

MEASUREMENT SCALE OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

Mohd Yusri Ibrahim¹, Mohammad Mahdi Abas¹, Kasawani@Kazuwani Ibrahim¹, Masduki Mohammad Morni¹, Syahrin Said¹, Azhar Mohd Sinin¹, Mohammad Zaidi Bin Mahadi¹, Mat Rahimi Yusof²

¹Centre for Fundamental & Liberal Education, University Malaysia Terengganu, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu Darul Iman, Malaysia.

²SMK Penarek, Setiu, Terengganu Darul Iman, Malaysia.

E-mail: yusri@umt.edu.my

Abstract: University students are important personal in making, they are the citizens who will contribute to the well-being of community. Therefore, students need to be more responsible, care and participate in community activities. However, nowadays students were found to be less involved in volunteerism, especially at the community level. In order to solve the problem, we need to identify the indicators to measure the participation behaviours, and acting further steps to improve their engagement. This study was conducted to develop a scale to measure the participation among university students, and testing the validation of the measurement. Conceptualizing of this study was suggested 10 indicators to measure the variable of participation in community volunteerism. This cross-sectional survey by questionnaires was applied in east side of peninsula of Malaysia for 150 respondents, and analyzed by structural equation modelling (SEM) by AMOS. The suggested indicators were consider accepted as measurement elements by observing on regression weight for standard loading, average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity, square root of AVE for discriminant validity, composite reliability (CR) for reliability of items, and at least three fit indexes for model fitness. Finally, a measurement scale of volunteerism participation for students was succeed developed, and suitable to use in areas of research, evaluation, training, campaign or any type of programme in order to improve students engagement with community activities.

Keywords: Community participation, community volunteerism, youth.

BACKGROUND

Youth are defined as young people aged between 15 to 24 years old (Ho, Clarke & Dougherty, 2015; UNESCO, 2012; Weinstock, Berman & Cates, 2004). However, in the context of Malaysia, the National Youth Development Policy 1997 defines youth as a population aged 15 to 40 years. In a country, youth form a majority in the composition of the population and its position is quite important in the context of national development (Haslinda et al., 2012). In a social aspect, the Malaysian government has recognized youth as the future leader for the well-being of the nation and society. The nation's future will be put forward by youths today. If the quality of youth is bright, the future of a country is bright. In Malaysia context, students of higher education institutions mostly in age of youth. Discussion about student behavioural is identical to discussion of the youth.

In addition, youth are also seen as an important source or human capital to sustain the country's continued development and growth to drive the nation forward and become a developed nation by 2020 and achieve the National Transformation 2050's desire, as youths are the country's drivers in the future. The youth are the backbone of the future to rule the state (Sarimah Ismail et al., 2014), high hopes are placed on the shoulders of youth by leaders and societies, so that youth should become more responsible, confident, credible, active and competent in various aspects. All these features are important preparations that youth needed to build quality human capital and valuable assets to contribute to the well-being of communities, social and nations.

As young people are physically fit, mind-conscious and have more open minds, the youth need to be sensitive, caring and engaging in community life. Youth should involve themselves in a range of community activities at the community level, in particular the participation in livelihood and neighborhood activities. Youth involvement in volunteerism has become an increasingly important issue in facing the development and challenges of individual and community well-being (Ezhar & Madiha, 2015). Youth should actively engage in social work at the community level whether they joining the collaborative activities to clean up neighbourhood area, helping community that facing disaster, helping in funeral, joining religious activities at mosque and others, joining safety guides and so on. It is even better if the volunteerism activities in the community are pioneered by youths, with little guidance by elders and experienced community members.

Despite being urged to actively engage in social work and volunteerism, studies (Ezhar & Madiha, 2015; Warren, Ainin & Noor Ismawati, 2014; Sarimah et al., 2014; Haslinda et al., 2012) show that youth involvement in the community activities were still at an unsatisfactory level, the youth engagement show declining. This situation is somewhat worrisome, and is seen as contrary to the wishes to be achieved through Vision 2020 and the National Transformation 2050, which is to form a developed society by maintaining a pure tradition value, especially in the context of social life within a pure values of communities, helping each other to the wellbeing of life together.

