EXPLORING MOTIVATIONS FOR ONLINE VOLUNTEERING IN EMERGING ADULTS
A Descriptive Study

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Abstract
The widespread use of the internet has led to a new activity involving individuals in spreading goodness through voluntary social engagement. This activity is known as online volunteering. The flexible nature of online volunteering has increased interest and enthusiasm, particularly among emerging adults, motivating them to participate in such activities. However, research on this phenomenon, especially among emerging adults, is still limited. This study aims to explore the various forms of motivation among emerging adults in participating in online volunteering. A total of 205 emerging adult participants who have previously or are currently engaged in online volunteering activities are recruited to complete the Volunteer Functions Inventory, which had been previously adapted by the researcher. Descriptive analysis indicates that out of the six proposed motivation forms, motivations related to understanding, values, and enhancement play a crucial role in motivating emerging adults to engage in online volunteering. These three motivational factors serve as the primary incentives for emerging adults to develop themselves and achieve their goals. Additionally, the study finds that emerging adults who engage in online volunteering activities for 6 months to 1 year and those who participate in environmental online volunteering exhibit higher motivation compared to those engaged in volunteering for longer durations and in other volunteer fields. Overall, this research identifies a high level of motivation among emerging adults participating in online volunteering activities, categorizing it as a significant driving factor.

Keywords*: motivation, online volunteering, emerging adult*

Abstrak
Penggunaan internet yang kian meluas telah menimbulkan suatu aktivitas baru berupa keterlibatan individu dalam menyebarkan kebaikan melalui suatu kegiatan sosial bersifat sukarela. Kegiatan tersebut dikenal dengan istilah sukarelawan daring atau *online volunteering*. Kegiatan *online volunteering* yang bersifat fleksibel telah meningkatkan minat dan antusiasme khususnya pada kalangan dewasa awal, sehingga memotivasi mereka untuk berpartisipasi mengikuti kegiatan tersebut. Penelitian yang membahas fenomena terkait khususnya pada dewasa awal saat ini masih jarang dilakukan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bentuk-bentuk motivasi pada usia dewasa awal dalam mengikuti *online volunteering*. Sejumlah 205 partisipan dewasa awal yang pernah atau sedang mengikuti kegiatan *online volunteering* direkrut untuk mengisi alat ukur *Volunteer Functions Inventory* yang sebelumnya telah dilakukan proses adaptasi oleh peneliti. Analisis deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa dari enam bentuk motivasi yang diajukan, bentuk motivasi dengan fungsi pemahaman, fungsi nilai, dan fungsi peningkatan memiliki peran penting dalam memotivasi kalangan dewasa awal untuk menjadi sukarelawan secara daring. Tiga fungsi tersebut menjadi motivasi utama pada kalangan dewasa awal untuk mengembangkan diri dan mencapai tujuan. Penelitian ini juga menemukan

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bahwa kalangan dewasa awal yang mengikuti kegiatan *online volunteering* selama 6 bulan sampai 1 tahun dan dewasa awal yang mengikuti kegiatan *online volunteering* pada bidang lingkungan memiliki nilai motivasi yang tinggi dibandingkan durasi lama menjadi *volunteer* dan bidang volunteer lainnya. Secara keseluruhan penelitian ini menemukan motivasi pada kalangan dewasa awal dalam mengikuti kegiatan *online volunteering* tergolong ke dalam kategori tinggi.

Kata kunci: *motivasi, sukarelawan daring, dewasa awal*

INTRODUCTION

In the present day, individuals are inseparable from the use of a technology known as the internet. Nearly all communication, information, and knowledge rely on internet access. The internet was first introduced to the global community by the International Computer Communication (ICCC) in 1972. Until now, internet usage has continued to expand and has become a necessity for everyone (Pendit, 2013). This widespread use of the internet has given rise to a new activity involving individuals in spreading goodwill through voluntary and unpaid social activities (Ackermann & Manatschal, 2018). This activity is known as online volunteering.

According to Mukherjee (2011), online volunteering is an activity that engages individuals in volunteer work using the internet as a medium, which can be carried out from anywhere, whether from home or another location. This statement is supported by Ellis and Cravens (2000), who define online volunteering as an activity that has a tangible impact on the world and is done voluntarily using internet media. Various forms of online volunteering activities can be undertaken, such as participating in online campaigns, managing the social media of an organization, teaching online (Sari, 2022), online moderation, website management, or contributing to Wikipedia editing (Ackermann & Manatschal, 2018). The appeal of online volunteering has garnered significant enthusiasm from various groups because through online volunteering, individuals can complete a series of short-term tasks with short-term commitments depending on the duration of the volunteer activity (Ihm, 2016).

