

Exploring the Impact of Volunteerism in University CSR Initiatives

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARbSS/v13-i12/18573> DOI:10.6007/IJARbSS/v13-i12/18573

Published Date: 24 December 2023

Abstract

This study explores the context of volunteerism in university-driven Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, focusing on two distinct programs: U-International Surabaya 2023 (UIS'23) and Razak Education with Kampung Orang Asli (REDKOA) and their significant impact on university students' personal development. We evaluate the effects of various programmes, analyse the links between involvement and particular outcomes, and look at how demographic factors affect personal development paths using an inclusive research framework. The study aimed to answer the following research objectives. First, we investigated the impact of university CSR initiatives on the personal growth of university students. Additionally, we sought to examine the demographic factors that may influence the effectiveness of CSR initiatives in promoting personal development among university students and our third objective investigated the cause-and-effect relationships between participants' future interest in local and global CSR initiatives, with a focus on the participant's age, gender, and five categories of self-rated Personal Growth. We used a quantitative method to accomplish these objectives. The study's findings highlight the transformative potential of CSR involvement and provide insight into the ways by which college students experience personal development. Additionally, this research provided the path for well-informed programme design and implementation, improving CSR initiatives.

Keywords: Volunteerism, University CSR, Personal Growth, Personal Development

Introduction

The emphasis on volunteering initiatives among university students has increased significantly. The educational institution encourages CSR activities to be incorporated into various academic and non-academic courses due to their ability to promote personal growth, increase social consciousness, and address societal challenges (Joseph & Carolissen, 2022). This paper discusses the importance of understanding the impact of volunteering on personal growth and community involvement. Volunteering addresses the positive youth development (PYD) model, which asserts the fundamental conditions to be important indicators of adolescents and young adults' well-being (Lerner, 2009). The Tun Razak College Student Committee (JKM KTR) meticulously organised the U-International Surabaya (UIS'23), which took off in May.

The main goal of our programmes was to develop students' vital soft skills while also instilling in them the qualities of excellent leadership. It was a deliberate choice to work with esteemed organisations like Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), which is renowned for its engineering, scientific, and technological competence and brings an incomparable breadth of knowledge. In addition to enhancing the UTM students' experience in Indonesia through cross-cultural leadership exchanges, the programme promoted teamwork among students from all backgrounds. Indonesian and foreign students who interacted created a dynamic environment of cooperation and understanding via the sharing of ideas, values, and experiences. A volunteering programme with indigenous children from Pengkalan Ketereh Primary School, Kluang, Johor, was also been conducted by the student college committee in December 2022 in addition to UIS'23. The Razak Education with Kampung Orang Asli (REDKOA) programme aimed to improve the quality of education for rural communities.

In this paper, we investigated the significant effects of UIS'23's and REDKOA's leadership through the volunteering programme. The following research questions guided the framework of this study.

- What is the extent of the impact of university CSR initiatives on the personal growth of university students?
- Are there significant correlations between specific demographic factors and the effectiveness of CSR initiatives in promoting personal development among university students?
- Which factors in participants' age, gender, and self-rated in the five personal growth categories significantly affect the participants' level of future interest in local and global CSR initiatives?

We examined how these specific programmes affect participants and discovered the impact of volunteering. Our attention included the long-term effects on people in Surabaya, Indonesia, as well as local communities. In addition to enhancing the UTM students' experience in Indonesia through cross-cultural leadership exchanges, the programme promoted teamwork among students from all backgrounds. Indonesian and foreign students who interacted created a dynamic environment of cooperation and understanding via the sharing of ideas, values, and experiences.

Literature Review

Students may practise important life skills like leadership, communication, cooperation, problem-solving, and flexibility while volunteering during their university experience, which promotes personal growth. These experiences, which typically increase their self-confidence

and sense of efficacy, generally prepare students to handle both opportunities and challenges in their personal and academic lives. According to Joseph & Carolissen (2022), students who actively participate in volunteering activities typically see gains in their academic performance and retention rates. These extracurricular activities support what students learn in class and apply theoretical knowledge to real-world applications, helping them better grasp various disciplines.