The reassessment process of youth involvement in volunteerism should be started by identifying the factors that encourage their involvement in such activities. These stimulant factors, which will eventually need to be stimulated continuously to enhance youth engagement in volunteerism. This study was conducted to develop and test the validity and reliability of the items to measure the involvement of students in volunteer activities at the community level.

ISSUES & PROBLEM

In order to achieve high-income developed countries, there is a price that we have to pay, especially in terms of value drops. Among the issues most recently debated is the deterioration of volunteerism among community members, in particular involving of the younger generation. Youth's generation is seen as increasingly away from social volunteer activities such as collaborative activities to clean up neighbourhood area, helping community that facing disaster, helping in funeral, joining religious activities at mosque and others, joining safety guides and so on. The issue of youth involvement in voluntary activities seems clearer when open-ended lifestyles and democratic practices are implemented. Such a lifestyle has affected the significant drop in youth involvement in volunteerism rather than the level of

engagement from older generations (Zhang & Lallana, 2013), whose majority still maintains a long-lived culture.

Despite not denying that there are still youths who engage in community activities, more youths are like spending time with less useful things like hanging out on the beach, participating in concerts, entertaining, vehicle racing and committing crimes. Youths are often dizzy due to lack of involvement in social issues (Sulaiman, Noor Ismawati & Anne Marie, 2014). It is worsening the situation, criticisms by the public and other members of the community are not awkward to the youths, and even make their anger increasingly worsening. Recent situation indicate that youth are less responsible for helping others (Sarimah Ismail et al., 2014), not engaging in social activities, and are only in the group of peer only.

Based on the findings of the Malaysia Youth Development Research Institute (2013) study on 21, 665 youths throughout Malaysia in 2012, 19% (4, 117) youths who volunteered for leisure activities, compared to 66% (14, 299) youth who spend their free time watching VCD or DVD, 63% (13, 649 people) use social sites, 54% (11, 699 people) and 50% (10, 833 people). The results of this study show that the percentage of youth engaged in voluntary work activities in free time is still low.

Not only are the general youths, the involvement of youths who are studying at the institute is still at a low level. Universities are the best place to raise awareness and train youth about their role in social and community development. But in terms of progress, the current youth participating in the university is very low (Sarimah Ismail et al., 2014). It is alarming that education succeeds in producing youths who are so knowledgeable and expert in technology, but less voluntary involvement (Sarimah Ismail et al., 2014). Supposedly high-profile individuals are more likely to have and have many opportunities in volunteer engagement, but they are also easy to be affected and remain neglected (Head, 2011).

The attitude of the youth itself which does not concern the social issues that occur in the community (Sulaiman, Noor Ismawati & Anne Marie, 2014) especially in their residential areas are also a cause for them not engaging in volunteerism. This development led to the worsening of youth involvement in volunteerism (Delli Carpini, 2000). This phenomenon is very scary, giving the impression that the noble values in the community are increasingly eroding and disappearing. If this situation continues, an important core that forms the well-being of a community life will collapse, as well as undermine the major axis of a nation. These issues need to be debated again, to find the causal factors, and to develop short-term and long-term solutions plan.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism can be defined as the act of doing something with its own will, the intention of sincere intention, and without compulsion to contribute positively to the environment, individuals, groups or communities without receiving financial rewards (Azizan, 2013; Wilson, 2000). Involvement can also be referred to a form of social interaction, that is, there are parties engaged in an activity and will participate and work together to actively participate in creating, planning and carrying out mutual volunteer activities (Teuku Afrizal & Abdul Rahman, 2013).

Additionally, volunteerism participation also refers to the individual's ability to obtain resources, facilitating entry and decision-making in various areas involving the community (Toks Oyedemi, 2015),

including economic, cultural, social, health, education, placement and poverty . Involvement of volunteerism can be either individually or collectively, organically or spontaneously (Huntington & Nelson, 1976). Collectively voluntary involvement in the organization will last longer and more effective than spontaneous, individual or temporary involvement (Teuku Afrizal & Abdul Rahman, 2013). Examples of collective and organizational involvement as practiced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) today.

