

ASSESSING STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS VOLUNTEERISM AT PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: *The purpose of this research is to identify the level of attitudes and spirit of volunteerism among students in UiTM Cawangan Kelantan. This study also obtains to examine the significance influence between attitude and spirit volunteerism among students. Moreover, this study also examines the comparison between genders in relation to the attitude toward volunteerism and the level of spirit of volunteerism. A total of 179 students that completed the questionnaires. The data employed reliability, independent t-test and regression analysis. The study showed that the level of attitude and spirit towards volunteerism among student are positive. Moreover, even though, females show a slightly more positive attitude toward*

volunteerism than males, the difference is not statistically significant. The finding also indicates that significant relationship between attitude and spirit of volunteerism among students. For further research, it is recommended using other dimensions of factors such as knowledge and religiosity to the study

Keywords: *Volunteerism, Attitude, Spirit of Volunteerism*

Introduction

Volunteering is the practice of offering one's time, effort, and talent to serve others for no monetary reward. It is a selfless act in which one offers one's services or skills to help and promote the well-being of individuals or groups in need. Based on Okorley, Owusu, and Akumaa-Boateng, (2017), volunteerism is a practice often reflected the needs of communities to support themselves through activities such as community farm work, helping a neighbour to build, or spontaneous actions to defend the interest of the community in times of disaster or danger. Meanwhile, Omoto and Snyder, (2002), volunteerism as an ongoing activity aimed at improving the well-being of others. Every year, millions of people around the world contribute time and effort for organizations that provide help to people and groups in need, with contributions taking the form of social support, physical assistance, organizing and advising, ensuring that group activities can function, or acting on behalf of causes or movements designed to improve quality of life (Stukas, et al., 2016). Volunteerism is globally recognized as a vital force for social development, contributing to community resilience, civic responsibility, and personal growth. Across the world, student participation in volunteering has been linked to enhanced skills, social awareness, and stronger employability outcomes, as employers increasingly value graduates with teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving experience gained outside the classroom.

Despite volunteerism being widely acknowledged as one of the most powerful forces for social development in many countries, volunteerism has recently dropped in popularity, particularly among university students. Volunteering involvement among university students in Malaysia is deemed low in comparison to other social activities (Gombe, Suandi, Ismail, & Omar, 2015). They were found not really interested in joining in volunteerism activities and also given a negative response towards volunteerism programme held by the universities Simha et al (2011). Students' lack of interest in volunteering can be ascribed to a number of things, including bad experiences, a lack of awareness, and restricted opportunities. Studies found a lack of involved. lack of involvement in volunteering among students because volunteering programs that do not fit students' needs and motivation (AI Lin, Juan, Bidin, & Sheena, 2020). The students' lack of knowledge or awareness and exposure to volunteer activities which are caused by a lack of a systematic and consistent volunteer sector, ultimately, leads to lack of participation (Normah & Lukman, 2020). The issue of younger generation being volunteers is of utmost importance because of their higher level of energy and motivation which can result in good outcome (Salam et al, 2018). Siti Raba'ah Hamzah et al. (2012) found that Malaysian students often lack interest due to limited exposure and awareness, as well as misconceptions about volunteering being time-consuming or unrelated to academic and career development.

The study also pointed out that volunteering is not always well-integrated into the university culture or curriculum, which further weakens engagement. This in line with Yusof, Hassan, and

Shamsudin (2016) revealed that students perceived volunteering as less rewarding unless it was tied to academic credits or tangible benefits. Many also reported that they were unaware of available volunteer opportunities or felt underprepared to participate effectively. This statement is further supported by a study Arshad, Rizal and Zamzam, (2022), agreed that the youths in Malaysia do lack awareness on volunteerism. Most people joining volunteering activities are retirees. In a study of volunteerism and the development of Malaysian social care system found 4% had 21-30 years active volunteers and 1% had 31- 40 years active volunteers. Time is considered the barrier for greater in the volunteer practices among younger generation. Therefore, it interesting to know the level of attitude and spirit volunteerism among UiTM student towards volunteerism activities. This study also seek to examine the significance influence between attitude and spirit volunteerism among students UiTM Cawangan Kelantan. Addressing this issue contributes to knowledge by showing how students' attitudes and motivations shape volunteerism within the Malaysian higher education context. It also contributes to practice by guiding universities to create programs that enhance student skills and employability while supporting community development.

Literature Review

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is broadly defined as the act of offering one's time, skills, and energy to benefit others without expecting monetary rewards (Omoto & Snyder, 2002). Globally, it is seen as a vital tool for social development, community resilience, and civic engagement (Stukas et al., 2016). In the Malaysian context, volunteerism is often associated with the cultural practice of *gotong-royong*, which reflects collective responsibility and mutual aid (Uttam Singh et al., 2005). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) offers a solid framework for understanding volunteerism. It posits that attitudes toward a behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence both intentions and actual participation. In the context of volunteerism, this means that students' positive attitudes and the social expectations they perceive play a significant role in shaping their intention and readiness to engage in volunteering activities.

