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# VOLUNTEERING AMONG STUDENTS OF INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT, UKM

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## ABSTRACT

*Students who are involved in volunteer work have been identified to possess significant changes in terms of social value due to their experiences. This study aims to analyse the readiness of students in following the volunteer programme which is compulsory in the Introduction to Management course. It is compulsory for students to involve themselves in the volunteer programme in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur during the second semester. This study applies the qualitative and quantitative method. The questionnaire involved 69 respondents comprising of students from the Faculty of Economy and Management who are undertaking the Introduction to Management course. Interviews were also conducted with lecturers of the Introduction to Management Course to obtain basic information about the programme. Most students who follow this programme are very excited and expect that they will be gaining a lot of benefits from a social and humanity perspective. However, there are students who are unsure about the questions posed as they have never participated in any volunteer programme prior to this. On the whole, the students understand the benefits of the volunteer programme that they must undergo, but for the first timers, they are unable to envision how the programme will go.*

**Key word:** Volunteer, Community, Community Service, Service Learning, and Teaching Learning.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of education is not only to holistically develop the personality and capability of a student through the learning of special skills, but it is also an effort to realise their intellectual, physical and spiritual abilities in order to produce outstanding human capital. This aim has caused institutions of higher learning in Malaysia to begin to train undergraduates with various soft skills as a requirement in the working field as learning can occur anywhere and at any time, whether formally or not. Students can obtain knowledge and apply it outside the classroom.

Involvement in volunteering opens new opportunities for youth to expand their potential in communication, problem solving and teamwork skills; enhance their opportunities in the working field and curb involvement in anti-social behaviours; as well as guiding or rehabilitating juvenile delinquents (Saifuddin Abdullah, 2001). Ruzy Suliza Hashim (2011) states that The service of volunteers to the community is part of the soft skills that is applied in the Malaysian education system to ensure students can hone their skills, besides excelling in academics. UTHM has carried out various programmes to ensure undergraduates truly master soft skills through the implementation of Community Service (Bakti Siswa), Friends of the Community (Rakan Komuniti) and others.

Volunteering plays a role in ensuring the wellbeing of the community and the continuation of human civilisation. A person who gets involved in volunteer work is someone who has social awareness, is highly spirited, loves the world in general and is willing to make sacrifices for others' welfare (Azizan Bahari 2014; Tajul Arifin & Aishah Nadirah 2013; Ali Salman, et al. 2015). This practice creates an environment that is safer, reduces fear of crime in the community and enhances community confidence towards the government's awareness and responsibility in creating a safe and peaceful environment (Unit Perancang Ekonomi, 2004). Youth involvement in volunteer work can keep them away from anti-social activities and criminal acts, as well as makes them more responsible in upholding their family, community and nation's dignity.

The involvement of youth in volunteer work also provides a positive impact in terms of the development of their personality, character, identity, values, faith and motivation. This group can also be highlighted as a role model for other youth and become social agents to aid the government in reducing social problems besides providing volunteer services to reduce the cost of repairing public facilities due to vandalism. The involvement of youth in volunteer activities also indirectly reduces social problems and the cost of rehabilitating youth due to social problems, drugs or other high-risk activities. Volunteering should be instilled in each level of society to produce a community that is aware of the current issues around them.

## 2. RESEARCH AIMS AND LIMITATIONS

The aim of this research is to analyse the readiness of students in following the volunteer programme which is compulsory in the Introduction to Management Course at the Faculty of Economy and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. This course has now made it compulsory for students to conduct volunteer work as part of their course requirements. Students must involve themselves with the volunteer programme in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur during their second semester.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Aishah Nadirah (2013) volunteering is a commendable nature inherent in most individuals and can be used as a measure of the traits of humanity that exists in someone or a group of people. Volunteerism is also driven by cultural values, ideologies, principles, traditions and impacts that it gives to the community. The findings of this study have shown that factors like understanding and good values are among the factors that drive students to involve themselves in volunteer activities. The research done by Md Zain et al. (2015) found that 85.97% of the 108 respondents are willing to conduct volunteer work without hoping for any reward. The research on environmental volunteer work shows that a majority of the respondents are aware about environmental protection. These students are ready to participate in volunteer activities through programmes that give an impact to the environment. Similar findings were obtained by Aishah Nadirah (2013) who found that volunteers love to do a variety of activities without any influence on job position and the pay given.