Although the culture of volunteerism is a noble tradition of society and is widely cultivated by previous generation, it is increasingly marginalized by the current generation, especially among youth and young people (Ibrahim et al, 2012; Haslinda et al., 2012), and university students. Generations now prefer to live and take their own, and are less interested in engaging in community-based activities. As a result, many of the previous that managed by community members had to be handed over to the private sector that offered the service, or handed over to the responsible by government authorities.

In order to address the problems that have ruined the value of this society, several studies have been conducted (Azizan, 2013, Ibrahim et al, 2012), but the issue has not been resolved, even becoming worse (Ibrahim et al, 2012). These studies haven't yet to find the most significant contributing factors to contribute effectively and comprehensively to the participation of volunteerism among youths. Further, researchers and social scholars continue to suggest that investigations, research, discussions and discourses to address this issue are made without tears, until our social system finds a powerful recipe for addressing these problems.

MEASURES

This study used a cross-sectional survey design using quantitative methods. The respondents of the study consisted of 150 students from the Institute of Higher Education (IPTA) in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia selected through purposive sampling. The data were collected using a questionnaire with respondents required to respond to their involvement in volunteer activism in the community, with indicators beginning 'never' to the most frequent 'very often'. A total of 10 items were used to measure their involvement in activities such as clean up neighbourhood area, helping community that facing disaster, helping in funeral, joining religious activities at mosque and others, joining safety guides and so on. Details of the item of questionnaires was shown in Table 1 in part of research result. Pilot studies conducted on 30 samples in Terengganu show that this instrument has Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.8, while all items correlate at moderate rate ($r = 0.4 - 0.6$).

The data was analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) approach by AMOS 20 software focusing on standard loading, convergent validity, composite reliability, discriminant validity and fit indexes. The items of the measurement will accepted when regression weight for every standard loading are 0.708 and above (consider accepted for 0.4 and above if AVE achieve), average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity are 0.5 and above, composite reliability (CR) are 0.708 and above, square root AVE for discriminant validity greater than value of correlation between item (Hair et al, 2012). The model also assume as fit when at least one fit index from each category namely basic, relative and parsimony was achieved where CMIN ratio < 5 , CFI and NFI > 0.9 , PCFI and PNFI > 0.5 , and RMSEA < 0.1 (Meyers et al, 2013).

For preliminary analysis, items and variable of volunteerism consider low if got score mean below 2.00, moderate level for score mean between 2.01 and 3.00, and high level for mean above 3.01.

RESULT

Generally, the findings show that the level of involvement in volunteerism among students is moderate. Of the 10 measured indicators, involvement in funeral management activities, involvement in neighborhood security controls and involvement in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were at low levels, while the rest was at moderate levels. Out of the 10 indicators measured, no indicator is shown to be at high. The details result is shown in Table 1 below, including the finding of normality testing.

Table 1: Preliminary Result

Item	Participation	Mean	Level	Sd	Skew.	Kurt
V1	I was helping out with feast preparation.	2.599	Moderate	0.074	0.045	-0.863
V2	I was helping out with funeral when there is a death.	1.757	Low	0.057	0.489	-0.426
V3	I was helping those affected by the disaster such as floods, storms, fires and so on.	2.217	Moderate	0.065	0.353	-0.254
V4	I was involved in security control activities in neighborhoods.	1.691	Low	0.064	0.928	0.184
V5	I was participating in community activities in mosques and other synagogues.	2.217	Moderate	0.064	0.411	-0.104
V6	I was joining collaborative activity to clean the housing area, caring public facilities and so on.	2.322	Moderate	0.067	0.260	-0.424
V7	I also get involving when a neighbour is affected by illness or distress.	2.382	Moderate	0.064	0.028	-0.454
V8	I am joining a non-governmental organization (NGO) who conducts volunteer work	1.947	Low	0.072	0.669	-0.311
V9	I was participating in social activities organized in the community.	2.336	Moderate	0.067	0.287	-0.412
V10	I was inviting other friends to participate in volunteer activities in the community.	2.322	Moderate	0.069	0.371	-0.412
	Volunteerism	2.179	Moderate	0.0663	0.3841	-0.347

The findings also show that all items are inter-correlated at a moderate as shown in Table 2 below. This finding indicates that the items are interdependent, while at the same time discriminating against each other to avoid multicollinearity phenomenon. This is in line with the need that items within the same construct need to be interconnected with each other, but at the same time not very similar.