Attitude and Volunteerism

Attitude is one's predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner toward people, events, objects, or behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Wang et al, 2014). Meanwhile, volunteering has become so common that Malaysians are familiar with the term "gotong royong. (Turiman Suandi, 1991). Mustapha, Azman, & Mohamad (2020) showed that students' altruistic attitudes, empathy, and sense of responsibility significantly influenced their volunteering behaviours and their willingness to contribute to societal well-being. The authors concluded that attitude serves as a psychological foundation for nurturing the spirit of volunteerism among youth, especially in educational settings. Jamal et al (2024), The students displayed a positive attitude towards volunteering, particularly in activities that matched their personal interests Their attitudes towards volunteering activities tend to undertake activities related to their interests in terms of the types of volunteers available. Encouraging things in volunteering practice shows that students keep learning things related to volunteering, keep looking for opportunities to help others, and influence others to do it together. As well, Holdsworth & Brewis (2014) argued that higher education institutions that promote volunteering opportunities and cultivate positive attitudes through service-learning programs see higher levels of student

engagement in voluntary activities. These programs help shape students' identities and reinforce a lifelong spirit of civic responsibility. However, Malaysian studies reveal challenges. Students often perceive volunteering as time-consuming, irrelevant to career goals, or lacking tangible rewards (Hamzah, Abu Bakar, & Othman, 2012; Yusof, Hassan, & Shamsudin, 2016). More recent studies highlight that poor alignment between program design and student motivation reduces participation (Ai Lin, Juan, Bidin, & Sheena, 2020). Additionally, Normah and Lukman (2020) found that limited awareness and lack of systematic support structures contribute to declining engagement. Expanding on this, Yusof, Jusoff, and Hussin (2011) found that university students with favorable attitudes toward community service were more inclined to participate in volunteer programs, demonstrating a stronger volunteer spirit. Their study emphasized that perceiving volunteering as valuable and enjoyable increased the likelihood of sustained participation. Similarly, Yuan, Gong, Liu, and Liu (2024) revealed that attitudes, subjective norms, and personality traits such as empathy and conscientiousness collectively influence students' willingness to engage in volunteer services, especially in programs supporting older adults.

Evidence shows that positive attitudes strongly influence volunteer participation, supported by motivation, social expectations, and institutional factors. However, findings are mixed: some studies report strong interest when activities match students' needs, while others note low participation due to perceptions of irrelevance or lack of reward. Therefore, more context-specific studies are needed to show how volunteerism can be better integrated into higher education to enhance both student growth and employability.

Gender Differences in Volunteering Attitude

In aspect of gender differences, Chisty, (2023), gender differences play a significant role in shaping attitudes and behaviours toward volunteerism. Women generally demonstrate a higher awareness of the societal value of volunteerism and are more inclined to seek social support when initiating or participating in volunteer activities. This tendency reflects a more relational and community-oriented approach to service. In contrast, Wymer, (2012). men are often driven by task-oriented motivations, showing a greater interest in volunteering when they can utilize specific skills or expertise, they are eager to share. These differences suggest that gender-sensitive approaches to volunteer recruitment and engagement may enhance participation and effectiveness in volunteer programs. Einolf, (2011) also highlighted that men possess more social capital, particularly in the form of trust and participation in secular voluntary associations. In contrast, women tend to have broader social networks through religious participation, which can also facilitate both charitable giving and volunteering. Research indicates that views significantly impact volunteerism, and gender may influence motivation; nevertheless, results are inconsistent—some research emphasize women's higher participation, while others reveal minimal differences.

Methods

This research employed a quantitative approach, and data were collected using a survey method. The sample targeted was the students in UiTM Cawangan Kelantan. A total of 197 responses were received in this study selected by using simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling ensures that each student has an equal chance of being selected and can reduce selection bias. It is considered appropriate in a homogeneous population like university students, where characteristics are relatively similar (age, education level, environment).

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questions were adapted from Hamzah et al. (2011) and assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The study analysed reliability, independent t-test and regression analysis.