The 5Cs, which stand for "competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring or compassion," were suggested by Lerner et al. (2005) as the five main indications of Personal Youth Development (PYD). According to this model, the Five Cs of PYD will become apparent when an individual's characteristics connect with the relationships, institutions, and resources that various contexts, including the institution and community, supply. Students can do this by developing their perspectives and abilities and fostering meaningful and practical connections that encourage personal development.

In fact, Panduranga and Nair (2010) and Vasilescu et al. (2010) took the initiative to implement CSR in the university as a student development approach. Students can have a rich and varied experience through volunteering, as they may move outside of their comfort zone to participate in new tasks, collaborate with various groups of people, and take on new challenges. Encouraging adaptability and a readiness to accept change encourages personal growth. Apart from this, students can also learn various useful skills, including teamwork, communication, project management, and problem-solving, and can use these transferrable skills in various facets of their personal lives.

Programme Structure

UIS'23 showcased three major activities, which are "Ayo Sinau Bareng", "Ayo Kuliah," and "Ayo Gotong Royong," in which, through these initiatives, UIS'23 has demonstrated its commitment to improving education and empowering the younger generation to become confident leaders of the future.

The UIS'23 "Ayo Sinau Bareng" initiative offers learning support and access to educational resources to children in various villages, functioning as an indicator of their potential. The programme not only helps learners finish their schoolwork but also instils in learners and facilitators a sense of concern and responsibility for education. UIS'23 equips the next generation to take on challenges with confidence and competence by nurturing an effective learning system in a fun and engaging way. With an impressive turnout of 343 attendees, including representatives from several ethnic groups, highlighting the community's commitment to education and improving the condition of their area. UIS'23 aids in creating a better future for the entire nation by funding the education of young people.

Similar to this, the UIS "Ayo Kuliah" project brought the initiative to Surabaya's high schools in collaboration with reputable institutions like the Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS). The pupils received significant information about ITS, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and the academic courses they provide. This exposure encourages pupils to make well-informed choices based on their academic achievements, guiding them in the proper direction for higher education and careers. The "Ayo Kuliah" project additionally offered a forum for students to express concerns and seek guidance, ensuring that they were well-prepared for their academic journey. The collaboration of these activities between ITS and UTM demonstrated the value of group effort in developing future leaders.

The UIS "Ayo Gotong Royong" was held in the Mangrove Wonorejo Ecotourism on May 21, 2023. It is a demonstration of the impact of group efforts in protecting the priceless mangrove forest and encouraging community involvement. This activity not only helped preserve the local area's natural beauty but also introduced them to valuable community activities. With a focus on conserving the environment, the organisation supported many efforts to ensure the mangrove forest's preservation. Participants eagerly participated in a beach cleanup, gathering almost 100 kg of various trash. This dedication to cleaning up the coastline is an important step in protecting the ecology and raising the region's overall attractiveness for both residents and visitors. By promoting such knowledge, UIS'23 aimed to create a generation of environmentally aware individuals who are concerned about their impact on the environment. Additionally, "Ayo Gotong Royong" served as an outstanding instance of cross-community collaboration. Students, local communities, and environmentalists are brought together through UIS'23.

In contrast, a programme that was carried out locally named REDKOA, was initiated by 20 students from Tun Razak College (KTR). It offered a diverse range of engaging activities tailored for youths aged 7 to 12. The inaugural session kicks off with engaging activities accompanied by music, serving as an "icebreaker" to foster connections between the students and facilitators. This approach effectively bridges communication gaps, instils a sense of comfort among participants, and fosters closer bonds. Following the introductory session, the students were divided into multiple groups for an "educational exploration" segment. Here, they engaged in a series of exercises and assessments at designated checkpoints. Each checkpoint was designed with modules that challenged the students' listening, reasoning, and critical thinking skills, all within the framework of the core subjects they studied in school. Moreover, the REDKOA team undertook additional initiatives, such as embellishing the school's surroundings with educational banners and decorations, to enhance the overall learning experience.

