasm, and knowledge of the organization that long-term volunteers get is precious, so do everything you can to keep them.

Common volunteer issues include feeling disconnected from the organization's aims, underappreciated, or unsupported, all of which can lead to volunteers quitting organizations. To overcome these obstacles, volunteer managers must create a clear plan for volunteer engagement and appreciation.

5.2 Discussion

University students have reached the adulthood stage, and their view of the world and values have been created, which suggests that implementing ideological teaching throughout higher education may be ineffective. As a result, cultivating young volunteering awareness should take advantage of the golden moment of philosophical education. The Chinese government has recognized the significance of raising youth volunteering awareness and has consistently introduced regulatory requirements on youth volunteer activities, such as "Interim measures for the administration of student volunteer service" and "On strengthening the execution of secondary school volunteer service." However, those regulations are based on their own leadership scope and need, with little integration and cooperation across regions and countries. In terms of national strategies to encourage volunteerism, programs for college students are more extensive, but programs for teenagers are inadequate. This implicit suppression management method has resulted to a lukewarm condition of Chinese young volunteer activities due to the limitations of "regulations" and the lack of motivation provided by "programs." The primary means of increasing young volunteering awareness is through school instruction. It is vital to avoid a heavy flag set of volunteer activities in order to encourage every youngster to participate in volunteer activities on their own. Many litter-picking tasks pale in comparison to rescuing a stray dog. Teenagers might be encouraged to participate in volunteer activities if they act from the bottom of their hearts. On the contrary hand, parents' duties in family education are critical since a good family can raise a good child.

According to the results of this survey, the modalities of participation in volunteer instructional methods have become increasingly diverse. College student societies are a new and powerful force, but in terms of size and quantity, they are dwarfed by official groups. Furthermore, the lack of public awareness has made it more difficult for college student volunteer organizations to gain social money and public support. The general public views college students as immature and feels that their volunteer activities are mostly for self-development and social experience, rather than assisting the community. Through the establishment of foundations, association culturing bases, and the emergence of mature non-government organization resources, colleges and universities can actively create a comfortable growth environment for organizations of university student volunteers, inspire them to arrange and discover challenging, impactful, and imaginative volunteer service projects, and welcoming broad platform for aspiring young people to participate in this endeavor.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, an effective method to encourage students is for campus groups to clarify the true goal of why they should volunteer. Earning additional credit in school or learning new skills are ineffective motivators. They must comprehend the true significance of volunteering. Organizations must make an effort to convey the significance of what they are going to undertake and how they may make an impact on the world. Give them a goal and let them go with it. Secondly, some students believe that volunteer work is tedious, exhausting, and needs an inordinate amount of time and physical effort. One of the most effective motivators is enjoyment. Incorporate activities such as games with learning sessions to make your volunteer opportunity more enjoyable. Thirdly, consider what knowledge and skills the volunteer will require and earn from certain opportunities, and incorporate this information in the volunteer position descriptions. Despite the fact that the vast majority of student volunteers are driven by a desire to make a difference, strengthening their skills and gaining work experience in meaningful jobs are critical to recruiting student volunteers. Potential volunteers may be more interested in opportunities that need talents related to their academic degree.

REFERENCES

- [1] Clary, E. G., & Snyder, M. (1999). The motivations to volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations. *Current directions in psychological science*, 8(5), 156-159.
- [2] Fairholm, G. W. (2011). *Real leadership: How spiritual values give leadership meaning: How spiritual values give leadership meaning*. ABC-CLIO.
- [3] Jiang, D., Hosking, D., Burns, R., & Anstey, K. J. (2019). Volunteering benefits life satisfaction over 4 years: The moderating role of social network size. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 71(2), 183-192.
- [4] Lambert, V. A., & Lambert, C. E. (2012). Qualitative descriptive research: An acceptable design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(4), 255-256.
- [5] Wei, N., & Cui, Y. (2011). The development of volunteerism in China: Context, role of government and influences.
- [6] Yuriev, A. (2019). Exploring dimensions of satisfaction experienced by student volunteers. *Leisure/Loisir*, 43(1), 55-78.
- [7] Zhang, H. X. (2019). College students' voluntary service and community governance. *Social Scientist*, 262(2), 152-155.
- [8] Zhang, J. (2021). A survey on income inequality in China. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 59(4), 1191-1239.

