

# Research on the Motivation Analysis and Enhancement Strategies of University Student Volunteers' Sustainable Participation in Volunteer Service Activities

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**Abstract:** *University students' sustainable participation in volunteer service is greatly correlated with personal motivation to participate. Based on the concept of self-interested and altruistic motivation for volunteering, this paper analyzes the problems affecting university students' motivation to participate in volunteering on a sustainable basis. Accordingly, the paper proposes to establish a professional volunteer team brand, strengthen the systematic training of university student volunteers, evaluate the volunteers' participation in volunteer service, and add psychological and practical incentives for university student volunteers, to enhance the motivation of university student volunteers to participate in volunteer service sustainably and strengthen the active participation in volunteer service, thus ensuring the smooth implementation of all volunteer service.*

**Keywords:** University student volunteers; Motivation for voluntary service participation; Volunteer management; Sustainability.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteer service is an integral part of university students' daily study and life, and it is one of the most important links in the cultivation of university students' social responsibility and practical ability. From a micro point of view, in the process of carrying out volunteer service, the motivation of university students to sustainably participate in volunteer service directly affects the quality and efficiency of volunteer service and the cultivation of personal practical ability. From a macro point of view, the motivation of university students to sustainably participate in volunteer service is inextricably linked to the ability of universities to improve the management of volunteer service, promote the development of social welfare undertakings, and realize the sustainable development of volunteer service. This paper studies the motivation of university students to sustainably participate in volunteer service from the perspective of management of university volunteer service organizations and further improves the motivation of university volunteers to participate in volunteer service on a sustainable basis.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO SUSTAINABLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Since the 1990s, scholars in different countries have studied volunteering behavior from different perspectives. Clary et al. established a Volunteering Process Model and found that the sustainability of volunteering behavior is related to the conditions that volunteers' needs are satisfied and their experience is increased in the process of service. Omoto and Snyder found that self-interested motivation directly affects the sustainability of volunteering. Penner, in his Sustained Volunteering Model, pointed out that volunteers' relationship with the organization is an important variable in the sustainability of volunteering. In their study, Hidalgo and Moreno found that the training and supervision of volunteers, as well as the diversity of volunteering types, have a direct impact on the sustainability of volunteering. Thus, the motives affecting volunteering behavior are complex and multidimensional. The following paper will analyze the motives for sustained participation in volunteering from the perspectives of self-interested and altruistic motives.

### 2.1 Self-Interested Motivation

Self-interested motivation emphasizes the autonomy of volunteers' behavior, that is, volunteers participate in volunteering activities with clear plans and goals, more to obtain the corresponding material benefits in return, or to meet the needs of their own vocational skills development, the expansion of the social circle or social

opportunities, etc.. However, volunteering activities carried out with self-interested motives are not detrimental to the interests or rights of others, and it is only based on the intrinsic needs of volunteers to fulfill the act of volunteering. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, human psychological needs can be satisfied by completing volunteering, and positive evaluation and feedback will be generated after satisfying psychological needs, and the resulting incentives will drive volunteers to continue volunteering. Therefore, by volunteering driven by self-interested motivation, more volunteers can get a greater sense of happiness and satisfaction, and better enable their volunteer behavior with continuity [1].

## **2.2 Altruistic Motivation**

Altruistic motivation refers to volunteers' participation in a series of voluntary service activities independently out of the psychological considerations of adhering to humanitarian values, caring and sympathetic mentality, and assuming social responsibility. Some scholars have argued that altruistic motivation is a better predictor of the persistence of volunteers' participation in social volunteering than self-interested motivation. Although some volunteers expect to get material or profit returns in volunteer service, it is undeniable that among the young university volunteers who participate in volunteer service activities such as environmental protection, rescue, cultural and sports activities, there are still a large number of volunteers who do not require tangible material or profit returns from volunteer service, but rather hope to get external affirmation and inner satisfaction. This motivation is in line with Marx's concept of "human nature lies in its sociality", and also better reflects the value of each person in society.

## **3. ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AFFECTING THE MOTIVATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO SUSTAINABLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

### **3.1 Insufficient Construction and Institutional Safeguards for Professionalized University Student Volunteer Teams**

At present, some universities have not yet established a standardized and professional volunteer service team in the process of organizing student volunteers to carry out social volunteer service, and lack a guarantee system to assist the development of volunteer service work. The above deficiencies will lead to low motivation for university students to participate in volunteer service sustainably and even affect the formation of the atmosphere of the culture of volunteering in universities.

