

## Identifying Motivational Factors That Influence Youth Participation in Volunteerism: A Pilot Study on TFTN Pahang

Azniza Ahmad Zaini  
Musramaini Mustapha  
Norulhuda Tajuddin  
Maisarah Ishak  
Adibah Hussin

### ABSTRACT

*The involvement of young people nowadays in volunteering activities such as education, health and welfare, environmental concerns and services for youth group and senior citizens has been increasing in Malaysia. The outcomes of being involved in volunteering activities could produce a feeling of self-worth and respect. The existence of a group named Teach for The Needs (TFTN) in Malaysia has so far contributed a lot to the volunteering activities especially in giving free education services to the orphans and children from poor families. However, lack of research has been done to identify the motives that youth offer for their participation in volunteering activities. Hence, a pilot study on TFTN group has been carried out to investigate the motivational factors that influence the youth participation in volunteerism. Self-administered questionnaire were distributed to the members of TFTN group from Pahang state that were chosen as respondents for this pilot study. The result reveals that factors like values, satisfaction and social motivate the TFTN members to be involved in volunteering activities.*

**Keywords:** youth, volunteerism, motivational factors, pilot study

### Introduction

Teach for the Needs (TFTN) is a non-profit organization that aims to provide education opportunities for school pupils, especially those from less privileged family and orphanages as their mission. This mission brought a numbers of qualified teachers, volunteers and activists all around Malaysia who are willing to sacrifice their free time, effort and money contributed in various activities since 2012. The idea begins by providing free extra tuition to less fortunate students. These students have no opportunity to attend extra tuition due to poverty, and therefore their right to get better education service were denied. TFTN believes everybody should get equal right in education to have better life in future. The tuition classes are not only limited to school related subjects, but TFTN also offers extra interpersonal training, such as play and theatre, music and arts (source: [www.teachforthenneeds.org](http://www.teachforthenneeds.org)).

On top of that, some activities were planned to raise funds and increase awareness among society regarding the importance of education opportunity to less fortunate people such as collaboration with international university like National Taiwan Sports University, Warwick University in United Kingdom, seminars, field trip, and convention. Involvement in volunteerism activities is a very good culture and it is one of the most important activities in universities. According to Scafidi (2007), those volunteers may understand that volunteerism activities will require them to help others to improve the condition of the community surrounding. Besides that, volunteers could learn to improve their condition by looking at others' situations and at the same time learn to serve them well. It is a "win-win situation" with exposure on the volunteering activities, volunteers may develop tendencies to participate not only "serve to learn" but also "learn to serve" (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009) through their volunteerism activities.

Because of those advantages that volunteers could gain through volunteering activities, we are interested to conduct a pilot study on this specific group (the TFTN) in order to investigate the motivational factors that influence youth participation in volunteerism since lack of research regarding volunteerism has been done in Malaysia. It is recommended to conduct a pilot study prior to a full-scale research in order to investigate the feasibility of a study (Johanson and Brooks, 2009). Some of the advantages of conducting a pilot study are assessing measures, measuring the feasibility of a full-scale study, evaluating people's willingness to participate in the study, and testing the adequacy of questionnaire (Van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley & Graham, 2001).

## Literature Review

According to Oxford online dictionary (2013), volunteerism means “the use or involvement of volunteer labour, especially in community services”. This definition was supported by Penner (2002) as it is known as long term with appropriate planned and involve committed person used to benefit others usually start in organization. In Malaysia nowadays, the involvement of young people in volunteering activities has been increasing. For example, the existence of a group named Teach for The Needs (TFTN). There are numbers of research on volunteerism has been conducted in previous research. However, very few researchers try to investigate the motivational factors that influence the youth participation in volunteerism (Antioni, 2010; Finkelstein, 2009; Vetter, Hall & Schmidt, 2009; and Booth et al., 2010).

According to Antioni (2009), between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to volunteer, intrinsic motivations seem to be more important as factors that influence people to engage in volunteerism. He considered two extrinsic motivations to volunteer which are a desire to increase the social recognition and the desire to increase the number of friends. While for intrinsic motivations to volunteer is the desire to feel useful for others. Between these three factors, respondents agreed that the desire to feel useful for others is the highest factors that motivate them to engage in volunteerism. It was followed by the desire to increase the number of friends and the desire to increase the social recognition is the least one. Finkelstein (2009) also tries to investigate the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors to volunteer. He listed out five factors for internal motives, which are values, understanding, social, enhancement and protection, meanwhile career is for external motive. He found that all motives both internal and external are significantly correlated to their engagement in volunteerism.

On the other hand, Vetter, Hall and Schmidt (2009) conducted a survey to investigate the specific motivational factors that influence people to volunteer. They classified 5 factors that represent the satisfaction, which are work itself, achievement, recognition, responsibility and advancement. Most of the respondents believed that they got engaged in volunteerism because the works are for a good cause. Booth, Segon and Shannassy (2010) found that most volunteers were engaged in volunteerism mainly because for the need for personal satisfaction by helping street people and the need for involvement and contribution by volunteerism.

