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THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERING IN THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS' HUMANISTIC VALUES

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of volunteering in the formation of students' humanistic values. Volunteering positively influences the development of social responsibility, empathy, compassion, cooperation, and solidarity. By participating in volunteer activities, students learn to contribute to society, gain a deeper understanding of social issues, and develop a habit of helping others.

The article highlights that volunteering plays a significant role in students' personal development and increases their social engagement. These activities expand their worldview, enhance leadership, communication, and teamwork skills, and instill a sense of responsibility. Moreover, volunteering strengthens students' social integration and fosters a sense of belonging within the community.

The study concludes that volunteering is crucial in enriching students with humanistic values. Such activities have a significant impact not only on the education system but also on the overall development of society. Therefore, encouraging students to engage in volunteer work is essential for their personal growth and social progress.

KEYWORDS

Volunteering, Value, Student, Humanistic, Education, Youth, Activity

CITATION

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INTRODUCTION

The development and reinforcement of humanistic values play a fundamental role in shaping a progressive and compassionate society. These values, including empathy, solidarity, social justice, and responsibility, contribute to the formation of individuals who are not only aware of societal challenges but also actively work towards addressing them. The younger generation, particularly students, represents the future of society, making it essential to instill these values during their formative years. Various educational and social approaches are employed to achieve this goal, and one of the most impactful methods is volunteering.

Volunteering serves as a powerful tool for personal growth and social development. Through active participation in volunteer activities, students gain firsthand experience in understanding the struggles faced by different segments of society. This exposure fosters a sense of empathy, encouraging them to approach social issues with compassion and a willingness to contribute to solutions. Unlike theoretical education, volunteering provides practical experiences that allow students to engage with real-life challenges, enhancing their problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities (Khalilov, Aliyev, Guliyeva & Babayeva, 2024).

One of the significant benefits of volunteering is its role in shaping students' social responsibility. By dedicating their time and effort to helping others, students develop a deeper awareness of the impact of their actions on society. This sense of responsibility extends beyond volunteer work, influencing their behavior in

everyday life, their career choices, and their contributions to community development. Additionally, volunteering nurtures a culture of cooperation and teamwork, as students work alongside peers, mentors, and community members to achieve shared goals. These collaborative experiences strengthen their interpersonal skills and prepare them for future professional and social interactions.

Beyond personal development, volunteering enriches students' academic and professional lives. Many educational institutions recognize the value of volunteer work and encourage students to participate in community service initiatives. Engaging in such activities enhances students' resumes, as employers and universities often value individuals who demonstrate a commitment to social causes. Volunteering provides students with hands-on experience in various fields, helping them explore career paths, develop leadership skills, and build professional networks that may benefit them in the future.

The broader societal impact of volunteering should not be overlooked. When students actively engage in volunteer work, they contribute to building a more inclusive and supportive community. Their efforts help address social inequalities, support marginalized groups, and promote a culture of kindness and mutual aid. Moreover, their involvement in volunteering often inspires others to participate, creating a ripple effect that amplifies the positive changes within society (Wilson, 2000).

In conclusion, volunteering plays a crucial role in the formation of students' humanistic values. It provides them with opportunities to develop empathy, social responsibility, leadership skills, and a strong sense of community engagement. Beyond personal growth, volunteering contributes to academic success, career development, and societal well-being. Encouraging students to actively participate in volunteer work is essential in nurturing responsible and compassionate individuals who will continue to make meaningful contributions to society throughout their lives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To explore the role of volunteering in the formation of students' humanistic values, a mixed-methods research approach was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The research focused on students participating in volunteer programs and aimed to assess the impact of these activities on their personal and social development. The materials and methods section outlines the tools and procedures used in this study.

1. Participants

The study involved a total of 200 students from various educational institutions, including universities and colleges. The participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring a diverse group of students from different academic disciplines, backgrounds, and volunteer experiences. The age range of participants was between 18 and 25 years old, with a balanced representation of both genders (Penner, 2002).

2. Data Collection Tools

The data collection process included both qualitative and quantitative methods:

Surveys/Questionnaires: A structured questionnaire was developed to assess the students' perceptions of the impact of volunteering on their humanistic values. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions used a Likert scale to measure the extent to which volunteering influenced values such as empathy, social responsibility, cooperation, and compassion. The open-ended questions allowed participants to provide more detailed reflections on their personal experiences with volunteering (Okun & Schultz, 2003).

Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with a subgroup of 30 participants. These interviews aimed to provide deeper insights into how volunteering shaped their attitudes and values. The interviews were semi-structured, with questions designed to explore specific aspects of humanistic values and the overall experience of volunteering. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

3. Procedure

The study was carried out in two phases:

Phase 1 (Survey Distribution): The questionnaire was distributed to the selected participants, who were asked to fill it out either in person or online. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in their responses (Carman & Stewart, 2013).

Phase 2 (Interviews): After the surveys were completed, a subset of participants who indicated a strong connection between volunteering and the development of their humanistic values was selected for interviews. These interviews took place over the course of four weeks, either in person or via video conferencing platforms, depending on participants' availability.

4.Data Analysis

Quantitative Data: The survey responses were analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis, were applied to explore the relationships between volunteering experiences and the development of humanistic values.

Qualitative Data: The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes related to the development of humanistic values (e.g., empathy, social responsibility, and cooperation) were identified, and participant responses were categorized accordingly. Thematic analysis allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and insights into the personal impact of volunteering (Lough & Tiessen, 2009)

5.Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. All data was kept confidential and stored securely. Participants' anonymity was maintained throughout the research process (Madsen & Bowen, 2014).

Through this methodology, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how volunteering influences students' humanistic values and contributes to their overall personal and social development.

RESULTS

The findings of this study highlight a significant connection between volunteering and the development of humanistic values among students. Data collected from both surveys and interviews reveal that volunteering plays a crucial role in enhancing values such as empathy, social responsibility, compassion, and teamwork.

From the survey data:

Empathy and Compassion:

85% of participants indicated that their involvement in volunteer activities led to an increase in empathy and compassion. In particular, 70% rated their empathy as "strongly increased" or "moderately increased" after volunteering, suggesting a direct link between volunteering and the enhancement of these values.

Social Responsibility:

78% of students reported that volunteering significantly boosted their sense of social responsibility. Additionally, 72% expressed an increased commitment to societal issues and social participation after engaging in volunteer work, showing that volunteering positively impacts students' civic engagement.

Cooperation and Teamwork:

80% of students reported that volunteering improved their ability to work in teams and collaborate with others. These results emphasize the role of volunteering in strengthening teamwork and cooperative skills.

From the interview data:

Personal Growth and Development:

Many participants described volunteering as a transformative experience that deepened their understanding of societal issues and motivated them to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Changes in Attitudes and Values:

Participants mentioned how volunteering reshaped their perspectives on life. They emphasized the value of selfless giving and forming human connections, which helped them appreciate their role in society.

Long-term Impact on Career and Personal Life:

Several students shared that volunteering influenced their career goals, motivating them to pursue fields like social work and community development that align with their humanistic values.

Statistical analysis revealed a strong correlation between the frequency of volunteer participation and the enhancement of social responsibility, empathy, and teamwork, supporting the idea that regular engagement in volunteer work fosters humanistic values (Khalilov, Adilzade, Rzayev, Guliyev & Yusifova, 2024).

Demographic variations were minimal, but students engaged in direct service activities, such as working with marginalized communities, showed a more significant increase in empathy and social responsibility compared to those in indirect volunteer roles.

In conclusion, the results of this study confirm that volunteering significantly contributes to the development of humanistic values among students. It enhances their empathy, social responsibility, and teamwork skills, preparing them to become compassionate, socially responsible individuals.

The findings of this study demonstrate that volunteering plays a vital role in the development of humanistic values among students. Through their involvement in volunteer activities, students experience an increase in empathy, social responsibility, compassion, and cooperation. Volunteering not only helps students connect with societal issues but also fosters a deeper understanding of human connections and selflessness.

The results suggest that volunteering contributes to personal growth by shaping students' attitudes and ethical perspectives, making them more socially conscious and motivated to contribute positively to society. The study also highlights that volunteering can influence career choices, with many students expressing an interest in fields that align with the humanistic values they develop through volunteer work (Schwartz, 2011).

Furthermore, the positive correlation between volunteer participation and the development of key humanistic values reinforces the importance of incorporating volunteer opportunities into educational programs. These activities provide students with hands-on experience, helping them develop essential skills and values that benefit both their personal and professional lives.

Overall, this research underscores the significant impact of volunteering in nurturing responsible, compassionate, and engaged individuals who are better equipped to address the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Encouraging students to participate in volunteer work is essential in fostering a more empathetic, responsible, and cohesive society.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that volunteering plays a vital role in the development of humanistic values among students. Through their involvement in volunteer activities, students experience an increase in empathy, social responsibility, compassion, and cooperation. Volunteering not only helps students connect with societal issues but also fosters a deeper understanding of human connections and selflessness.

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