Research Methodology

Data for this quantitative study was collected through a survey distributed to all facilitators involved in the programme. There was a total of 30 questions in the survey questionnaire, which was divided into two sections. Section 1 encompasses demographic information, while Section 2 comprises Likert scale questions focussing on the participants' initial assessments of personal growth throughout the volunteering experience. The purpose of these questions was to gather insightful data regarding the influence of CSR programmes at regional and international universities on students' personal development. After the surveys were completed and the data was gathered, data analysis started. The analytical framework used in this study was thoughtfully designed to successfully accomplish the research goals. Descriptive statistics were used. This first stage was to define the sample population in order to lay a strong foundation for the study. Age, gender, and several personal development categories were among the variables of interest that underwent careful analysis. To give an extensive overview of the sample while an understanding of its demographic composition and the distribution of personal development indicators, mean, median, and standard deviation calculations were used.

Analysis Method

The analytical framework used in this study has been developed to provide a thorough understanding of how corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes at both national and

international institutions affect students' personal development. This section goes into further detail on the approaches we employed in our analysis to successfully accomplish the study's goals.

We laid the framework for the descriptive analysis of the data by using fundamental statistical measures to represent the sample population. Age, gender, and the fundamental characteristics of personal growth are examined as variables. Calculations of the sample's mean, median, and standard deviation are made to give an overview of the population and make it easier to understand how it is made up.

With the use of correlation analysis, we investigated the relationships between important study factors in order to find correlations that could support personal development. In this section, Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine how age and gender relate to the observed levels of personal development within each category and participation in local and international CSR projects. In this way, we could show whether these two factors have a statistically significant influence on personal development in different categories.

Moving to regression analysis, we used this method to examine the indicators of prospective interest in local and international CSR activities. These models attempt to identify specific factors of personal development in each category that impact future interest in joining upcoming local and global CSR initiatives. Age, gender, and Personal Growth categories were explored as potential predictors in order to emphasise their influences on future CSR participation by individuals.

Findings

In this section, we present the findings from the dataset's descriptive statistics analysis, which covered demographic information as well as the study participants' initial levels of personal growth categories. The sample size was 55 individuals, with a median age of 21.0 and an average age of 21.4. 37% of individuals identified as male, whereas 63% identified as female, according to the gender distribution.

Initial Levels of Personal Growth Categories

Table 1 provides an overview of the initial levels of personal growth categories for the participants.

Table 1:*Initial Levels of Personal Growth Categories*

Categories	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Competence	Male	20	4.5917	0.66111	0.14783
	Female	35	4.4048	0.95852	0.16202
Confidence	Male	20	4.7200	0.62374	0.13947
	Female	35	4.4571	0.98527	0.16654
Character	Male	20	4.7300	0.46009	0.10288
	Female	35	4.4400	0.97956	0.16558
Compassion	Male	20	4.7500	0.41486	0.09276
	Female	35	4.4514	0.96448	0.16303
Connection	Male	20	4.6500	0.45364	0.10144
	Female	35	4.4057	0.98874	0.16713

Participants' initial levels of personal growth were evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating more progress. An interesting finding was that, on average, male participants scored higher in the "Compassion" category than female participants did in the "Competence" category (Mean = 4.56 vs. 4.47). It is important to note that standard deviations for all categories, which ranged from 0.82 to 0.87, were very high. Although the levels stayed largely constant, this shows that the participants' beginning levels of personal improvement varied noticeably. These descriptive statistics shed important light on the characteristics of the study sample as well as the starting points of the personal growth categories. They provide a foundational point of reference for the following. The data will also serve as a foundational reference point for subsequent comparative and correlation analyses to further explore the impact of CSR initiatives on personal growth.

Correlation between Participation's Age in CSR Initiatives and Personal Growth Categories

In this section, we present the results of the Correlation Analysis, specifically employing Pearson Correlation analysis to assess the relationships between the extent of participation in local and global CSR initiatives and personal growth within each category. Table 2 summarizes the Pearson Correlation analysis results for the relationship between participation age in CSR Initiatives and personal growth categories.

Table 2:

Pearson Correlation Analysis for participation's age in CSR Initiatives and personal growth categories

Category	Participation Correlation (r)	p-value
Competence	- 0.232	0.088
Confidence	- 0.216	0.113
Character	- 0.224	0.100
Compassion	- 0.135	0.324
Connection	- 0.192	0.161

The Pearson Correlation analysis conducted among participants engaged in CSR initiatives did not uncover any statistically significant correlations between the participants' age and the five categories of Personal Growth ($p > 0.01$). Participants in CSR activities were subjected to a Pearson Correlation analysis, however, no statistically significant connections between age and the five categories of personal growth were found ($p > 0.01$). Notably, there was a recurring pattern of very low negative correlation, which suggested that younger individuals tended to rank themselves higher across all five Personal Growth categories.

