



**Volunteering Intention among Malaysian Undergraduates:
Investigating the Influence of Attitude, Subjective Norms,
Perceived Behavior Control, and Religiosity**

by

**Abdullah AbdulElah Ali Sallam
(1233010793)**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UniMAP	Universiti Malaysia Perlis
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
ATT	Attitude
SN	Subjective Norm
PBC	Perceived behavioral control

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Tujuan sukarelawan di kalangan Belia Malaysia: Kaji Selidik Pengaruh Sikap, Norma subjektif, Persepsi Kawalan Kelakuan , dan Keagamaan.

ABSTRAK

Belia merupakan sasaran utama di dalam kelompok masyarakat sebagai sumber yang penting untuk bergerak sebagai sukarelawan. Walau bagaimanapun di dalam mengenalpasti sifat sukarelawan menggambarkan limitasi fahaman sebab utama mereka berminat menjadi terlibat dengan aktiviti sukarelawan. Bagi menghubungkan jurang ini, saya menggunakan teori rangka kerja yang terkenal iaitu Teori Perancangan Tingkah Laku (TPB) dan tambahan pembolehubah iaitu perkara keagamaan yang menyumbang kepada keinginan atau keputusan belia membuat keputusan untuk terlibat dengan sukarelawan. Umur responden adalah di kalangan pelajar Universiti Malaysia Perlis yang berumur di antara 18-26 tahun. Dengan menggunakan analisis kandungan dan tematik, semua soal selidik dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 18.0. sebanyak 500 set soalan kajiselidk telah diedarkan dan sebanyak 432 responden yang telah memberi maklum balas. Analisis penemuan telah menggambarkan sikap, norma subjektif, tanggapan kawalan tingkah laku, dan keagamaan secara positif mempengaruhi niat sukarelawan tersebut. Keputusan juga menunjukkan model hipotesis adalah benar dan semua hipotesis disokong. Walau bagaimanapun, sampel daripada golongan yang lebih berumur dan pembolehubah yang berbeza dicadangkan untuk digunakan di dalam penyelidikan yang akan datang.

Katakuncil: sukarelawan, Sikap, Norma subjektif, Persepsi Kawalan Kelakuan , dan Keagamaan.

Volunteering Intention among Malaysian Youth: Investigating the Influence of Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavior Control, and Religiosity

ABSTRACT

Youth represent important target of the population with great potential and a valuable resource to work as volunteers. The primary focus on describing the characteristics of youth who choose to volunteer, however, has resulted in limited understanding of the psychosocial factors impacting on youth intention to volunteer. To bridge this gap, we used an extension of a well-known theoretical framework, the theory of planned behavior (TPB), and added a new variable that is religiosity to predict youth' intentions to volunteer for community service. The age of respondents was between 18 and 26 that currently pursuing their studies in University Malaysia Perlis. Using content and thematic analysis, data for all the study variables were collected through self-administered survey questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 18.0. A total of 500 sets of questionnaires have been distributed and 432 questionnaires were returned and used for coding, analyzing and testing the hypothesis. The findings analyses showed that attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and religiosity positively influenced volunteering intention. The results also demonstrated that the hypothesized model was fit and all hypotheses were supported. Sample from old people and other variables that related to volunteering behavior were suggested to be included in future research.

Keyword: Volunteering Intention, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavior Control, and Religiosity.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study's background in relation to its rationale is discussed. Research Objectives, research questions, problem statements, scope and significance, definition of the terms used, and organization of this thesis is also presented in this chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

During economic downturn or normal time, the role of volunteers in development of collaborative community partnership was considered of utmost importance (Fuller, 2012). Volunteers avail as important reservoirs of knowledge for development programs and can help ensure that development-related advocacy campaigns are relevant and legitimate. And volunteers can be empowered with confidence, knowledge, and skills necessary to effect changes in their world also help them to prepare for employment and their transition to responsible adulthood (International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE); Shah, Suandi, Ismail, 2014 & United Nation Volunteer, 2008). Many NGOs faces the challenge of retaining volunteers over the years. Organizers usually adopt strategies to retain volunteers for the purpose of encouraging and rewarding volunteering works (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007; Seippel, 2002; Grammatikopoulos, Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2006) stressed out the fact that the recruitment and retention of volunteers is a continuum, which must be repeatedly evaluated and improved, based on the community needs and the

progressing mission of NGOs (Shen, 2012). Many government departments and non-governmental organizations organize volunteer service for youths actively.

