CONTRIBUTIONS OF VOLUNTEERING UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT TO NATIONAL ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Volunteerism refers to voluntary activities that are not intended to obtain material rewards. It is also activities that benefit volunteers as well as to assist societies either formally or informally and also involve individual or collective action. Volunteerism is a global issue that is increasingly gaining attention due to its importance to individuals, communities, and countries. The contribution of undergraduate's student volunteering is not only seen through self-development and society but also on the economic development of the nation. However, people often overlook the issue and link productivity and economic generation to the public and private sectors. This situation caused the voluntary value being economically vague and less attention in most countries especially in developing countries. In this regard, the study was conducted to see how the involvement of undergraduate's students in volunteerism impacts the economic value of a country. In order to see clearly the contribution of volunteering from the economic point of view, the value of engagement time in volunteerism is converted into the number of paid employees and the amount of money.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is originates new formula that can be used widely in the world context of volunteerism. Formula on how to calculate time volunteerism value is purposely develops in order to appreciate volunteer's time in doing any community works.

1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism is not a new phenomenon in the society where its existence has begun since the beginning of civilization and the formation of society from the past (Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Sneed and Cohen, 2013; Pah *et al.*, 2016). Volunteerism appears in every society in a different form depending on the history, ideology, politics, socio-economy, and culture of a country (Eckstein, 2001; Sullivan, 2005). Humanitarian tragedies that occur like war, political conflict, economic recession, and natural disasters lead to individual and community responses to volunteering (Joseph, 2005; Cohen and Werker, 2008; Bergholt and Lujala, 2012). Hence, engagement in volunteerism is no longer a locality and locality but global that transcends national, cultural, religious and community boundaries (Doherty, 2006; Martinson and Minkler, 2006). This study contributes to the existing

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literature about the volunteerism is a noble work that is able to evaluate talent as holistic (Kamal and Lukman, 2017; Kamal and Lukman, 2017; Kamal and Lukman, 2017).

2. UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT AND VOLUNTEERISM

The involvement of students in volunteering began to be concerned about the 1960s and 1970s (Ellis, 1978; Gage III and Thapa, 2011). At that time, the university offered various community service activities to encourage students' involvement in volunteerism through student associations, student affiliations and campus-based religious organizations (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). Data from the Australian Voluntary Work Survey showed that the participation of students aged 18 to 24 in volunteerism was higher (43.4%) than those in the same age category but not university students (20.1%) (Kim, 2017). The study conducted by Wong and Foo (2011) also showed similar findings in which students were involved in volunteering activities twice as high (30.2%) as compared to young people who did not enter university in the same age category. This shows that student engagement in voluntary volunteerism has improved. While reports from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2010 also showed university students more engaged in volunteering activities (43%) than students in high school (19%) and students who did not pursue higher education (9%) (Gage and Thapa, 2012). According to Penner and Finkelstein (1998) student engagement in volunteerism is higher than other youth groups as they have more accessibility in terms of exposure and opportunities to engage in such activities. Therefore, by having right talent at the right program, it will help the volunteering activities to the max (Kamal and Lukman, 2017).

The importance of volunteering towards student development has led many Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Malaysia or abroad to embark on volunteering elements in their education policies (Clary and Snyder, 1999). Basically, the main principle of setting up a university is to educate the students. However, the principle of educating not only focuses on academic achievement but also creates and transforms students from various aspects of life by providing various activities and social opportunities (Widjaja, 2010). Volunteerism is seen as one of the best ways to encourage student learning actively, to shape the personality of a good student, to strengthen student commitment to civic participation, to widen the educational experience and to provide the best service to the community (Zhuang, 2010; Brockner et al., 2014).

3. CALCULATION OF TIME VOLUNTEERISM VALUE FROM ECONOMIC ASPECT

The volunteerism sector has had a huge impact on the economic development of a country (Roy and Ziemek, 2000; Omoto et al., 2009; Dandeker et al., 2010; Wu, 2011). For example, using the average wage minimum converted to 'charitable wages' shows that volunteering could have a huge impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Wilson et al., 2011; Brockner et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the contribution of the volunteerism sector to the national economy is not addressed by many parties in which most communities link the nation's economy to the public and private sectors. This is the case because most developing countries including Malaysia do not have a systematic information system about the statistics of volunteers involved. Furthermore, the contribution of time by doing volunteering actives is difficult to calculate in regards with the expenses that can be saved by the nation (Salamon, 2002). In addition, the aspect of national development is often associated with the economic value without taking into account other social aspects such as social welfare, health and so on and so forth (Brockner et al., 2014).

