Humanitarian Aid Involvement Factors Among IMARET Volunteers

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Abstract
In many domains, core activities of people’s lives would be disrupted if volunteers were not present to provide much-needed help especially medical-based mobile clinics that rely heavily on the labour of volunteers. This study was designed to identify the factors related to humanitarian aid involvement of volunteers, to discover the background of volunteers attending Islamic Medical Association of Malaysia (IMAM) Response and Relief Team (IMARET) mobile clinic and outreach mission and to determine the association between the humanitarian aid involvement factors and the background of volunteers. This cross-sectional study used Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) scale to measure the motivation factors of volunteers and total of 178 volunteers were recruited. Among the six motivation factors such as values, protective, understanding, enhancement, security and social factors being studied, understanding factor was found out to be the highest factor that motivated the volunteers. Based on the Fisher’s Exact Test, the motivation factors were found to have no association with the demographic data of volunteers. This study suggests that non-profit organisations should be aware that people joining volunteering or humanitarian aid work were not influenced by their sociodemographic characteristics.

Introduction
Many community agencies face a discrepancy between the demands and the supply of volunteers [1]. Thus, the recruitment of volunteers is a significant concern for many organisations and agencies. The most frequently asked, and the most perplexing question in the field of voluntary action—why do people volunteer? However, there is very little research in Malaysia that studies on how the background of volunteers will influence the factors of joining in humanitarian work. This study aims to reveal the most common factors of joining humanitarian work and also to associate between the background information of volunteers to the factors of humanitarian aid involvement.

Method
This study was a cross-sectional study. Target participants were taken using a convenience sampling method by online survey from August 2019 until December 2019. This study targeted volunteers involved in IMARET mobile clinics in Selayang, Selangor, Malaysia and Orang Asli Medical Outreach mission in Gua Musang, Kelantan, Malaysia. A total 178 responses out of 190 respondents were accepted to be analysed in this study.

Results and Discussion
1. Demographic Characteristics
• The age range of the respondents largely clustered within the age range of 25 to 44 years old. This was the age range when people had the necessary knowledge, skill and strength to contribute to volunteer work [2].
• The distribution of female respondents was higher compared to males in this study. It was suggested that that women appear to be more charitable than their male counterparts [3].
• Majority of the respondents were never married. Similar study revealed that mostly the respondents were single because they had less commitment thus more time to spend on answering questionnaire [4].
• This study found that majority of the respondents had bachelor’s degree or higher. The findings resonate with the literature as respondents with a high level of education were more likely to volunteer or to be potential volunteers [5].

2. Humanitarian Aid Involvement Factors
Table 1 shows that respondents indicated that understanding factor was the strongest factors in driving them to participate in voluntary activities. This factor received a mean score of 22.69. This finding implied that the overall level of motivation of the respondents to participate in voluntary activities spurred on by these six elements of motivation was high.

Table 1. Mean of Motivation Factors to volunteer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation Factors</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>22.69 (3.268)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>22.15 (2.752)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>21.05 (3.268)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>19.41 (4.426)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>19.32 (3.883)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>18.85 (4.449)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Association between Respondents’ Demographic Data and Motivation Factors
There were no significant differences (p > 0.05) between total motivation factors and demographic data. All individual had the same chance to participate in volunteering activity regardless of their age groups because it did not associate with their motivation factors.

Conclusion
• From the study, it was found out that understanding factor which means the motivation to learn, explore their strengths, exercise their skills and expand their understanding of how to give aid was the strongest motivation factor of respondents to volunteer.
• Majority of the respondents came from age group of 25 to 44 years old, female, Malay, Islam, never married, had bachelor’s degree, had monthly household income of RM 3,000 to RM 5,999, fully employed, joining IMARET mission or session for the first time and also joining other volunteering or humanitarian aid work.
• This study revealed that there was no association between motivation factors and demographic data being studied. It may be suggested that when recruiting volunteers, the target should appeal to motivation factors despite of sociodemographic differences.
• The findings showed that these respondents were more likely to participate in voluntary activities when the activities could provide understanding such as the opportunity to acquire knowledge, make improvements to existing skill and knowledge and to exercise existing skills.

References

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