



Investigating Attitudes and Feelings Towards Volunteering: A Comparison of Arab and non-Arab students

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose Volunteer activities play an important role in shaping students with various skills including self-identity and soft skills. This study aimed to explore the attitudes of outstanding students at the Arabic Academic College for Education in Israel and Students at Other Colleges in Israel towards voluntarism **Methodology:** There were two questionnaires used in this study to collect data from 100 students selected through the purposive sampling technique: the first included 34 items, which collected data on the motives of volunteering; the second involved 9 items on their perception about volunteerism. The descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data,

Findings: The results indicate that: Arabic College students perceive volunteer activities as more helpful in their future career in comparison with the perception of the students from other colleges. However, no significant differences were found between the Arabic College students and students at other colleges in terms of their feelings and attitude toward the volunteer activities they perform. **Implications to Research and Practice.** This research would be a useful reference to volunteering individuals and organisations planning to volunteer in Israel or the surrounding regions.

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Introduction

Volunteering exposes someone to many experiences that are related to one's career, increases one's self worth, reduces negative behaviors, strengthens social ties, increases positive life practices, as well as enhances emotional resilience, namely the ability to control, evaluate, express and use emotions to solve problems while increasing understanding on various issues, conflicts and problems faced by the group assisted, especially those who are involved in negative activities (Chong, 2010). Someone who is involved in volunteering is a person with social awareness, fighting spirit, universal love and willingness to make sacrifices for the welfare of others (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014). This social encouragement can be divided into four aspects, namely encouragement from peers, family, the local community, and school community.

All these encouragements indirectly influence and shape a person's behavior and drive them towards participation in volunteer work. The constant improvement of the social requirements for the quality of talents demands that the social practice be recognized as fundamental in refining student's intellectual capacity and their ability to make appropriate adjustments in an organization and apply their knowledge in the future in terms of academic or real life situations (Al Shehhi & Azam, 2019; Maki, Dwyer, & Snyder, 2016; Tham, Ab Yazid, Khatibi, & Azam, 2017). Hence, the role of voluntary community service cannot be over emphasized (Oh, 2019).

In recent times, volunteering activities among the youth have gained prominence in most developed countries. (Jigssa, Desta, Tilahun, McCutcheon, & Berman, 2018) noted that volunteers feel motivated to carry out task when it promises them career development even when it does not involve financial benefits. According to (Liket & Maas, 2015), for organizations to attract more volunteers, the challenges that confront the volunteers needs to be spotted out and solved. Several factors - both internal and external- create an influence on social volunteering activities.

Literature Review

Studies have shown that volunteering services improve the standard of living of the recipient community and progress of the civilization and the human society. A person who gets involved in volunteering work has social awareness, is highly spirited, and loves the world in general and is willing to make sacrifices for others' welfare (Muhamad & Alauddin, 2013). Volunteerism is also driven by cultural values, ideologies, principles, traditions, and impacts that it gives to the community. Most of the respondents who have participated in volunteering programs have positive thoughts on the program. Various positive values can be applied within themselves, such as hard work, helping one another, not ill-judging others and so on.

Volunteerism has become extremely vital in any society, among other reasons, it includes people who benefit from their service (Al Amirul Eimer Ramdzan Ali & Abd Hamid, 2020). The concept of volunteering has offered the prospect in fostering positive social outcomes and community benefits or social capital. According to (Kim et al., 2019), in most cases, people who have the intention to be involved in volunteering activities are motivated by intrinsic reward, such as having a pleasure feeling fostered by doing a good job and a sense of doing something that brings benefit to the society. An example of

volunteering amongst students in tertiary institutions was highlighted by (Handy, Schmid, Bousquet, Kissling, & Bernoulli, 2010). It was a career development and resume building kind of volunteering, wherein students volunteered to build CVs. Volunteering is a good means for college students to develop their individual and moral attributes. (Liu et al., 2020) acknowledges that the basis for volunteering is obtained from the moral conscience of the volunteer, and volunteering is a pragmatic demonstration of the desire for building moral cultivation in the individual student.