The contribution of volunteerism to the national economy is clearer if it can change the value of time contribution in the form of value or money. For example, the Baillie and Laurie (2011) has created an information system on volunteer statistics and time contribution for volunteering activities. With such information, it will include in national budgeting for volunteering programs (Nazilah et al., 2014). Accordingly, researchers such as Wong and Foo (2011) and Pillemer et al. (2010) present ways to calculate the economic value of volunteering. However, the researcher chose to use the method developed by Clary et al. (1994); Ross (1994) because it is more convenient and appropriate with the context of this study. Ross presents two ways of calculation. First, look for the

equation of time value in volunteering with the total number of paid employee's full time. Secondly, find the equation of time value in volunteering with the value of money or salary received by full-time paid employees. Although there are two methods, the researcher decided to combine these two methods into a simpler form to see similarities in both contexts. Calculation step can be explained as follows:

    a.   Estimates the number of volunteer hours involved in volunteer activities per year.

    b.   Divide the number of volunteer hours involved in volunteerism a year with the total number of hours paid by full-time employees a year.

    c.   The result shows the total number of paid employees full time matching the value of volunteer hours involved in volunteering.

    d.   Raising the total number of paid employees earned by the minimum payroll amount of paid employees per year.

    e.   The result shows the full value of paid employee's payroll equal to the student volunteer hour value per year.

In summary, the formula for calculating the value can be shown as follows:

$$z = \frac{c}{y} \quad \text{............................} Equation\ 1$$

Then, the value of c is:

Where : $c = a \times b$

$$j = z \times h \text{.............................} Equation\ 2$$

z = The number of employees paid equal to the value of volunteer time undergradatues student per year.

j = Salaries of full-time employees paid equal to the value of volunteer time undergraduates student per year

a = Estimated student involved in volunteering in the calculation.

b = Total hours of student volunteers involved for a year.

c = The number of hours involved per year for the entire student volunteers.

y = The number of hours of paid work per year (by current standards).

h = Average annual salary of full-time paid employees.

Step 1: Calculation of value a – Student budget is involved in volunteering in the year of calculation.

UPM – *Kelab Penyayang* (200 members) x 82 student association.

UKM – *Kelab Penyayang* (250 members) x 142 student association.

UM- SEKRUM (284 members) x 79 student association.

$$\frac{(200\ students\ x\ 82\ student\ association) + (250\ students\ x\ 142\ student\ association) + (284\ students\ x\ 79\ student\ association)}{3}$$

= 24, 778 the volunteers of Public Higher Education Institution (PHEI) students studied.

In this case, the average volunteer at PHEI studied is equivalent to the average value of volunteers at PHEI. In this regard, the estimated number of volunteers at PHEI is:

a = 24, 778 x 20 PHEI

= 495, 560 student volunteers at PHEI.

Step 2: Calculate value b – Number of hours involved for a student volunteer a year.

b = 5 hours x 2 semesters (annual)

= 10 hours yearly involvement.

Step 3: Calculation of value c - Number of hours involved annually for all student volunteers.

c = a x b

= 495, 560 students x 10 hours

= 4, 955, 600 hours a year.

Step 4: Exposure value y - Number of paid work hours per year.

y = the number of hours worked a day * x Number of working days per month * x 12Months

= 8 x 25 x 12

= 2400 hours of paid work per year.

Note: According to current standards *

Step 5: Calculate the value of z - The number of paid employees equal to the student volunteer time value per year.

z = c
    ───
     y

= 4, 955, 600
   ──────────
     2400

= 2, 081 paid employees per year (Equation 1)

Step 6: Calculation of the value h - The average minimum wage paid by a full-time employee per year.

h = Average minimum wage per month x 12 Months

= RM 1000 x 12

= RM 12, 000

Step 7: Calculation of the value j - The value of the full-time paid employee salary equal to the student volunteer student value per year.

j = z x h

= 2, 081 x RM 12, 000

= RM 24, 972, 000 per year (Equation 2)

Based on the results of the calculation, the value of the time allocated by PHEI students involved in volunteerism is 4.9 million hours a year. The time value of this year if converted in the form of full-time paid employees is equal to 2, 081 persons (see equation 1). This means that the government can reduce a total of 2,000 full-time paid employees every year if it replaces them with student volunteers. In terms of the value of money or salary, the government is able to save RM 24, 972, 000 a year (see equation 2). This indicates that the volunteerism sector has a huge impact on the country's economy as it reduces the country's spending by almost RM24.9 million per year to pay full-time staff wages. This is because the service or work done by volunteers is free of charge without paying any fees or salary. In the volunteer sector, the monetary value was converted into time value (Benatar, 2006). Given the example of some developed countries, Table 1 shows the contribution of the volunteerism sector in the economic aspects.

Table 1 Volunteerism Contribution to National Economy

Country	Per Year	Total Hours Paid Work Equation (Year)	Budget Value (One Year)
AS (2009)	8.1 Billion Hours	9 Million people	$169 Billion
UK (2003)	1.9 Billion Hours	1 Million people	£22.5 Billion
Canada	1.1 Billion Hours	578,000 people	$11 Billion
Belanda	802 Million Hours	455,000 people	$13.65 Billion
Australia	700 Million Hours	-	14.6 Billion
Malaysia *	4.9 Million Hours	2,081 people	RM 24.9 Million

Source: Haski-Leventhal (2009) and Wu (2011)
* Note: Involves PHEI students only.

4. CONCLUSION

The involvement of students in volunteering activities brings a variety of benefits not only to their holistic development but also to have a significant impact on the country's economic development. With the formula of the calculation, the government can estimate the savings that can be done by replacing full-time paid workers with volunteering services.

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