

A Study on the Intrinsic Motivation of University Student Volunteers in Reading Promotion Services (Postprint)

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] College student volunteers' participation in reading promotion services has become an important approach to expanding promotional human resources and enhancing the performance of promotional activities. [Method/Process] Through exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, this study examines the intrinsic motivations of college student volunteers participating in reading promotion services and their relationships with service participation behavior and participation satisfaction. [Results/Conclusions] The motivations for college student volunteers to participate in reading promotion services include five factors: "self-development," "quality control," "social identity," "social compliance," and "social interaction." The effects of these five motivational factors on participation behavior and satisfaction vary. Four factors—"quality control," "social identity," "social compliance," and "social interaction"—exert positive influences on volunteers' behavior in participating in reading promotion services, while three factors—"self-development," "quality control," and "social identity"—are positively associated with volunteers' satisfaction with reading service participation.

Full Text

Preamble

A Study on the Intrinsic Motivation of College Student Volunteers Participating in Reading Promotion Services

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] The participation of college student volunteers in reading promotion services has become an important approach for expanding human resources and enhancing the effectiveness of promotional activities. **[Method/Process]** Through exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, this study examines the intrinsic motivations of college student volunteers participating in reading promotion services and their relationships with service behaviors and satisfaction. **[Results/Conclusions]** The motivations of college student volunteers include five factors: “self-development,” “quality control,” “social identity,” “social compliance,” and “social interaction.” These five motivational factors have varying effects on participation behavior and satisfaction. Four factors— “quality control,” “social identity,” “social compliance,” and “social interaction” —positively influence volunteer participation in reading promotion services, while three factors— “self-development,” “quality control,” and “social identity” —form positive correlations with volunteer satisfaction in reading services.

Keywords: reading promotion; volunteer service; service motivation; service satisfaction; service behavior; correlation relationship

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Promoting nationwide reading and building a scholarly society constitute an important component of cultivating and practicing socialist core values, while active participation and collective efforts from social forces serve as the solid foundation and crucial guarantee for nationwide reading promotion activities. The “13th Five-Year Plan for Nationwide Reading” explicitly states: “Encourage and attract social forces to build public facilities for nationwide reading and provide reading services; encourage and support civil servants, teachers, press and publication workers, college students, and others to join the reading promoter ranks, with regular training to enhance the overall quality and service capacity of reading promoters” [1]. Undoubtedly, volunteers will gradually become an indispensable component of the reading promotion workforce. Currently, many promotional organizations have fully recognized the importance of volunteer participation in reading promotion services and have conducted practical explorations in building volunteer service platforms, recruiting and training volunteers, and researching volunteer service operation models. Despite significant achievements in volunteer participation in reading promotion services, promotional organizations must confront a reality: compared with formal promotional staff, reading promotion volunteer work is more characterized by its public welfare and unpaid nature. Without real constraints, the sustainability and depth of volunteer participation present challenges that affect the advantages of volunteer promotion services [2-3]. How to fully tap the potential of reading promotion volunteers, stimulate their vitality and efficiency, and promote the deepening development of promotional services has become an important issue requiring urgent research and resolution in the field of reading

promotion.

