

Volunteering attributes and motivation among Chinese university student

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the volunteering attributes and volunteering motivations of Chinese college students, so as to make suggestions for strengthening school welfare programs. Specifically, it attempts to profile respondents in terms of gender, age, profession, and frequency of volunteering. The intrinsic attributes and motivations of volunteer service were determined from intrinsic attributes, decision-making attributes, attitude attributes, interest in others, and personal preferences. This paper examines the respondents' responses to the differences between the attributes of volunteer service and the motivation of volunteer service, explores the relationship between the attributes of volunteer service and the motivation of volunteer service, and finally puts forward suggestions to improve the campus happiness of Chinese college students based on the attributes and motivation of volunteer service. Using descriptive method, 400 students from more than 10,000 students in Yichun Preschool Teachers College were selected as the investigation objects. The results show that the respondents are mainly female, aged between 18 and 20 years old, and most of them major in primary education and preschool education. The frequency of participating in voluntary activities is mainly not participating at all and at least once a year. The results of the questionnaire on volunteer service attributes and motivation of Chinese college students show that there are significant differences according to all file variables. There were significant differences in the results of the questionnaire on voluntary intrinsic attributes, decision attributes, attitude attributes, interest in others and personal preferences. The number of college students participating in volunteering is not related to gender difference but has a significant relationship with the intrinsic attributes and motivation of volunteering, especially the intrinsic attributes, decision-making attributes and attitude attributes of Chinese college students. There is a significant relationship with Chinese college students' interest in others and personal preference.

Keywords: volunteering attributes, volunteering motivations

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1. Introduction

With the development of the times, educators' understanding of the role of volunteerism in the field of education has been deepening. Volunteerism generally refers to the behavior of volunteer organizations and volunteers in serving the public's productive life and promoting social development and progress. In other words, volunteering refers to the use of one's time, skills, resources, and kindness to provide non-profit, unpaid, and non-professional assistance to one's neighbor's, community, and society. In the past, educators thought that volunteerism was only social work and had little relevance to school education. However, in recent years, with the standardization of social volunteering activities, especially the implementation of the "Administrative Measures for Registered Volunteers in China" issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League in November 2006, college students' participation in volunteering activities has been well guided, and college students' participation in volunteering activities develops the participants' abilities in various aspects in their own unique ways, such as the development of their mental health, the development of teamwork, and the cultivation of their autonomy, and so on.

Volunteer activities are increasingly becoming a new way of learning and exercising for Chinese college students, and how schools can guide the development of volunteer activities is also becoming an important study to enhance students' sense of well-being at school. Volunteering is becoming a new trend in China. College students can get a good emotional experience through volunteering, and most of the college students who have volunteered think that the joy of volunteering is far more than the joy of playing games, compared with the joy of playing games in the past. In interpersonal communication, volunteering activities also play a certain role in improving, in the team volunteering activities, team members have to communicate, discuss the process of each volunteer service, the formation of the planning, service activities after the end of the conclusion of the summary, in the process of strengthening the communication between team members. In each other's work to deepen the emotion between students, they deepen understanding, thus increasing the level of interpersonal communication between college students, according to Abdullah, et al (2020); Akhtar, (2019).

For the enhancement of the sense of social responsibility of college students volunteering also has a significant effect, volunteering activities can help college students to understand the laws of social development, to solve the social phenomena of the confusion, to find their own correct position in society, to recognize the responsibility that should be borne by the community, in the volunteer activities to be educated, in the contribution of the community to improve the sense of social responsibility, and to strengthen the sense of citizenship.

With the gradual deepening of volunteering in the field of education, the state has also introduced a series of programs to encourage college students to actively participate in volunteering activities, such as the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, college students' volunteering service in the west program and so on, all of which provide good platforms for college students to encourage them to actively participate in volunteering activities. In 2009, the publication of "Student Volunteerism" provided detailed guidance on how to improve and standardize the volunteer activities of college students.