## Methodology

Since we conducted a pilot study, a self-administered survey questionnaire was distributed to 23 members of TFTN in Pahang using convenience sampling. Hill (1998) as cited in Johanson and Brook (2009) recommended that 10 to 30 participants for pilots should be taken into consideration in survey research. Furthermore, Isaac and Michael (1995) also proposed that samples with N's between 10 and 30 have many practical advantages (as cited in Johanson & Brook, 2009). The respondents completed the entire questionnaire during a workshop on the date the survey was carried out. It is crucial for the researchers to collect the questionnaire on the same day in order to get high response rate.

The questionnaire comprises 2 sections; first, section A is motivational factors towards volunteerism, and section B about the demographic profile. Measurements for motivational factors towards volunteerism were employed from Tikam (2011). All responses were elicited using a four point Likert-type scale. All respondents were required to rate their level of agreement ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 4 “strongly agree”. The data were then entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics such as the mean and percentage were used in this study to examine the factors that motivate the TFTN members to participate in volunteerism.

## Findings and Discussions

### Demographic Results

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. There are 23 people who have joined TFTN as volunteers. 57% were female and 44% were male. Majority of the volunteers were between the age of 21 and 23 years old (52.2%) and there were 2 volunteers who were between 27 and 29 years old and another 2

volunteers were below 20 years old which carry same percentage 8.7% respectively. Next, for occupation, 16 members of TFTN were students and 16 of them were degree holders.

**TABLE 1:** The Demographic profiles

<i>Demographic categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i> <i>N = 23</i>	<i>Percentage</i> <i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	10	43.5
Female	13	56.5
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	2	8.7
21 – 23	12	52.2
24 – 26	4	17.4
27 – 29	2	8.7
Above 30	3	13.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	16	69.6
Self employed	1	4.3
Government servant	2	8.7
Private sector	3	13.0
Unemployed	1	4.3
<b>Education background</b>		
SPM	1	4.3
Certificate	2	8.7
Diploma	2	8.7
Degree	16	69.6
Master	2	8.7

### The experience in TFTN

Next, this study would also investigate the experience of the volunteers in TFTN. First, we identify their position in TFTN (see Table 2). Out of 23 volunteers, there were 43.5% (10 persons) involved as Volunteer RAY. RAY stands for *Rumah Anak Yatim* in Bahasa Melayu which means orphanage home. They are volunteers who are involved in managing field trip to orphanage house which is organized by TFTN. Nine of them (39.1%) are event volunteers who are responsible to manage and organized events such as forum, seminar, charity event and many more. There are 2 teacher ambassadors and another 2 persons are top management. The teacher ambassador is the teacher who voluntarily assists a group of students who show low academic performance. They take their own initiative to teach them outside school hours as they realize this group of students needs special attention. Top management plays importance role in TFTN as they are the backbone of the organization. They are also the key founder of the TFTN.

**Table 2:** Position in TFTN

<i>TFTN position</i>	<i>Frequency</i> <i>N = 23</i>	<i>Percentage</i> <i>%</i>
Top management	2	8.7
Teacher ambassador	2	8.7
Volunteer RAY	10	43.5
Event volunteer	9	39.1

Table 3 shows the involvement level of the volunteers. It is based on their perception of how active they are when involved in TFTN. Majority of them (60.9%) believed that they have involved actively in TFTN. On top of that, 26.1% (6 persons) considered their involvement in TFTN as very active. Meanwhile, 3 persons said that they are less active compared to others. This might be because they are still new in TFTN in terms of the number of participation years in TFTN, compared to those who claimed they are very active in

TFTN. It also depends on their position whether they are the top management, volunteer RAY, event volunteer or teacher ambassador.

**Table 3:** Involvement level in TFTN

Involvement level	Frequency <i>N</i> = 23	Percentage %
Very active	6	26.1
Active	14	60.9
Less active	3	13.0

Next, we investigate the commitment level of the volunteers. Table 4 indicates that the volunteers perceive somewhat same result with involvement level. There are 6 volunteers who feel that they are very committed and another 13 respondents feel they are committed to TFTN. However, 4 persons believed that they are less committed to TFTN.

**Table 4:** Commitment level in TFTN

Commitment level	Frequency <i>N</i> = 23	Percentage %
Very committed	6	26.1
Committed	13	56.5
Less committed	4	17.4

### The Motivational Factors

Section A in the questionnaires measures three motivational factors that motivate youth to be involved in volunteerism included values, satisfaction and social factors. As seen in Table 5, the overall mean for items in values factor are displayed. The respondents were required to rate the answer according to the scale 1 for "strongly disagree" and 5 for "strongly agree". It was found that 22 respondents (95.6%) responded strongly agree and agree that by joining volunteerism, they would be able to strengthen their relationship to their religion. The mean score for this item is 3.61.