2 Literature Review

Volunteer service originated from Western charitable services in the early 19th century and has since experienced rapid development and standardization. Throughout this deepening and specialization process, numerous research findings have emerged, addressing multiple dimensions including the concept and significance of volunteer service, its functions and effects, service behaviors and types, and volunteer service management and mechanisms, drawing from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and management. Specifically analyzing volunteer participation in reading activities, existing research can be summarized into three aspects: (1) **Analysis of volunteer participation effectiveness in reading promotion.** J. Fitzgerald studied the reading tutoring effectiveness of college student volunteers on 144 first and second-grade children in the National Reading Program, concluding that reading volunteers significantly impacted children's reading levels and word recognition abilities [4]. E. Jung et al. examined reading tutoring activities conducted by community volunteers and found that when students worked with experienced adult volunteers, female students' reading fluency improved substantially more than male students, though improvements in reading attitude and confidence were not significant [5]. (2) **Volunteer participation methods in reading services.** R. Jacob discussed the costs and value of volunteers serving as reading partners for students with reading difficulties [6]. E. T. Dawe emphasized the importance of establishing reading partnerships between adult volunteers and children through methods such as reading aloud, writing, and interaction [7]. Wang Lin, in introducing the "Happy Little Taozi" promotion activities, noted that core volunteers possess strong autonomy, capable of handling entire processes from design to execution, from project application to picture book resource acquisition, from venue coordination to volunteer organization, from manual compilation to information dissemination [8]. (3) **Methods and strategies for promoting in-depth volunteer service.** T. C. Al-Hazza and A. Gupta proposed that reading is a complex process and many volunteers lack relevant teacher education backgrounds; therefore, frameworks and tools should be provided to help volunteers achieve professional tutoring before conducting reading guidance activities [9]. Mei Hua et al. suggested implementing content guarantees for cultivating volunteer reading promoters through developing training plans, teaching materials, and evaluating outstanding promoters [10].

Reviewing domestic and international research findings reveals that studies on this specific service type—volunteer participation in reading services—have primarily focused on sociological factors such as service effectiveness, social context, and organizational groups. Few studies have addressed psychological factors including volunteer motivation, personality, and empathy in reading promotion services. Research on intrinsic motivational factors is particularly crucial, as

it directly relates to how individuals engage in task selection, activity persistence, and verbal expression through their own thoughts and feelings within environmental contexts. Intrinsic motivation significantly influences volunteer participation behavior and holds important research value. In light of this, this paper takes college student volunteers as a specific research population, conducting in-depth analysis and discussion of their participation motivations, examining influencing factors and key elements, and revealing the relationships between participation motivation and both participation behavior and satisfaction, with the aim of providing beneficial references for efficiently establishing incentive strategies that match volunteer motivations and promoting scientific, sustainable volunteer participation in reading promotion services.

3 Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

To correctly understand motivational differences among volunteers participating in reading promotion services and thereby conduct targeted volunteer management and incentive work, scientifically and rationally mobilizing volunteer enthusiasm and action represents a crucial pathway for improving volunteer vitality and participation while reducing turnover rates. Therefore, this study addresses two main questions: (1) Among the numerous motivations for college student volunteers participating in reading promotion services, what are the main intrinsic motivational factors? (2) What correlations exist between college student volunteer motivations and their participation behavior and satisfaction? Which motivational factors can effectively intervene in participation behavior and satisfaction?

3.2 Measurement Variables

To comprehensively and accurately understand the intrinsic motivations of college student volunteers participating in reading promotion services, this study conducted in-depth interviews with 15 college student volunteers engaged in reading promotion services, representing varying levels of participation, different participation methods, diverse majors, and different geographic locations. During these interviews, multiple motivational factors emerged in discussions, including “making more friends through participation,” “gaining others’ support for one’ s own reading,” “enhancing abilities in reading cooperation, communication, and organization,” and “achieving personal fulfillment through successful volunteer activities.” Through inductive analysis of interview data, relevant intrinsic motivation measurement indicators were extracted and summarized. Drawing upon R. T. Fitch’ s three-factor participation model [11], B. M. F. Law et al.’ s revised Volunteer Functions Inventory [12], R. A. Cnaan et al.’ s 28-factor reward motivation scale [13], and L. Prouetau and C. Wolff’ s relational motivation scale [14], the existing participation motivation measurement indicators were supplemented and revised, ultimately yielding 22 refined motivation measurement items.

Volunteer participation behavior was measured through three dimensions: participation duration, frequency, and level. Participation satisfaction was measured through three dimensions: perceived satisfaction, willingness to participate again, and word-of-mouth promotion.

3.3 Questionnaire Design and Pre-survey

To investigate whether differences exist in participation levels among college students of different genders, majors, grades, and backgrounds, the first section of the questionnaire measured demographic variables of college student volunteers. The second and third sections employed a seven-point Likert scale to measure motivational variables, participation behavior variables, and participation satisfaction variables.