Flexible online volunteering activities have increased interest and enthusiasm among various groups. According to data from Indorelawan.org, there has been an increase in online volunteering participation from 2021 to 2023, with nearly 260,000 people in Indonesia currently participating as volunteers (Indorelawan.org, 2023). From the same website, it is noted that individuals participating in volunteer activities are predominantly emerging adults aged between 18 and 35 years old (Indorelawan.org, 2023). Sugiarti, et al. (2020) explain that this is supported by the fact that early adulthood, spanning from 18 to 29 years, is considered a productive age. When related to the developmental tasks of early adulthood, this stage involves significant growth in various aspects such as skills, knowledge, self-understanding, and a stronger self-identity (Berk, 2018). Therefore, it is important to maintain the quality of individuals in the early adulthood stage so that their abilities can be optimally utilized in facing challenging developmental tasks (Sugiarti, et al., 2020).

Participating in online volunteering can provide numerous benefits, as described by Leventhal, et al. (2022), who state that online volunteering offers diverse services accessible to all participants. Research conducted by Kristofferson, et al. (2014) indicates that online activities, such as online

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volunteering, can instill a desire in participants to present themselves as moral and responsible individuals. Online volunteering activities can also serve as a platform that provides individuals with opportunities for learning, skill development, and personal growth (Ackermann & Manatschal, 2018). Various advantages are obtained when emerging adults participate in online volunteering activities, which create specific motivations for their involvement.

Wilson (2012) explains that motivation to engage in volunteer activities refers to the underlying drive that compels individuals to participate. According to Alam and Campbell (2017), individuals have diverse motivations for engaging in online volunteering, and these motivations can change over time due to personality factors and other external influences. Motivation to become a volunteer falls into six dimensions outlined by Clary and Snyder (1998): values function, social function, career function, understanding function, protective function, and enhancement function.

The values function aims to express altruistic and humanitarian values. The social function aims to develop and strengthen social bonds among individuals. The career function aims to achieve a career related to the volunteer activities being undertaken. The understanding function aims to learn and seek knowledge, as well as new experiences. The protective function is where volunteer activities serve as an escape for individuals facing personal issues. Meanwhile, the enhancement function aims to grow and develop psychologically (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

Several researchers have conducted studies on individual motivations, particularly among emerging adults, in participating in volunteer activities. Hyun (2012) found that values, enhancement, and understanding functions tended to be

the motivations for individuals who had completed their college education. On the other hand, high school graduates tended to be motivated by social, understanding, and enhancement functions when becoming volunteers (Pangestu, 2016). Rahmawati, et al. (2019) discovered that the understanding function was the most common motivation (highest mean score= 5.56) among individuals involved in scouting volunteer organizations compared to other forms of motivation.

Research on individual motivations, especially among emerging adults, participating in online volunteering activities is still limited. Previous research conducted by Pangestu (2016) examined the motivations of individuals involved as volunteers in several art organizations in Yogyakarta. Another study by Sugiarti, et al. (2020) found that the understanding function played a crucial role in motivating emerging adults to engage in volunteer activities. However, these studies were conducted on emerging adults participating in offline volunteer activities. Currently, the increasing popularity of internet usage and the emergence of online volunteering activities as a new form of prosocial behavior have generated enthusiasm among individuals to participate in online volunteer activities (Sari, 2022). Research that identifies various forms of motivation for emerging adults participating in online volunteering from a psychological perspective is needed. This is because emerging adults are primarily interested in participating in volunteer activities to build social and interpersonal relationships (Pangestu, 2016). Thus, this research aims to explore the various forms of motivation for emerging adults participating in online volunteering.