The highest mean score under this factor is 3.83 which 22 respondents (95.7%) stated agree and strongly agree that they were concerned about those less fortunate than themselves when they got involved with volunteerism activities. Only 1 person (4.3%) disagreed with the statement. Nonetheless, all respondents stated agree and strongly agree that they felt compassion toward people in need and felt that it is important to help others. They also agreed that they could do something for a cause that is important to them. The mean score for this item is 3.57.

**Table 5:** Mean and Percentage for Values Factor

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strengthen volunteers' relationship to his/her religion	3.61	-	1 (4.3%)	7 (30.4%)	15 (65.2%)
<b>I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself</b>	<b>3.83</b>	-	1 (4.3%)	2 (8.7%)	20 (87.0%)
I feel compassion toward people in need	3.78	-	-	5 (21.7%)	18 (78.3%)
I feel it is important to help others	3.78	-	-	5 (21.7%)	18 (78.3%)
I can do something for a cause that is important to me	3.57	-	-	10 (43.5%)	13 (56.5%)

Table 6 shows the overall mean for each item of satisfaction. Each respondent was asked to rate the answer according to the scale 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. Based on the mean analysis it shows that a total of 22 respondents (95.7%) responded strongly disagree and disagree that they frequently think to stop volunteering activities. The mean score for this item is 1.43.

Besides that, 22 respondents (95.6%) responded agree and strongly agree that they have been able to make an important contribution in volunteerism activities with the mean score is 3.26. The results also show that the entire respondents (100%) were satisfied with the experience in volunteerism activities with the highest mean score = 3.78. Majority of the respondents (22 or 95.6%) responded agree and strongly agree that they enjoyed their experience in volunteerism activities. Mean score for this item is 3.70.

**Table 6 : Mean and Percentage for Satisfaction Factor**

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I frequently think to stop volunteering activities	1.43	14 (60.9%)	8 (34.8%)	1 (4.6%)	-
I have been able to make an important contribution in volunteerism activities	3.26	-	1 (4.3%)	15 (65.2%)	7 (30.4%)
<b>The experience in volunteerism activities has been a worthwhile one</b>	<b>3.78</b>	-	-	5 (21.7%)	18 (78.3%)
I am enjoying my experience in volunteerism activities	3.70	-	1 (4.3%)	5 (21.7%)	17 (73.9%)

Table 7 shows that most of the respondents were very positive with all items categorized under social factor. The highest mean score is 3.87 which explained that the respondents did strongly agree and agree that volunteerism would be able to strengthen the feeling of belonging to their society or community. They strongly agreed and agreed that friendship could be developed when they involved in volunteerism (mean score = 3.83).

On the other hand, 1 person (4.35%) disagreed with item "People I know share an interest in community service. Another 22 respondents (95.7%) agreed and strongly agree with the statement. The mean score for this item is 3.48.

**Table 7: Mean and Percentage for Social Factor**

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Volunteerism develops friendship	3.83	-	-	4 (17.4%)	19 (82.6%)
<b>Volunteerism strengthen the feeling of belonging to his/her society or community</b>	<b>3.87</b>	-	-	3 (13.0%)	20 (87.0%)
People I know share an interest in community service	3.48	-	1 (4.3%)	10 (43.5%)	12 (52.2%)
Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service	3.57	-	-	10 (43.5%)	13 (56.5%)

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on earlier discussions, there are three identified motivational factors among the TFTN volunteers. The motivational factors are known as values, satisfaction and social. Under the values factor, the highest mean score is 3.83 that represents the volunteers' perception which were concerned about those less fortunate pupils. Next, the volunteers found that it was meaningful for them to involve in volunteering activities

(M=3.78). Furthermore, for social factor, the TFTN volunteers believed that volunteerism strengthens the feeling of belonging to the society or community with a mean score of 3.87. Among those three factors, it shows that the volunteers are motivated to be involved in volunteerism because of the social factor.

Based on this research, we found that volunteerism is significant to the youth development because the human values could be developed gradually starting from the early age and it will evolve continuously in the society later on. In addition, it will give huge contribution to the society as it promotes social interaction and develops understanding amongst volunteers in their chosen fields of activity, like in the case of TFTN (Measham & Barnett, 2008).

It is recommended that other motivational factors such as self-enhancement, understanding and career development to be investigated in the future since the three factors discussed earlier are insufficient to portray the whole motivational factors of the volunteers. Since this is a pilot study, a larger sample size should be taken into consideration in the future research. In addition, a study could be extended to various non-profit organizations as the nature of the activities might produce different results.

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AZNIZA AHMAD ZAINI, MUSRAMAINI MUSTAPHA, NORULHUDA TAJUDDIN, MAISARAH ISHAK, ADIBAH HUSSIN.  
Universiti Teknologi MARA (Pahang).  
nizazaini@pahang.uitm.edu.my, musra\_08@pahang.uitm.edu.my, alhudatajuddin583@pahang.uitm.edu.my, maisarahishak@pahang.uitm.edu.my, dibah575@pahang.uitm.edu.my.