

Functional Motive Involvement Of Community Service Volunteers: Unishams Case Study

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Abstract

Why are a lot of people involved in volunteer activities without any specified payment or reward? The motivation behind this human behaviour which involve themselves in volunteer activities is the six personal and social functions which are stated by the Functional Theory (Snyder, M., 2000). The Community Service Module which makes undergraduates to perform compulsory community activities is considered challenging, whether they perform the activity voluntarily or only to complete the required compulsory course of the university. An overview study was conducted to 85 students enrolled in several field of education which registered for the Community Service course in order to identify the students' involvement motive in volunteerism activity. This study also observes the volunteerism motive based on gender, soft skills after participated in a volunteerism programme as well as identifies the relationship between volunteerism motive with soft skills. Both descriptive and inference methods (t-test and Pearson correlation) were used to analyse the obtained data. The results of the study found that Value is the dominant involvement motive in volunteerism activity and there is no difference in motive based on gender. This study also found that after students participated in volunteerism activity, the students gain soft skills application through good relationship and interaction, besides learning to work effectively. Next, the Pearson correlation analysis show that there is a high relationship ($r = .727$) between volunteerism involvement motive with the soft skills gained among the students. In reality, the Community Service course is required as one of the compulsory modules of the University and placing the graduates produced by UniSHAMS to be on a different level when they have added value as well as having the opportunity to assist and contribute on a larger scale at the national and international level.

Keywords

Undergraduates, Volunteer, functional motive, community service

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Introduction

Undergraduates Volunteerism: “Unwavering spirit becomes identity”

Undergraduates and volunteerism cannot be separated. However, recently there is a cynical phrase about student volunteerism when it was referenced together with the 6T syndrome: cap, t-shirt, tea, fare, guest and TV! (Saifuddin Abdullah: 2001) Why does this happen?

In reality, the spirit of volunteerism among undergraduates should be nurtured early while setting foot to the ivory tower because they are an educated group which becomes the best icon to the community when volunteer activities are conducted wholeheartedly without taking into account the intensive which they are about to receive. Thus, volunteerism must become the identity for the young generation especially undergraduates. This identity needs to be influenced and nurtured in every student in the public or private higher education institutions through courses in education programmes including in the Community Service course which is one of the U4 section optional courses in the General Studies (MPU).

Based on Kamus Dewan, the word “volunteer” has the meaning of “with one’s own desire, without force, not forced and voluntarily” while the word “volunteerism” means “volunteer attitude”. This proves that when they do something voluntarily, they are called as “volunteer” for males and also “volunteer” for female. Therefore, volunteerism can be defined as the effort in doing something voluntarily, without force or not forced with a genuine intention or wholeheartedly without hoping any reward for themselves. In reality, at UniSHAMS, the offering of a Community Service course clearly shown that their undergraduates’ spirit of volunteerism is intact and even better, it becomes their continuous motivational identity.

This is in line with the statement by Saifuddin Abdullah (2001) which view that youths who are involved with volunteerism activities will have the opportunity to shape their personal identities which will indirectly open wider career opportunities because it contains individual potential such as communication skills, problem solving and working as a team. This is supported by Barbara J. Houle et.al (2005) which states that a person may have a better positive experience when stated that individuals may have a more positive experience when they are allowed to choose the volunteer task which fulfils their motives similar to the result of the study by (mis., Clary et al., 1998) which found that volunteers that perform in line with their motive has reported a more positive volunteer experience and motivate them to continue volunteering in the future. It is clear that there are a lot of positive experiences from offering the Community Service course which aimed to educate and train higher learning institution students in community management skills which is considered practical (Wardatul Aishah Musa & Nooraini Othman, 2014).

Generally, a larger volunteer labour force which is more efficient is much needed for a successful Community Service programme because they are the backbone of all accomplishments. The government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports declared the National Volunteer Year since 2009 as proof on the high commitment of leaders in the efforts to empower the spirit of volunteerism as well as various associations and clubs were established at the university level to nurture the spirit of volunteerism among undergraduates. As an example, the Students Volunteer Foundation (YSS) is an entity which was established under the Ministry of not only attempts to attract as many volunteers as possible among undergraduates, but also functions to recognise volunteer leaders among them. One example is Miss Masyitah Zazali, a student enrolled in the Degree in Business Management (Islamic Finance and Banking) at UniSHAMS which had enrolled in the Community Service Course during the December 2018 session and was chosen to participate in a YSS mission to Vietnam which she was considered due to her attitude in continuous assisting and planning from the perspective of functional theory to prove there is an influential process based on individuals (example, individual psychology function) in providing assistance, but the influence which is usually present and in the future which will diminish as compared with certain situations which is usually studied in the spontaneous assistance situation (mis., Clary & Snyder, 1991) in Mark Snyder et.al (2015). This is line with the view from Gil Clary et.al (n.d.) which identified that a person who is interested in volunteerism activities based on the functional theory

in the function capacity of value, comprehension, self-improvement, career, social and protection. However, the study focuses on volunteerism in Community Service is limited.

