

Gender Differences among Youth in Volunteerism

Mohd Ramlan Mohd Arshad¹, Zaliha Hj Hussin² & Mohd Nazir Rabun³

^{1,3}Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies
Universiti Teknologi Mara, UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Seremban
mramlan2957@ns.uitm.edu.my
mohdn2623@ns.uitm.edu.my

²Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies
Universiti Teknologi Mara, UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia
drzaliha@salam.uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The growing demand for services has resulted in the increasing demand for volunteers. The lack of an adequate number of volunteers has left many agencies and organizations with the inability to provide services that clients need or desire. Thus, it increases the urgency for volunteers with a high level of energy which suit to youth volunteers. This paper aims to explore the issue of volunteerism among youths in terms of gender differences as an antecedent. Methodologically, the paper employs a quantitative approach to test and prove the formulated hypothesis on gender differences in this issue. It begins with an introductory background to address the issue of volunteerism and the scenario of volunteerism among youth in Malaysia in general. The paper then proceeds to capture the differences between male and female youth to volunteer. The main analysis in the paper employs descriptive and inferential statistics to study the differences in the level of volunteering behaviour between male and female youth volunteers. There are also suggestions regarding volunteerism among youth in Petaling Jaya with regards to gender differences.

Keyword: Volunteerism, Youth, Gender

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, most women volunteers were not employed, whereas most men who volunteered had full-time jobs and helped others in the community in their spare time (Taniguchi, 2006). Although this type of clear-cut gender division no longer exists (Kaminer, 1984), the pattern of volunteering may still be quite different between men and women. Despite the changing gender attitudes and the rapid entry of women into the labor force over the past several decades, women continue to play a major role in running the household and giving care to family members (England, 2000; Hochschild, 1989), which may, in turn, limit not only their career opportunities but also their civic participation such as volunteering (Bianchi, 2000). The past decades have shown that researchers examined the difference between male and female in

doing charity works. Many feminist scholars have argued that women follow “a different voice” in moral thinking (Gilligan, 1982), placing more importance on caring, relationships, and helping than on impersonal reasoning and rule-making.

Analyzing sex differences in charitable giving is difficult, because most adults are married, and married couples tend to pool income and make joint decisions about charitable giving (Einolf, 2010). Surveys conducted by Independent Sector found that women are slightly more likely than men to report donating to charity (Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1992, 1994, 1996; Kirsh, Hume, and Jalnadoni, 1999). This paper aims to look at the differences between male and female youths in doing volunteer activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRENT STUDY

Therefore the study aims; (i) To examine the differences in the level of volunteering behaviour between male and female (gender); (ii) To study the breakdown of respondents’ gender and their level of volunteering behaviour and (iii) To propose ways to intensify level of volunteering behaviour among youths.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteer work is also likely to give individuals a greater sense of being recognized and appreciated than either paid work or family work because the contributions they make as volunteer participants are not as taken for granted (Taniguchi, 2006). Besides making them feel free and valued, volunteering is increasingly linked to better overall mental health (Musick and Wilson, 2003; Wilson and Musick, 2000), greater interpersonal trust (Brehm and Rahn, 1997), and even upward occupational mobility (Wilson and Musick, 2000). It was interesting in studying this type of gender difference because it could have significant implications not only for the overall supply of volunteers but also for women’s opportunities to get involved in the wider society. Here we need to realize that civic engagement can be a privilege as well as a responsibility (Taniguchi, 2006). Volunteering becomes a privilege when participants benefit from it in terms of human interaction, personal growth, and life enrichment. To be sure, individuals may just as well gain similar benefits by working for pay or looking after a family. Yet what makes volunteer work distinct from paid work or family work is, rather obviously, voluntarism (Taniguchi, 2006). One would have more freedom to decide whether to continue or discontinue his or her work as a volunteer than as an employee or a family caregiver.

A volunteer survey conducted at Austria identifies that most male volunteers more interested engaged in activities regarding the culture, entertainment and sports as compare with females are more influence involve in social services (Badelt and Hollerweger, 2001). Similarly, a survey had been in Germany where male volunteers are more interested in job-related, outdoor activities, recreational and political engagements, while female volunteers prefer activities related to caring and helping others (Ziemack, 2003). Longer surveys, with more questions about volunteering and charitable giving, tend to find a smaller gap between men’s and women’s participation (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2006; Rooney *et al.*, 2005). Differences in other areas are

