

## A study of post-95s undergraduates' voluntary service will - Take HZAU as an example

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**ABSTRACT:** With continuous development of economic society, voluntary service has become an important way for undergraduates to practice socialist value outlook. At present, post-95s undergraduates are newly emerging forces in voluntary service. As a group with characteristics of the times, post-95s undergraduates' voluntary service will be worth attention. This thesis took the post-95s undergraduates in Huazhong Agricultural University as an example and applied random sampling in investigation to conduct correlation analysis between their current service situation, participation will, service motivation, growth & achievement and their grades, aiming to provide constructive suggestion for improving post-95s undergraduates' voluntary service will.

**Keywords:** post-95s undergraduates; voluntary service; will

### 1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND RELATIVE CONCEPT DEFINITION

#### 1.1 *Origin of the issue*

Voluntary service is a lofty social undertaking. Based on people's conscious spirit and the good wish of establishing a nice society, voluntary service has witnessed great progress with the development of economic society. Nowadays, the undergraduates have formed a main force in developing social voluntary service activities which can further help them cultivate correct world outlook, view of life, and vision of value. At present, most undergraduates are post-95s students. Our general secretary Jinping Xi once praised post-95s undergraduates as "A generation with youthful spirit, willingness to learn, wide sphere of vision, openness and confidence. They are adorable, trustworthy, and capable." In order to cultivate post-95s undergraduates' voluntary service spirit, related study of current situation is necessary.

#### 1.2 *Concept definitions*

##### (1) Post-95s undergraduates

To define by physiological age, post-95s refer to Chinese citizens who were born from 00:00 on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995 to 23:59 on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999. Compared with post-80s and post-90s, post-95s are younger with more active thinking logic. In general, most post-95s are still students and their parents are normally post-60s or post-70s.

##### (2) Voluntary service

Voluntary service refers to non-governmental and unofficial service behavior. It is organized by individuals or organizations to provide various social service works. Volunteers use their own knowledge, energy and time to voluntarily complete those work, so as to fulfill social responsibilities, devote their effort to making social contribution, and offer service and guarantee to social groups in need of help. Yuanzhu Ding thinks voluntary service refers to service done by individuals who voluntarily devote their time and energy to promoting human's development, social progress, and social welfare without asking for any material benefit.

##### (3) Will

Will refers to the combination of intention and wish. It is the target and direction for one to reach by using his/her own ability.

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## 2 DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS RESEARCH STATUS

### 2.1 *Research status of overseas undergraduates' voluntary service*

Overseas voluntary service has witnessed development in three centuries. It has accumulated certain elements and formed a sound voluntary service management system during development. People in those countries have cultivated the cognition to voluntarily participate in voluntary service. Voluntary service activities have spread to every corner of their social life. There are a lot of studies about voluntary service abroad which can be concluded as follows:

#### 2.1.1 *Analysis of volunteer organization management pattern and work flow*

American scholar Joan E. Pynes discussed the assessment and comprehensive management of volunteer recruitment, election and work implement. He made deep research on how to realize optimized voluntary service in social public organizations and non-profit organizations. *The Recruitment Book* discussed each process from the beginning to the end of voluntary service activities; and analyzed the common content and inevitable problems in voluntary service management. Sue and Steve introduced volunteer recruitment and training; analyzed relation handling among each party of voluntary service; and pointed out the detailed procedures of volunteer recruitment.

#### 2.1.2 *Study of voluntary service type*

British scholar Justin Davis divided voluntary service into four major types: the first is to offer help to volunteers themselves and to others; the second is to kindly offer help to others; the third is to actively seek for and take part in voluntary service; and the last is to actively develop and expand voluntary spirit while encouraging voluntary behavior. According to related studies, Justin Davis has concluded that nations or districts with higher economic level have more official and organized voluntary service while those with weaker economic strength have more dispersed and individualized voluntary service.