The goals or objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the functional motive of volunteer involvement for UniSHAMS Community Service.
2. To study the differences of the functional motive of volunteer involvement for UniSHAMS Community Service based on the factor of gender.
3. To identify Soft Skills obtained after following a Volunteer Programme.
4. To study the relation between the functional motive of volunteer involvement for UniSHAMS Community Service with Soft Skills.

Volunteerism

The previous Community Service Research Paper explained about the development and improvement level as well as the impact of soft skills. In 2010, Roslina Ahmad Faisal et.al. presented their research findings that the students' satisfaction level and social well-being level towards Community Service activities is at the moderate level. The research also found that there is no difference in satisfaction and social well-being level based on gender. This is different from the result of the study by Hasnuddin Ab Rahman et.al. in 2018 which shows the involvement level of students which was studied is at the low level and there is a significant relationship between volunteerism activity with the students' social skills. Next, the result of the study by Mohd Fathi Adnan et.al. in 2013 has shown that the impact level which was given by UTM and Community Service courses is high for each element of soft skills which was studied with elements of ethics and professional moral are the most dominant. The researches is clearly not involved with the volunteerism functional motive for the Community Service course. It is clear that the study conducted is limited about the volunteerism functional motive for the Community Service course even though the Community Service course is among the Compulsory Module courses taken by all students before finishing their education programme and to return and contribute to the community.

The Malaysian nation development is not only dominated by development growth and military but it is also supported by the education sector as well as the Islamic religion and emphasising volunteerism work. This is proven by the existence of the need for Muslims to take care of the close relationship with God (*hablu min Allah*) and at the same time to take care of the relationship among humans (*hablu min 'an nas*) such as the result of the study by Fauziah Ibrahim in 2018 which found that (89%) which is the majority of undergraduates who are involved in performing volunteer work in the period of less than six months which is (38%). This is due to 89% of them feeling satisfaction and happy while involving themselves in working in the form of volunteerism and 39% of them are influenced by the factor of desire to assist the community and those finding new experience are at 33.5%. The result clearly contradicts the result of the study towards volunteers by Sharififar et.al. in 2011 in Tajul Arifin Muhamad (2013) which found that the motivation factor is the most important in developing the interest and commitment of volunteers which in line with the result of the study by Clary et.al. (1998) in Tuan Pah Rokiah Syed Hussain (2016) which studies the motivation and its relationship with volunteerism and it founded that motivation greatly affects a person's volunteerism activity. It is clear that letting the volunteers perform meaningful duties which are appropriate with their main motive will produce positive meaningful volunteer experience and a good outcome for all who were involved which is the same result obtained from the study by Siti Raba'ah Hamzah (2015) which found that the structural equivalence analysis model show that there is a significant relationship between variables of motivation and intention towards the involvement of youth groups in volunteer activity.

Therefore, in order to empower volunteerism among UniSHAMS' undergraduates, a study was

conducted involving UniSHAMS Community Service volunteer involvement motive. Based on Barbara J. Houle (2015), the psychological function approach has a history which spans more than a century (mis., Angell, 1907; Dewey, 1896; James, 1890) and the latest functional strategy which was used to understand the motive behind volunteers (refer Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1991, 1995, 1999 Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1996, Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Omoto, Snyder, & Berghuis, 1993; Snyder, 1993; Snyder, Clary, & Stukas, 2000; Snyder & Omoto, 1992a, 1992b) which found that Clary and Snyder (1991) define functional analysis as "worry with cause and underlying purpose and creating required phenomena, planning, objective and personal and social goal which are presented by the community's faith and their actions" (pg. 123) and finally the main functional premise is that while different people can act the same way, this action can function with a different psychological function for different individuals because this approach is identified with the functional theory for attitude and persuasion (mis., Herek, 1987; Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956; Snyder & DeBono, 1987) which people may have the same attitude or involved in the same behaviour, but attitude and behaviour may satisfy different functional motive. Therefore, all parties should let volunteers perform duties with the appropriate benefit and main motive in order for them to produce positive volunteer experience and good outcome for all that were involved.