It is also believed that, people who love to involve in volunteering work will develop a more positive behavior and healthier outlook (Abdulelah, Sallam, Safizal, & Osman, 2015a). This is because volunteers tend to perceive themselves as optimistic about their future as they feel empowered to assist and improve their community and have that burning motivation to help others who are in need. According to (Wery & Thomson, 2013), there are two (2) main classifications of motivational strategies: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The general consensus is that the prosocial actions of volunteers offer numerous benefits not only to communities but also to volunteers themselves (Snyder, Omoto, & Dwyer, 2016). While we are not saying that volunteering has no costs or downsides or that all such activities are worth promoting (Finkelstein, 2008), on balance, bringing people together in ways that enhance and improve the lives of community members has been shown to be a good thing.

There is a dearth of research studies on volunteerism in the context of Israel educational system. Therefore, a need was felt to explore the attitudes of outstanding students at the Arabic Academic College for Education in Israel and compare them with students at Other Colleges in Israel towards volunteerism. It was premised before this study (Shamma & Kassem, 2021) that such a gap between the Arabic College students and the rest of the students can be measured in terms of satisfaction derived from volunteering. It was estimated that the former group was less satisfied than the latter group. It was also seen that the Arabic College students liked to do volunteering they in such areas that suited their skills. Their main aim for volunteerism was to build a better society, a desire to meet the coordinator's expectations, deriving a good feeling from it, the similarities between the field of volunteering and the field of their future employment. It was a rare opportunity for the outstanding students at the Arabic College to be the part of a volunteering program. They took it as an opportunity to accumulate an educational experience but did not consider volunteering as an opportunity to pay back for their community.

Since the research focused on the attitude and perception of the sampled population towards volunteering activities, the following research questions were stated to collect the data:

1. How can volunteering activities help outstanding students at the Arab college for Education as compared to other students participating in this study?
2. Are their clear differences between the outstanding students at the Arab college for Education and the other students regarding their feelings and attitudes towards volunteer activities?
3. Are their clear differences between outstanding students at the Arab college for Education and the other students in terms of reasons for volunteering?
4. Are their clear differences between outstanding students at the Arab college for Education and the other students in terms of their perception towards volunteering?

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative research design was adopted for this study, which focused on measuring the statistical data of mean and deviations. Such a study is called explorative research with an experimental approach to test the effects of one variable on another, through investigating the relationship among the variables.

Research sample

The sample of the study comprised 100 outstanding students from 7 Educational colleges in Israel who were selected through the purposive sampling method. Three of the colleges served the Arab sector (The Arabic College, Al-Qasemi College and Beit Berl) and four of which served the Jewish sector (Gordon College, David Yellin College, and Moreshet). A total of 25% of participants were males and 75% females, 54% were from the Arab sector and 46% were from the Jewish sector. Table 1 illustrates the background information about the research sample.

Table 1

Demographic information of participants

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	25	25
	Female	75	75
	Total	100	100.0
Sector	Jewish	46	46
	Arab	54	54
	Total	100	100.0
Education institution	The Arabic College	28	28
	Gordon College	10	10
	David Yellin College	13	13
	Givat Washington College	12	12
	Al-Qasemi College	12	12
	Moreshet	13	13
	Beit Berl College	12	12
	Total	100	100.0

Research instrument and procedure

This study used the two questionnaires developed by the Szold Institute. The first scale contained 34 items which collected data on the motives of volunteering, ($\alpha=0.94$), The second questionnaire involved 9 items, ($\alpha=0.928$).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistical methods, measuring the means and standard deviation. The data was segregated into sets, one set of data was for the Arabic College students and the other set of data for the other groups of students. An independent t-test was also conducted to compare the averages of the responses of the two sets

Results

The research aimed to find answers to the research questions framed for this study. The findings of the questionnaire were interpreted in the context of the students and the other students who participated in this study. This section presents the findings for each research question.