#### 2.1.3 *Study of voluntary service development*

Lester M. Salamon from U.S. pointed out that the emergence of various charity and public welfare organizations has brought the appearance of tertiary departments. These departments and organizations deal with various public affairs which are neglected or not given enough attention by society or are taken care of by the state. The functions that social public welfare organizations can play are very important. Robert D. Putnam said voluntary service is a media that can help cultivate social trust. It is a social capital. Voluntary groups gather social members in common institu-

tions. Activities among social members can help citizens cultivate the sense of mutual help. This important sense can be a capital of social development and a driving force for citizen & society development.

#### 2.1.4 *Study of volunteer's personal gains*

Through related studies, Wilson and Musick found participating voluntary activities can have certain effect on personal mood. The longer one participates in voluntary service, the lower possibility of feeling down he/she will have. Thoits and Hewitt believed volunteers can obtain six benefits from voluntary service: happiness, life satisfaction, self-evaluation, sense of life control, psychological health, and pressure release. Based on related studies, Erik W. Carter and Carolyn Hughes found that compared with people who haven't participated in any voluntary service, those who have can obtain more unofficial social communication and generate stronger will to have more social communication, to absorb more related knowledge, and to have more social contact. In comparison, people who haven't participated in voluntary service have shown little improvement.

### 2.2 *Research status of domestic undergraduates' voluntary service*

In 1990s, large-scale voluntary activities started to emerge with the development of our national economy and public welfare establishment. Many volunteer organizations had been set up while the areas of voluntary service had been in continuous expansion. More and more people had joined volunteer teams, showing a favorable tendency for voluntary service development. During those twenty years, studies about voluntary service were also in deeper development mainly focusing on the followings:

#### 2.2.1 *Investigation report and experience summary of Yong volunteer*

*The Investigation on Undergraduates' Voluntary Service Participation Will Model and Compensation Mechanism* written by Yubin Zhang and Weixi Wang includes investigation survey conducted among undergraduates in Xiamen. It studied those undergraduates' recognition, understanding and attitude towards participating voluntary service. *Investigation on Undergraduates' Voluntary Service: Take Shandong University as an Example* written by Lin Yu studied the voluntary service among undergraduates in Shandong University. It analyzed the participation, features, and existing problems of undergraduates' voluntary service. *The Survey and Implications of Undergraduates' Voluntary Service in Nanchang* written by Minjing Liu did investigation research on voluntary service among undergraduates from five universities of different types in Nanchang.

### 2.2.2 *Study of the existing problems in volunteer management*

Yi Fang compared volunteer management at home and abroad; and pointed out the main problems in domestic volunteer management: organizational forms of voluntary service are few and have little interaction with society; there's lack of service target; and no clear standard has been set up for volunteer management and volunteer evaluation. Jianhong Miao and Anping Yu regarded volunteer as a kind of human resources. They believed that volunteer planning, management, designing, and investment shall be processed from perspective of human resource management. Targets of volunteer organizations and volunteers' potential value and advantages. Baoyuan Li discussed the core problems of volunteer management; and pointed out the measures to encourage more volunteers to take part in voluntary service and give play to volunteers' human resource advantage.

### 2.2.3 *Study of value, function and motivation of voluntary service*

Liang Li analyzed the functions of young volunteers' behavior: firstly, voluntary service behavior can help young volunteers join society and realize individual socialization. Secondly, young volunteer service can supplement governmental security system and make up the deficiency of social security implementation. Thirdly, young volunteers' service can pass on true feelings of the world and reduce social contradictions, serving as an important social integration mechanism. Guoqi An and Kai Cao believed China is in transformation of social economic mechanism and the government cannot completely satisfy social public service requirements. Young volunteers' service can satisfy this part of public service requirements from society and help promote social progress and socialist spiritual and civilization construction.

### 2.2.4 *Study of volunteer's personal gains*

Qidi Zhou believed participating voluntary service can promote participants' self-development and help participants to be widely recognized and praised by others and society, so as to gain happiness, satisfaction, sense of belonging, and sense of accomplishment. Through studies, Liangping Li found voluntary service can cultivate young people's sociality and help them further study social regulations; enhance sense of social responsibilities; internalize concept of value; and cultivate healthy personality. From their questionnaire investigation on undergraduate volunteers, Shan Liu and Xiao Feng found that undergraduates can gain respect and satisfaction from voluntary service. By interviewing volunteers in Shenzhen, Jianguang Tan found participating voluntary service can help volunteers restore their mindset and generate good wishes while serving for others and the society. During vol-

untary service, volunteers tend to have simple and beautiful life.