As the volunteer force is being an essential part of the overall success of events; most managers and leaders of NGOs are in need of recruiting and retaining enough volunteers to fulfill the wide range of roles that are required for activities to be successful. When it comes to recruiting and retaining enough volunteers for any activities, it is also important in volunteering intention to have a clear understanding about perceived behavioral control, the attitude, subjective norm, religiosity and the relationships among the previously mentioned factors.

Generally, with volunteering, the well-being of a volunteer is enhanced and the frequency of having positive emotions is increased (Hackl et al, 2007). Because of the work of volunteers, the prospects of their careers like command, getting better jobs and attractive salaries (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2005; Calvo et al, 2012). Regarding the enhancement of self-esteem of volunteers in other things, different researchers have been unanimous in the acceptance of the volunteering reality (Calvo et al, 2012; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Thotis & Hewitt, 2001).

In Malaysia, volunteering both as an individual or being a corporate is being an emerging practice in Malaysia and the “Do Something Good” campaign in Malaysia has been started recently in by different NGOs. And the government has announced 2013 as a year named as National Volunteer Year and a fund for Youth Volunteers of amount \$33 million has been allocated (Veerasingam et. al, 2013).

The two limitations seen in the literature related to volunteering are: First, the limited research in the area of young adults being volunteers. The lack of research is highlighted in the study of Baum and Lockstone (2007). The lack of research in this field is comprised of volunteers and religiosity relationship (Favreau, 2005). Secondly, limitation

in this field is that few studies have used longitudinal design which is considered helpful in the causal relationship elucidation with intention of volunteering (Marta & Pozzi, 2008). The present study attempts to explain volunteering intention among youth by examine the relationships between volunteering intentions, attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms and religiosity and also the question, “What is the impact of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, religiosity and volunteering intention among youth in Malaysia especially undergraduate students?”, is addressed.

On the other hand, there are many studies of religion and mental health in a Christian context, but studies in Islamic countries are few (Vasegh & Mohammadi, 2007). For every organization, the role of volunteer is considered important (Hallmann & Harms, 2012) and therefore the understanding related to volunteer’s underlying religiosity, the recruitment and volunteer’s intentions (Bang & Chelladurai, 2009) are of utmost importance (Favreau, 2005). In this study, the issues influencing the religiosity of volunteering intention are addressed and provides more insight to the understanding related to the volunteer’s religiosity in Malaysian youth.

This study’s contributions are: First, the lack of research related to intentions of volunteering and its results (Bond, 2012; Wilson, 2012). And there is lack of research includes the relationship of religiosity and volunteers (Favreau, 2005). In this study, the impact of an individual’s attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, religiosity on the intentions related to volunteering, and the relationship between both dependent and independent variables are considered for investigation. Finally, the target of the study is the Malaysian youth volunteers. Studies in on volunteering are very rare (Calvo et al, 2012).

1.3 Problem Statement

Volunteerism is a method to promote active learning, providing experience which helps in the enhancement of commitment to the contribution of citizens, the education experience related expansion, and the serving communities more appropriately (Sahri et al, 2013). Currently, in the development of communities, the role of youth is considered of utmost importance and youth is considered a reason for nation's development and can be a good future's leader (Hussin & Mohd Arshad, 2012). Volunteering is considered a behavior which is helping and is a particular form of behavior which is comprised of long term commitments.

Almost a number of one billion people are volunteering worldwide using different modes like public, for profit, or non-profit organizations, or they directly work for neighbors or friends (Salamon et al, 2011). For most events organizations, volunteers are considered an integral resource for making an event successful. For a sustainable volunteer workforce, developing motivational sense, more commitments, and intentions for keeping volunteering continuous, are considered of utmost importance for the management and organizations. Youth volunteerism is very crucial in developing a community (Hussin & Mohd Arshad, 2012). In fact, for NPO (Not for profit organization), young people are considered a growing and strong volunteer's source and are considered essential for the efforts of NGO marketing (Briggs, Landry, & Wood, 2007).

Recently, in volunteer practices, the contribution of adults has been increased. According to the study of Gage & Thapa (2012), the strategy use for the purpose of increasing volunteers is the identification of population interested in volunteering. One population which can be target is the students or youth of universities and colleges. Though, the study related to volunteering, in previous three decades, is increased (Eisenberg &

Fabes, 1998), even then the volunteering is still in need of improvement as it is little known (Marta, & Pozzi, 2008) about the features of volunteers like social and psychological, the volunteering motivations, volunteering psychological influence (Kirkpatrick-Johnson et al. 1998), and the relationship of causal and intentions related to volunteering (Marta & Pozzi, 2008).