Research Method

An overview study towards 85 students who are enrolled in the Community Service course at a private institution (IPT) which focuses on Islam was conducted by using a simple random sample method. The instrument for the study is using questionnaires which uses the questionnaire instrument of the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) which was created by Clary et al. (1998). This instrument was created to test the individual motive of choosing to become volunteers by observing through the approaches based on the Functional Theory (Katz 1960). There are six motive dimensions in VFI which are Value, Comprehension, Improvement, Career, Social and Protection. Meanwhile, there are 7 items to measure the soft skills application in volunteerism programme.

The focus group is students who are enrolled in the Community Service course which consist of Kulliyah Hospitality and Creative Art, Kulliyah Syariah, Kulliyah Usuluddin and Al-Quran Science and Kulliyah Muamalat and Management Science students.

The research instrument used was the questionnaire which consists of three sections. Section A is to obtain the student's demographic. Section B is to study the volunteerism factor which contains 30 items. Items 7, 9, 11, 20 and 24 are measurements based on the aspect of protection, while items 3, 8, 16, 19 and 22 are based on the aspect of value. Items 1, 10, 15, 21 and 28 are based on the aspect of value. Items 2, 4, 6, 17 and 23 are based on the aspect of social. Items 12, 14, 18, 25 and 30 are based on the aspect of comprehension and lastly, items 5, 13, 26, 27 and 29 are based on the aspect of improvement. The item score which was used is a score of 1 to 5 based on the scale such as 1 = greatly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree and 5 = greatly agree.

Meanwhile in section C is to evaluate the soft skills application. The item score used is score of 1 to 6 based on the scale such as 1 = greatly not increase, 2 = not increase, 3 = somewhat not increase, 4 = somewhat increase, 5 = increase and 6 = greatly increase.

A prior study was conducted towards 30 students as a believability test for testing the questionnaire items and found that overall value of the Alpha Cronbach is 0.95 when the alpha value for the dominant volunteerism Factor is 0.94 and the alpha value for Soft Skills Application after participating in Volunteerism Programme is 0.93. This instrument is considered to have great internal stability and consistency.

The min analysis description is conducted to achieve the study objective of volunteerism functional motive and soft skills level with referencing to the min Descriptive Analysis conducted to achieve the study objective of volunteerism functional motive and soft skills level with referencing to the min Descriptive Equivalence like in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1

min Descriptive Equivalence

Scale	min Weightage	min Descriptive Equivalence
5	4.21 - 5.00	Very High
4	3.41 - 4.20	High
3	2.61 - 3.40	Moderate
2	1.81 - 2.60	Low
1	1.00 - 1.80	Very Low

An inference analysis test t (independent samples t-test) was used to calculate the difference in the volunteerism functional motive based on gender, while the Pearson correlation analysis was used to calculate the relationship between volunteerism functional motive with soft skills application.

Research Findings And Discussion

Demographic Profile

The respondents involved 85 students which enrolled in the Community Service Course which consisted of 35 male students (41.2%) and 50 female students (58.8%). The majority (65.9%) of the respondents' age is in the age group of 18 – 20 years old and the majority (71.8%) of the respondents enrolled in the Community Service Course at UniSHAMS are in the first year of the education programme. 56.5% of respondents are students enrolled in Kulliyah Hospitality and Creative Arts, followed with Kulliyah Syariah (17.655), Kulliyah Usuluddin and Al-Quran Science (15.3%) and Kulliyah Muamalat and Management Science (10.6%).

This study also found that the majority of the respondents have participated in volunteer programmes (94.1%) and almost the majority of the respondents (98.8%) expressed their satisfaction after participating in volunteer programmes.

Community service volunteer involvement functional motive

The min comparative analysis of the six involvement motives of the respondents in volunteerism activities (Table 2) shows the Value motive is the highest min value (min=4.21, SP=.493) followed by Comprehension motive (min=4.16, SP=.544), Improvement motive (min=4.00, SP=.584), Career motive (min=3.93, SP=.568), Protection motive (min=3.87, SP=.571) and Social motive (min=3.87, SP=.557) (refer Table 2). Overall, the min descriptive comparison and equivalence (Table 1) show all six volunteerism functional motives among the students are at high levels.

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of volunteers' functional motive involvement

Motive	N	Min	Standard Deviation	min Descriptive analysis
Value	85	4.21	.493	Very High
Comprehension	85	4.16	.544	High
Improvement	85	4.00	.584	High
Career	85	3.93	.568	High
Protection	85	3.87	.571	High
Social	85	3.87	.557	High

The differences of volunteer involvement motive based on gender

To achieve the second objective of the study is to analyse the differences in the community service volunteer involvement functional motive based on the factors of gender, nol hypothesis (Ho1) created as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the UniSHAMS Community Service volunteer involvement functional motive based on gender.

