

## Exploring Satisfaction, Motivation and Challenges of Volunteering Among University Students

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**Abstract:** Students have an important role in the nation development. Active involvement in volunteer activities indirectly help the student to develop their own potential while building a better society. The main objectives of this study are threefold. Firstly, it seeks to ascertain the primary motivations driving students to engage in volunteer work, as well as the factors that discourage them from participating in such activities. Secondly, the study aims to explore the relationship between various satisfaction factors and the overall level of satisfaction experienced by students when they take part in volunteering endeavours. Lastly, the research endeavours to determine if there are significant differences in the challenges faced by students participating in volunteering, based on their gender and ethnic backgrounds. By addressing these objectives, the study intends to provide valuable insights into the motivations, satisfaction levels, and challenges associated with student involvement in volunteer work across diverse demographics. A total of 270 students from School of Quantitative Sciences (SQS), UUM were the main respondents in this research. The respondents were selected using stratified sampling. Descriptive statistics, t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression were conducted to analyse the data. This study found that majority of the students had experienced involve in volunteerism. Respondent indicates that the item in understanding and social dimension most likely to motivate them to volunteer. Furthermore, the factors that significantly contribute to the overall volunteer satisfaction are smooth activities, benefits and cooperation from all parties. Meanwhile, basic facilities, financial provision and activities are found not significant.

**Keywords:** volunteer; motivation; satisfaction; youth

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### Introduction

Youth are important assets in society and play a crucial role in addressing community issues. Volunteer programs help develop sensitivity in young people by giving them opportunities to actively contribute to resolving imbalances. University students, with their ideas, knowledge, desires, and experiences, have great potential to benefit the country. However, despite their technological savvy, they often lack interest in volunteering. Hence, it is crucial to engage youth, particularly university students, in volunteer activities.

This study is inspired by a student who received the "Student Award Expectation" from the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia for their active involvement in volunteer activities and outstanding academic achievements. Volunteerism has been a characteristic of human civilization and community development for as long as people have existed (Arrifin, 2013). The primary aim of this research is to examine the motivation factors for undergraduate students in Malaysia to participate in volunteer activities. Additionally, this study seeks to (1) investigate the relationship between motivation factors and satisfaction, and (2) determine any significant differences in the challenges faced by SQS students based on gender and ethnicity when participating in volunteer activities.

Motivating factors play a crucial role in attracting and retaining volunteers. Every day, many volunteers donate a significant portion of their time and energy to causes that they are passionate about. Over the years, there have been people who have been willing to offer their time, effort, and resources to assist others (Ismail et al., 2015). However, as reported by Kim, Zhang, and Connoughton (2010), the number of volunteers has decreased significantly throughout 2010. Students seem to lack interest and commitment to serving others. A research conducted by Institut Penyelidikan Pembangunan Malaysia (IPPBM) in 2011, which surveyed 5223 young respondents, found that only 27.1% expressed interest in volunteering. Additionally, their survey revealed that only 18.1% of youth spent their leisure time participating in volunteer activities. The current reality shows that students are more interested in technology and less inclined to engage in volunteering."

This research is conducted to provide an overview and understanding of the issues and scenarios related to undergraduate student involvement in volunteering. The findings of this study may offer approaches and answers to these issues and give students in universities, especially, an idea of their responsibilities and roles in participating in volunteer work. It is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge and make involvement in volunteering an effective approach to moral education. This study is also crucial in helping the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and university student affairs departments to encourage and increase student involvement in volunteering.

## Literature Review

### 1. Volunteerism Definition

Volunteerism refers to the voluntary conduct of activities without a contract or any obligations arising from family, friendship, or employment. It is performed for the benefit of others, the community as a whole, or a specific organization, and is not paid. Additionally, it is carried out in an organized context (Smith et al., 2010). Furthermore, Aziz and Bashir (2015) noted that volunteerism is a valuable act that is performed voluntarily and not compelled by others."

Arrifin (2013) defined volunteering as "any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another individual, group, or cause." Volunteer work encompasses activities that are performed to assist others without seeking reward or personal gain. According to Roberts (2006), volunteering can enhance skills, promote socialization, and create a sense of excitement when working with others. Dorsch et al. (2002) noted that volunteers are valuable for the expertise, skills, and knowledge they bring to organizations or communities. Azimi Hamzah and Turiman Suandi (1994) identified four elements of volunteerism: sincerity, education, empowerment, and involvement.