Firstly, the operating funds of the volunteer team usually come from university finance, social organizations, corporate institutions, etc., limited by the lack of funds, some universities have not established professional volunteer teams, and even a small number of universities can not be equipped with uniform team clothing for volunteers, in the holding of volunteer activities temporary call for students to set up a volunteer team so that the professionalism of the volunteer team is not strong. Secondly, a part of universities have not yet formulated a rights and interests protection system for student volunteers by the provisions of the policy documents, which can not provide institutional safeguards for university students participating in volunteer service activities [2].

### **3.2 The Training System of University Students' Volunteer Service Skills Fails to Meet Actual Needs**

The current university volunteering training is based on short-term lectures or temporary guidance, lacking a complete course system from basic theory to practical application, and lacking on-site situation simulation guidance, experience summarization, and reflection during the training, which largely constrains the sustainability of student volunteers' motivation to engage in volunteerism.

There are still various drawbacks in the current volunteer service training system in universities. First of all, the training content mainly focuses on general-purpose services, and there is insufficient training for social special groups such as the disabled, left-behind children, and orphans, and other specialized fields such as psychological counseling, emergency rescue, and other technical volunteer services, which leads to insufficient practical performance of volunteers in the above volunteer service activities. Secondly, in terms of teachers for volunteer training, it mainly relies on lectures with university teachers or experienced student volunteers and lacks the participation of social workers, psychological counselors, and other professionals, as well as the joint training mechanism of the Red Cross Society, social welfare organizations, and other institutions. Finally, the evaluation and incentive mechanism for volunteer training is ineffective, focusing mainly on attendance rates or written

exams, but lacking multifaceted evaluations such as feedback from service recipients and assessment of practical skills, and overly relying on the recognition of “hours of volunteer service”, while neglecting long-term incentives such as skill-level certification and linkage to vocational abilities.

### **3.3 Lack of Systematic Management of University Student Volunteers**

In recent years, local governments vigorously organized cultural and educational, sports events, large-scale conventions, and exhibitions, which require a large number of volunteers to participate in event volunteering, universities and local Sports Bureau, Bureau of Culture and Tourism, and social enterprises to form a cooperation to provide volunteers with a broader development platform, but how to comprehensively and systematically manage volunteers has become an important problem faced by the development of volunteer work.

First of all, the volunteer management system used in universities is prone to the following problems. On the one hand, there is no strict limitation on the number of participants in different types of volunteer activities; on the other hand, there is no reasonable distribution of the duties of students in different positions in the volunteer activities, which prompts the volunteers who have the mentality of opportunism to be “lazy” in the volunteer services. It is easy to encourage volunteers with an opportunistic mentality to have “lazy” behavior in volunteer service, which increases the heavy workload for other volunteers. Secondly, the university volunteer management department pays no attention to the motivation of volunteers' sustainable participation in volunteer service, and the assessment of service results is not in place, which is more inclined to the recognition of volunteers' service hours and neglects the examination of intangible elements invested by volunteers in volunteer service. In the long run, this will reduce the motivation of volunteers for sustainable participation in volunteer service.

### **3.4 Lack of Psychological and Practical Incentives for University Student Volunteers to Participate in Volunteer Service**

The altruistic motivation of university student volunteers to continue participating in volunteer service is usually closely related to their ideological values and spiritual and emotional needs. Volunteers adhering to the ideology of "willingness to give and help others" are more willing to participate in all kinds of volunteer activities for free, but the neglect of the psychological needs of volunteers and the incentives to protect social practice will lead to the gradual decline of some volunteers' high motivation to participate and their sustainable participation.

For example, some universities select volunteers to participate in volunteer activities based on whether they have free time to participate in volunteer service, but ignore whether the volunteer service activities can meet the volunteer's discipline and specialty suitability, hobbies, psychological and practical needs, etc. Even if the end of the volunteer service, can provide the certificate of volunteer service hours, material rewards, and other incentives, it cannot enhance the motivation of university student volunteers to continue to participate in the service.

## **4. STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING THE MOTIVATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS TO SUSTAINABLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

### **4.1 Strengthen the Construction of University Student Volunteer Teams and Enhance Institutional Guarantees**

University student volunteers participate in volunteer service activities mainly because they want to get positive feedback and incentives, including incentives for a good team atmosphere, and tangible or intangible rewards. Therefore, based on the guiding policy documents related to volunteer management, universities need to establish strict and clear volunteer recruitment standards, volunteer service process standards, clear volunteer duties and strengthen the protection mechanism of volunteer rights and interests, set up professional volunteer teams for different types of volunteer projects, and formulate a detailed system in volunteer project planning and volunteer service process to lay the foundation for student volunteers to carry out volunteer service in a high-quality and sustainable way. It also sets up a detailed system for volunteer program planning and volunteer service process, to lay a foundation for university student volunteers to carry out volunteer service with high quality and sustainability.