The First Research question: How can volunteering activities help outstanding students at the Arab college for Education as compared to other students participating in this study? To answer this question, means and standard deviation of the responses for the ten statements comprising this section were calculated of both Arabic College students and the other group of students. Table 2 presents the findings:

Table 2
Students' responses regarding the benefit of volunteering

No.	Statement	Jewish College Mean	S.D	Arabic College Mean	SD
1.	An opportunity to acquire professional experience in a new field	3.8	1.2	4.4	0.9
2.	An opportunity to use the experience acquired in a paid job	3.5	1.2	4.3	0.7
3.	The possibility of getting a paid job in the organization where I am volunteering	2.6	1.5	3.6	1.6
4.	An opportunity to acquire new knowledge & skills to implement at work	3.9	1.1	4.5	0.6
5.	An opportunity to strengthen my knowledge & skills in the field where I work	3.6	1.2	4.3	0.8
6.	An opportunity to get a recommendation for other work	3.0	1.3	3.7	1.3
7.	An opportunity to check whether a field that is close to the one where I volunteer suits me	4.2	1.0	4.6	0.7
8.	An opportunity to meet people that will help me in my career	3.6	1.3	4.4	0.7
9.	An opportunity to be valued at my workplace because I volunteer	3.0	1.4	4.0	1.1

M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation

Looking at the findings, it is evident that the perception level of the Arabic College students was higher than that of the other group of students. The 10 items dealt with volunteering and its impact on their thoughts and feelings. These items cover almost all the potential range of perception of that student may think of regarding volunteerism. From the findings, it is also obvious that there are differences between the responses of the other group of students and the Arabic College students regarding the future benefits from volunteering. For example, the other group of students does not strongly believe that volunteering may help enrich them or will contribute to them as individuals and employees (4.2), however, students at the Arabic College students did believe in this statement (4.6). Similarly, the other group of students viewed volunteering less as an opportunity to acquire professional experience in a new field (3.8), but the students at the Arabic College students (4.4) looked at it otherwise.

The most prominent responses were of the last two statements. The perception that volunteering would help them meet people who can advance their careers is more widespread among Arabic College students than among other students (4.0 and 3.0 respectively). Likewise, the Arabic College students believed, more than the other group of students, that the perception of volunteerism will increase their self-esteem that they will receive in their future workplace (4.3 vs. 3.2, respectively).

The Second Research question: Are there clear differences between the outstanding students at the Arab college for Education and the other students in terms of their feelings and attitudes towards volunteer activities? To answer this question, the scores of the independent samples t-test were compared. Table 3 presents a comparison of the means of each response of both the groups, the Arabic College students, and the other group of students.

The data reveals that for most statements in this section (except # 7 and # 12), the mean and SD of the Arabic College Students equaled or exceeded that of the other group of students, when questioned about their feelings and attitudes for volunteering. The implication is that there are hardly any statistically significant differences between the two groups and that there is a high degree of similarity between the Arabic College students and the other students.

Regarding two statements, # 7 and # 12, it was found that the Arabic College students fell short of the other group of students. The statement # 7 stated, "The activity times are convenient for me" was measured as 3.8 and 3.7 by other group of student and Arabic college students respectively. Though marginally higher, it shows that the volunteering time was a bit less convenient to the Arabic college students. Likewise, for the statement # 12, "Volunteering gives me a lot of satisfaction", the findings indicate that the Arabic College students find it less satisfying (3.9) as compared to the outstanding students at other college (4.2).

The Third Research question: Are there clear differences between outstanding at the Arab college for Education and the other students in terms of the reasons for volunteering? To answer this question, the scores of the independent samples t-test were compared. Table 4 presents a comparison of the means of each response of both the groups, the Arabic College students, and the other group of students.

These findings reveal slight differences between the students at the Arabic College and those of other colleges since 14 out of 34 statements show significant differences. For instance, the Arabic College students want to get practical experience in advance of working for pay more than the students in other colleges (3.3 vs. 2.6, respectively); they want to broaden their horizons more (4.1 vs. 3.5 respectively); they feel that volunteering where they do and being part of the organization or project is more prestigious (4.4 vs 3.10, respectively); they believe that volunteering makes them feel better about themselves (4.3 vs.4.1 , respectively); they feel that it provides them with a challenging activity (4.3 vs. 3.3, respectively); they perceive that most people around them volunteer (2.9 vs. 2.5); they believe less that it is an opportunity to develop social contacts (4.1 vs. 4.4 respectively); they feel that it is more an opportunity to work with people of different ages (4.5 vs. 4.3, respectively); they believe more that if they do not volunteer, they will not be promoted at work (2.8 vs. 2.7, respectively); they think that if they do not volunteer, they will be the exceptions in their study track (3.3 vs. 2.9, respectively); they believe that they are expected to set a personal example (3.5 vs. 2.2, respectively); however, they had fewer previous contacts with the staff working at the organization where they are volunteering (3.1 vs. 3.8, respectively); they feel that their future professional career is more related to their volunteer activities (4.3vs. 3.7, respectively); and their hobbies are more related to the field in which they are volunteering 4.0 vs3.9, respectively).