METHOD
Participants

Participants in this study met the criteria of having previously or currently

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engaged in online volunteering activities and being in the early adulthood developmental stage, with ages ranging from 18 to 35 years old. In this research, participants were recruited through social media, and they provided informed consent online through an online form questionnaire. The sampling technique employed for this study was purposive sampling, which is used when researchers recruit participants who meet predefined criteria (Kumar, 2011). The research included 205 participants within an age range of 18 to 35 years (35 males, 170 females, Mean Age = 22.5 years). Participants had diverse focuses in the field of online volunteering, with 27.3% involved in social and humanitarian activities, 25.9% in education, 6.8% in healthcare, 4.9% in environmental causes, and 35.1% participating in online volunteering activities in other fields (religious, music, entertainment, economics, and others). Furthermore, approximately 39.5% of participants engaged in online volunteering for durations between 3-6 months, 51.2% participated for shorter durations of less than 3 months, 5.4% were involved for durations between 6 months and 1 year, and the remaining 3.9% participated in online volunteering for durations exceeding 1 year.

Measurement

In this study, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire used as a measurement tool in this research was the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) by Clary and Snyder (1998), which was adapted by the researcher. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale consists of 30 items, with each dimension—values, understanding, social, career, protection, and enhancement—comprising 5 items. Scores on the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale were rated on a Likert

scale ranging from 1 to 7, where a score of 1 indicated "completely untrue" and 7 indicated "completely true". The adaptation process of the measurement instrument began with translating it from English to Indonesian. Subsequently, the instrument was discussed and underwent content validity assessment by experts in the field of Psychology. Following this, the researcher conducted a pilot test of the adapted instrument to assess its suitability and reliability. In this study, the reliability coefficients of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) measurement instrument were considered good to very good, specifically in the dimensions of values (5 items; α = 0.758), understanding (5 items; α = 0.875), social (5 items; α = 0.861), career (5 items; α = 0.839), protection (5 items; α = 0.852), and enhancement (5 items; α = 0.862).

Data Analysis

This study employs the method of descriptive statistical analysis with the assistance of statistical software. Descriptive statistic is a non-experimental research method used to provide an objective descriptive overview of a phenomenon (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). The researcher utilized descriptive statistics as the research analysis to understand the characteristics of participants, the various forms of motivation among participants in engaging in online volunteering activities, and to determine the overall level of motivation among participants in online volunteering activities by calculating percentages and categorizing their motivation levels. Categorization in this study is divided into high, and low motivation levels. Additionally the researcher also examined the differences in motivation levels for participating in online volunteering activities among genders, the fields of online volunteering they engaged in, and the duration of their

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participation in online volunteering activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

Participants in this study numbered 205 individuals, comprising 35 males and 170 females, with ages ranging from 18 to 35 years. These participants had either previously or were currently engaged in online volunteering activities in various volunteer fields such as education, social and humanitarian work, environmental causes, healthcare, and other fields (religious, music, entertainment, economics, and more). In this study, the majority of participants participated in online volunteering activities for a short duration of less than 3 months, accounting for 51.2% of participants. Descriptive statistical analysis regarding the distribution of participants' demographic data can be seen in the following table.

Tabel 4.1
Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Participant Demographic Distribution

Category	N	%	Category	N	%
Gender			**Field of *Online Volunteering***		
Male	35	17.1 %	Education	53	25.9 %
Female	170	82.9 %	Social &humanitarian work	56	27.3 %
			Healthcare	14	6.8 %
			Environmental	10	4.9 %
			Other fields (religious, music, entertainment, economics, and more)	72	35,1%
Age (year)			***Online Volunteering* Duration**		
18-20	14	6,8%	< 3 months	105	51.2 %
21-23	164	80%	3-6 months	81	39.5 %
24-26	18	8,8%	6 months – 1 year	11	5.4 %
27-29	2	1%	> 1 year	8	3.9 %
30-32	4	1,9%			
33-35	3	1,5%			

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the variables in this study, which focused on the forms of motivation among emerging adults participating in online volunteering activities, were measured using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale. The study found that the understanding function was the highest form of motivation (M = 29.8). The values function (M = 29) and the enhancement function (M = 28.8) were the second and third highest forms of motivation among participants in online volunteering activities. In contrast, the social function (M = 25.9) was the lowest motivation among participants. The analysis of motivation forms based on the dimensions of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) among participants can be seen in the following table.

Tabel 4.2
Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Volunteer Functions Inventory

Dimension	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation
Values	29.0	10.0	35.0	3.93
Understanding	29.8	19.0	35.0	3.47
Social	25.9	12.0	35.0	4.43
Career	27.7	17.0	35.0	3.81
Protective	27.1	12.0	35.0	4.54
Enhancement	28.8	15.0	35.0	4.07

Subsequent statistical analysis indicated the means for each dimension on the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale based on gender, the field of online volunteering, and the duration of participation in online volunteering. The understanding function was the highest form of motivation for both male (M = 29.2) and female (M = 29.9) participants in engaging in online volunteer activities. Regardless of the field and duration of participation in online volunteering, the understanding function remained the highest form of motivation for participants, followed by the social and enhancement functions. Further analysis regarding the forms of motivation based on the dimensions of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) among

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participants can be seen in the following table.

