

# **The Effect of the Interpersonal Skills Attributes in Volunteerism Activity Among Undergraduates in UMK**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Volunteering has been recognised as a beneficial combination of assistance to the host community while simultaneously providing cultural and educational advantages for students. Volunteering in the tourism industry is also an important element of the tourism education process because volunteers are so vital in the tourism industry. Therefore, because volunteering is an education process, this study aims to examine the effect of the interpersonal skills attributes in volunteerism activity among undergraduates at UMK. In this research, team working, negotiation, non-verbal communication and relationship building have been used as variables to measure the effectiveness of these interpersonal skills attributes in motivating undergraduates in this field of volunteering. 341 students who took the subject of volunteerism from the Universiti of Malaysia Kelantan are the target population to answer the questionnaire from Google Form.*

**Keywords:** *Volunteerism, Team Working, Negotiation, Non-Verbal Communication, Relationship Building*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, there seems to be some pedagogical argument and public dispute about acknowledging different forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, sustainable tourism, and responsible tourism (Smith & Font 2014). Volunteer tourism (Molz, 2016) is one of the quickest developing kinds of alternative tourism. It has been recognised as a beneficial combination of assistance to the host community while simultaneously providing cultural and educational advantages for students (Sin 2009, McGehee 2014).

Interpersonal skills must be used in everyday life to engage and communicate with others, whether alone or in groups. According to previous studies, interpersonal skills have been referred to as social skills, social competence, human skills, human talents, and social intelligence. "Skills essential for individuals to communicate effectively with each other or a community of individuals," according to Rungapadiachy (1999).

Next, interpersonal skills, on the other hand, refer to a collection of abilities that includes interactive conversations, connections, and a collaborative way of managing relationships in teams and inside organisations, along with networking with individuals from various communities and different expertise (Malaysian Qualification Framework, 2017). Nonverbal communication, listening skills, conveying information, negotiating, collaboration, decision making, team working, networking, relationship building, assertiveness, respect, tolerance, socialising with skills and etiquette, self-awareness, and ethical responsibility are 16 characteristics (Malaysian Qualification Framework, 2017) that can be used in interpersonal skills.

This research is to determine whether understanding interpersonal skills contributes to volunteerism activity among undergraduate students at UMK. As a result, this initiative aims to accomplish the following three key objectives:

1. Assess whether negotiation is important and affects UMK students.
2. To identify non-verbal communication, develop and improve interpersonal skills and motivate all UMK students.
3. Determine the relationship between good team working and good relationship building for institutions and Students of UMK.

## **Significance of Study**

### **Researchers**

Conducting this study will be a significant resource for future researchers, including students from other institutions and related government departments. For future researchers, this may only be an analysis of UMK students in volunteerism. Instead, investigators need to learn more about the interpersonal skill attributes that can be developed in volunteering and understand the perceptions of other professions. Future investigators could use this study to compare with future research, allowing future researchers to see if volunteering has made a difference to UMK students or individuals in the community and whether the issues of their interpersonal skills have improved.

### **Undergraduates Students**

UMK undergraduates or the community know the usefulness of volunteering to help others and enhance and develop their interpersonal skill attributes. This is because interpersonal skills can be communication skills, an attitude, and a virtue as a social being.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

Non-verbal communication is frequently described as a form of communication that does not include verbal expression. Even though most people are more aware of and use verbal communication daily, non-verbal communication occurs unintentionally. It may reveal much information about people's feelings and situations. Non-verbal communication encompasses a wide range of behaviours, some of which could be unnoticed by everyone, as defined by Hess (2016). Thus, the face, posture, volume of speech, touch and gaze are among the more obvious non-verbal behaviours.

Non-verbal communication is helpful in communicating with regular individuals and is also useful for persons suffering from misfortune, such as the deaf. Being a standard volunteer means not being able to select people who are in difficulty. Since there are speech therapists who provide more knowledge of non-verbal communication, volunteers are provided with the opportunity to experience non-verbal communication. This kind of communication maybe just a matter of comparing hands and feet for an average person, but from the perspective of a non-verbal child, this is how they have to communicate in a world where communication is mainly verbal (Very Special Kids, 2015).