An independent sample t-test was conducted and the result has shown that there is no significant difference between the min value with male students (min = 4.00, SP = .46) and female students (min = 4.00, SP = .47). The result of the subsequent t-test has shown that there is no significant difference between both student groups, $t(83) = -.094$, $p > .05$. The result of the study has found that if the significant value of $p = .926$ ($p > .05$), then the nol hypothesis has failed and is rejected as well as prove that there is no difference in volunteer involvement functional motive between male and female respondents.

Table 3 :

T-test analysis based on gender

	N	Min	Standard Deviation	F value	t value	Degree of Freedom (df)	Significance (p)	Result
Male	35	3.999	.45629	.084	-.094	83	.926	nol hypothesis failed and is rejected
Female	50	4.008	.47332					

Soft Skills application in Volunteerism Programme.

The min analysis of the seven Soft Skills application items (Table 4) in volunteerism programme shows that building good relationship, interaction and effectively working to achieve the objective which is the soft skills obtained from volunteerism activities is the most dominant item (min = 4.75, SP = .858).

The min descriptive comparison and equivalence (Table 1) also show that all seven items of soft skills which are obtained after students participated in volunteerism activities are at the highest level.

Table 4:

Soft skills application analysis in volunteerism programme.

	Min	Standard Deviation	min Descriptive Equivalence
Building good connection, interaction and working effectively to achieve an objective after participating in volunteerism activity	4.75	.858	Very High
Ability to analyse and make decisions in problem solving involving ethics after participating in volunteerism activity	4.68	.790	Very High
Ability to find ideas and solutions to alternative problems after participating in volunteerism activity	4.68	.805	Very High
Ability to find and manage relevant information from various sources after participating in	4.62	.859	Very High

volunteerism activity			
Leadership skill after participating in volunteerism activity	4.56	.906	Very High
Capable of presenting ideas clearly, effectively and with full confidence verbally and written after participating in volunteerism activity	4.47	.867	Very High
Ability to create, explore and grab business and job opportunity after participating in volunteerism activity	4.39	.860	Very High

The relationship of volunteer involvement motive with Soft Skills Application

The Pearson correlation analysis was used to analyse by referring to Cohen (1988) which suggests the relationship value guideline between two variables with the value of $r = .10$ to $.29$ (or $r = -.10$ to $-.29$) is a 'Low' relationship, value of $r = .30$ to $.49$ (or $r = -.30$ to $-.49$) is a 'Moderate' relationship and the value of $r = .50$ to 1.0 (or $r = -.50$ to -1.0) shows a 'High' relationship.

In order to achieve the fourth objective of this study which to analyse the relationship between volunteer involvement motive and soft skills application, a nol hypothesis was created as follows:

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between volunteer's involvement motive and soft skills application.

The Pearson Correlation Analysis (table 5) shows that there is a significant or strong correlation relation between the volunteer's involvement motive and soft skills application variables ($r = .727$, $p = .000$). The findings of this study also found that the relation between both variables is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), therefore the hypothesis nol (Ho2) is rejected and in other words, it means that there is a strong relation the volunteer's involvement motive and soft skills application.

Table 5:

Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between volunteer's involvement motive and Soft Skills Application.

		Functional Motive	Soft Skills
Functional_Motive	Pearson Correlation	1	.727
	Significance (p)		.000
	N	85	85
Soft_Skills	Pearson Correlation	.727**	1
	Significance (p)	.000	
	N	85	85

Conclusion

This study has found that even though the status of the Community Service course as a General Subject which is compulsory and required to achieve a passing grade before finishing their studies, the volunteerism attitude among undergraduates is considered high. Rewards in the form of marks or grade is not seen as motive for students to get themselves in volunteerism activity. It is hoped that with the presence of the value motive in themselves regardless of gender, it will motivate the students to continue participating in volunteer activities outside the context of subjects or education programmes which involve a grade reward. The Value factor is the main involvement motive of students in volunteerism activities. After participating in a volunteerism activity, students are successful in building good connection, interaction and working effectively to achieve an objective after participating a volunteerism activity. This study also in the end successfully proved that there is a strong relationship between UniSHAMS Community Service volunteer involvement

functional motive with Soft Skills. Therefore, it is shown that both variables must be widely benefitted in any form of volunteerism activity.

Ironically, the result of volunteer activities is indirectly in line with the statement of education is a continuous effort towards expanding an individual's potential comprehensively and integrate it to create individuals who are in harmony and balance in the aspects of intelligence, spiritual, physical and social based on the believe and faith towards God (National Education Philosophy) as well as capable of having characteristics as active undergraduates who are ready to contribute to society, religion, race and country. Regarding the matter, it is also in line with the efforts of the Ministry of Higher Education which made volunteerism work as part of students' activities as it was apparently included in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025.

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