For young adults, in adolescence, the different kind of volunteering related exposure is initiated (Hill & den Dulk, 2013). A suggestion is made that before adulthood almost 75% adolescent will take part in US formal volunteering opportunities (Hill, & den Dulk, 2013; Johnson et al, 1998). Furthermore, in contrast to the procedure of different age's cohort related disengagement, the volunteering of adults and adolescent is seen emerging. In the mid of year 2000, a volunteering activity in a particular year was reported which was done by almost one third of older teenagers like the peoples from age 16 – 19, which is considered almost twice rebound of the rate related to volunteering in comparison to the year 1989 (Grimm et al. 2006). Considering the study of Grimm et al. (2006), most of these volunteers are considered episodic (making a contribution of 99 or fewer hours per year). 11% of 12th graders volunteers are suggested on a weekly basis in the data analysis (Smith & Faris 1999).

The findings, in which, almost 16% of worldwide adults were volunteering their time to organizations according to The Gallup World Poll (GWP). For volunteering the most willing people were from North America, Australia and New Zealand, second by the people of South-East Asia and Africa. The volunteering level in the Middle East, North Africa and East Asia, i.e. China, Japan and South Korea was considered the lowest (see: GWP – Gallup World Poll, 2011).

A report issued by UN volunteers made by state of the world's volunteering mentioned that the reported 44% of volunteers are comprised of civil society organization's

workforce which is almost equal to a number of 20.8 million full time workers. In the developing part of the world, where statistical data is less comprehensively represented, it is almost equal to 1.1 percent of these countries GDP (UNV report, 2011; BMFSFJ, 2013). Moreover, in the countries developing and transitioning, almost 0.7% of GDP was the volunteer work which is considered smaller. The volunteer work is equal to 2.7% of GDP in the developed countries (Salamon, 2008).

Almost 8 billion hours are the accumulated services provided by annual volunteers in American which is estimated to the \$100 billion worth (Gasiorek & Giles, 2013). About 62.8 million people had participated in a volunteer activity for or through an organization in the United States between September 2009 and September 2010 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). Of the six age groups surveyed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), older adults spent the most time volunteering in 2010, and nearly 40 percentage of those older adults reported volunteering between 100 and 500 hours per year (Pruchno, Wilson-Genderson, Rose & Cartwright, 2010).

On the same context, in EU, the volunteering is comprised of 92 to 94 million adults, in which, 22% are above 15 years of age and the rest of them are from ages 30 to 50 years (EAC-EA, 2010). Among European countries, Nordic countries have the highest prevalence of volunteering rates (Gil-Lacruz & Marcuello, 2013). Whereas in countries located at Mediterranean and East are ranked the lowest (Plagnol & Felicia 2010; Sardinha 2010). Whilst in Western and Eastern Europe and in the CIS (common wealth independent states), the volunteering work was the lowest.

A survey conducted in United Kingdom states that the worth of volunteering is almost 40 billion pound per year which makes a contribution to the GDP and is ranked 3rd in number. In Canada, the number of volunteers is 24 million in which 7.5 million are in age of 15 or above. Based on last data the volunteering in developed country is higher than

developing country especially among adults' people, so this represents the volume of problem that developing countries are suffering from how to get volunteers and the volunteering intention still low in this countries. This would correspond to a reference containing the last data.

The Malaysian history related to volunteerism does not vary much from other societies (Ali, 2004). It considered the commitment of an individual to religion and altruism related to charity, volunteering is also considered a kind of response to the tragedies created by war, conflicts in politics and economic crisis (Ali, 2004). Retired people majorly make their contribution in volunteer activities, while the barrier for the involvement of younger generation in the volunteer practices is time and energy (Ali, 2004; Shah, Suandi, Ismail, 2014).

In the survey studied 17 of Malaysia's top volunteering organizations and several online volunteering platforms to build a view of the state on volunteering in Malaysia , Do Something Good network found interesting results that is for every 1,000 Malaysians, there are 7 registered volunteers. While the total number of registered volunteers in Malaysia is projected at about 135,000, it makes up less than 1% of the 20.5 million Malaysians aged above 15. Another key concern that emerged in the survey was the engagement level of volunteers, while the survey included 30,215 registered volunteers; it found that slightly less than 30% (8,856) of volunteers were actively engaged in volunteering with their organizations. Zahirah Mohd Yusoff, Project Lead for Do Something Good said although a surge of interest in volunteering is seen but there is still much more to be done to make volunteering mainstream in our culture," This means that Malaysians have an attitude problem when it comes to doing volunteer work, and helping people, most shy away, quoting a number of reasons (Azhar, 2012).

Similarly, programs officer of Disaster Risk Reduction department of Mercy Malaysia Suria Junus indicated that volunteers are not aware of the charities that need help. Further it was added that some are discouraged from becoming volunteers because they think that being a volunteer means it is a full-time job.