Table 3

Means of students' responses to question two about their feelings and attitude towards volunteering

No.	Statement	Other Group Mean	Other Group SD	Arabic College Mean	Arabic College SD
1.	I am interested in what I am doing as a volunteer.	4.3	0.8	4.6	0.7
2.	I have the opportunity to express the range of my skills.	4.1	0.8	4.3	0.6
3.	There is a good social atmosphere where I volunteer.	4.6	0.9	4.4	1.0
4.	I have the opportunity to demonstrate my values while volunteering.	4.3	0.7	4.3	0.7
5.	I have independence to make decisions where I volunteer.	4.0	1.0	4.0	0.9
6.	I am appreciated by my superiors where I volunteer.	4.1	1.0	4.2	1.0
7.	The activity times are convenient for me.	3.8	1.1	3.7	1.0

Table 3 continue

No.	Statement	Other Group Mean	Other Group SD	Arabic College Mean	Arabic College SD
8.	I am satisfied with my volunteering achievements thus far.	4.2	0.8	4.5	0.8
9.	Sometimes, the volunteering is a burden for me.	3.3	1.0	3.3	1.1
10.	I am considering continuing my present volunteering for a long time.	3.1	1.1	3.3	0.8
11.	I am forced to give up important things because of my volunteer work.	3.0	1.2	3.2	1.1
12.	Volunteering gives me a lot of satisfaction.	4.2	0.9	3.9	0.9
13.	In the future, I will prefer to volunteer in different areas.	3.0	1.3	3.0	1.5
14.	In general, volunteering is an activity that I look forward to happily.	3.7	1.0	3.7	1.1
15.	I have a strong sense of belonging where I volunteer.	3.9	1.1	3.9	0.9
16.	I considered or am considering job retraining.	2.4	1.4	2.6	1.5
17.	I am involved in the area that suits me and my skills the best.	3/9	0.8	4.3	0.8

Table 4

Means of students' responses to question three about their reasons for volunteering

No.	Statement	Other Group Mean	Other Group SD	Arabic College Mean	Arabic College SD
1.	It is a commandment.	4.0	1.2	3.9	0.9
2.	I identify with the objectives of the track & the project in which I volunteer.	4.3	0.8	4.2	0.8
3.	If I don't volunteer, there won't be anybody to do the work I do.	2.9	1.3	2.9	1.3
4.	I have nothing better to do with my time.	2.1	1.3	2.4	1.1
5.	I feel lonely.	1.6	0.9	1.8	1.0
6.	I have free time.	1.9	1.1	2.4	1.1
7.	I want to get practical experience before getting a paying job.	2.6	1.4	3.3	1.4
8.	I want to broaden my horizons.	3.5	1.3	4.1	1.1
9.	It's considered prestigious to be part of the organization or project where I volunteer.	3.1	1.5	4.4	0.6
10.	I am volunteering to help others and make me feel better about myself.	4.1	0.7	4.3	0.6
11.	Volunteering provides me with a challenging activity.	3.8	1.1	4.3	0.7
12.	Most of the people closest to me volunteer.	2.5	1.2	2.9	1.2
13.	Helping people in need enhances my approach to my life.	4.0	1.0	4.2	0.9
14.	Volunteering creates a better society.	4.5	0.7	4.4	0.7