### **Team Working**

Teamwork is a powerful concept that can be applied to almost any organised industry or activity (Sonnenschein, 2020). The fundamental component of teamwork is to distribute the work construct logically and then engage with each other to a large extent on site. However, understanding among volunteers does not develop on the first day they meet, so they must share their thoughts more frequently and allow everyone to seek guidance from one another.

In addition, teamwork represents a process in which two or more people are interdependent and cooperate towards a shared objective, with each person being assigned a specific role or task to perform (Ellis, Bell, 2005). In basic terms, the purpose of teamwork development should be to create synergy and cooperate towards a common goal. Teamwork development in every organisation, regardless of the nature of the task, has the same purpose of motivating employees and increasing organisational capacity. As an example, all volunteers are allocated their specific tasks with the express objective of helping the victims through their difficulties.

## **Negotiation**

Negotiation is an interaction or process for the agreement in terms of mutual interest while optimising their utility (Adnan, Muhamad Hariz Muhamad; Hassan, Mohd Fadzil; Aziz, Izzatdin; Papatungan, Irving V, 2016). According to Will Kenton (2021), negotiation is also one of the ways to gain an advantage to create a decision after successfully resolving the point of difference. Negotiations, distribution, or compromise are submitting positions and making agreements to reach the right moment. Some types of negotiation may take place unconsciously. Michael K. Swan (2011) states that listening and conversing are unquestionably effective communication. As a result, when a misunderstanding occurs, it is simple to hear and comprehend. While two-way exchanges occur naturally, they must be carefully planned at times and in most cases. Students who have overcome obstacles will gain the confidence to face more difficult challenges in the future. Besides, negotiation is simply a technique and discussion among individuals to reach a mutual agreement (Michael K. Swan, 2011). Everyone will get something, and conflict can be avoided.

## **Building Relationship**

Relationship-building abilities are soft skills that a person employs to connect with others and develop positive bonds. Relationship-building abilities are critical for interacting with coworkers, teams, and individuals and increasing mutual understanding (Prachi Juneja, 2015). According to Anayet Hossain (2014), building a relationship must be between an individual and a person. This is because no relationship exists for one person alone. It is a shared interest with each other to build a good relationship. Relationships will not exist if there is no constant interaction with others. Trust and respect are important aspects of a relationship by Md. Korban Ali (2014).

Moreover, relationship building is significant in motivating UMK students. Good relationships, to some extent, contribute to mental and physical well-being. In addition, relationship-building skills are also crucial for socialising with peers while contributing to a group that builds understanding with each other (Anayet Hossain, 2014). Strong working relationships can also benefit student activities. For example, students can look for opportunities to move forward and develop their teamwork skills to become stronger and more resilient.

## **Altruism**

Altruism is commonly defined as a person's willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of others, including personal behaviour. Altruism is necessary on three levels because it relates to the main goals of socialisation, core personality traits, and human-related theories. The independent variables associated with altruism were based on experimental measurement sources and generality. Thus, positive and negative emotional states, as well as conditions caused by model observations, would affect altruism and interpersonal interdependence and attraction and were also found to influence the recipient's ability to evoke altruism.

In addition, altruism is also discussed or divided into two parts, namely, as a selfish and unselfish motive. Many actively seek opportunities to serve others, such as helping at a nursing home, volunteering at a fire department, or even taking out their neighbours' garbage (Brewer & Kramer, 1986). While there are many possibilities for altruism in daily activities, one of the simplest models for measuring generosity is to observe a person's behaviour. Many people are actively looking for opportunities to serve others, such as helping at home, volunteering at their respective universities (such as at UMK), or disaster-stricken areas or areas in need of assistance. On the real motive of this action, two streams of thought emerge. Leading researchers on both sides of this issue debate whether the goal of altruistic behaviour is selfishness (Batson, Ahmad, & Tsang, 2002).