The issues related to the development of youth are considered by Malaysian government, particularly the issue related to social contribution and volunteering. An approach made by Malaysian for the development of youth was making a call for together work (Azimi & Turiman, 1994). For young people's learning, contribution and bringing creativity and innovation through guidance, is the role of agencies to ensure conducive educational environment and climate (Azimi & Turiman, 1994). Volunteering both as an individual or being a corporate is being an emerging practice in Malaysia and the "Do Something Good" campaign in Malaysia has been started recently in by different NGOs. In Malaysia, the government has announced 2013 as a year named as National Volunteer Year and a fund for Youth Volunteers of amount \$33 million has been allocated (Veerasamy et al, 2013).

In the strategic plan of National Higher Education of Malaysia, making a foundation beyond the speech of 2020, the question was indicated by prime minister if the Malaysian education quality, with its increased quantity, is improved or not; if the generation clearing the national education system are eligible for thriving an emergently competitive global environment or not. The prime mister also focused on the "education revolution" need for making sure that the aspiration for instilling a new culture of performance in both private and public sector is not damaged by the inefficacy for nurturing a new type of human capital which is considered equal to the upcoming task and challenges (Sahri et al, 2013).

This is considered consistent with 1986 education related national policy which states that opportunity is provided by higher education which reflects social, cultural,

economic, spiritual and moral issues faced by humanity. One of the tools to inculcate pro-social behavior in the students such that they would be inclined towards social and humanity issues is through volunteerism. Thus, there is a strong need to build this human capital and volunteerism is one of the medium to build such character (Sahri et al, 2013). These efforts carried out by the Malaysian government indicate that there are weaknesses in voluntary work and they urgently need to build human capital and volunteerism, especially young people.

According to Datuk Seri Hj. Mohamed Khaled Nordin, (Minister of Higher Education), there are currently 1.2 million students of Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia and they should be empowered to play their roles that would certainly contribute towards the development of the country. One of their roles is to build strong characters, idealism, skills and leadership qualities so as to become assets of the society. These characters could not be attained simply through hearing lectures in classes, but they should have an active participation in social activities and volunteering programs that will help mould strong characters and valuable human capital for the country (Nordin, 2011).

Sadly, the majority of people joining volunteering activities are retirees. In a study, volunteerism and the development of Malaysian social care system found 4% had 21-30 active volunteers and 1% had 31-40 active volunteers (Ali, 2002). While time is considered the barrier for completely involving in the volunteer practices of younger generation (Ali, 2002). The issues of younger generation being volunteers are considered an issue of utmost importance because of their higher level of energy and motivation which can result in making good outcome (Hussin & Mohd Arshad, 2012).

In volunteer work, the participation of younger generation is considered lowest in the age group 25–34 (Gray, Khoo, & Reimondos, 2012). Although there are about 135,000 full-fledged volunteers in Malaysia, the figure only represents less than 1% of youths aged

above 15 (Azhar, 2012). For the explanation and understanding related to youth volunteering, the focus of an individual must be on the factors influencing the motivation or encouraging youth for being a volunteer (Hussin & Mohd Arshad, 2012). A study of youth volunteers of Anti-Drug Program findings show that most of the participants did not know the membership procedures of this Youth Volunteers for the Anti-Drug Program. It is believed that there are some factors that affect students' inactiveness or lack of interest in participating in voluntary activities and intention to volunteering (Aisyah et al, 2013). The time constraint is considered the reason for having no engagement of students in volunteer practices (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Simha, Topuzova, & Albert, 2011), the study commitments force people to find paid employment, Gage & Thapa, 2012; Simha, Topuzova, & Albert, 2011), and the lack of knowledge related to the opportunities of volunteering and knowledge related to the involvement of volunteering (Auld, 2004; Gage & Thapa, 2012). From this evidence, it showed that intention among youth is an important issue in performing social community as without the attitudes and perceived behavioral control towards volunteering intention, youth would not intent to volunteering.

The volunteers involved are mostly working with limited time left. Time constraints are the most consistent reason given for not participating in many studies. Many studies have reported time constraint as one of the primary factors that hindered volunteer recruitment and retention. Time constraint is related to volunteers' obligation and commitment towards their work and family. Which means that there is a lack of understanding in Malaysian community for important of volunteer work resulting that Malaysian youth is suffering from social pressure to not volunteering. In their study, Stephen & Jane (2012) found that major reasons for people not volunteering were family obligation and work commitment. A research by Cleave and Doherty (2005) indicated that time-factor and scheduling related to the juggling of work-family conflicts influenced both