In her study, Ibrahim, F., et al. (2015) identified the background and involvement of students and citizens of UKM with volunteer activities. She found that 59 percent of the respondents were male and 86 percent admit to having been involved in volunteer work. This study is an indicator towards the shaping of a positive mindset and solid personality development among the students as among the factors which drive them is that they want to help the community and gain new experiences. However, this study does not reflect the entire population of UKM, as the research sample consisted of only 100 respondents, compared to the total population of UKM students which numbers 17, 000 in total. Aizan Sofia Amin (2017) in the publication Sari Penyelidikan (Kongres Budaya 2017) stated that exposure to volunteer work will create a community that is more aware of the rights and needs of the people around them.

Many UKM students are not really interested to participate in volunteer work organised by certain courses, such as the Self Development Course, as they consider it to be a supplementary course. This problem may exist due to the materials and method of "teaching learning" in this course, which only uses lectures and discussions in theory that does not involve active discussion and volunteering by students. The findings of this study has found that a majority of students showed an a high level of interest and spirit in volunteer ship (76.7%), but a more interesting method of teaching learning must be applied in this course, including having a programme with the community as a form of application (Hamdzun Haron et.al 2018; Mohd Arip Kasmoo et. al 2015; Haslin Hassan & Hamdzun Haron 2013). However, Azrina Mazlin Alias (2016) experienced a different situation when she found it difficult to conduct volunteer activities in risky locations such as a School of Moral Rehabilitation and Youth Protection Home as confidentiality had to be preserved especially when involving teenagers. Places like these are protected, although they attract volunteers. Therefore, the selection of the programme location is significant to the level of suitability, as the safety of volunteers must also be taken into consideration. According to Shahrul Nazmi Sannusi (2017), volunteers must be ready to face various risks that may potentially occur during a volunteer activity. Volunteers must also identify effective communication methods for use during the activities conducted.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applies the qualitative and quantitative methods. Library research was conducted at several libraries in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) to obtain information from journals, books, working papers, theses and Internet searches. This study also used a questionnaire involving 69 respondents, along the students of the Faculty of Economy and Management who are taking the Introduction to Management Course. The questions for the study were prepared online to make it easier for the respondents to answer the questions

wherever they might be. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed. An interview was conducted with the lecturer of the Introduction to Management Course to get basic information on the programme.

## **5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. UKM Student Volunteering**

Various volunteer activities are conducted by UKM, including by faculties, Citra UKM, organisations, hostels and courses. The 'Berbakti 30 Minit di PTSL' Programme launched on 24 October 2017 by the Student Volunteer Club is an example of the involvement of students from various faculties. This programme includes activities such as changing books to digital form, repairing damaged books and managing microfilm. Students who are involved have the opportunity to receive guidance in the skills of information finding, experience working in a library and an appreciation certificate.

A group of students from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) who call themselves "Eko-Relawan UKM" have collaborated with the staff of Institut Alam Sekitar dan Pembangunan (LESTARI), Canon Opto (M) Sdn Bhd, Canon Marketing, Jabatan Perhutanan Negeri Selangor (JPNS), Majlis Perbandaran Kajang (MPKj) and IHP Malaysia to join the Cleanup Programme at Sungai Tekala Hulu Langat Selangor. The programme is a periodic programme that has been carried out since 19 May 2013. There were four main programmes that were held in conjunction with the river cleanup programme, among them were a photography competition, a bridge painting programme, a litter collection contest and a jungle trekking activity. The participants succeeded in collecting 314.84 kg of litter through this programme. The Eko-Relawan Club is a student group that often participates in volunteer activities, especially those involving care of the environment. Eko-Relawan UKM receives cooperation and support from LESTARI UKM and the Industry and Community Network Affairs Department (HEJIM) in organising community service activities. This group often carries out environmental sustainability programmes like beach cleanups at Corus Hotel Port Dickson and the Charity and Health Rowing programme (KASIH). In the Charity and Health Rowing programme, parts of the donations were given to the Al-Kausar Bangi orphanage.

Pusat Citra Universiti (Citra UKM) has applied volunteering through the various courses offered at the university. For example, the Writing Skills and Forms Course has organised a volunteer programme called the Students and Community Programme. It involved 60 Writing Skills students and obtained the cooperation of various agencies such as the Public Library, Malaysian Ministry of Health, Selangor Pharmacy Department, Serdang Hospital and Know Your Medication Ambassador. This programme required the students to organise a one-day event with various contents and activities, such as a sports event, colouring competition, health exhibition, exercise session, health checks, health counselling, lectures and so on. The programme required students to conduct research on health and self-care in the community.