## Research Hypotheses

In this study, the following four hypotheses were indicated based on the research objectives:  
H1: Non-verbal communication relates to the motivation to volunteer among undergraduates in UMK.

H2: Team working correlates with the motivation to volunteer among undergraduates in UMK.

H3: Negotiation relates to the motivation to volunteer among undergraduates in UMK.

H4: Building relationships correlates with the motivation to volunteer among undergraduates in UMK.

## Research Framework

Based on the background and extensive literature review, the following conceptual model has been formed (Fig. 1). The operationalisation of the research construct considers four independent variables that contribute to the motivation to volunteer among undergraduates in UMK.

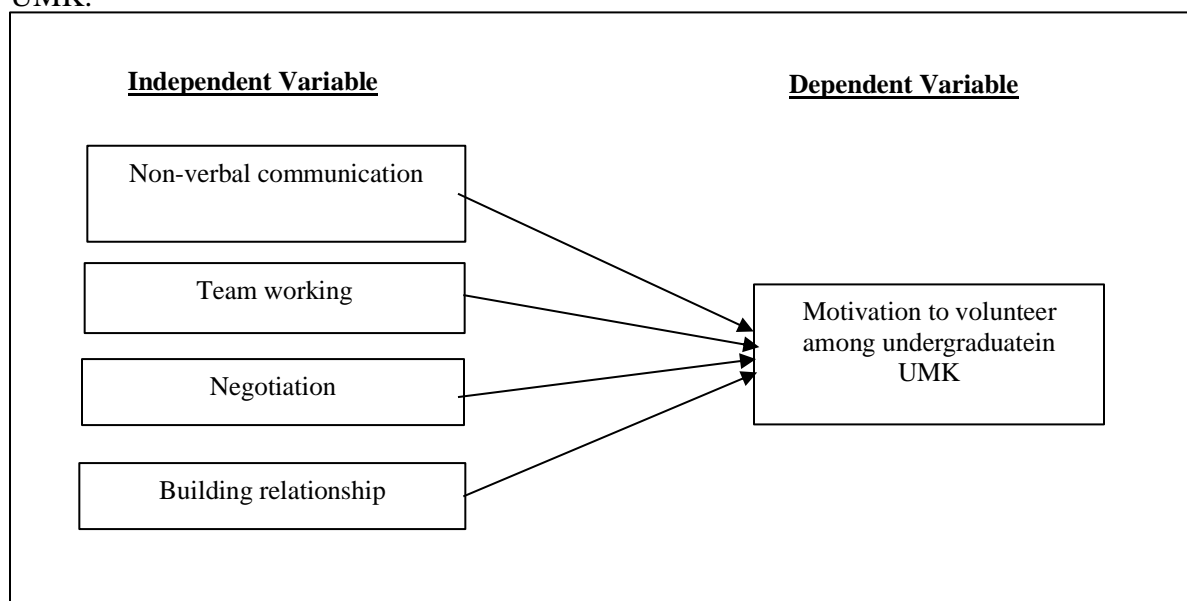


Figure 1: Research Framework

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study design is a broad framework that might accommodate all of the aspects of a research study. Earlier studies have characterised the design of this study as a collection of conditions for data collecting and analysis in a way that tries to combine data and information, according to Jahoda, Deutch, and Cook (1965). This study was designed in various ways, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research. In this study, the researchers have decided to employ a quantitative research design to collect and analyse data in this study.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is the process of collecting and measuring information on variables in a predetermined and systematic manner that allows respondents to answer predetermined research questions, test hypotheses, and forecast future trends (Kabir, 2016). Parts of data collection are universal to all research sectors, including commercial, physical, social, and humanities. All data collecting aims to produce high-quality evidence, which can subsequently be translated into comprehensive data analysis and used to provide reasonable answers to the questions stated. Regardless of how the research field or preference defines data (quantitative, qualitative), reliable data collecting is critical to the study's integrity.