## 3 CURRENT STATUS OF POST-95S UNDERGRADUATES' VOLUNTARY SERVICE WILL

### 3.1 *Data source*

This investigation survey used random sampling method and selected 522 respondents. Questionnaires were issued according to proportion of faculty student number which can effectively reduce investigation error while guaranteeing the authenticity and effectiveness of the samples. 540 questionnaires were issued in total and 522 were recovered as effective with an effective recovery rate of 96.7%.

### 3.2 *Sampling distribution*

According to distribution of respondents' genders, grades, and faculties, the statistical results basically share no difference from the respondents. Thus, this survey is authentic and believable.

According to the designing scheme of this survey, 522 respondents were selected by random sampling from 14 faculties. The respondents were given self-administered questionnaires and were asked to fill in the answers anonymously.

### 3.3 *Data collection*

#### 3.3.1 *Documentary method*

To complete this thesis, the author set "Topic" as the search term among existing documentary reviews and entered "Voluntary Service" as the index word to look up plenty of document information.

#### 3.3.2 *Analysis of questionnaire data*

The main source for the data information of this study is from the questionnaire survey conducted in November, 2016.

#### 3.3.3 *Data analysis*

(1) Post-95s undergraduates' cognitive status of voluntary service

80% of the interviewed undergraduates know the university has established volunteer register system and the volunteer spirit of "Devotion, Friendship, Mutual Help, and Advance". They also know about related incentive policies and guarantee measures. This can show the university has well propagandized voluntary service in campus. The undergraduates have appropriate understanding of voluntary service and have well accepted it.

(2) Post-95s undergraduates' participation will on voluntary service

According to data, the post-95s undergraduates'

Table 1. Understanding of voluntary service activities

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective percentage	Accumulative percentage
Effective	Totally understand	150	28.7	28.7	28.7
	Understand	234	44.8	44.8	73.6
	Understand a bit	114	21.8	21.8	95.4
	Do not understand	24	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	522	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Attitude towards voluntary service activities before attending any voluntary service activity

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective percentage	Accumulative percentage
Effective	Totally support	444	85.1	85.1	85.1
	Do not care	72	13.8	13.8	98.9
	Do not support	6	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	522	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Major factors hindering undergraduates participating in voluntary service

		University pays little attention	Social circles are lack of correct understanding of voluntary service	Insufficient fund for voluntary activities	Lack of standard organizing management for voluntary activities	Too few voluntary service opportunities	
Grade	Freshman	42	78	60	18	12	210
	Sophomore	48	120	18	6	6	198
	Junior	6	30	6	0	6	48
	Senior	12	36	12	6	0	66
Total		108	264	96	30	24	522

understanding on voluntary service has an accumulated percentage of 73.6% (see Table 1), and their supportiveness on it can reach 85.1% (see Table 2). However, we cannot exclude that some students do not care about it. The result has extremely importance influence on the publicity of voluntary service, establishment of public image, and undergraduates' attitude towards voluntary service. It can also reflect the undergraduates have paid much attention to voluntary service.

The undergraduates' enthusiasm on voluntary service is running high. The interviewees all agreed to participate in voluntary service. Even those who didn't support voluntary activities in questionnaires agreed to participate. Only 16.1% respondents showed indifference to it, matching the proportions of people who "Do not care" and "Do not support". The result can show there's dense atmosphere of voluntary service in campus with high participating activity among undergraduates.

