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Understanding the motivations of volunteers in acute and extended care hospitals: a functional approach

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Introduction

Volunteer service has become an indispensable workforce in enhancing quality of health care in Hospital Authority. It becomes an integral part of HA services. Throughout the years, their continuous and unfailing contributions have been vividly observed and appreciated. However, their loyal motivations are not well known and explored. This study would aim at both cross-sectionally and longitudinally investigating their loyal motivations using a validated functional approach questionnaire.

Objectives

- 1.To investigate the personal motivations of hospital volunteers
- 2.To study any personal motivations difference across volunteers' demographic characteristics
- 3.To compare the results with previous study in 2012.

Methodology

Under the functional approach, Clary et al proposed six functions to represent the diversity of personal motivations in 1998. Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), designed by Clary et al 1998, an instrument using 7-point Likert scale to detect six multi-factorial psychological functions of volunteering including Value, Social, Career, Understanding, Enhancement and Protection was administered. Self-administered questionnaires with the VFI were distributed to volunteers in 7 NTEC hospitals in 2016. Independent t-test or ANOVA test was used to identify any differences of six VFI functions across volunteers' characteristics such as gender, age groups, and willingness to continue to be a volunteer. Spearman correlation was used to investigate any relationships involved.

Result

708 completed questionnaires were received in a 3-month period. Among these

volunteers, 75.0% were female, 59.4% of those ages ranged from 55 to 74, and 76.6% had attained secondary education level or above. 86.9% volunteers were willing to continue serving HA in the following year, while 61.0% volunteers were currently receiving or received NTEC medical services.

Similar ranking of those six functions (value, understanding, enhancement, social, protection & career) was observed when compared with previous study in 2012. Those with high scoring in value, understanding, enhancement and social function has stronger relation to their continuing volunteer service in NTEC. The overall response from volunteer that willing to continue their service in NTEC is 86.9% (87% in 2012). We observed that VFI could be a tool for quantifying volunteers' willingness in volunteer service as well as understanding their domains of motivations in volunteerism.

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