## Sampling Method

The researcher chose the sampling method in the study to make data collection easier. The sampling methods used in this study are critical. This is because it is a procedure for selecting a sufficient number of policies from the population (Kumar, 2013). During the sampling phase, the researcher selects individuals from the general public to serve as the sample population's subjects. Furthermore, there are two sorts of sampling methods: probability and non-probability.

## Data Analysis

There were three data types of data analysis used in this study; Data analysis, on the other hand, is the process of obtaining, modelling, and analysing data in order to derive insights that can be used to make decisions. Any study's analytical approach is mainly focused on two areas, namely the quantitative and qualitative methods. Besides primary data and secondary data are the types of data analysis. Primary data is collected through surveys, interviews, or experiments for specific research purposes. In addition, the researchers examined the statistical data analysis using the SPSS, as known as Statistical Analysis for Social Sciences, version of this research.

## FINDINGS

### Demographic

Demographic Percentage %	Classification	Frequency		
Gender	Female	181	53.1	
	Male	160	46.9	
Age	18 - 20 years old	25	8.2	
	21 - 23 years old	255	74.8	
	24 years old and above	58	17	
Race	Malay	217	63.6	
	Chinese	69	20.2	
	India	42	12.3	
	Others	13	3.8	
How expose are you to Volunteer activities	Through the volunteerism club available at UMK	141	41.3	
	Through the volunteerism subjects that offered at UMK	200	58.7	
Participated in Volunteerism Activity's times	Never	76	22.3	
	Once	109	32	
	2 - 5 times	108	31.7	
	More then 5	48	14.1	
Interpersonal attributes skills	Non-verbal communication	Yes	150	44
	Team working	Yes	191	56
		No	251	73.6
	Negotiation	Yes	90	25.4
		No	140	41.1
	Building relationship	Yes	201	58.9
No		206	60.4	
	Building relationship	135	39.6	

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the characterization of respondents. Out of 341 respondents, 160 respondents were male and the remaining 181 respondents were female. 21-23 years old is the highest of

respondents with 255 (74.8 %). The age is 24 years old and above that is 58 (17%) meanwhile 18-20 years old of respondents is 25 (8.2%). The highest percentage of the race is Malay, which accounted for 64%. This is followed by the Chinese (20%) and Indians (12%). A minority percentage of our respondents is coming from the other race (Kadazan, Suluk, Dusun, Bumiputera and Brunei), which is 4.0%. in terms of respondents, 141 respondents (41.3%) were through the volunteerism club, which is available at UMK and the remaining 200 respondents (58.7%) were through the volunteerism subjects offered at UMK. According to the above results, 76 out of 341 respondents (22.3%) have never participated in volunteerism activities. In addition, the percentages of respondents who had participated once volunteering and those who had participated in 2-5 volunteering were very close, at 109 respondents (32%) and 108 respondents (31.7%), respectively. According to the results, respondents who had participated more than five times were the lowest percentage, with 48 respondents (14.1%). According to the above results, 150 respondents (44%) agreed with non-verbal communication, while 191 respondents (56%) disagreed. Team working was the one interpersonal skill attribute that was identified by the highest number of respondents, with 251 (76.3%); the remaining 90 respondents (26.4%) did not believe that this skill could be acquired through volunteering activities. The following skill that many people identified was building a relationship, with 206 respondents (60.4%), in contrast to 135 respondents (39.6%) who did not think so. Then, 251 respondents (58.9%) disagreed that negotiation skills could be acquired through volunteering, but 140 (41.1%) respondents agreed.