The Beautify Bandar Baru Bangi Programme, on the other hand, was carried out in November 2017 and involved the Bandar Baru Bangi community, organisations such as The Malaysian Ministry of Health, Selangor Pharmacy Department, Serdang Hospital, Know Your Medication Ambassador, the Kajang City Council and a group of volunteers called the Clean Squad Bangi. Students needed to conduct research, record their research findings and carry out a programme to beautify Bangi, besides activities such as health checks, briefings and exhibitions on dengue. The programme involved three main courses, namely Writing Skills and Self Development Skills Courses. Many other courses at Citra UKM have also organised volunteer and community service activities with orphans, Rohingya refugees, recycling, environmental care and others.

In UKM, volunteer and community service activities are organised by the University Community Transformation Centre (UCTC), Student Development and Alumni Communications Centre (PPMPA), faculties, Pusat Citra, courses that instill service learning or problem based learning, student organisations and student hostels (Alias, J. et. al 2012). Students who are keen on participating volunteer work are able to take part in those programmes.

## 5.2. Data Analysis

This study aims to analyse student expectations related to volunteer programmes that they will undertake in the Introduction to Management Course. This introductory course is for all first year students and it exposes them to the concepts and theories of organisational management and administration. In addition, this course also conducts two volunteer activities, which is conducting classes for homeless children in Chow Kit and giving out food to the homeless. This activity will begin at several locations around Kuala Lumpur and end in Taman Medan. A total of 69 First year students from the Faculty of Economy and Management (FEP) were involved in this programme. From this number, 49 students gave assistance to the homeless and 27 students gave free classes to the children in Chow Kit. This programme was conducted on 17 February 2018 under the guidance of lecturer Mrs Shazlinda binti Md Yusof. She considers this activity to be very beneficial as it provides all students with a new experience. Students from all racial, religious and social backgrounds cooperate in helping the homeless in heart of the city. This programme has not only honed the students' soft skills, but has also spread awareness towards homelessness in the community, besides contributing to the community.

Demographically, this study involved 69 respondents comprising of students taking the Introduction to Management Course. 79.7% of them are female and 20.3% are male. The majority of the respondents are First Year students aged 19 (65.2%), 21.7% aged 20 and only 2.9 % aged 22 years. Many respondents were Malay 91.3%, with Indians 4.3%, Sabah bumiputeras 2.9% and Sarawak bumiputera only 1.4%. The majority of respondents are Muslim (94.2%), 4.3% are Hindu and 1.4% are Christian.

This study has found that 39.1% of the Introduction to Management students have participated in a volunteer activity prior to this, while 23.2 % have never participated in a volunteer programme. This may be due to the fact that the respondents comprise of First Year students and have not yet been exposed or given the opportunity to participate in any programmes or activities organised by the university, faculty or college. Overall, students who participate in volunteer work are involved in different programmes such as cleanups and community service. Some of them also served as volunteers during the SEA Games 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Only 1.4 % or one respondent has been involved in over 5 volunteer programmes. This means the programme conducted in Chow Kit has given the students a new experience, and if it was fully utilised, the experience of being in the said community can enhance their soft skills from various perspectives.

**Table 1** Positions Held by Respondents in Volunteer Programmes

| NO. | POSITION              | F  | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|-----------------------|----|------------|
| 1   | Programme Leader      | 1  | 1.5%       |
| 2   | Deputy Programme Head | 1  | 1.5%       |
| 3   | Treasurer             | 3  | 4.6%       |
| 4   | Secretary             | 1  | 1.5%       |
| 5   | Committee             | 18 | 27.7%      |
| 6.  | Members               | 41 | 63.1%      |

The answers given by the respondents depended on the frequency of their involvement in volunteer work. Table 1 shows the positions that have been held by the respondents in the programmes they participated in. More than half of the respondents (63.1%) were involved as members in the programmes they participated in. This is because they were inexperienced in managing activities or could not yet be entrusted with running a programme. Only 27.7 % of the respondents have served as a committee member and only 1.5% have served a main role such as programme leader, deputy programme leader and secretary. This should be improved because through the implementation of these programmes, Malaysian students are able to hone their talents and soft skills to prepare themselves for the working world later.

