Who Volunteers and Why? Characteristics of Community Service Club Members at AUC

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AUC

Publication Information

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**Benefits of Youth Voluntary Service**

- **Individual volunteers**
  - Higher sense of personal competency
  - Higher self-esteem, self-concept
  - Better academic performance
  - Increased critical thinking skills
  - Greater commitment to civic service
  - (research on older adults): Better psychological well-being such as less depression, anxiety

- **Community & community organizations**
  - Offering services beyond capacity of paid staff
  - Enhancing visibility of the organization’s work
  - Direct service to disadvantaged communities

- **Societal**
  - Improved relationship between youth and community residents
  - Having more active, engaged citizens
  - Contributing to community development, social change

**In Egypt**

- 62% of population is aged 29 or younger
- Only 2.3% of youth engage in volunteerism (Population Council, 2011)
Aims of the Study

- What are the characteristics and predictors of voluntary civic engagement?
- How does local place attachment relate to voluntary civic engagement?
- How does sense of community at AUC relate to voluntary civic engagement?
- What is the relationship between voluntary civic engagement and depression, anxiety, stress?

Methods – Procedures

- Nonprobability convenience sampling
- Paper version
  - Distributed on campus
- Internet version
  - Announcements sent to students & faculty
  - Facebook advertisements targeting AUC network

Methods – Participants

- 518 students at AUC
  - 1st year: 12.5%
  - 2nd year: 18.1%
  - 3rd year: 23.7%
  - 4th & 5th year: 24.5%
  - Graduate students: 21.3%
- 67.6% Female, 32.4% Male
- Mean age 21.81 (SD= 5.65)
Methods – Instruments

- Survey on socio-demographics, religiosity, academic background, campus activities
- Modified Organizational Identification Questionnaire (Cheney, 1982)
- Self-Efficacy Toward Service Scale (Weber et al., 2004)
- Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)

Methods – Participants

Civic Engagement Classification

- Member in community outreach and community service clubs
- 19%
- 81%

Number of monthly community outreach/service hours significantly higher among those classified as civically engaged (15.7) compared to those who were not (4.7).

Data Analysis

- Comparison between civic engagers and non engagers
  - Chi square analysis
  - Two-tailed independent samples t-test
- Predictors of civic engagement
  - Logistic regression
Results – Characteristics

- Compared to non-engagers, civic engagers had a higher proportion of:
  - Women
  - Egyptian nationality (versus dual or non-Egyptian)

- Compared to non-engagers, civic engagers had higher rate of religiosity

- Both groups did differ in GPA

Results – Characteristics

- Compared to non-engagers, civic engagers had a higher proportion of:
  - High school from rural governorates (although majority of both volunteers and non-volunteers graduated in Cairo)
  - Thanaweya Amma degree
  - Socially speaking mostly Arabic or both Arabic + English (compared to mostly English)

Results – Engagement Predictors

- Factors that were significant in predicting civic engagement in the regression model:
  - Religiosity
  - Sense of community with AUC
  - Sense of civic responsibility
Results – Psychological Wellbeing

- Civic engagers had higher rates of anxiety compared to non-engagers
- No differences in depression or stress

Discussion – In General

- Sample large and diverse enough to conduct results
- High percentage of students involved in voluntary civic engagement (19%)
- Factors shown in previous research (e.g., women, higher religiosity) were significant
- Academic performance not significant
- Anxiety higher among engagers (why?)

Discussion – Profile of Engagers

- Civic engagers more likely to be deeply rooted in Egyptian society
  - Egyptian nationality, from rural governorates, from Egyptian public school, of majority religion (Muslim), speaking Arabic
- Attachment to “Egypt” more of a factor than attachment to physical location (e.g., Cairo)
- Civic engagers more deeply connected to the AUC community
Discussion – Findings Contradicting Previous Research Results

- Why are AUCians more civically engaged than youth in Egypt in general?
- Why are graduates from other degrees that encourage community service (e.g., IB, French schools) not as involved?
- Why are students from presumably more affluent family backgrounds not as involved?
- Why are Christians not as involved?

Implications

- Would results be similar for other activities?
- What are the implications for club recruitment?
  - Should they target more “Egyptianized” students?
  - How to encourage other students to join?
- How can these results be translated to other universities in Egypt?
- Would NGO’s be more successful if they shift recruitment away from “Western” candidates
- How do programs such as LEAD play a role?

References

- Please refer to the published article
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THANK YOU!