Along with the depth of voluntary activities in the field of education, the problem is slowly beginning to emerge, most of the domestic researchers are concerned about how to ensure the external environment and logistics of voluntary activities, rarely care about the attributes of volunteering itself, a single think that volunteering is all good, all can play the same role, but this is obviously there is a big difference. This has led to a lot of volunteering activities that do not serve the purpose of education, but instead become a burden. Many college students lose their passion and vitality in long-term volunteering activities, and instead of getting a sense

of satisfaction and acquisition in the activities, they disrupt their own lives and even ask for more material compensation, which is inconsistent with the purpose of volunteering. In view of this situation, more and more researchers have begun to study college students' participation in volunteer activities and their own attributes of volunteerism.

As experts and scholars begin to turn to the study of college students themselves, more and more people are aware of the importance of the attributes of college students' volunteering, which has a significant relationship with the growth of college students' participation in volunteering activities. As we can see from the literature, most of the research on college students' volunteering still focuses on the improvement of the external environment, with little research on the attributes of volunteering, which leads to the fact that many volunteering activities do not play a good role, and do not care about the suitability of volunteering and college students' willingness and suitability to participate in the activity. In 2015, the Ministry of Education issued the Interim Measures for the Administration of Student Volunteerism, which requires adherence to the principle of voluntarism and full consideration of student autonomy, allowing more consideration of students' internal motivation, which is precisely where we are reminded of the need to consider the relationship between the attributes of volunteering and the motivation for volunteering.

In addition, psychologists have begun to pay attention to the role of volunteering on the mental health of college students, and studies have shown that most of the college students who participate in volunteering activities are able to obtain positive emotional experiences, but a small number of college students are unable to experience such emotions, which are related to their intrinsic motivation. Checking previous studies, we can find that few researchers have studied the attributes and motivation of college students' volunteering, and few researchers have paid attention to the relationship between the attributes of volunteering and college students' motivation to volunteer. As a mental health teacher in school, the researcher come into contact with a lot of students who feel unhappy in school, and the researcher can understand their psychology, and the profession motivates me to want to help them in some ways, who often face strong academic pressure and bad interpersonal relationships. Then, from carrying out volunteer service to enhance their happiness is where the researcher can help them, thus, launching this research.

Objectives of the study - The purpose of this study is to determine the volunteering attributes and volunteering motivation among Chinese university students in order to propose an enhanced school well-being program. Specifically, this study determine the respondents' volunteering attributes in terms of intrinsic, decisional, and attitudinal attributes; assess the respondents' volunteering motivation in terms of their interest in others and personal preference; test the significant relationship between the volunteering attributes and volunteering motivation; and propose an enhanced school's well-being program for Chinese university students.

2. Method

A descriptive methodology was used for this investigation. Descriptive method is a research technique used to outline the characteristics of the population or phenomenon under investigation. When using this descriptive method, the focus is more on the subject of the study rather than the reasons behind their behavior. Descriptive research designs can use multiple research techniques to study one or more variables. In contrast to experimental research, the researcher simply observes and quantifies the variables without controlling or manipulating any of them. The survey method focuses on investigating volunteering attributes and volunteering motivations and examining the relationship between the two variables.

The questionnaire was randomly distributed in Yichun Early Childhood Teacher Training College according to the purpose of the survey. The questionnaires were distributed to include students in the first to third years and excluded externs to reduce errors. Using the Raosoft calculator with the following formula $((1.96)^2 \times .5(.5)) / (.05)^2$, the number of questionnaires distributed was 400.

This study used quantitative research methods to collect data. The researcher developed an online

questionnaire using "Wenzhuoxing" (the most widely used online survey, examination, assessment and polling platform in China). The survey consisted of three parts. The first part collected respondents' personal information, the second part assessed respondents' intrinsic attribute profile of volunteering, and the third part assessed respondents' intrinsic motivation profile of volunteering. The first section focuses on assessing respondents' volunteering attributes. It consists of three sections (intrinsic attributes, decision-making attributes, and attitudinal attributes). Each section contains ten statements related to which respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale from "strongly agree" (4 points) to "disagree" (1 point). The 30 items in this section were adapted from Valentin et al. (2023) "When Real Service Counts: Developing the Volunteer Attributes Questionnaire (VAQ), an Exploratory Order Mixed Methods". In Section 2, respondents were asked to identify their level of motivation for volunteering. These motivations were divided into two different categories, and respondents used the same scale from "strongly agree" (4) to "disagree" (1) to indicate their level of agreement. This section contains a total of 20 descriptions. Sourced from Yunfang (2002) A Review of Cattell's Theory of Personality Traits. Journal of Xiaogan College. The content of the questionnaire used in this study underwent a rigorous validation and confirmation process to ensure its reliability. The instrument was first reviewed and validated by a panel of experts in the field to ensure that it adequately measured the intended construct. The results of the validity test for each section of this questionnaire instrument are as follows:

