

Engaging the future: motivations and impacts of Community-Based Volunteering among the youth

Abstract

With the advent of social media and digital platforms, awareness of social and environmental issues has markedly increased, making it easier for individuals to find volunteering opportunities and share their experiences. This ease of access has spurred a growing willingness among people, particularly the younger generation, to engage in community-based charity work, driven by a desire to contribute positively to society. In light of these developments, it's imperative to explore the underlying reasons motivating young individuals to partake in volunteer activities. This understanding is key to effectively engaging and supporting this essential group in their pursuit of philanthropy. This study employs a qualitative approach, engaging with 32 young volunteers in Beijing, China, through semi-structured interviews. By utilizing thematic analysis in an inductive manner, the research aims to explore emerging themes that offer deeper insights into the motivations driving the younger generation to engage in community-based charity work. This research seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that inspire young individuals to dedicate their time and resources to charitable endeavors.

The findings reveal primary motivational factors, which are further subdivided into ten sub-factors driving young volunteers. These include: (1) Self-oriented motivation (career and learning development motive, value orientation motive, empathy motive, and well-being enhancement motive), which focus on personal growth and self-fulfillment. (2) Social-oriented motivations (social support motive, social identity motive, and a sense of belonging motive), emphasize the importance of community and interpersonal connections. (3) Culture-oriented motivation (philanthropic culture motive, patriotism and honor motive, and fraternity of kindness motive), highlight the role of cultural values and national pride in volunteering. These motivations underline the complex interplay of personal, social, and cultural factors in influencing young people's participation in community-based charity work.

This research significantly extends the academic discourse on volunteerism by merging insights from functional theory, driving force theory, and behavior theory to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding the motivations of young volunteers in community service. It transcends traditional analyses by examining how these motivational

factors influence volunteer engagement within the unique context of community-based charity work. Furthermore, on a practical level, this study acts as a pivotal resource for improving volunteer management strategies and fostering a culture of volunteerism among youth. It provides multi-dimensional recommendations that are applicable to volunteers, charity organizations, educational institutions, broader society, and policy-making bodies. This approach not only aims to enhance the effectiveness of volunteer programs but also to cultivate a deeper commitment to volunteerism across various societal levels, thereby contributing to the development of a more engaged, altruistic, and socially responsible youth population.

Key words: Young Volunteers, Motivation for Participation, Community based charity
Volunteer Behavior