### (3) Post-95s undergraduates' motivation in attending voluntary service

In general, there are a lot of voluntary service opportunities at school. Undergraduates think school pays much attention to voluntary service activities; however, they generally think social circles are lack of correct understanding of voluntary service, resulting in a major factor of hindering undergraduates from participating. It shows that there's room to improve the voluntary service atmosphere in our society. We shall continue to enhance the propaganda and celebration of excellent voluntary service examples. Besides, some undergraduates think lack of service fund is one of the reasons hindering them from participating. From the above, we can analyze and conclude that universities

and colleges shall prepare more budgets for voluntary service which can help establish a virtuous cycle with related propaganda. The data in Table 3 show that junior and senior undergraduates are easier to be influenced by those hindering factors. Thus, good service environment is very important in maintaining the sustainability of voluntary service.

### (4) Post-95s undergraduates' attitude towards voluntary service organized by university

The data in Table 4 show that the undergraduates commonly show optimistic attitude towards voluntary service activities. Each average value in Likert Scale (1 refers to "Totally support") maintained from 1.5 to 2.3, showing pretty high supportiveness. The respondents even agree to participate in mandatory voluntary service organized by the university. The undergraduates' acceptance on voluntary service activities is extremely high.

Most respondents are freshman or sophomore students who tend to participate in nursing home voluntary service. In the campus, the introduction and development modes of student's voluntary service activities do not show many choices. The undergraduates' concept of voluntary service activities still remain on traditional ones such as nursing home voluntary service. Universities and colleges shall try to organize activities with higher diversity and more features.

Most undergraduates think it is very good for the university to have voluntary activities because mandatory service cannot only provide opportunities for classes to have group activities and enhance interactions among students; but can also provide the platform for many freshman students to participate in voluntary service for the first time.

Table 4. Graduates' attitude towards voluntary service

	N	Minimum value	Maximum value	Average value	Standard deviation
I think there's dense voluntary service atmosphere in campus.	522	1.00	5.00	1.5747	.92299
I think there's sufficient publicity about voluntary service in campus.	522	1.00	5.00	1.7816	.90766
I think the training before voluntary service organized by school is very useful.	522	1.00	5.00	1.9080	1.00732
I am very satisfied with the compensation system of voluntary service set by school.	522	1.00	5.00	2.0115	1.19587
I think it is good for school to have mandatory voluntary service activities.	522	1.00	5.00	2.3103	1.34086
I think we shall keep the tradition of voluntary service activities organized by school	522	1.00	5.00	1.5287	.98641
Effective N (in list form)	522				

Table 5. Description of statistics

	N	Minimum value	Maximum value	Average value	Standard deviation
I think voluntary service activities have helped me build up myself.	522	1.00	5.00	1.4828	1.00997
I think voluntary service activities are full of joy.	522	1.00	5.00	1.6322	.91645
I think I am capable of doing this job.	522	1.00	5.00	1.7586	.92718
I think it is necessary to have certain training before attending voluntary service activities.	522	1.00	5.00	1.6092	.86745
I think voluntary service organization contains group cohesion.	522	1.00	5.00	1.6897	.98016
I think our university needs to fund more in voluntary service activities.	522	1.00	5.00	1.5862	.88333
I think it is necessary to improve volunteer reward mechanism	522	1.00	5.00	1.5862	.97111
I think I can clearly see the return for my endeavor in voluntary service.	522	1.00	5.00	1.5977	.90810
Effective N (in list form)	522				

As freshman students are new at school, their voluntary service duration only stay in the mandatory voluntary service duration required by the university. However, sophomore students obviously have longer volunteer hours, and 60% of them have certified volunteer hours of more than 10 hours. However, junior and senior students do not show obvious rise in volunteer hours, showing that freshman and sophomore students have the longest service hours; there's no obvious leap between the service duration of sophomore and junior students; and there's no obvious improvement on junior student's service duration based on sophomore's performance.

(5) Post-95s undergraduates' voluntary service awareness

As we can see from Table 5 that most undergraduates think voluntary service activities are full of fun and exercise, meaning self-value can be reflected and improved during voluntary service. Most undergraduates are positive about their capability and become confident. However, there is certain reason for us to believe pure confidence is not enough. Student's good self-perception is good for their learning of related voluntary service knowledge. This is a kind of motivation. In the meantime, those participating students agree on the training mode. In general, most undergraduates are very optimistic about voluntary service activities.