Table 1*Reliability Result*

Indicators	Cronbach Alpha	Remarks
Intrinsic attribute	0.915	Excellent
Decisional attribute	0.948	Excellent
Attitudinal attribute	0.914	Excellent
Interest in others	0.940	Excellent
Personal preference	0.950	Excellent

The results of the test show that all the relevant parts of the questionnaire are highly reliable and can produce trustworthy results. The scores for each item are above 0.9, which shows that the questionnaire has very good reliability and validity, and that there are strong correlations between each item, which will support the study of volunteer attributes and intrinsic motivation of Chinese university students' volunteering. The reliability of the questionnaire will greatly enhance the validity and credibility of the research findings.

The data collection procedures for this study included the use of a validated questionnaire to collect data from respondents. An online questionnaire was developed using China's largest online survey, examination, assessment and polling platform, Questionnaire Star. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the selected school, obtaining the help of the student union, sending the questionnaire, the questionnaire collection were stopped after receiving 400 points of response from the respondents and there were 384 valid questionnaires.

Descriptive statistical methods, including frequency distribution and percentage pie charts, are used to outline the basic profile of the respondents. To observe the frequency of male and female students participating in volunteer service, compare the difference between male and female students participating in volunteer service, and evaluate the influence of gender on the number of volunteer service participation. Correlation analysis was used to explore the relationship between variables, and regression analysis was used to find the impact on participation in volunteer service activities. spss26 version is used for the above statistics and processing.

In order to protect the privacy of the respondents, the researcher avoided disclosing any personally identifiable information. The researcher ensured personal interaction with the participants, respected their privacy and sought their consent before obtaining any sensitive information. In conducting the analysis, priority was given to the participants and ensured that their data was accurately represented in the study. The researcher did not express personal opinions and only presented information and conclusions drawn from the data collected. The researcher assured respondents of the confidentiality of their responses and informed them that the survey would be used only for the purposes of this study.

3. Results and discussion

Table 2

Summary Table on Training Evaluation

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Intrinsic Attribute	3.15	Agree	1
Decisional Attribute	3.06	Agree	2
Attitudinal Attributes	2.93	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.05	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 summarises the test results of the intrinsic, decision-making and attitudinal attributes of the volunteering attributes, and the combined mean of the results is 3.05, indicating that the three attributes of the volunteering attributes are consistent and have a positive influence on Chinese university students' participation in volunteering activities.

The weighted average of the intrinsic attribute of the volunteer attributes is 3.15, which is the highest compared to the other two attributes and has a positive influence on whether Chinese college students choose to participate in volunteer service. School leaders should fully consider the intrinsic attributes of volunteering when organising volunteer services. Whether volunteering can make volunteers get rewarded. This reward can be either spiritual or material, and at the same time, strengthening the education of core values of college students can help encourage Chinese college students to participate in volunteer activities. Wu and Yang (2023) found that college students' combination of community volunteering can satisfy their growth needs and enhance their emotional experience, but at the same time, they need to face the problem of inadequate institutions.

The weighted mean of the decision-making attribute of the volunteering attribute is 3.05, which is in the middle position relative to the other two items and has a positive effect on Chinese college students' participation in volunteering. College students' participation in volunteering is more rational in making decisions, and they can differentiate between the boundaries of their study life and volunteering, and do not confuse the two lives. Current volunteering activities need to be more in line with the current study life of college students, rather than simply setting the time and content of the activities. Xu.(2022) looks at volunteering from a single event, such as the Nanchang Cancer Kitchen, where there are dilemmas such as imperfect facilities, the age of the person in charge, irregular management, high mobility of volunteers, and the quality of service to be improved, which seriously restricts the sustainable operation of the Cancer Kitchen's volunteering service. The researcher proposes that there should be clear norms and training from top to bottom, from top-level design to bottom-level piloting.