After initial questionnaire design, 30 college student reading promotion volunteers participated in a pre-survey, providing feedback on questionnaire structure, logic, language, and wording. Based on this feedback, the questionnaire was revised to produce the final version.

3.4 Data Collection and Research Methods

Data were collected through a combination of online and offline methods. Questionnaires were distributed to college student volunteers who had engaged in reading services at multiple universities in Sichuan Province. A total of 251 questionnaires were collected, with 238 valid questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 94.8%. The collected data were randomly divided into two groups: Group A (N=131) for exploratory factor analysis of college student volunteer participation motivations using SPSS 19.0 software, and Group B (N=107) for confirmatory factor analysis to verify relationships between participation motivations and both behavior and satisfaction using AMOS 17.0 software.

3.5 Sample Structure and Reliability Testing

Independent samples t-tests were conducted on Groups A and B, as shown in Table 1. P-values for gender, grade, major, and position variables all exceeded 0.05, indicating no significant differences in demographic variables between the two groups.

As the questionnaire was self-designed and not a standardized measurement tool, reliability and validity testing was necessary to ensure research accuracy and stability [15]. Cronbach's coefficient was used for reliability analysis, with internal consistency reliability coefficients all exceeding the minimum acceptable standard of 0.7, confirming questionnaire reliability. KMO and Bartlett's sphericity tests yielded a KMO coefficient of 0.914 and a Bartlett's sphericity test P-value of 0.000, reaching significance and indicating common factors among the surveyed variables, making the data suitable for factor analysis. Factor analysis results showed that the cumulative explained variance for eigenvalues greater

than 1 exceeded 60% for both questionnaires, demonstrating good structural validity.

4 Results Analysis

4.1 Determination of Motivational Dimensions

To effectively identify representative common factors hidden within the original 22 motivation variables, exploratory factor analysis was employed. Analysis of motivation measurement data yielded rotated total explained variance (see Table 2). The results indicate five common factors that explain 77.9% of the variance in the original 22 observed variables, demonstrating that these five factors significantly represent the original motivation variables.

To clarify the meaning of each factor for practical analysis, factor rotation was performed to obtain more satisfactory and interpretable factor variables. As shown in Table 3 , among the 22 measurement variables, variables 1-5 form the optimal subset. Based on their meanings— “acquiring reading information,” “developing cooperation and organizational skills,” “broadening horizons,” “preparing for job searches,” and “proving personal value” —this factor was named “self-development.” Similarly, the subset “contributing to the promotion team,” “making suggestions for reading services,” “evaluating reading services,” “improving promotion service quality,” and “emphasizing service goals” was named “quality control.” The subset “influenced by friends and peers” and “influenced by parents and relatives” was named “social compliance.” The subset “enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem,” “gaining sense of achievement,” and “acquiring reading emotional support” was named “social identity.” Finally, the subset “seeking pleasure,” “pursuing fashion,” “curiosity about activities,” “finding reading companions,” “helping others read,” “enhancing visibility,” and “sharing reading emotions” was named “social interaction.”

The “self-development” and “quality control” factors reflect that college student volunteers focus on self-perception when participating in reading volunteer activities, demonstrating their personalized life visions and sense of responsibility. In contrast, the “social identity,” “social compliance,” and “social interaction” factors reflect that college student volunteers’ psychological states during reading promotion services are jointly influenced by social relationships and groups. Compared with other reading promotion volunteers, college student volunteers exhibit a distinct “self-development” motivation, indicating that due to limited life experience, knowledge, skills, and social exposure, they place greater emphasis on self-growth needs, viewing participation in reading promotion volunteer activities as a new pathway for self-development to acquire knowledge, enhance abilities, broaden horizons, and gain honors. Additionally, compared with other volunteer activities, college student volunteers demonstrate relatively strong “quality control” motivation in reading promotion services, suggesting that their expectations for reading promotion services differ from current offerings, driving them to develop internal responsibility and commit to improving

service quality.

