

Differences in Psychological Well-Being and Commitment to Volunteer Activities According to the General Characteristics of Volunteers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify differences in psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities according to the general characteristics of volunteers. The study was conducted on 190 volunteers in Bucheon, Gyeonggi Province. Frequency analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, t-test and one-way ANOVA were performed using the SPSS program. The study found that firstly, the psychological well-being of volunteers according to their gender was of no mean difference, and that the commitment of volunteer activities was of significant difference. Second, psychological well-being by age was found to have no significant differences among groups, volunteer activity was found to have the highest mean among those in their 40s, and the mean difference between groups was significant. Their, it was analyzed that the average difference in the loyal to volunteer activities according to the employment status was significant among groups. Fourth, the difference in the commitment to volunteer activities according to volunteer experience was found to have significant mean differences between groups. The results of this study may be used to enhance abilities of volunteers.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Voluntary, Volunteer, Volunteer activity, Volunteer activity commitment.¹

1. Introduction

1.1 Importance of Research

With the economic growth, improved standard of living, and the advancement of medical technology, the average life expectancy has increased, which has, in turn, led to the aging of the population. The rapid aging of the population is creating social problems such as poverty, loss of roles, disease, depression, and sense of isolation among the elderly. The government has implemented the Long-Term Care Insurance Act to address these social problems. However, despite the effort, the national and local administrative bodies cannot fully solve their social

¹ Article history:

Received (March 6, 2019), Review Result (April 7, 2019), Accepted (May 8, 2019)

problems due to a lack of administrative personnel. Hence, the government is cooperating with volunteers and volunteering groups to deal with these social problems in the blind spot. Therefore, volunteers and volunteering work play an important role in these situations. However, since most of the volunteers are one-timers, who do not participate on a regular basis, it is difficult to get a consistent data on the utilization of the volunteers [1]. The satisfaction with the volunteer work can be evaluated in terms of psychological variables like self-respect, psychological well-being and happiness. Moreover, the satisfaction with volunteer work influences formation of positive self-respect and supports the formation of self-acceptance for psychological well-being [2].

This means that volunteer experience improves psychological well-being by providing satisfaction with life and a positive sense of self-respect. In addition, it was found that the intrinsic motivations of volunteer work has a positive effect on the satisfaction with volunteer work, while the external motivations has a negative effect on the satisfaction with volunteer work. Such result shows that involuntary participation lowers the satisfaction with volunteer work [3]. Based on the results, the national and local administrative bodies should encourage consistent participation of volunteers considering the motivation of volunteers.

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to analyze the differences in psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities according to the general characteristics of volunteers. Specific research questions are as follows:

First, how are the psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities different, according to the gender of the volunteer?

Second, how are the psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities different, according to the age of the volunteer?

Third, how are the psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities different, according to the employment status of the volunteer?

Fourth, how are the psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities different, according to the volunteer experience of the volunteer?

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Subject

This study was conducted on the volunteers in the city of 00, Gyeonggi Province, were surveyed from November 1, 2018 to January 31, 2019. The volunteers were given a full explanation about the purpose of the study, after which they filled out the survey on their own. A total of 190 surveys were collected and used in the analysis.

2.2 Research Tools

The research tools used in this study consist of 4 questions about demographic characteristics, 18 questions about psychological well-being, and 10 questions about commitment to volunteer activities. Questions about the general characteristics included those about gender, age, employment status, and volunteering experience. A tool used by H.J. Park[4] to evaluate the psychological well-being of volunteers consisted of 18 questions about individual's psychological status. A tool used by J.W. Yang[5] to measure commitment to volunteer activities consisted of 10 questions.

2.3 Reliability Level

The result of reliability test for psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities shows high reliability level at 0.832 and 0.908, respectively. Each measurement tool shows high reliability level, as well, with Cronbach's α values higher than the minimum of .60. The results are as shown in <Table 1>.

Table 1. Reliability Level of Main Variables

Category	Number of Questions	Cronbach's α
Psychological Well-Being	18	.832
Commitment to Volunteer Activities	10	.908

2.4 Data Processing and Analysis Method

The data collected in the study were verified at a significant level of 5% using the SPSS 22.0 program, and the reliability calculation of each research tool was analyzed using Cronbach's α . The general characteristics of volunteers were analyzed for frequency, and the correlation analysis was performed for the psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities. Additionally, t-test and one-way ANOVA were performed to analyze the differences between groups for the psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities.

