

Chosen psychosocial features of volunteers acting for disabled in non profit organisations

Summary

Research on voluntary work conducted globally confirms its significant role in social life. While research on the motives and characteristics of volunteers involved in this area is scarce, volunteer support is essential in activities benefiting people with disabilities.

Within the scope of the undertaken topic of this paper, the selected psychosocial characteristics of volunteers engaged in activities benefiting people with disabilities are discussed as a premise for effective management in nonprofit organizations. The interpretation of the concept of volunteering was considered taking into account different types of motives for volunteering. The research involved an analysis of the current legislation regulating all activities in this area resulting from the increased interest in voluntary work in Poland.

The research aimed to examine the motives for volunteering and selected psychosocial characteristics of volunteers working for the benefit of people with disabilities. Determining the motives for volunteering and the assumed psychosocial characteristics could provide a premise for the management of non-profit organizations.

The study was conducted with 412 participants - 333 females and 79 males aged 16 - 61 years. The selection for the survey was purposive - all individuals were engaged in volunteering work. The criteria for selection for the study: age 16 and older, mentally capable of completing the questionnaire on their own. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Based on the summarized research results, it can be stated that volunteer activities for people with disabilities are dominated by residents of medium cities, and young people - most often students/schoolchildren. In the surveyed group, the largest number of people lived in cities with 30 to 100 thousand inhabitants. The highest percentage of people had primary/high school education. The majority of people had a student status - 281 people. When asked for a self-assessment of their material status, the highest percentage of respondents declared average status. The analysis of descriptive statistics of the respondents' results showed that the highest values of undertaking voluntary work referred to emotional-cognitive motives, followed by professional motives. The empathic motives showed the lowest value.

As a result of the study, it was found that there were relationships between sociodemographic characteristics and motives for volunteering. As far as the vocational motives are concerned, the statistically significant determinants included occupational status, a disabled family member, and experience in volunteering for the benefit of people with

disabilities. For empathic motives, the independent variables were education, health self-assessment, family members with disabilities, friends with disabilities, and volunteer experience.

Sociodemographic variables showed correlations with personality traits related to self-esteem, which varied by age, education, occupational status, marital status, and the size of the respondents' places of residence. The analyses showed that sociodemographic variables significantly differentiated particular aspects of the sense of coherence (intelligibility, resourcefulness, and sensibility).

The study showed existing relationships between personality traits and motives of voluntary work. The analysis of the relationships between the meaning of life and the motives of voluntary work showed the existence of correlations between the meaning of life and emotional-cognitive motives and between the search for the meaning of life and emotional-cognitive motives. However, taking gender variations into account, strong correlations are noticeable only for men.

The results obtained in this research study are characterized by sociodemographic, motivational, and personality traits, which can provide a basis for recruitment, training, and management of volunteers in nonprofit organizations working with people with disabilities, which indicates the importance of the issues addressed in the dissertation.