### 2. Motivation in Volunteering

Studies on volunteerism have shown that motivating factors play a crucial role in increasing volunteer interest and commitment. For example, Sharififar et al. (2011) found that these factors are important in managing volunteer programs. Chacon et al. (2011) similarly emphasized the significance of studying motivational factors in organizing recruitment, job allocation, and training strategies. According to Musick and Wilson (2008), a person's background and personal experiences can impact their involvement with volunteerism, with those who were involved in charity work from an early age being more open to helping others as adults. Ekerdt (1986) found that gender can also play a role, with most men continuing to engage in volunteer work after marriage, while women are less likely to do so due to their responsibilities at home. However, Knauft (1999) contested this finding and argued that women are more positive towards community involvement compared to men. In terms of individual motivations, Nichols and King (1999) found that a desire to help the community is the main reason people get involved with volunteerism. This is supported by Barron and Rihova (2011), who noted that most volunteers are motivated by the need to meet the basic needs of their community. Smith et al. (2010) found that the value motive dimension is the strongest motivational factor among volunteers, implying that they are driven by their attitudes, values, and a desire for personal growth and enrichment. Overall, volunteering can help individuals achieve social and psychological goals, such as developing a sense of concern for others, gaining new experiences, and enhancing positive values.

### 3. Satisfaction in Volunteering

According to Dailey (1986), the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of voluntary workers can depend on factors that lead to satisfaction (such as achievement, recognition, and trust in tasks given more responsibility) and factors that lead to dissatisfaction (such as poor interpersonal relationships, lack of supervision, and poor working conditions). Thus, organizations need to identify both the sources of contentment and dissatisfaction in order to maintain the loyalty of voluntary workers. Engaging volunteers to help build their potential can be a rewarding experience for both the volunteer and the organization. To increase self-esteem, organizations can offer learning opportunities such as training, which allows volunteers to interact with permanent employees and acquire new skills. Interpersonal communication can also be improved through training, which can be beneficial in conducting training programs for other volunteer workers, such as teaching dynamic group building (Dailey, 1986).

In conclusion, many factors impact student engagement in volunteer activities, as mentioned earlier, and all of these factors play a significant role in shaping students' involvement in volunteer work.

### Methodology

Based on the past research, a set of questionnaires was constructed. The following are the variables used in this study.

- Motivation to volunteer: containing 15 question items using a semantic scale from 1 to 7 for the answer.
- Satisfaction of volunteering: containing 7 question items using a semantic scale from 1 to 7 for the answer.
- Challenges in volunteering: containing 11 question items using a semantic scale from 1 to 7 for the answer

The main motivational factor or motive for engaging in this volunteer refers to the five-dimensional motive in Volunteer Inventory Functions (VFI) developed by Clary et al. (1998).

Table 1. Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI)

Motivation function	Definition
Value	Individuals become volunteers with a view to expressing or acting upon their values and humanity
Understanding	Volunteers want to know more about current needs and the skills they often use.
Career	Volunteers have the goal of pursuing a career related to experience through volunteer activities.
Social	Volunteering allows the individual to strengthen their social relationships.
Protective	Individuals can reduce negative feelings such as guilt and overcome personal problems through voluntary activities.

Sources: Clary and Snyder (1999)

### 1. Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprises students who are pursuing studies at the School of Quantitative Sciences, UUM. The sample consists of 270 students, representing various races, programs, and years of study. The participants were selected using stratified sampling, which involves dividing the heterogeneous population into subpopulations. These subpopulations are defined based on the courses offered at SQS, such as business mathematics, decision science, and industrial statistics. Each subpopulation is treated as a separate entity, and a sample is drawn from each stratum using simple random sampling, accomplished by assigning random numbers to each population.

## 2. Data Analysis

### *Multiple regression*

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the independent variables: current year of study, gender, and the number of programs or events in which volunteer students participated. The analysis was conducted in comparison with the dependent variable of student satisfaction derived from participating in volunteering.

### *One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)*

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there is any significant difference between the means of three or more independent variables. In this study, ANOVA is used to determine the differences in challenges faced in volunteering among different ethnic groups.

### *T-test*

A t-test is used to find out if two sets of data are significantly different from each other. It compares two sets of data and their means. The t-test assumes that the data follow a normal distribution, and the variance of the two groups of data is equal. The t-test uses null and alternative hypotheses. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the groups, while the alternative hypothesis states that there is a difference between the groups. The value resulting from the t-test tells us how likely the difference between the two could have happened. Then, we compare the test statistic with the critical value. In this study, a t-test will be used to determine the significance of the differences in the challenges that SQS students must face when participating in volunteering with different genders.