(6) The relations between post-95s undergraduates' voluntary service will and their grades

Guidance analysis principle: as values of the options are integers from 1 to 2 or from 1 to 5. The values are concentrated, but there's obvious correlation between value and tendency. Thus, we can use linear regression for analysis and test whether there is positive correlation between grade and option tendency by observing plus or minus of slope. Meanwhile, due to value concentration, we shall not expect super-strong linear correlation between grade and option tendency during regression analysis, that is regression gets higher than 0.9. The correlation can be proved through test.

(7) The relation between grade and participation in voluntary service activity

Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.352 and  $P=0.001$ , meaning there's linear correlation between grade and participation in voluntary activities. After fitting analysis, fitting straight-line slope is proved to be 0.116, meaning there's positive correlation between grade and participation in voluntary activities. In Question 1, 1 refers to "I have participated" and 2 refers to "I have not participated", meaning higher dependent variable brings higher tendency of not participating in voluntary activities. It can show that students from lower grade have higher probability of participating in voluntary activities.

It means Huazhong Agricultural University has achieved good effect on voluntary activities in recent years, resulting in rising enthusiasm in voluntary activities.

(8) The relation between grade and satisfaction degree of voluntary activity compensation system

Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.220 and  $P=0.041 < 0.05$ , meaning there's linear correlation between grade and voluntary service compensation system. After fitting analysis, fitting straight-line slope is positive (0.152), meaning higher grade brings higher tendency in giving more scores for option "I am very satisfied with the compensation system of voluntary service set by school". However, in original question setting, higher score means less satisfaction. Therefore, we can find lower grade brings higher satisfaction with compensation system. There is rising trend in the allowance provided by university for volunteer in recent years, so as to bring higher satisfaction with voluntary service allowance to later-enrolled students.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

(1) Enhance education on voluntary service cognition  
The Three Elements of Attitude Theory proposed by Hovland believes attitude is composed of cognition, emotion, and behavior disposition among which cognition is the most fundamental part. The first step for an individual to generate attitude is to have correct cognition. The above study can show that the undergraduates have good understanding of voluntary service to a certain degree; however, some of them are not clear about what voluntary service is and have cognitive dissonance by regarding voluntary service as a way to practice their ability. How much undergraduates understand voluntary service can influence their attitude towards it and further influence their participation in voluntary service. Thus, we shall enhance education on undergraduates' cognition about voluntary service, so as to improve their participation in voluntary service activities.

(2) Cultivate undergraduates' sense of identity about voluntary service

In the Three Elements of Attitude Theory, individual's emotional experience is emotion. Emotion is based on cognition and thus can further influence

behavior. The final expression of emotion is degree of recognition. Data in this study can show junior and senior undergraduates have worse emotional attitude expression on voluntary service compared with freshman and sophomore students. As a result, junior and senior undergraduates have less enthusiasm about participating in voluntary service. The detailed reflection is their voluntary service hours are shorter than freshman and sophomore students. In order to improve their enthusiasm on voluntary service, we shall not only enhance their cognitive education, but also enhance their emotion on voluntary service. In this way, we can guarantee the sustainability of voluntary service activities and continuously enhance undergraduates' recognition on voluntary service.

(3) Create good voluntary service atmosphere

The study shows post-95s undergraduates think one of the main factors influencing voluntary service activity is social atmosphere. Therefore, universities and colleges must create the conditions and atmosphere for students to participate in voluntary service activities. Current voluntary service systems organized by universities and colleges are becoming sounder and sounder. Voluntary teams are in prosperous development with featured service activities. However, there's no further development in corresponding supervision mechanism. The most common situation lies in the upper limit set for voluntary service hours while there's no corresponding service duration certification for volunteers. Some students who have not made any voluntary effort also take advantage of service hour certification bug. They falsely claim voluntary service hours as their own and this problem has existed for a long time. Universities and colleges shall pay more attention to maintain diversity, systematism, and sustainability while developing voluntary service activities.

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