The weighted average of the attitude attribute in the attributes of volunteering is 2.93, which indicates that the attitude attribute has a positive effect on college students' participation in volunteering activities, but there is still room for improvement, as volunteering should be more voluntary and automatic, and there should be no coercion. This requires a higher level of planning on the part of the developer of the volunteering activity. Xu (2020) also sees the problems of utilitarianism and blindness, the formalisation of volunteering organisations, the homogenisation of content, and the lack of management of volunteering, and believes that intermediate and upper-level organisations such as the state or schools are obliged to improve their management mechanisms.

Table 3 is a summary table of volunteering motivation, and the composite mean of the results is 3.07, indicating that the attributes of the two items of volunteering motivation, interest in others and personal preference, are consistent and have a positive influence on Chinese college students' participation in volunteering activities. Zhang, (2021), in a study of college student volunteers at four universities in Yunnan, found that college students' motivation to participate in volunteer activities was strongly influenced by external factors, including material incentives, compensation, and the influence of others. Because of the motivation of external factors, college students are really motivated to participate in some activities. The fact that students are

influenced by material rewards and other people's influence does not mean that they are trained to be refined egoists or lack the ability to think independently, but it indirectly indicates that the starting point of these college students is precisely because of their desire for substantial rewards and interpersonal relationships. The researcher suggests that self-interested motives should be viewed correctly, and that it is a normal motive to participate in volunteer activities, whether it is to show the interest of others or personal preference. Our study of interest in others and personal preference clearly has a positive effect on promoting Chinese university students' participation in volunteering.

Table 3*Summary Table on Volunteering Motivation*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Interest in Others	3.08	Agree	1
Personal Preference	3.06	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.07	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

The weighted average of interest in others is 3.08, which is higher than that of personal traits (3.06), suggesting that interest in others accounts for a larger proportion of the motivation for college students to participate in volunteering, and that interest in others is conducive to encouraging college students to participate in volunteering if they are positive and want to get in touch with others, which means that our schools need to take this into account when designing volunteering activities. If we design volunteering activities, we need to take into account that college students need to be in contact with others, so it should be in line with the expectations of college students' interest in others. Although the weighted mean of personal attributes is slightly lower than interest in others, the difference is not significant and should be considered on the same footing. Xie, et al., (2017) pointed out that interest in others sometimes harms one's own interests, and how to correct the interests of both sides can start from two paths, the internal path refers to the fact that altruistic behaviours can promote positive interactions between the helper's body and mind through the intrinsic process of self-motivation, bring internal utility gains, and thus improve his or her adaptability at certain moments. The external pathway provides altruism with signals that demonstrate the qualities of the helper, which can help to enhance their in-group status and increase their chances of co-operation and mate selection. In turn, altruistic behaviors can be preserved by evolutionary selection at the individual and group levels. Li and Lin, (2018) study shows also in side agree with this point of view, college students carry out volunteering on the need to maintain a balance between the interest of others and personal preferences, that is, both self and others, and it is not a shame to talk about interests in volunteering. Li and Ye.(2015), on the other hand, looks at the issue between college students' interest in others and their personal preference from the perspective of socialist core values, and the shift from individual to others can be utilized in the role of socialist core values.

Table 4*Relationship Between Volunteering Attributes and Volunteering Motivation*

Intrinsic Attribute	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Interest in Others	.759**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Preference	.724**	0.000	Highly Significant
Decisional Attribute			
Interest in Others	.829**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Preference	.798**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudinal Attributes			
Interest in Others	.800**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Preference	.784**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 4 shows the relationship between intrinsic, decision-making and attitudinal attributes and interest in others, personal preferences. There is a clear relationship between the two items of intrinsic attributes and interest in others and personal preference. This represents that the stronger the intrinsic attributes of volunteering, then the more motivated college students are to participate in volunteering activities. At the beginning of the

design of volunteering, the incentive effect on the motivation of college students to participate in volunteering should be considered, in line with the intrinsic attributes of college students' motivation volunteering. College students participating in volunteer activities are more willing to choose activities that can help others, in line with the sense of compassion in their hearts.