Table 4 continue

Statement No.	Other Group Mean	Other Group SD	Arabic College Mean	Arabic College SD
15. The outstanding student track coordinator expects me to volunteer.	4.2	1.0	4.5	0.8
16. Volunteering is an opportunity to repair social ills.	4.0	0.9	4.3	0.6
17. Volunteering is an opportunity to develop social contacts.	4.1	1.1	4.4	0.8
18. This is an opportunity to work with people from different age groups.	4.3	0.9	4.5	0.6
19. Volunteering constitutes an opportunity to do something worthwhile.	3.8	1.1	4.4	0.7
20. Volunteering is an opportunity to repay society for my good fortune.	1.8	1.0	3.6	1.1
21. A relative or friend received this service or a similar service.	2.2	1.5	1.7	0.8
22. If I don't volunteer, maybe I won't be promoted at work.	2.7	1.6	2.8	1.5
23. If I don't volunteer, I'll be an exception at the college and in my track.	2.9	1.4	3.3	1.3
24. I'm expected to volunteer in order to serve as an example to those below me in the track.	2.2	1.2	3.5	1.2
25. Volunteering compensates for the lack of satisfaction from doing academic assignments in the college.	3.1	1.3	2.3	1.2
26. I have experience in providing the same sort of services.	3.9	1.1	3.5	1.2
27. It's easy for me to identify with the population with whom I am volunteering.	3.5	1.1	4.0	1.0
28. Volunteering is something different in my weekly activities.	2.4	1.5	3.7	0.9
29. I had earlier contact with the staff of the volunteer organization.	3.8	1.3	3.1	1.6
30. This is an opportunity to give more help to those who need it for less money.	4.2	0.9	3.9	1.3
31. It's great educational experience for me.	3.8	1.3	4.4	0.8
32. My future professional involvement will be along the lines of the field of activities in which I am volunteering.	3.7	1.3	4.3	1.0
33. I was taught to volunteer.	3.2	1.4	3.8	1.2
34. My hobby is related to the field of activities in which I am volunteering.	4.0	1.1	3.9	1.1

The fourth Research question: 4. Are there clear differences between outstanding students at the Arab college for Education and the other students in terms of their perception towards volunteering? To answer this question, the scores of the independent samples t-test were compared. Table 5 presents a comparison of the average of responses of both the groups, the Arabic College students, and the other group of students.

Table 5

Average of students' responses to question three about their perception about volunteering

No.	Statement	Average among Arabic College students	Average among the rest of the students	t	Sig. (2-tailed).
1.	An opportunity to acquire professional experience in a new field	4.18	3.57	2.35	0.02
2.	An opportunity to use the experience acquired in a paid job	4.29	3.18	5.51	0.00
3.	The possibility of getting a paid job in the organization where I am volunteering	3.59	2.21	4.29	0.00

Table 5 continue

Statement No.	Average among Arabic College students	Average among the rest of the students	t	Sig. (2-tailed).
4. An opportunity to acquire new knowledge & skills to implement at work	4.48	3.71	4.16	0.00
5. An opportunity to strengthen my knowledge & skills in the field where I work	4.33	3.27	4.92	0.00
6. An opportunity to get a recommendation for other work	3.66	2.72	3.22	0.00
7. An opportunity to check whether a field that is close to the one where I volunteer suits me	4.40	3.24	5.64	0.00
8. An opportunity to meet people that will help me in my career	4.03	2.53	5.30	0.00
9. An opportunity to be valued at my workplace because I volunteer	4.33	2.73	6.63	0.00

These findings reveal significant differences between the Arabic College students and the students in the other colleges related to the statements regarding future professional benefits from volunteering. The Arabic College students agree more to a significant degree with a few statements than the students in the other colleges. For instance, the Arabic College students feel that their volunteering activities give them an opportunity to acquire professional experience in a new field; to express the experience they acquired in their paid job in their volunteer work; to get a job later on in the organization where they are volunteering; to acquire new knowledge and skills; to strengthen knowledge and skills in the field where they work; and to be valued at their future workplace because of their volunteering.

Discussion

This research aimed to examine the attitudes of outstanding students toward volunteering activities that they are required to participate as one of the prerequisites for attending the excellence track in their curriculum. One of the principles underpinning the excellence track in the program is that outstanding students contribute to the community and not just receive something from it (Lieberman et al., 2001). In this research we sought to reveal the attitudes of the three Arabic College students and compared them with those of outstanding students from four other colleges –in total, 100 outstanding students from 7 colleges. The research focused on three areas related to contribution to the community: (a) students' feelings toward volunteering; (b) the reasons why they are contributing to the community; and (c) the future benefits they expect to get because of their volunteer activities.