Tabel 4.3
Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Volunteer Functions Inventory based on Demographic Distribution

Category		V	U	S	C	P	E
Gender							
Male	M	28.9	29.2	26.7	27.4	26.7	27.7
	Std Dev	5.37	4.61	5.00	4.05	5.05	4.85
Female	M	29.0	29.9	25.7	27.8	27.2	29.0
	Std Dev	3.58	3.18	4.30	3.76	4.44	3.87
Field of Online Volunteering							
Education	Mean	28.6	29.4	26.1	27.1	26.6	28.1
	Std Dev	3,68	3,25	3,72	3,91	5,29	3,68
Social humanitarian work	Mean	29.8	30.4	26.1	27.6	27.0	28.5
	Std Dev	3,21	2,92	4,07	3,67	4,20	4,49
Healthcare	Mean	28.0	28.7	25.0	28.4	27.8	28.5
	Std Dev	4,37	3,45	4,59	3,63	3,62	4,33
Enviromental	Mean	30.7	31.4	27.3	30.0	29.2	30.6
	Std Dev	3,30	4,20	6,46	3,59	4,52	3,31
Other fields (religious, music, entertainment, economics, and more)	Mean	27,5	29,4	24,6	27,5	26,3	29,0
	Std Dev	2,90	2,84	4,71	3,16	4,13	3,27
Online Volunteering Duration							
< 3 months	Mean	29.0	30.0	25.8	27.5	27.3	28.8
	Std Dev	3.61	3.37	4.25	3.85	4.16	3.85
3-6 months	Mean	28.9	29.5	26.4	28.1	27.1	28.8
	Std Dev	4.33	3.59	4.47	3.86	4.94	4.44
6 months – 1 year	Mean	29.5	31.3	25.5	28.3	26.5	29.3
	Std Dev	4.23	2.53	6.27	3.61	5.77	4.24
> 1 year	Mean	27.8	28.0	23.3	26.5	25.6	28.0
	Std Dev	3.58	4.14	2.76	2.78	3.78	3.12

Tabel 4.4
Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Motivation Levels in Online Volunteering

Category		Motivation Score	Category		Motivation Score
Gender			**Field of *Online Volunteering***		
Male	M	167	Education	M	166
	Std Dev	25,1		Std Dev	18,9
Female	M	169	Social humanitarian work	M	169
	Std Dev	17,5		Std Dev	16,4
			Health care	M	166
Online Volunteering Duration				Std Dev	18,7
< 3 months	M	168	Enviromental	M	179
	Std Dev	17,3		Std Dev	18,6
3-6 months	M	169	Other fields (religious, music, entertainment, economics, and more)	M	164
	Std Dev	21,3		Std Dev	16,8
6 months – 1 year	M	170			
	Std Dev	20,7			
> 1 year	M	159			
	Std Dev	12,4			

Descriptive analysis regarding motivation in participating in online volunteering activities based on the total scores from the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale revealed that the motivation level among females (M = 169) was higher compared to the motivation level among males (M = 167) in participating in online volunteering. Further analysis regarding the motivation scores based on the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale among participants can be seen in the above table 4.4.

The research finding revealed that participants' motivation in engaging in online volunteering activities overall falls into the high category. Motivation, as categorized based on the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale, is divided into two categories: high and low. The categorization of motivation levels in participating in online volunteering activities can be observed in the following table.

Tabel 4.5
Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Motivation Levels in Online Volunteering

Category	Participant	Percentage
Low	87	42,4%
high	118	57,6%
Total	**205**	**100%**

Discussion

This research aims to identify the forms of motivation in early adulthood individuals engaging in online volunteering, using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) scale by Clary, et al. (1998), which has been previously adapted by the researcher. Descriptive statistical analysis shows that among the six proposed forms of motivation, the understanding function (M = 29.8), values function (M = 29), and enhancement function (M = 28.8) play significant roles in motivating early adults to participate in online volunteering activities. The social function (M = 25.9) is the lowest form of

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motivation among early adults when engaging in online volunteering activities.