There is a clear relationship between the decision-making attributes and the two items of interest in others and personal preference. This represents that the stronger the volunteering decision-making attributes are, then the more motivated college students are to participate in volunteering activities. At the beginning of the design of volunteering, the incentive effect on the motivation of college students to participate in volunteering should be considered, in line with the decision-making attributes of volunteering for college students' motivation. Separating the boundaries between volunteering and life, such volunteering, according to the results of the test, will motivate college students to participate in such volunteering activities.

There is a significant relationship between the attitude attributes and the two items of interest in others and personal preference. This represents that the stronger the volunteering attitude attributes are, then the more motivated college students will be to participate in volunteering activities. At the beginning of the design of volunteering, the incentive effect on the motivation of college students to participate in volunteering should be considered, in line with the motivation of college students' attitudinal attributes volunteering. Volunteering itself is a kind of dedication activity, the integration of attitudinal attributes in volunteering is conducive to the long-term persistence of college students to participate in volunteer activities.

In conclusion, the intrinsic attributes, decision-making attributes and attitudinal attributes of volunteering are closely related to college students' motivation to participate in volunteering activities. There is a strong positive correlation. It has a very significant role in enhancing college students' motivation to participate in activities.

Table 5

Program to enhance the well-being of university students at school through good volunteerism

Key Result Area/ Objective	Strategies/Activities	Success Indicator	Persons Involved
Variety and content Enhancement of headmasters' organisational skills and sense of volunteerism to keep pace with the times in the development of voluntary activities and enhance the well-being of school students	School leaders are required to conduct social research every year to provide more interesting and informative volunteer activities. School leaders should be trained at least once a year to improve their professional skills and organizational level so as to bring better experience to students. School leaders need to conduct internal research to understand students' needs and improve their sense of well-being.	90% of headmasters are trained at least once a year on the attributes of volunteering and the diverse forms of service delivery	Headmaster Deputy Principal
Rewards and ideological training Increase awareness of resource utilisation by school leaders and increase volunteering incentives. Enhance the height of students' ideological awareness, cultivate the spirit of dedication, and enable a greater sense of well-being on campus	School leaders need to specify clear material or spiritual rewards when carrying out volunteer service. School leaders need to pay attention to the ideological and cultural construction of college students, at least three times a semester need to carry out ideological education, combined with ideological and political. Actively docking social resources, enhance the utilization of resources, enrich the choice of student rewards	90 per cent of head teachers trained at least once a year on volunteering incentives and motivational factors	Headmaster Deputy Principal

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Most of the respondents do not have resistance to participating in volunteering, have compassion, can

separate volunteering from their lives, and are determined to stick to the activities. Most of the respondents are not motivated to participate in volunteering activities, since the current volunteering activities do not motivate do not bring external material nor internal spiritual rewards and especially external motivational support. There is a significant relationship between volunteering attributes and motivation of college students to participate in volunteering in almost every aspect, and volunteering attributes have a great deal to do with enhancing the motivation of college students to participate in volunteering. Volunteering attributes and motivation are closely related to enhanced happiness of college students in school.

School leaders need to consider the attributes of volunteering when developing volunteering activities that connote compassion and kindness and are separate from students' regular schedules. Diversified forms of volunteerism, combined with the new technologies of the times, online and offline. No age limit, suitable for all age groups. School leaders can combine various resources to carry out volunteer activities, not only limited to on-campus activities, more out, will volunteer activities and the main theme of ideological education together, exercise college students' red thinking. There is a need to balance material and spiritual rewards for volunteering so that students are motivated to persevere in their volunteering endeavours. Volunteerism, as a purely ethical behaviour, is at the same time a practical activity of human interconnectedness. Therefore, volunteering activities must be based on a people-centred philosophy in order to continue to develop, with full respect for the participants.

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