## Findings

Table 2 presents the respondents' background information, including gender, year of study, race, hometown, and course. Most of the respondents were female (52.3%). In terms of ethnicity, the majority of students who responded classified themselves as Malay (82.4%), followed by Chinese (10%), and Indians (2.7%). Among the students involved in this study, 45% were enrolled in the decision science course, 26.4% in industrial statistics, and 28.6% in business mathematics. Based on the university year, the results show that the majority of the respondents were in year 4 (29.5%) and year 3 (27.7%), followed by year 2 (23.2%) and year 1 (19.5%). Slightly more than half of the respondents had a rural hometown, while the remaining chose an urban hometown.

Table 2. Profile of the respondents

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	59	26.8
Female	161	73.2
<b>Year of study</b>		
1	43	19.5
2	51	23.2
3	61	27.7
4	65	29.5
<b>Race</b>		
Malay	192	87.3
Chinese	22	10
Indian	6	2.7
<b>Hometown</b>		
Rural	100	54.5
Urban	120	45.5
<b>Course</b>		
Industrial Statistics	58	26.4
Business Mathematics	63	28.6
Decision Sciences	99	45.0

Table 3 shows that almost 74.5% of students have experienced volunteering, and 66.8% of students have continued to join the volunteer program at the university. Meanwhile, 25.5% of SQS students have never participated in a volunteer program. Most students hear about volunteer services from friends (80.6%), campus events such as workshops, presentations, or lectures (51.4%), and volunteering leaflets/posters (45.5%). In college, students volunteer for various types of activities. The category with the highest reported volunteerism was sports/outdoor activities/coaching (62.1%), followed by youth work (54.9%) and events and stewarding (51.4%). The categories with the least reported volunteerism were administrative/office work (18.6%) and the arts (18.6%). Students typically participate in fewer than five programs for volunteer activities.

Table 3. Volunteer characteristics

Response	Frequency	%
<b>Participate in volunteer club in university</b>		
Yes	147	66.8
No	73	33.2
<b>Experienced involve any volunteers' programs</b>		
Yes	164	74.5
No	56	25.5
<b>Where did you hear about your university's volunteer services?</b>		
University website	42	25.6
Campus events (workshops, presentations or lectures)	84	51.4
Student Union	59	36
Volunteering leaflet/poster	75	45.5
Friends	132	80.6
Resident halls board	31	19
<b>Number of volunteer events/programs participated</b>		
1-5 programs	140	51.9
6-10 programs	36	13.3
11-15 programs	17	6.3
16 and above programs	21	7.8
<b>Types of volunteers</b>		
Befriending/Mentoring	61	37.2
Administrative/Office Work	31	18.6
Arts (Music/Drama/Crafts)	31	18.6
Teaching/Tutoring/Supporting Learning	61	37.2
Youth Work	90	54.9
Events and Stewarding	84	51.4
Sports/Outdoor Activities/Coaching	102	62.1

In Table 4, the factor of understanding was ranked highest among students, with a mean score of 6.14. This was followed by the social factor (mean = 5.95) and then the career factor (mean = 5.85). The results indicate that respondents generally expressed a higher level of agreement with the questions in each of these sub-categories. The remaining factors with the lowest scores were protective (mean = 5.74) and value (mean = 5.74).

Table 4. Motivation factors of volunteerism

Volunteer Functions	Mean
Understanding	6.14
Social	5.95
Career	5.85
Protective	5.74
Value	5.74

Table 5 illustrates the statements that received the highest rankings, indicating their significance. "I can learn how to deal with a variety of people" (mean = 6.29), "Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands-on experience" (mean = 6.25), and "Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know

best" (mean = 6.12). The lowest ranked statements were, "To enhance my CV" (mean = 5.42), "I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving" (mean = 5.43), and "By volunteering, I feel less lonely" (mean = 5.65).

Table 5. Motivation statements of volunteerism

Statement	Construct	Mean
I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.	Understanding	6.29
Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on Experience.	Understanding	6.25
Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.	Social	6.12
To help improve my career prospects through voluntary.	Career	6.10
I feel compassion toward people in need.	Value	6.07
Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.	Career	6.02
Connected with needs/interest's family or friends.	Social	5.98
I can explore my own strengths.	Understanding	5.89
Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.	Protective	5.84
Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.	Social	5.77
I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.	Value	5.73
Volunteering will help me work through my own personal problems.	Protective	5.73
By volunteering I feel less lonely.	Protective	5.65
To enhance my CV.	Career	5.42
I am genuinely concerned about the group I am serving	Value	5.43

Figure 1 shows that the main goals or expectations for students involved in volunteering activities are to improve skills, followed by increasing knowledge and expanding their social network. Meanwhile, the least expected outcome is to receive rewards and recognition.