The following is the level of student readiness and expectations towards the volunteer programme;

**Table 2** Student readiness to participate in volunteer programme

| NO. | Matter   | Strongly disagree |   | Disagree |     | Unsure |      | Agree |      | Strongly agree |      |
|-----|--|-------------------|---|----------|-----|--------|------|-------|------|----------------|------|
|     |  | F                 | % | F        | %   | F      | %    | F     | %    | F              | %    |
| 1   | I am very excited about this programme                           | 0                 | 0 | 1        | 1.4 | 11     | 15.9 | 27    | 39.1 | 30             | 43.5 |
| 2   | I cannot wait to attend this volunteer programme                 | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 11     | 15.9 | 27    | 39.1 | 31             | 44.9 |
| 3   | I will be more humane after completing this programme            | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 3      | 10.1 | 32    | 46.4 | 30             | 43.5 |
| 4   | Do you think this programme will be carried out successfully?    | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 10     | 14.5 | 30    | 43.5 | 29             | 42   |
| 5   | Hope that this programme will instill positive values within you | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 1      | 1.4  | 12    | 17.4 | 56             | 81.2 |
| 6   | I am more optimistic and less judgmental of others               | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 6      | 8.7  | 34    | 49.3 | 29             | 42   |
| 7   | I want to help those who are less fortunate                      | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 5      | 7.2  | 25    | 36.2 | 39             | 56.5 |
| 8   | I want to understand the woes of those who are less fortunate    | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 12     | 17.4 | 25    | 36.2 | 32             | 46.4 |
| 9   | I want to contribute to society                                  | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 6      | 8.7  | 28    | 40.6 | 35             | 50.7 |
| 10  | I want to hone my soft skills through this programme             | 0                 | 0 | 0        | 0   | 5      | 7.2  | 24    | 34.8 | 40             | 58   |

(source: research)

In reference to Table 2, it was found that respondents who will be involved in the volunteer programme to help the homeless in Kuala Lumpur are very excited about participating in the programme (43.5%), 39.1% were excited, while 1.4% disagreed with this statement. There was also 15.9% who were unsure about their feelings regarding the programme that was about to be implemented. The excitement has a correlation with the anticipation they felt for participating in the programme. Although both these statements emphasise "anticipation" for participating in the planned volunteer programme, the findings of this study, however, has been a little different. 44.9% of the respondents strongly agree with this statement and no respondents disagree with the statement. In the category of "agree" and "unsure", both questions receive the same answer.

As many as 42% of the respondents strongly agree that they sincerely hope that this programme will run smoothly and give them an opportunity to hone their "soft-skills" (58%), at the same time instilling positive values within themselves. However, 14.5% of the respondents were unsure. As many as 81.2% of the students placed a high hope that they can instill positive values through such programmes. However, when asked if volunteer work can make them more humane, it was found that 46.4% truly agreed with the statement. 10.1% of the respondents are still unsure of the situation. Based on this situation, respondents who answered "unsure" are believed to be part of the 23.2% of respondents who have never participated in any volunteer activities. This group are unable to envision the journey and implementation of the programme, as well as the experiences they will encounter due to their lack of experience in this activity.

When undergoing this volunteer programme, 42% of the respondents agree and expect that they will become more optimistic and less judgmental. They (56.5%) strongly agree that they can help those that are less fortunate, while 46.4% strongly agree that this programme gives an opportunity for them to understand the predicament of those who are less fortunate. Respondents who agree are also excited about helping the less fortunate, but for those who are unsure, they are still doubtful about the benefits of such community programmes. In addition, 23.2% of the respondents who have never participated in any volunteer programmes are also among the first year students who have never been exposed to community activities. They are still in their first semester in university, which is when their learning pattern is changing from secondary school to tertiary..

## 5. CONCLUSION

Overall, this study's aim is to analyse student expectations regarding volunteer programmes in the Introduction to Management course. We can see that most students are excited by the volunteer work that they will be conducting. They also expect to become more humane and open to those who are less fortunate after being involved with the homeless programme and educating children in Chow Kit.

Various positive values can be applied within themselves, such as hard work, helping one another, not judging others and so on. All students in the Introduction to Management Course hope to be more optimistic with others, regardless of age, race or religion. In addition, students hope that they can contribute something to the community. With programmes like these, they hope to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate in their own way. This can help our nation be better and more harmonious.

In conclusion, most of the respondents who have participated in volunteer programmes have positive thoughts on the programme, although a small group of students were uncertain of the questions asked. They not only hope that the programmes succeed and achieve their objectives, but also want such programmes and activities to help instill positive values, strengthen soft skills and sharpen leadership skills within them.

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