Table 2: Inter-item Correlation

Variables	Vol	V10	V9	V8	V7	V6	V5	V4	V3	V2	V1
Vol	1.00										
V10	.664	1.00									
V9	.747	.496	1.00								
V8	.631	.419	.471	1.00							
V7	.720	.478	.538	.454	1.00						
V6	.799	.530	.597	.504	.575	1.00					
V5	.752	.499	.562	.474	.541	.600	1.00				
V4	.628	.417	.469	.396	.452	.501	.472	1.00			
V3	.716	.475	.535	.451	.515	.572	.538	.450	1.00		
V2	.595	.395	.444	.375	.428	.475	.447	.373	.426	1.00	
V1	.576	.382	.430	.363	.414	.460	.433	.361	.412	.342	1.00

The findings in Table 3 below show the average variance extracted (AVE) to test the convergent validity is 0.500, the AVE's square root for testing the discriminant validity is 0.707, the composite reliability is 0.898, while all the standard loading values exceed 0.4. The AVE square root value is also greater than the inter-correlation between the items that shown in Table 2 above. These findings confirm that these proposed items are valid and reliable to measure the involvement of students in volunteerism.

Table 3: Standard Loading, Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity & Composite Reliability

Variable	Item	SL	AVE	\sqrt{AVE}	C.R
Volunteerism	V1	.576	0.500	0.707	0.898
	V2	.595			
	V4	.628			
	V5	.752			
	V3	.716			
	V6	.799			
	V7	.720			
	V8	.631			
	V9	.747			
	V10	.664			

Lastly, the testing to see the fitness of the model also shows all the index categories ie basic, relative and parsimony were achieved the needed score, which confirms that the collected data was fit to the proposed of measurement model. The findings are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Model Fitness

Fitness indexes	Required	Result
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χ^2	Small better	124.124
χ^2/df	< 5	3.546
CFI	> 0.90	0.921
RMSEA	< 0.10	0.097
PCFI	>0 .50	0.680
PNFI	>0 .50	0.650

The final model that summarizes the arrangement of items, standard loading scores and result of fitness testing is shown in Figure 1 below. This figure confirms that all 10 indicators that was suggested to measure the student involvement in volunteerism are valid and reliable.

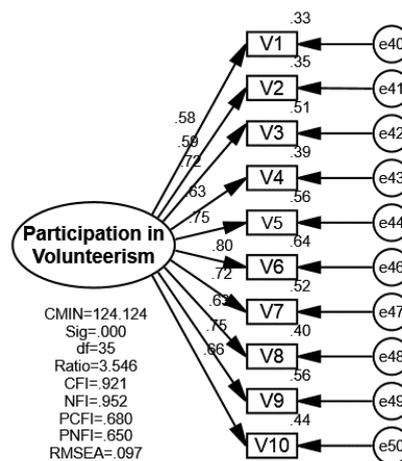


Figure 1: Final model

CONCLUSION

This study has successfully identified a scale that can be used to measure student engagement in volunteerism at community level. The study also developed a measurement model to measure the involvement of students and youth in the volunteerism.

This finding can be used by future researchers to study the behavioral of voluntary involvement in more detail, as well as recommending the best measures to encourage involvement of youth and university students in volunteerism.

This finding can also be used by the parties to recognize recognition of volunteering involved in volunteerism. Universities, governments, NGOs, private companies and so on can use this scale to identify youth who are immersed in volunteerism, thus being rewarded for such engagement.

For employer recruitment, employers are also encouraged to prioritize youth who are involved in volunteerism. This measurement scale can be used by employers to select the best prospective employees, especially those who are involved with the community.

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