less clear. Some studies find that men are more likely to engage in sports and recreation volunteering, while women are more likely to volunteer for religious, human services, and educational organizations (Einolf, 2010). Men are also more likely to volunteer with groups organized at their place of employment. The differences are not great, however, and different studies have found contradictory results (see Musick and Wilson, 2008, for a review). Sex differences also exist in the types of organizations to which people donate money. Men tend to concentrate their charitable giving among a few organizations, while women tend to give smaller amounts to a larger number of groups (Andreoni, Brown, and Rischall, 2003; Brown, 2005; Piper and Schnepf, 2008). Differences of gender shows male and female have difference perception and have different interest in volunteerism. Another survey stated the male involved in political activities and females notice in joined for caring, helps and person to person task (Gaskin and Smith, 1997). Gender shows the differences on the level of empathy and altruism and several sociological studies stated that females as opposed to male more concerned to help another people although not have any relationship (Wilson and Musick 1997, Flanagan *et al.*, 1998, Wilson, 2000).

In this relationship, volunteer work can be viewed as occupying a middle position vis-à-vis each of the other two domains. Just like paid work, volunteer work typically and increasingly takes place in formal organizations and just like family work, volunteer work is unpaid, and often though not always involves tasks that are described as caregiving or emotional labor (Taniguchi, 2006). With this unique position of volunteer work in mind, the paper was explored how individuals' volunteering decisions may differ by gender.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted quantitative method through cross-sectional survey to drive the understanding of the differences between male and female volunteers and their level of volunteering behaviour. The unit of analysis of this study is individual level involving youth volunteers. The population is among the youths that joining any youth or voluntary organizations in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Questionnaire was used as the only mean of collecting the data from the respondents. Then, purposive sampling technique was adopted to identify and select the targeted respondents. The sample for this study comprised of 240 respondents. In order to analyse the data, *Independent Sample T-Test* is used to compare the result on the differences between male and female youth into volunteerism. In addition to that, *crosstabulation analysis* was run and performed to study about the breakdown of respondents' gender and their level of volunteering behavior.

FINDINGS

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows about the demographic profile of the 240 respondents for the study conducted. In terms of its gender, they were about equally distributed between male 47.1 percent and female 52.9 percent of the respondents. In terms of age, among the higher percentage of

respondents 30 percent and 28.3 percent were between 18 to 21 years old and 26 to 29 years old respectively. It is found that, there is only small percentage of 8.3 percent represented by youths aged between 38-40 years old. It is also important to highlight that most of the youth volunteers 67 percent were represented by Malay ethnic. While there is a quite similar response from youths between 14.2 to 15 percent from Chinese and Indian Ethnic. Moreover, a large percentage of them 74.2 percent received tertiary level of education. Lastly, it is almost half of them 43 percent had less than 1 year of experience in volunteering activities.

Table 1:
Summary of Demographic Profile of Volunteers

Demographic Profile of Volunteers	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	113	47.1
Female	127	52.9
Age of respondents		
18-21	71	29.6
22-25	40	16.7
26-29	68	28.3
30-33	19	7.9
34-37	22	9.2
38-40	20	8.3
Education Level		
SPM	37	15.4
Diploma	56	23.3
Degree	99	41.3
Masters	23	9.6
Others	25	10.4
Ethnicity		
Malays	167	69.6
Chinese	36	15.0
Indian	34	14.2
Others	3	1.3
Years of experience		
Less than 1 year	103	42.9
1 to 3 years	83	34.6
4 to 6 years	44	18.3
More than 6 years	10	4.2

FINDINGS

Results of the t-test analysis in volunteering behavior between gender is showcased in the Table 1. In examining the influence of gender on volunteering behavior, the Levene's test showed that all group variances are assumed to be equal at p-value greater than .05. Thus, the resulting t-value is -.166 but it is not significant as p-value greater than .05 ($p > .05$). Thus, the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference in volunteering behavior between male and female respondents is rejected.

H_{01} : *There is no significant difference in volunteering behaviour between male and female (gender)*

H_{a1}: *There is a significant difference in volunteering behaviour between male and female (gender)*

Table 2:
Results of Differences between Gender in Volunteering Behavior using T-Test Analysis

Variables	Mean	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Gender					
Male	4.181	-.166	238	.869 (not sig)	Reject Ha1
Female	4.193				

Note: sig –significant, not sig – not significant

CROSSTABULATION BETWEEN RESPONDENTS' GENDER AND ITS INFLUENCE ON VOLUNTEERING BEHAVIOUR

Next, in studying about the correlation between gender and its influence on level of volunteering behavior, the reported results confirm that among those who had lower level of volunteering behavior 73.3 percent were female. Apart from that, among those who had moderate level of volunteering behavior, it turns out to be the male respondents with the percentage of 52.9 percent. Moreover, among those who had high level of volunteering behavior, female respondents reported 56.6 percent. Based on the reported results in Table 2, most of the male respondents 52.9 percent had a moderate level of volunteering behavior. While it is worth mentioning that most of the female respondents' 73.3 percent had a low level of volunteering behavior.