The research embarked with the question: How can volunteer activities help outstanding students at the Arab College for Education – Haifa, in their view, compared to the other students participating in this research? The findings for this question indicated that the Arabic College students consider their volunteer activities more significant than the outstanding students from other colleges, something that may help them in future, this point was in line with (Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010). The findings revealed that the Arabic College students perceive, more than the students of other colleges, that volunteering enriches them both as individuals and employees. This finding is in line with (Shamma & Kassem, 2021), who concluded Volunteerism was extremely vital in any

society because it involved all those people who were benefited from their service. The same is true about acquiring professional experience in a new field, meeting people who may help them in their careers and the desire to be more involved in their future place of work because of having volunteered, (Muhamad & Alauddin, 2013).

Additionally, there were questions related to differences between outstanding students at the Arabic College and students at other colleges in terms of their feelings toward volunteer activities, reasons for their volunteering, and how volunteering helped them in future. To begin with, no significant differences were found between the Arabic College students and other students in terms of their feelings toward volunteering activities they performed, except regarding two statements: the Arabic College students feel less satisfied by the volunteer activities than the other students, but nevertheless, they reported that they were involved in the most appropriate field given their skills. This finding is in line with (Shamma & Kassem, 2021) who also found similar results. The reason for this attitude of the Arabic students might be because they ascribe great importance to their volunteering activities being congruent with their skills and were very interested in them, though not satisfied compared to the students at other colleges. One possible explanation for this finding may be that these students aspired to volunteer more or invest more in their volunteering, but most likely were not finding someone to talk to about this.

While examining reasons for volunteering, a total of 14 significant differences were identified between the Arabic College students and the students from other colleges namely the former wanted to get more practical experience in advance in order to get a better-paid job; they wanted to broaden their horizons; it was prestigious in their opinion to be part of the organization or project where they were volunteering; volunteering made them feel better about themselves; it gave them something challenging to do; they felt that most people around them volunteer; it was an opportunity to develop social contacts, to work with groups of people of different ages; they felt that if they did not volunteer, they would not be promoted at work and would be the exceptions in their study track; they expected to serve as an example to others; they had earlier contact with the staff at the organization where they volunteered; their future professional job was related to the field where they are volunteering; and their hobby was related to the field in which they are volunteering. There were no significant differences found in the rest of the statements.

In terms of perceiving how volunteering activities would help them in future, significant differences were found between the Arabic College students and the outstanding students from other colleges in all the statements related to future professional benefits from volunteering, which is similar to what (Abdulelah, Sallam, Safizal, & Osman, 2015b) concluded in their research. The students of the Arab colleges felt that the volunteer activities gave them the opportunity to acquire experience in a new field, to use their experience from their paid place of work, to get a job in future in the organization where they volunteer, to acquire new knowledge and skills, to strengthen their knowledge and skills in the field where they work, to get recommendations for work, to be enriched, to check whether the field in which they are volunteering suits them, to get to know people who may help their career, and to be valued at their future place of work because they volunteered. With each of the above statements, the Arabic College students agreed to a significant degree more than the students studying in the other colleges.

Conclusion

In fact, there is a larger section of population, including visitors, who act as volunteers in Israel. In fact, Israel has developed a lot due to very successful voluntary efforts. In general, however, there are no religion requirements to volunteer, the country is a perfect blend of old and new traditions. The trend among the people fully reflects their inclination towards volunteerism. Since Israel became internationalized, there were plenty of opportunities to volunteer in Israel for people from all parts of the world, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, and nations. The current study was an attempt to understand the attitude and perception of the university students towards volunteerism. The findings have revealed interesting information about Arab students as well as students at other colleges. This study can be expanded in future to study other cultures and compare them together to determine to what extent volunteering is significant among students to investigate their cultures. Stakeholders should encourage students to volunteer as partial form of fulfilment of their studies.

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