Correlation between Participation Gender in CSR Initiatives and Personal Growth Categories

Table 3 summarizes the Pearson Correlation analysis results for the relationship between participation's gender in CSR Initiatives and personal growth categories.

Table 3:

Pearson Correlation Analysis for participation's gender in CSR Initiatives and personal growth categories

Category	Participation Correlation (r)	p-value
Competence	- 0.105	0.444
Confidence	- 0.146	0.288
Character	- 0.168	0.219
Compassion	- 0.177	0.195
Connection	- 0.142	0.303

The Pearson Correlation analysis of participants who were actively participating in CSR projects revealed that there were no statistically significant associations between the participants' gender and the five categories of Personal Growth ($p > 0.01$). Both age and gender correlation results do not show significant value due to certain reasons. This is due to the relatively limited sample size and it is conceivable that although a linear relationship was analysed, non-linear relationships may exist that were not investigated.

Further investigation is required into the nature of this relationship. However, the consistency of a very low negative correlation shows that male participants rate themselves higher in all five Personal Growth categories. This shows that more investigation is needed to fully comprehend the nature of this relationship. The fact that there was a recurring pattern of very low negative correlation is interesting, however, since it may indicate that male participants tended to rank themselves higher across all five Personal Growth categories.

Multiple Regression Analysis for Future Interest in Local CSR Initiatives

In this section, we present the results of the regression analysis that was done to identify the precise variables impacting the tendency of individuals to take part in future national and international CSR efforts. For each type of project, several regression models were carefully developed, considering factors including age, gender, and all five Personal Growth Categories as potential predictors. Table 4 summarizes the results of the multiple regression analysis for future local CSR initiatives.

Table 4:*Multiple Regression Analysis for future interest in local CSR initiatives*

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients (B)	Std. Error			
Gender	0.161	0.070	0.091	2.298	0.026
Age	0.022	0.034	0.026	0.640	0.526
Competence	-0.041	0.031	- 0.213	- 1.304	0.199
Confidence	0.058	0.046	0.247	1.240	0.221
Character	0.232	0.048	0.940	4.871	<.001
Compassion	-0.114	0.050	- 0.457	- 2.263	0.028
Connection	0.113	0.042	0.465	2.669	0.010

The impact of age, gender, and personal growth categories on people's propensity to express interest in local CSR projects in the future was examined using the Multiple Regression analysis. The findings showed that the Personal Growth of Character demonstrated a statistically significant beneficial influence with regard to future interest in local CSR initiatives ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that participants showed greater enthusiasm for participating in upcoming local efforts when they reported improvements in these three categories. The remaining personal growth categories, however, showed no statistically significant effects (all p -values > 0.01).

Multiple Regression Analysis for Future Interest in Global CSR Initiatives

Table 5 summarizes the results of the multiple regression analysis for future interests within the global CSR initiatives.

Table 5:*Multiple regression analysis for future interest in global CSR initiatives*

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients (B)	Std. Error			
Gender	0.122	0.076	0.067	1.595	0.117
Age	0.021	0.038	0.024	.548	0.586
Competence	-0.053	0.034	-0.267	-1.533	0.132
Confidence	0.015	0.051	0.064	.303	0.764
Character	0.290	0.052	1.150	5.592	<.001
Compassion	-0.220	0.055	-0.860	-4.003	<.001
Connection	0.217	0.046	0.872	4.697	<.001

The impact of age, gender, and personal growth categories on individuals' projected interest in future global CSR activities was thoroughly examined using Multiple Regression analysis. The findings showed that the Personal Growth categories of Character, Compassion, and Connection showed statistically significant positive effects in the context of future global CSR interest ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that participants showed greater enthusiasm for participating in upcoming international CSR programmes when they reported improvements in these three

categories. Notably, no statistically significant effects were found for the remaining categories of personal growth (all p-values > 0.01).