These findings align with Clary, et al. (1998) explanation that the main principle of motivation in volunteering activities is that each individual has different motivations even when participating in the same volunteering activity. Clary, et al. (1999) further explain that among the six functions of motivation individuals have in volunteering activities, at least two major functions can motivate individuals to become volunteers. This explanation corresponds with the research findings, as early adults have more than one primary form of motivation when engaging in online volunteering, namely the understanding, values, and enhancement functions.

The understanding function is the highest form of motivation possessed by early adults when participating in online volunteering activities. This finding is consistent with previous research where Sugiarti, et al. (2020) found that the understanding function was the highest motivation among early adult volunteers, helping them achieve life goals and boost self-efficacy. According to Shabrina and Musabiq (2018), individuals motivated by understanding tend to engage in volunteering activities to gain knowledge and skills. This form of motivation also represents that early adults' involvement in volunteering is driven by their desire to acquire new knowledge, which they can use to broaden their experiences (Shabrina & Musabiq, 2018). Those who engage in online volunteering with the motivation of understanding view it as an opportunity to develop knowledge, sharpen skills, even though the activity is conducted virtually. This aligns with the cognitive aspects of early adulthood, where individuals tend to learn and explore knowledge and skills they find necessary for their personal development (Berk, 2018).

The second and third highest forms of motivation for early adults in online volunteering are the values and enhancement functions. The values function motivates early adults, in particular, to engage in online volunteering to demonstrate contributions and altruistic attitudes in their chosen volunteering fields. Baruch, et al. (2016) also found in their research that online volunteering activities can encourage altruism and make positive contributions to others through an online platform accessible to anyone. The third highest function, enhancement, is a form of motivation where individuals engage in online volunteering to foster psychological growth. Online volunteering can serve as a means for individuals to build relationships by making new virtual friends. Online volunteering can also enhance individuals' well-being because by participating as volunteers, they feel valuable and accomplished. These findings are consistent with the characteristics of early adulthood, where individuals are inclined to build social and interpersonal relationships centered around their careers (Papalia et al., 2009).

This research also examines the overall motivation levels among early adults participating in online volunteering. Approximately 57.6% of early adults engaged in online volunteering have a high level of motivation, while approximately 42.4% fall into the low motivation category. Based on the duration of online volunteering, early adults who participate for 6 months to 1 year have higher motivation levels than those with different durations. Early adults engaging in online volunteering in the environmental field have higher motivation levels compared to fields such as education, health, social humanitarian, and others.

The high or low motivation levels of individuals participating in online volunteering can be influenced by various factors. Leventhal, et al. (2022) explain that factors such as unrestricted access in terms

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of time and place, flexible activities, and efficiency play roles in motivating individuals to engage in online volunteering. Online volunteering also offers unlimited access and opportunities for individuals to join a social community, even if they are physically distant. However, this finding differs from Kulik's (2021) research, which suggests that individuals engaging in online volunteering tend to have lower satisfaction levels compared to those participating in offline or hybrid volunteering activities. This is because virtual communication is considered limited and can lead to emotional dissatisfaction. This emotional dissatisfaction can contribute to lower motivation levels in participating in online volunteering activities.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the forms of motivation among early adulthood individuals engaging in online volunteering. The research findings reveal that among the six forms of motivation, the understanding function (M = 29.8) is the highest motivation function among early adults participating in online volunteering activities. The second and third highest forms of motivation among early adults engaging in online volunteering are the values function (M = 29) and the enhancement function (M = 28.8). Early adults engaged in online volunteering for durations ranging from 6 months to 1 year, as well as those involved in the environmental field, exhibit higher motivation levels compared to those with longer volunteer durations and involvement in other volunteer fields. Overall, this research finds that motivation among early adults participating in online volunteering falls into the high category, with approximately 57.6% of early adults engaged in online volunteering demonstrating high motivation levels,

while around 42.4% fall into the low motivation category.

RESEARCH LIMITATION

The researcher recognizes the need for further investigation into the motivations of early adulthood individuals engaging in online volunteering activities. Subsequent research is expected to explore the factors that are related to or influence the motivations of early adults in participating in online volunteering activities. When using an online form as a data collection method, researchers should ensure that the online form settings avoid options such as "other" in response choices. This is intended to facilitate the researcher in processing descriptive data later on. Furthermore, future research should consider employing a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, to gain in-depth insights into the motivations of early adults participating in online volunteering activities.

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