### Result of Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Item	Mean Score	Standard deviation
Non-verbal Communication	A person's emotions can be known through non-verbal communication behaviors.	4.34	.834
	Non-verbal communication is more important in volunteering activities than verbal communication.	4.13	.964
	Compared to other activities, I think that I can learn more about non-verbal communication by volunteering.	4.29	.808
	Non-verbal communication is very effective when there is emergency involving OKU.	4.41	.771
	Non-verbal communication can give awareness to other people of how important it is.	4.46	.795
Team Working	Creativity increases when people work together as a team.	4.54	.757
	Team working can shape everyone self-discipline to achieve high interpersonal skills.	4.41	.753
	Team working can build closer relationships in interpersonal skills.	4.53	.745

	I believe team working allows stress to be reduced because of being able to share responsibilities.	4.56	.694
	Team working helps share knowledge and stimulates interpersonal skills.	4.56	.736
Negotiation	I believe that negotiation skills can be improved through volunteering activities.	4.45	.879
	I believe that negotiation skills are something that will help me gain an advantage in the future social activities.	4.47	.769
	I would think that negotiation skills are in common use in our daily dealings.	4.42	.803
	I believe that negotiation skills can enhance a smoother way of expressing oneself with people.	4.53	.717
	When I doing volunteerism activity, I often invent new ideas in negotiations to get agreement and the negotiation can move forward.	4.49	.754
Building Relationship	I would build relationships with unfamiliar volunteers/disaster victims.	4.39	.814
	It is important to have the skills to build relationship with the community so that I can increase my involvement in volunteering.	4.42	.762
	In order to build relationships with the community, I have to understand their culture and get to know people in order to build relationships with them.	4.35	.843
	I believe that building relationships with the community as a volunteer allows me to get understand the community up close-and-personal.	4.46	.799
	I believe that participating in volunteering activities strengthens my own connections with the people I help and builds a relationship (such as friendships) with other volunteers.	4.48	.762
Student motivation to volunteer	Doing volunteerism activity make me feel happy.	4.54	.776
	Through volunteerism it enables UMK students to improve their skills and motivation in delivering high quality services.	4.51	.734
	Did having a skills such as non-verbal communication, team working, negotiations and building relationship can make student's motivation to get more involves in volunteerism activity.	4.49	.762

Undergraduate students can be interest in the work, along with having a spare time and wanting to learn or gain experience that will help in the future career.	4.44	.771
Undergraduates students can give contributions to many people and achieve goals by having altruism in completing the works.	4.41	.827

Based on table 2, the highest scores mean value for non-verbal communication was 4.46, where the respondents agreed that non-verbal communication could give awareness to other people of how important it is. Meanwhile, non-verbal communication is more important in volunteering activities than verbal communication is the lowest mean of 4.13. In addition, the highest mean for team working is I believe team working allows stress to be reduced because of being able to share responsibilities. Team working helps share knowledge and stimulates interpersonal skills with a mean score of 4.69. However, team working can shape everyone's self-discipline to achieve high interpersonal skills is the lowest mean of 4.41. Next analysis, the highest mean for negotiation is I believe that negotiation skills can enhance a smoother way of expressing oneself with people with a mean score of 4.53. But I would think that negotiation skills are in common use in our daily dealings is the lowest mean score of 4.42.

Furthermore, the highest mean for building relationships are I believe that participating in volunteering activities strengthens my own connections with the people I help and builds a relationship (such as friendships) with other volunteers, with a mean score is 4.48. Instead of in order to build relationships with the community, I have to understand their culture and get to know people in order to build relationships with them is the lowest mean score with 4.35. Lastly, the highest mean for student motivation in a volunteer is doing volunteerism activity makes me feel happy with a mean score of 4.54.

### Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha is an instrument used for reliability analysis and it is widely used and has assessed the internal consistency of psychometric instruments, and it is very convenient for calculations as well as guidelines provided for constructing single-dimensional scales. This reliability analysis was to measure the internal consistency between items in the scale. Table 2 has shown the results based on calculations from Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables.