4.2 Correlation Analysis Between Motivation and Behavior/Satisfaction

Individual behavior is driven by motivation, which determines the form, direction, intensity, and duration of behavior [16]. Simultaneously, motivation constitutes a dimension of behavioral satisfaction, activating functions that fulfill and realize individual desires and needs [17]. To clarify how each motivational factor affects participation behavior and satisfaction in reading promotion activities, a structural equation model was established linking motivational factors (independent variables) with behavior and satisfaction (dependent variables), as shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

To test the research hypotheses, maximum likelihood estimation was used for model computation, yielding fit indices and path coefficients for the proposed model. Initial model fit indices were acceptable, but significance tests for model parameters showed large P-values for all path coefficients, indicating no statistically significant relationships. Therefore, based on modification indices, the model was re-estimated and revised. After revision, absolute fit indices, relative fit indices, and information indices were used to measure model-data fit, as shown in Table 4 .

The results show a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio of 2.6, below the standard value of 3, with the chi-square test passed. The relative fit index RMSEA is less than 0.05; relative fit indices GFI, NFI, and IFI all exceed 0.9; and information indices AIC and BCC are acceptable, indicating good fit between the revised theoretical model and the data.

After model revision based on modification indices, path coefficients between motivational factors and participation behavior/satisfaction are shown in Table 5 . The results indicate that among the five motivational factors, “quality control,” “social interaction,” “social compliance,” and “social identity” significantly influence volunteer participation behavior, while “self-development,” “social identity,” and “quality control” significantly influence volunteer satisfaction. Based on these path relationships and coefficients, the revised theoretical model is shown in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper].

The analysis reveals that “social compliance” has the largest positive impact coefficient on participation behavior, demonstrating that frequent information feedback among closely related individuals incentivizes participation, enhances confidence, and strengthens behavior. However, due to individual differences in perceived satisfaction experiences, “social compliance” does not significantly impact service satisfaction. The “quality control” factor positively influences both participation behavior and satisfaction, reflecting that volunteers’ own reading experiences enable them to identify promotion activity deficiencies, generating social responsibility to improve reading quality. During service, volunteers’ personal involvement with clear intentions, plans, and goals helps address promotion process shortcomings, enhance social benefits, and increase scientific ra-

tionality, thereby facilitating personal achievement and promoting satisfaction. The “social interaction” factor substantially impacts participation behavior, indicating that interpersonal connections establish shared service concerns, and through interactive thinking and discussion, enhance participation awareness, deepen motivation, and expand participation depth and breadth. However, because satisfaction perception depends on interaction depth, frequency, and content, “social interaction” does not significantly impact service satisfaction. Influenced by external incentives and mainstream values, volunteers receive social appreciation during promotion activities, which promotes continued participation and psychological satisfaction. Therefore, “social identity” significantly impacts both participation behavior and satisfaction. The “self-development” factor enhances volunteers’ knowledge and behavior during participation, thus impacting satisfaction, though the relatively slow knowledge and behavior improvement in volunteer activities may explain its non-significant impact on participation behavior.

5 Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

College student volunteers’ motivations for participating in reading promotion services demonstrate complexity and multiplicity, including “self-development” and “quality control” as two individual intrinsic factors, and “social identity,” “social compliance,” and “social interaction” as three social influence factors. Among these five factors, “quality control,” “social identity,” “social compliance,” and “social interaction” positively influence volunteer participation behavior, promoting frequency, depth, and breadth of involvement. Meanwhile, “self-development,” “quality control,” and “social identity” positively correlate with volunteer satisfaction in reading services.

5.2 Implications

The constructed motivation model for college student volunteers in reading promotion services reveals the relationships and influence degrees between multiple intrinsic, hidden participation needs and both behavior and satisfaction, enriching and extending motivation theory. The model helps promotion personnel correctly understand college student volunteers’ value cognition and emotional experiences from a psychological perspective, enabling them to develop appropriate, targeted strategies based on their promotional goals and characteristics. This approach guides and stimulates volunteers’ different levels of intrinsic motivation, enhances successful experiences, regulates participation behavior, optimizes service quality, and promotes sustainable development of college student volunteer reading promotion services.