Discussion

The findings of this study provide insight into the dynamics of personal growth and development among university students involved in national and international Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes. We explore the implications and interpretations of our findings in this thorough discussion, taking into account the value of taking part in CSR programmes, the impact of demographic considerations, and the larger context of personal development in higher education. The findings show that there are significant differences in the initial rates of personal development among participants in CSR initiatives, with male participants scoring higher in the "Compassion" category and female participants scoring slightly lower in the "Competence" category. Interestingly, age did not show a statistically significant relationship with personal improvement, yet younger people consistently rated themselves higher than older people in all areas. Even though male participants consistently assessed themselves higher in all categories, gender and personal growth did not show any correlations that were statistically significant. Additionally, the study found that participants' interest in both local and international CSR projects was highly influenced by gains in a few personal growth categories, such as Character, Compassion, and Connection. These results highlight the significance of considering individual differences and the significance of personal growth characteristics when developing and evaluating the effectiveness of CSR programmes.

Impact of CSR Initiatives on Personal Growth

Our findings highlight the CSR efforts' potential for transformation within the context of higher education. It became apparent that local and international CSR projects both influenced several facets of human development favourably. Participation in CSR projects specifically showed the highest mean self-rating in the compassion category. The findings indicate that CSR programmes collaborate with local and international organisations, charitable organisations, and local projects to address social issues. In fact, students were exposed to a wide range of social issues when universities took part in such efforts, such as poverty, environmental problems, and healthcare issues. These findings are consistent with Mawonde & Togo (2019) observations, which emphasised the benefits of collaborations and external engagements, as noted by (Trencher et al., 2016). According to them, universities are able to offer resources to address challenging concerns like industry, local governments, and non-governmental organisations. Likewise, Mawonde & Togo (2019) presume that the level of involvement a university has with the community reflects its dedication to societal well-being.

Implications for Future University CSR Initiatives

The results of this study have important implications for universities and educational institutions that wish to promote the holistic development of students in the upcoming planning of CSR initiatives. It is evident that both local and global CSR initiatives can be instrumental in promoting the five categories of personal growth, particularly character, compassion, and connection among students. Therefore, universities could consider diversifying their CSR programmes to give students the opportunity to participate in different initiatives. Additionally, understanding the factors influencing personal growth categories allows universities to tailor their programmes to the diverse needs of their student bodies.

For example, universities could design special programmes or provide additional support to promote other, less impactful categories of personal development, such as developing the competence skills, and confidence of younger students, recognizing the growth potential of this demographic. These benefits and their importance were also identified by Topal R. S (2009) in his work, where CSR was more significantly developed in universities than economic, intellectual, social, and cultural capital.

Limitations and Future Directions

Even though this study provides insightful information, it is important to recognise its limitations. The study's methodology is quite simple, and actual investigation would demand improved ways to gather data and elaborate analytical frameworks. Additionally, because this study only looks at a smaller aspect of personal growth categories, it may be missing out on important personal growth aspects. Future research projects should aim to include a wider range of personal growth categories and take into account more demographic aspects that could have an impact on personal development through CSR efforts.

Furthermore, longitudinal research might offer a more complex understanding of how personal development changes over time within the framework of CSR projects. This would allow researchers to monitor the progression of personal evolution and gain a deeper understanding of the processes at play. Qualitative research techniques can also deepen our understanding by capturing individuals' experiences and perceptions, complementing quantitative studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Henry Ford's 1917 CSR programmes have promoted empathy, skill development, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose, all of which have had a deep and positive impact on personal growth (Norajila & Joni, 2010). These opportunities not only help the participants individually but also advance society. Furthermore, Mehta (2011) claimed that towards the end of the twentieth century, CSR was changed to have more lasting effects in a changing society rather than only focusing on specific benefits. In doing so, future university CSR initiatives have the potential to bring about positive changes in student development, campus culture, and community engagement. By aligning these initiatives with educational goals and societal needs, universities can play a pivotal role in creating a brighter and more socially responsible future. This study adds to the body of information about personal development within the context of university CSR programmes. It emphasises the potential for global engagement to improve lives and the significance of demographic considerations in determining personal growth trajectories. The findings from this study can be used to guide the design and implementation of CSR activities, maximising their impact on personal development as institutions prioritise the holistic development of their students.

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