*Table 3: Reliability Analysis Result based on Cronbach's Alpha Value*

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Non-verbal Communication	5	0.5
Team Working	5	0.8
Negotiation	5	0.8
Building relationship	5	0.8
Motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK	5	0.9



Table 3 shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables in the questionnaire questions that the researcher has distributed, which range from the lowest level of non-acceptance which is (0.5) to the highest level of acceptance (0.9). Five variables were tested using Cronbach's Alpha output of reliability. The findings of the study have found that motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK has a very high trust value (5 items;  $\alpha = 0.9$ ), followed by three variables, namely team working, negotiation and relationship building, that have the same Cronbach's Alpha value that is (5 items;  $\alpha = 0.8$ ) and the lowest reliability value was non-verbal communication (5 items;  $\alpha = 0.5$ ).

Variables for non-verbal communication, team working, negotiation, building relationships and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK can be maintained. Existing variables that remain using the five items include team working, negotiation, building relationships and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK. The non-verbal communication variable is at the lowest level in acceptance through calculations from Cronbach's Alpha. Therefore, the data are acceptable and suitable for further analysis except for the first variable, non-verbal communication.

### Hypothesis Testing

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result (Supported/Not Supported)
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b> : There is a relationship between non-verbal communication and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK	0.477	H <sub>1</sub> is supported
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b> : There is a relationship between team working and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK	0.450	H <sub>2</sub> is supported
<b>H<sub>3</sub></b> : There is a relationship between negotiation and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK	0.535	H <sub>3</sub> is supported
<b>H<sub>4</sub></b> : There is a relationship between building relationship and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK	0.521	H <sub>4</sub> is supported

Hypothesis 1 which is there is significant relationship between non-verbal communication and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK with a P-value of 0.477 is supported. Next, hypothesis 2, a significant relationship between team working and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK with P-value 0.450, is supported. In addition, hypothesis 3, a significant relationship between negotiation and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK with a P-value of 0.535, is supported. Lastly, hypothesis 4, which is there is a significant relationship between building relationships and motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK with a P-value of 0.521, is supported.

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The discussion is designed to solve problems and address the hypotheses mentioned in the first chapter of this study. In general, this study extensively investigated the effect of interpersonal skill attributes on students' motivation to volunteer among undergraduate students in UMK. Based on the findings, the current study will provide suggestions for future researchers who

want to understand the motivation of undergraduates to volunteer and express their interest in better understanding he/she studies. Hence, this could be done in future studies.

The findings of the study are also essential for future research. As such, it is recommended that future studies perceive the motivation of university students to participate in volunteering activities by including more demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as students from other schools, monthly income, marital status, occupation, and so on, in order to generate different results or findings from different perspectives. Furthermore, the four interpersonal skill attributes (non-verbal communication, team working, negotiation and building relationship) are not the only ones present in volunteering activities as listed in this study. However, each person's individuality is different and the way in which people relate to each other will change as a result. Consequently, the attributes that come out of getting along may be more than these four, such as: listening skills, decision-making skills, respectfulness, tolerance, self-awareness, ethical responsibility, and more.

In addition, it is recommended that future researchers collect data for this study in an improvised manner, especially in terms of questionnaire distribution. Instead of distributing the questionnaire through the internet, future researchers could conduct a physical face-to-face questionnaire distribution. As a result, the researcher could explain the purpose of the study in detail while distributing the questionnaire to potential respondents. In addition, the level of interaction between the researcher and the respondent would also assist in giving the respondent a clearer understanding of what will be asked in the questionnaire. Accordingly, future studies could add research methods to give more valid results, such as qualitative methods.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has been completed to find out the motivation of UMK undergraduates towards participating in volunteer activities. Four interpersonal skill attributes were chosen as independent variables, namely non-verbal communication, team working, negotiation and building relationships, in order to examine their relationship with the dependent variable, i.e. motivation to volunteer among students in UMK. Besides, a total of 341 respondents aged 18 years and until 24 years and above from University Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) were selected to examine and understand their motivation for participating in volunteering. According to Pearson's correlation analysis, non-verbal communication scored  $*0.477$ , followed by the team working with a score of  $*0.450$ , negotiation with a score of  $*0.535$  and building relationships with a score of  $*0.521$ .

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