Based on these conclusions, the following strategies can enhance college student volunteer motivation and regulate/incentivize service behavior:

- (1) **Identify volunteer strengths and match service assignments.** Strengthen acquisition and management of individual volunteer information. Based on differentiated motivations in “self-development,” “quality control,” and “social identity,” scientifically and flexibly design matching promotional volunteer tasks to maximize development of diverse cognitive abilities including learning, memory, problem-solving, language skills, and abstract thinking [18], thereby fulfilling individual intrinsic motivations and experiencing achievement and satisfaction, creating positive interaction between volunteers and promotional organizations.
- (2) **Provide scientific feedback on service status to enhance motivation.** Since “quality control” and “social identity” significantly impact satisfaction and behavior, detailed records and feedback on volunteer service processes should be maintained. Feedback should include expressing concern and support for active participation, inquiring about progress, acknowledging important contributions, and soliciting opinions on future participation. Through feedback, volunteers gain awareness of their positive impact, fostering positive service emotions that strengthen internal drive. Additionally, objective evaluation and feedback help volunteers understand external recognition of their service, generating empowerment, elevating service beliefs, enhancing mission consciousness, and ultimately achieving high satisfaction and emotional loyalty that motivates future participation.
- (3) **Build volunteer teams for mutual positive influence.** Both “social interaction” and “social compliance” influence participation behavior. Therefore, actively developing volunteer team cooperation promotes interdependence and mutual support during service activities, enhancing participation awareness and deepening motivation. Promotion organizations should first emphasize team culture construction, advocating shared service concepts, norms, and values to form common goals and ideals [20]. With strong team cohesion and centripetal force, volunteers develop a sense of belonging, viewing their behavior as integral to the team and consciously following group beliefs and goals. Organizations should also provide collaborative service platforms, encouraging cooperative service where volunteers learn from each other, discuss issues, and receive support, fulfilling “social interaction” motivation and building identity and achievement through team incentives. Additionally, promotion personnel should strengthen the role of opinion leaders within volunteer teams by analyzing communication patterns, identifying interpersonal relationships, and recognizing credible, influential opinion leaders [21]. Leveraging “social compliance” motivation, these leaders’ service concepts, attitudes, behaviors, and achievements should be publicized as references for others to follow, generating positive cognitive and behavioral tendencies toward volunteer service.
- (4) **Improve volunteer training systems to promote comprehensive**

development. Promotion organizations can provide professional volunteer service training to help volunteers master service skills, update service awareness, and acquire broader knowledge and abilities, thereby continuously improving their quality and capacity, achieving self-perfection and development, and enhancing “self-development” motivation to better fulfill volunteer responsibilities. Training can include theoretical learning on the entire process of reading promotion—publicity, organization, design, evaluation, and reflection—delivered by professional teachers or institutions, as well as practical training through observing promotion personnel’s service attitudes and methods and exchanging experiences regarding promotion challenges.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

The effectiveness of college student volunteers in promotion activities significantly impacts efficiency and sustainability. Research on their intrinsic psychological motivations and relationships can help identify suitable strategies to fulfill participation motivations, promote positive improvements in volunteer service concepts and behaviors, solidify service beliefs, realize volunteer service value, and drive harmonious, stable, and sustainable development of reading promotion services.

However, this study has limitations. First, volunteer service motivations are not only complex but also changeable. Individual motivations may shift across different stages, requiring longitudinal tracking research to analyze motivations in real-time and effectively promote volunteer service. Second, the questionnaire sample was relatively small, with data limitations that warrant broader future investigation and analysis to provide specific references for promoting deeper volunteer participation. Finally, as a cognitive construct, motivation can be influenced by both internal individual factors and external factors. This article only examined internal psychological factors affecting college student volunteer participation, without addressing external social factors such as promotion planning, content design, organizational arrangements, and incentive mechanisms. Future research should incorporate these elements into a comprehensive theoretical framework for deeper exploration.

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Tang Qiong: Responsible for literature review writing and manuscript polishing.

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