Result and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Profile

	Frequency	Percent
Male	88	49.2
Female	91	50.8
Total	179	100
Degree	157	87.7
Diploma	22	12.3
Total	179	100
Experienced Involve in	Yes (57)	31.8
Volunterism	No (122)	68.2
	179	100

As shown in Table 1, total of 179 respondents were employed in this study. The respondents involved in the study were mostly male, with total number of 88(49.2%), while the remaining of it were female, with total number of 91 (50.8%). From this study, there were 157 (87.7%) of respondent were in degree level meanwhile 22 (12.3%) respondents were diploma level. Moreover, regarding experienced involved in volunteer work, only 57 (31.8%) of respondents that participated in voluntary activity and 122 (68.2%) are not involved in voluntary activity.

Table 2: Result for Reliability Test

Variables	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude	11	0.911
Spirit of Volunterism	8	0.889

The reliability analysis conducted for this study shows that the variables demonstrate strong internal consistency. The construct attitude, which was measured using 11 items, recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.911, indicating excellent reliability. Meanwhile, the construct spirit of volunteerism, measured with 8 items, obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.889, which reflects good reliability, approaching the excellent threshold. These results confirm that both sets of items are reliable and suitable to be used for further statistical analysis.

Table 3: Mean Score

Variable	Mean Score	Sample Size (N)
Attitude toward volunteerism	4.8172	179
Spirit of volunteerism	4.7716	179

From above table in shown that, mean for attitude toward volunteerism is 4.82. This score is quite high on a typical Likert scale (usually 1 to 5 or 1 to 7), indicating that respondents generally have a positive or favourable attitude toward volunteerism. In addition, mean for spirit of volunteerism is 4.77. This indicates that, a strong or active internal motivation and enthusiasm toward volunteering.

Table 4: Gender Mean

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	88	4.8678	0.34401	0.03667
Female	91	4.7682	0.36872	0.03865

Table 5: Gender Difference in Attitude Towards Volunteerism

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	3.799	.053	1.866	177	.064	.09954
Equal variances not assumed			1.868	176.776	.063	.09954

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare attitude towards volunteerism scores between male and female students. The Levene's test indicated that the assumption of equal variances was not significantly violated, $F(1,177) = 3.799$, $p = 0.053$. Results showed no statistically significant difference in scores, $t(177) = 1.866$, $p = .064$. The result indicates that, male and female students generally have similar attitudes towards volunteerism. Even though, males scored slightly higher ($M = 4.8678$) than females ($M = 4.7682$).

Table 6: ANOVA Summary for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1Regression	21.248	1	21.248	611.3300.000 ^a	
Residual	6.152	177	.035		
Total	27.400	178			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude

b. Dependent Variable: Sprit in volunteerism

Table 7: Result Regression Analysis

Relationship				Unstandardized Beta (Coefficient)	Std Error	Standardized Beta	t-value	Significant
Attitude	>	Spirit	in	0.962	0.39	0.881	24.725	0.000
volunteerism								

The coefficient for attribute is 0.962, meaning that for every 1-unit increase in attitude toward volunteerism, the spirit of voluntarism is expected to increase by 0.962 units. The standardized Beta = 0.881, indicating a strong positive relationship between attitude and spirit of voluntarism. The p-value for attitude is $p = 0.000$, showing the relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that students who hold positive attitudes toward volunteerism are more likely to engage in such activities.

Conclusion, Limitation and Future Research.

The study indicates that students have a characteristically good attitude and strong spirit towards volunteerism, implying a healthy degree of awareness and readiness to participate in volunteer activities. Despite female students exhibited a slightly more positive attitude than male students, the gender difference was not significantly different, indicating that male and female students have similar views on the benefit of volunteers. Even though, males scored slightly higher ($M = 4.8678$) than females ($M = 4.7682$). Likewise, the findings of this study reveal a significant relationship between students' attitudes and their spirit of volunteerism, indicating that positive attitudes strongly influence students' willingness and motivation to volunteer. This suggests that students who believe in the value of helping others, contributing to society, and making a difference are more likely to embody a spirit of volunteerism. This aligned with Renfree and West, (2019), strong positive association between students' attitudes and their spirit of volunteerism, signifying that taming good attitudes might successfully increase students' willingness and excitement to participate in volunteer activities.

Limitation for this study focused primarily on attitude and spirit of volunteerism and only focusing in Kelantan. Therefore, future works could compare volunteer attitude and spirit in volunteerism across different locations especially in higher education area. This would help determine if cultural or regional factors influence volunteer attitude and whether the gender differences observed in this study hold true in diverse contexts. Furthermore, these studies collectively suggest that gender differences influence attitudes and levels of participation in volunteerism. Future research could incorporate additional variables such as the perceived usefulness of virtual platforms, motivational factors, institutional support, and peer influence to achieve a more holistic understanding of student volunteerism. Although simple random sampling was applied in this study, it may still overlook subgroups with distinct perspectives when the sample size is small, and non-response bias may arise if certain students are less inclined to participate. Moreover, relying on data from a single campus may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other higher education settings.

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