3. Research Results

3.1 General Characteristics

The participants of the study consisted of 104 male (54.7%) and 86 female (45.3%), showing higher level of response from male. 58 participants (30.5%) were in their 50s; 42 participants (22.1%) were in their 40s; 36 (18.9%) were in their 60s or older; 33 (17.4%) were in their 30s; and 21 (11.1%) were in their 20s. In terms of the employment status, 122 participants (64.2%) were employed and 68 participants (35.8%) were not. The volunteer experience of 45 people (23.7%) was between 3-5 years, which was the highest. 40 people (21.0%) had less than 3 years of volunteer experience, followed by 38 people (20.0%) who had more than 5 years. 34 people (17.9%) responded that they have 1-2 years of experience and 33 people (17.4%) said they have less than 1 year of volunteer experience. The general characteristics of the subject are as shown in <Table 2>.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

Category		Total (N=190)	
		Number	(%)
Gender	Male	104	54.7
	Female	86	45.3
Age	20s	21	11.1
	30s	33	17.4
	40s	42	22.1

	50s	58	30.5
	60s or older	36	18.9
Employment	Employed	122	64.2
	Unemployed	68	35.8
Volunteer Experience	Less than 1 year	33	17.4
	1-2 years	34	17.9
	2-3 years	40	21.0
	3-5 years	45	23.7
	5 years or more	38	20.0

2 Descriptive Statistics for Main Variables

The volunteers' main variables were measured on a five-point scale. The descriptive statistics analysis of the psychological well-being showed the minimum value of 2.25 and maximum value of 4.38; the mean value of psychological well-being ($M=3.12$) was found to be higher than the overall mean. The descriptive statistics analysis of commitment to volunteer activities showed the minimum value of 1.00 and maximum value of 5.00; its mean value ($M=3.33$) was higher than the overall mean. The results are summarized in <Table 3>.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Analysis of the Main Variables

Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Psychological Well-Being	190	2.25	4.38	3.12	.34
Commitment to Volunteer Activities	190	1.00	5.00	3.33	.85

3.3 Correlation between Main Variables

A low level of positive correlation ($r=.240$, $p<.01$) was found between the perceived sense of psychological well-being of volunteers and the commitment to volunteer activities. This means that each correlation coefficient is below the statistically significant minimum. The correlation analysis results of the variables are as shown in <Table 4>.

Table 4. Correlation Between Main Variables

Category	Psychological Well-Being	Commitment to Volunteer Activities
Psychological Well-Being	1	
Commitment to Volunteer Activities	.240**	1

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

4. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, the differences in the psychological well-being of volunteers and their commitment to volunteer activities were analyzed. The details of the analysis results are as follows:

First, there was no statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being according to gender, but commitment to volunteer activities was found to have statistically significant difference. The mean values of psychological well-being for each gender were found to be at the same level, showing that there is no statistically significant difference. The mean value of commitment to volunteer activities was higher in male participants than in female participants, suggesting that there is statistically significant difference between genders. This result was different from a study, which found higher effectiveness of volunteer participation in female than male [4].

Second, there was no statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being according to age. However, commitment to volunteer activities was found to have statistically significant difference among different age groups. Volunteers in their 40s had the highest mean value, and there was statistically significant difference in the mean values of the participants in their 40s, 60s or older, and 20s. The psychological well-being was about the same level regardless of the age but the commitment to volunteer activities had statistically significant difference across different age groups, with people in 40s having the highest level. This result is consistent with that of a study, which found that people in the late 40s have highest participation in volunteer activities and that the volunteer role status variable and the service time variable have a positive relationship with the well-being variable [5].

Third, there was no statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being according to employment status, while there was statistically significant difference in the commitment to volunteer activities according to employment status. The mean values for psychological well-being were found to be about the same level regardless of the employment status. This was inconsistent with a study, in which unemployed baby-boomers were found to have stronger motivation for volunteer work than the employed baby-boomers, in terms of one's social identity or sense of social integration [6]. Additionally, monthly income, status, and family support factors were found to cause statically significant difference in the consistent volunteer participation of an individual [7].

As discussed thus far, the need for research on psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities is increasing from the social welfare services perspective. Therefore, this study is meaningful as it establishes the relationship between the psychological well-being and the commitment to volunteer activities according to the general characteristics of volunteers. It is important to utilize these findings to develop social programs that will help improve psychological well-being and commitment to volunteer activities in accordance with the general characteristics of volunteers, or the direct variables of the volunteers. More in-depth research on the psychological capital of volunteers will be required in the future.

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