Table 3:
Summary of Crosstabulation between Gender and Volunteering Behaviour

Level of Volunteering Behaviour	Gender		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Low (%) (25-33)	26.7	73.3	100
Moderate (%) (34-42)	52.9	47.1	100
High (%) (43-51)	43.4	56.6	100

DISCUSSION

This present results are similar or in line with what reported by Taniguchi (2006) which it was found that there are no differences in gender on volunteering behaviour. This result due to the preferences of male and female is same in the nature. Both gender agrees on the basic ideas of volunteerism which is helping other with no return hoped. This result is in line with an earlier survey conducted by Norah (2004) which found that male and female have a same perception on volunteers even though there are different in the types of social works that their interested to join. In addition, the level of male and female involve in volunteering also found no significant

differences as they main aim is to ensure the humanitarian aid pursue in helping the community in need. However studies by Hall et al. (2009) and Rotolo and Wilson (2007) obtained a mixed results. Based on their findings, volunteering behaviour throughout the life course is often to be performed equally by both males and females. It implies that both genders shared a similar level of volunteering behaviour. This can be validated by looking at the recent results conducted by Tonye (2015) which found there is low differences between male and female volunteering in Australia. Result by Tonye (2015) is parallel to the latest study conducted by Department of Social Services (2015) which found that male and female level of volunteering has minimal differences of less than two percent for those age 45 to 54 years old.

On the other hand, the present results were also not linked with the reported findings by Salas (2008). He reported that a study in Marion County government volunteer which placed in Ocala, Florida United State specifically addressed that women seem to be more inclined to engage in volunteering. Furthermore, a more recent finding of survey conducted by Reid and Dunne (2015) are more interesting to be considered in analysing the gender differences in volunteering. They found that a higher proportion of male respondents (49 percent) were involved in “coaching”, gardening and farming as a volunteering activity while a higher proportion of female respondents (46 percent) than male respondents undertook “fundraising”. From this survey, it can be perceived that in analyzing the level of volunteering behavior among male and female, the element of the male and female interests in social works must be inserted as one the important element.

Thus, general evaluation on their differences in volunteering behavior is hard to be concluded if it is not breakdown to details sector that they interested to join as volunteer. These scenarios also explained in a previous study done by Ribaric et al (2014), although the absolute numbers differ significantly (given the unbalanced gender structure), when analyzing the answer-structure of female and male respondents, the differences are less substantial. As for the types of volunteering activities, larger variances are observable within the following activities: “coaching or refereeing sports” – 22 percent of male, and only 8 percent of female students are involved in this unpaid activity; “raising money or taking part in sponsored events” – 28 percent of female and 21 percent of male students; and “visiting people or providing care or support” – 11 percent of female and only 4 percent of male students.

In contemporary world, the involvements of male and female in volunteerism are highly needed to ensure marginalize communities can be served efficiently. While various parts in the world need the attention of volunteers, as example the crisis in Rohingya which is long stand humanitarian crisis, without denying the important of policy, the helps from volunteers are highly appreciated to aid the victims. Furthermore, the volunteering behaviour which found no significant differences in this study, is absolute answer to unite the community in pursuing the humanitarian works all around the globe.

CONCLUSION

The findings obtained from this study demonstrated the composition of the respondents is equally distributed between male and female volunteers. Majority of the respondents were

Malays. Larger proportion of them received tertiary level of education. Among the highest percentage who responded to the study were youths between 18 to 21 years old. It is also shown that almost half of them 43 percent had less than 1 year of experience in volunteering activities. The study found that no significant differences exist between gender in their level of volunteering behaviour. Results also indicate that most of the male respondents 52.9 percent had a moderate level of volunteering behavior. While it is worth mentioning that most of the female respondents' 73.3 percent had a low level of volunteering behavior. By looking at the results and analyses conducted in this study, the findings in this study help to understand better especially no differences of gender found on the level of volunteering behaviour among Youths in Petaling Jaya. Therefore, repetition of the study on youth volunteerism is extremely important and readdressing this issue may strengthen the knowledge on volunteerism among youth.

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