Figure 1. Expectations student when involved in volunteering

Figure 2 illustrates the factors that students didn't want to participate in volunteering. For this part, only those students who had no experience in volunteerism had to answer the question. The information given clearly shows that the majority of students chose to be too busy with academic work. Additionally, nearly a second of students chose to be too busy with club and society activities, they don't think they can afford volunteering, and their social life is too busy as their second largest factor for not wanting to participate in volunteering."

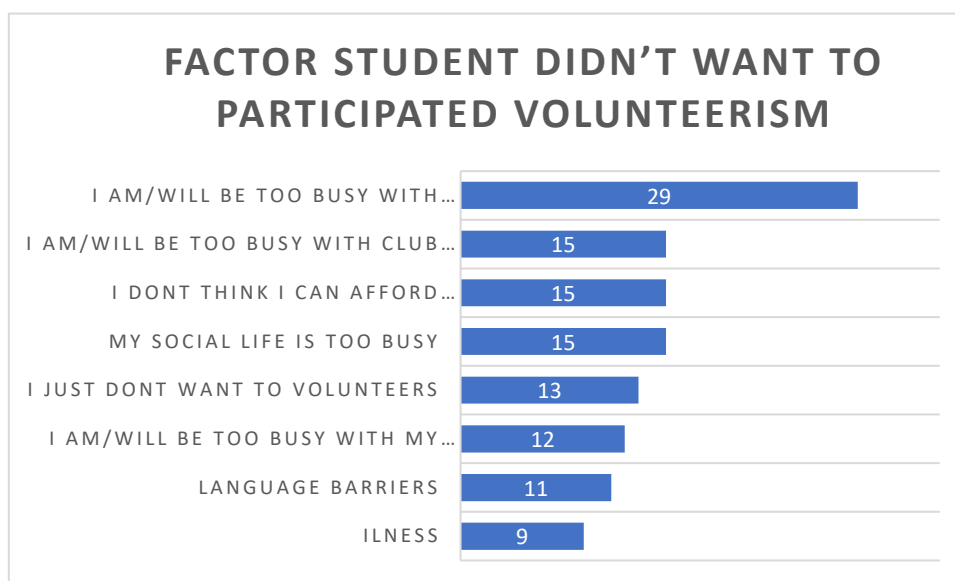


Figure 2. Factor student didn't want to participate in volunteering

Table 5 displays the results of multiple regression analyses examining factors that contribute to volunteer satisfaction. The analyses include coefficients for all engagement motives, t-values, significance values, and F-statistics. The dependent variable, overall satisfaction, was predicted using multiple linear regression based on independent variables such as enjoyment of activities, satisfaction with basic facilities, smooth activity flow, financial assistance, benefits from activities, and cooperation among all parties.

The significant value for the regression equation is equal to 0.000 ( $p = 0.000$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.651. The participants' predicted overall satisfaction is calculated as  $0.636 + 0.354$  (activity running smoothly) +  $0.232$  (benefits from activities) +  $0.304$  (cooperation from all parties). The hypothesis testing results indicate that the statistical significance of F (0.00) is less than the significance level tested (0.005), meaning that it is significant. For each unit increase in the satisfaction of activity running smoothly, overall satisfaction from volunteering increases by 0.354, holding other variables constant. Similarly, for each unit increase in the satisfaction of benefits received from volunteering, overall satisfaction increases by 0.232, while holding other variables constant. Lastly, for each unit increase in the satisfaction of cooperation from other parties, overall satisfaction from volunteering increases by 0.304, while holding other variables constant.

