

BEING A VOLUNTEER – PERSPECTIVE OF MACEDONIAN STUDENTS

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Introduction: Being a volunteer means being able to give yourself for others: giving your time, talents, energy, effort and knowledge without expectation for financial reward. Being a volunteer is a privilege and responsibility in the same time. It's a personal choice to give, help and share, and commitment to be dedicated and responsible. The number of reasons for being a volunteer is diverse as the number of volunteers. In last decade, there is a steady increased of rates of formal volunteering among young people, mainly as a result of establishment of many youth-focused volunteering programs and organizations (CAF World giving index, 2018). Volunteers, particularly volunteers in sport declare positive feedback in sense of higher self – esteem, emotional wellbeing, feeling of importance of their work, meaningful life (Delta value and moral research, 2014, www.joinuk.org). Considering different aspect of volunteering and motives to be involved in, we design this study with purpose to determine students' opinions for volunteering, including volunteering in sport, their reasons to become volunteers and motives to continue to volunteer.

Method: The study was realized on a sample of 250 university students (51% males, 49% females), with different volunteering background, from eight different Faculties at Goce Delcev University in Stip, Specially designed questioner, was designed and administrated. Descriptive – explicative method was applied. Basic descriptive statistic parameters were used to process obtained data.

Results and discussion: According the obtained results, only small percent of university students (15,6%) have served as volunteers so far, from whom 58% will definitely be volunteers again. From students with volunteering background, 35% declare that volunteering has both positive and negative aspects. From non -volunteering students, more than 64,5% will volunteer in future if they have a possibility. Following reasons were identify as leading motives for volunteering: new experiences and learning (53%), possibility to help and be useful (24%), social interaction and opportunity to meet new people (16%), easier access to certain event (7%). Reasons for quit

volunteering were also identified. Most of the students (70%) declare positive for participating as volunteers at sport events organized by the university. Receiving certificates as confirmation for their work and free access to university events are underlined as additional motives for students to volunteer.

Conclusion: Volunteering should be support in any age, especially in periods when young people are defining their personal identity. Promoting volunteering at university has multiple benefits not just for personal development of students – volunteers but also for the social recognition of the university as environment that promotes positive values and actions. Promoting the benefits of volunteering, supporting students' initiatives and actions, recognizing student's actions to help, give and share are pathways to recognize volunteering at university. Support can be also done in a form of formal recognition (certification), creating university office for volunteers, developing network of students – volunteers etc.

Key words: *volunteering, university students, motivation, actions*