University student volunteers participate in the process of community support, cultural education, environmental

protection, and public welfare volunteer activities, to enhance the professionalism of the work in the form of a team, and rely on the financial support of universities and social welfare institutions, set up a unified volunteer team logo, uniforms, flags, and increase the establishment of volunteer models and outstanding volunteers publicity, to enhance the volunteers for the cause of the recognition of the volunteer service and a sense of pride. The above practices are used by universities to promote the recognition and pride of volunteers. Through the above practices, universities can provide targeted guidance to the motivation of students to participate in volunteer service, thereby enhancing the creation of a volunteer culture and motivating volunteers to achieve a sense of personal fulfillment.

#### **4.2 Establish a Complete Training System for Volunteer Services**

The lagging training system for university students' volunteerism is one of the main reasons for the weakening of their motivation to participate in volunteerism on a sustained basis. In this context, universities should join hands with off-campus professional public welfare organizations and individuals to create a comprehensive, systematic, and coherent training system for volunteering. The theoretical training should not only include ideological and political theories, but also professional and technical knowledge such as medical first aid, social rescue, and psychological counseling.

In the practical training of volunteer service, the training instructors guide student volunteers to carry out volunteer service, from different perspectives of self-interested and altruistic motives, and deeply participate in the practice of volunteer service such as medical rescue, environmental protection, community services, cultural and sports services, caring for the elderly, etc., to enhance volunteers' ability to deal with emergencies in the face of emergencies in the course of participating in volunteer service, and improve volunteers' professional skills in the way of combining theory with practice [3]. In addition, in the process of volunteer service training, the training instructors can provide real-time guidance for student volunteers through online and offline channels. After the completion of the volunteer service practice, through the training summary meeting, strengthen the training results and experience sharing, and based on the feedback of the volunteer service users, the evaluation of the whole process of the volunteer service practice and other information for the volunteers to formulate long-term incentive programs, to stimulate the motivation of university students to continue to participate in volunteer service.

#### **4.3 Set up Process-based Assessment in Volunteer Service**

Universities should pay attention to each individual in the process of managing student volunteers, set up assessments in each link of volunteer service, and fully grasp the motivation of volunteers to participate in as well as fulfill their duties. This will prevent some volunteers from being overloaded with work and others from failing to fulfill their duties in the process of volunteering. Therefore, it is necessary to manage volunteers scientifically. First, make a clear division of responsibilities for volunteer service activities and establish a responsibility traceability mechanism. Second, the Volunteer Management Department should accurately record the work situation of the volunteers and form personal work files for them, which will serve as the basis for students' bonus points, commendations, and awards, as well as tangible or intangible rewards [4]. Thirdly, the Volunteer Management Department tracks the sustainable motivation of volunteers to participate in volunteer services, analyzes the incentive factors, and increases the motivating conditions in the management system to enhance the motivation of volunteers to participate in volunteer service sustainably.

#### **4.4 Optimizing the Psychological and Practical Incentives for University Student Volunteers to Participate in Volunteer Service**

Volunteer service has the characteristics of voluntariness and gratuitousness, and most university students who participate in volunteer service activities hold altruistic motives and have a relatively low willingness to obtain sufficient material and benefit incentives. Therefore, when universities organize and carry out volunteering activities, they should take into full consideration the psychological needs and social practice needs of students of different majors, and reasonably plan and select social volunteering projects [5]. Secondly, in the volunteer service activities, the university volunteer management department should pay attention to the spiritual incentives for volunteers through communication and exchange, reduce the physical and mental pressure when volunteers participate in the service, and guide more students to devote themselves to the volunteer service through the power of role models. In short-term and long-term volunteer service practice, the use of immediate feedback and stage feedback methods, combined with volunteer growth incentives, and material protection to enhance the stickiness of university student volunteers, helps them from passive participation to active participation in the transformation.

## 5. EPILOGUE

At present, all kinds of volunteer service activities carried out by the society have increased significantly, and there is a great demand for volunteers. University students, as the main force of volunteers, have diversified channels and ways of participating in volunteer service. In the face of the current situation that there is a big difference between the motivation and enthusiasm of university students in the process of volunteer service activities, we can start from the perspective of building professional volunteering teams, establishing training systems, strengthening the process of assessment, and setting up a system of incentives for spiritual and material aspects to sustainably improve the mechanism of university students' volunteering, which will help improve and enhance the motivation of university students' sustainable participation in volunteering.

## PROJECT NAME

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