Table 5. Results of multiple regression analyses on the overall satisfaction of volunteers

<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>		
.807 <sup>a</sup>	.651	.638	.518		

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Overall satisfaction</b>				
Independent variable:	coefficient	t- value	significance	F	
Satisfaction					
Activities are fun	0.006	0.089	0.929	48.777	
The basic facilities provided are satisfactory	0.002	0.036	0.971	0.000	
Activity is running smoothly	0.354	5.255	0.000		
Financial provisions are sufficient	-0.004	-0.085	0.932		
A lot of benefits can get from the activities	0.232	3.754	0.000		
Get cooperation from all parties	0.304	5.293	0.000		

To determine which factor most contributes to overall volunteer satisfaction, we need to look at the highest coefficient value. The regression analysis showed that the factors contributing significantly to overall

volunteer satisfaction were activity running smoothly, many benefits from the activities, and cooperation from all parties, with coefficient values of 0.354, 0.232, and 0.304, respectively. By comparing the coefficients of engagement satisfaction factors, we find that the activity running smoothly factor, with the highest coefficient value, contributes the most to overall volunteer satisfaction.

Among students, the highest ranked challenge in volunteering is commitment, with a mean score of 5.79. Time management and funding/monetary issues are close behind, with mean scores of 5.77 and 5.77, respectively. The lowest ranked challenges include working/dealing with a challenging population (children/disabled) or people from different backgrounds (class/culture/language), with a mean score of 5.42, learning new skills/adapting to the environment/training, with a mean score of 5.41, and weather, with a mean score of 5.18.

Table 6. Means of challenges students had to face during volunteering

Challenges	Mean Response
Commitment	5.79
Time management	5.77
Funding/Monetary issues e.g. travel cost	5.77
Finding the right place to volunteer	5.71
Job-specific challenges	5.59
Finding motivation	5.45
Working/dealing with challenging population (children/disabled) or people from different background (class/ culture/language)	5.42
Learning new skills/adapting to environment/training	5.41
Weather	5.18

A one-way analysis of variance (Table 7) and independent sample t-tests (Table 8) were used to examine the relationships between challenges in volunteerism and selected socio-demographic variables, including gender and ethnicity. The analysis of the correlation between challenges in volunteerism and gender was conducted by employing independent sample t-tests, as indicated in Table 7. The p-value was greater than the significance level ( $0.343 > 0.05$ ), indicating no significant differences were found between gender and challenges in volunteerism.

Table 7. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of challenges students faced during volunteering with ethnics

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.143	2	0.072	1.076	0.343
Within Groups	10.721	161	0.067		
Total	10.864	163			

Table 8 was utilized for conducting a one-way analysis of variance, aiming to examine the correlation between race/ethnicity and challenges faced in volunteerism. The dependent variable in this analysis was the challenges in volunteerism, while the independent variable was race/ethnicity. The p-value was greater than the significance level ( $0.154 > 0.05$ ), indicating no significant differences were found between race/ethnicity and challenges in volunteerism.

Table 8. T-test challenges students faced during volunteering with gender

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Challenges	Equal variances assumed	.975	.325	-1.431	162	<b>0.154</b>
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.501	63.146	0.138



## Conclusion

Volunteering activities not only enhance self-efficacy but also benefit society, religion, and country. The results of the study indicate that students' involvement in volunteer activities is driven mainly by the understanding factor, which includes learning how to deal with people, gaining hands-on experience, and discovering personal strengths. Other factors such as social, career, protective, and value-related are also important, but prioritize personal development. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between self-satisfaction factors and overall satisfaction in volunteering. The results showed that activity running smoothly, receiving benefits from the activities, and getting cooperation from all parties significantly contributed to overall volunteer satisfaction.

Additionally, this study compared the challenges faced in volunteerism activities between two demographic groups, gender and ethnicity. The findings revealed no significant differences between gender or ethnicity and the challenges faced in volunteering. It was also noted that more female students were likely to volunteer than male students. No significant differences were found between different ethnic groups and challenges faced in volunteering.

## Recommendations/Policy Implications

As a guide for future research, the structure of this category of motivational values needs to be explored in greater detail, as it is divided into many aspects to consider. This will help to find a stronger answer to the motivational values that contribute to volunteering in volunteer activities. Hence, the study of these motivational factors is important for the management of volunteer programs, as motives are crucial for setting strategies in determining factors of recruitment, job sharing, and training. It is hoped that this study will assist the management of events and organizations involved in volunteering in ensuring quality services are produced.

Another valuable opportunity is to conduct research on time series, in addition to my cross-sectional research. This can help us better understand how motivation changes over time, as students transition from not being members to being members and depending on the group they join. Based on the nature of the motivation, this information can be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of different groups.

Researchers recommend that the university should provide students with opportunities and space to actively participate in volunteering. The volunteer events should not interfere with the lecture sessions, and the university's strong encouragement and support can indirectly help students to remain actively involved in volunteer activities.

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