

ANALYSIS OF THE BENEFITS OF THE VOLUNTEER IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *Being volunteer means doing work without getting paid in return. The fact that no material benefit is received does not mean that volunteering is a transfer from volunteer to another persons. In fact, volunteering is a flow, the volunteer receiving in return more than he offered, as satisfaction, experience, own achievement, socialization, personal development and fulfillment. Not every person is willing to make voluntary work or have the necessary time, or simply is not looking for all these benefits. That's why a questionnaire was realised to present the pattern of the volunteer and to establish the variable that influence volunteering. For this we analyzed several socio-demographic and economic characteristics, using the multinomial logistic regression. The empirical results allow the author to draw some conclusions and to identify some aspects that form the basis for further research.*

Keywords: *volunteer, benefits, Romania, motivation, multinomial logistic regression*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the DEX, a volunteer is the person who acts voluntarily, on his own initiative, unconsciously. Volunteering is, according to Law 195/2001, "the activity of public interest carried out on its own initiative by any person for the benefit of others, without receiving any material consideration". George Bernard Shaw, irish writer, motivated the desire to be volunteer as "we have no right to consume happiness without producing it."

According to the Eurobarometer of November 2010, 30% of the population are people involved in volunteering. In 13 countries, including the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, the volunteers represent 50% of the population. The European volunteer is a citizen with a high socio-economic level and about 20 years of school, people working and showing a high interest in public life. The equivalent of the financial contribution of volunteering to GDP is between 3% and 5% in countries such as Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden, and in the UK, Finland and Denmark more than two percent.

In Romania, according to the Eurobarometer of November 2010, the volunteer participation rate is 20%, a low level of involvement compared to the EU average. Over time researches have indicated different values for volunteers. In the period 1996-2010, the percentage of involvement was between 8% and 33%. These variations can be explained by different methodologies of sampling and data collection or conceptual blur regarding the type of activities that can be classified as volunteering.

In 2011, the European Year of Volunteering, the European Commission shows that volunteering has gained an important role on the public policy agenda at European level because of its value to the people and society.

Volunteering can be analysed from two perspectives: the individual development of people involved in volunteer activities and the development of communities and society overall. Volunteering helps individual development by acquiring knowledge, skills and transferable skills on the labor market, the potential of volunteering as an opportunity for lifelong learning, the cultivation of social skills such as trust, tolerance, self-esteem, respect for diversity.

There is not much literature and studies on volunteering in the literature. In 2001 was studied the relationship between voluntary work in the community and the six aspects of personal well-being: happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, control of life, depression. Cross-sectional and longitudinal data were analyzed. The results of the study show that volunteer work improves all six aspects of well-being and people who have a good sense of well-being spend more time in volunteering (Thoits and Hewitt, 2001).

The literature on volunteers (both members and workers) has been and continues to be dominated by studies of their sociodemographic characteristics, motivations, attitudes, and values. The volunteer profile is married or unmarried men and women, whites, with higher education, with greater family income, employed persons with children. Married persons volunteer more hours; unmarried persons and older individuals volunteer fewer than 3 hours (Peggy, Thoits and Hewitt, 2001).

2. DATA

To analyze volunteering in Romania, was created a questionnaire and a database in the SPSS program. The data used in this study was obtained from an online survey conducted between October and November 2016 on volunteers. The sample consisted in 384 persons from all over Romania, being a representative sample for the population from both rural and urban environment, with Internet access. Throughout the collecting of data, not all the volunteers have accepted to participate in the interview, being reluctant and reticent. Still, by the end, 384 queries were completed.

The questionnaire contained 22 questions and covered several topics. The questions were open with many variants of answers. These refer to gender, age, marital status, when they started practicing volunteering, the family they belong to, their last graduate school, occupation, material status, how long they are involved in volunteering, whether they opted alone or was contacted by an agency or friend, the causes that triggered a volunteer involvement, the features/qualities of a volunteer group, the benefits of the volunteer and the field in which he volunteered. The registered variables are qualitative, with several variants of response.

3. METHODOLOGY

A multinomial logistical model was used in the analysis to identify the impact of socio-demographic factors on the benefits of the volunteer.

The multinomial logistic regression model, also called the polytomous logistic regression, is a generalization of the logistic model. The difference between the logistic binary model and the multinomial logistic model is that the dependent variable, Y can have more than two values. If the variable Y has as possible the elements of the unordered set $\{1, \dots, g\}$, the multinomial logistic model assumes that the probability of Y being equal to s in the observation depends on the values of the variables x_{i1}, \dots, x_{ip} by:

$$P(Y_i = s) = \frac{e^{\eta_{is}}}{\sum_{t=1}^g e^{\eta_{it}}}, \text{ where}$$

$$\eta_{is} = \sum_{k=1}^p x_{ik} \beta_{ks} \text{ is a linear function.}$$

From the model shape, it is noted that there are different β_{ks} regression coefficients for each k and s . Therefore, every possible Y value has an associated pattern. The model defined in this way is overparametrized, its reduction can be achieved by setting a Y value, eg $Y = 1$, as the reference category (ie $\beta_{11}, \dots, \beta_{p1}$ are equal to zero). Choosing the reference category may facilitate interpretation.

4. RESULTS

We estimated a multinomial logistic regression for the intuitive results provided, as the explanatory variables are categorical. The pattern of multinomial logistic regression has been used in order to evaluate the benefits of the volunteers are influenced by the independent variables: the material state, the field in which he acts as a volunteer, the cause that led to volunteer actions, the time he is a volunteer and the occupation. In this model, the dependent variable is a category variable (the benefits of volunteering) and the independent variables (“material state”, “field”, “cause”, “time”, “occupation”) represent categories as well. The results obtained by estimating this model are in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of each variable

		Case Processing Summary	
		N	Marginal Percentage
beneficii	satisfactie	271	70,9%
	autorealizare	37	9,7%
	socializare	33	8,6%
	dezvoltare	38	9,9%
	implinire	3	,8%
timp	<1 an	63	16,5%
	1-5 ani	165	43,2%
	>5 ani	154	40,3%
ocupatie	lucrez cu norma intreaga	274	71,7%
	lucrez cu norma redusa	28	7,3%
	pensionar	18	4,7%
	elev, student, masterand, doctorand	53	13,9%
	nu lucrez	9	2,4%
cauza	dorinta de a darui	220	57,6%
	nevoia de apartenenta	100	26,2%
	nevoia de dezvoltare profesionala	51	13,4%
	pentru a adauga experienta	11	2,9%
stare_materiala	scazuta	52	13,6%
	multumitoare	284	74,3%
	f oarte buna	46	12,0%
domeniu	mass-media	21	5,5%
	homeless	3	,8%
	educatie	44	11,5%
	HR	3	,8%
	civic	6	1,6%
	autism	3	,8%
	cultural	6	1,6%
	studenti	5	1,3%
	social	181	47,4%
	umanitar	14	3,7%
	protectia mediului	15	3,9%
	protectia naturii	2	,5%
	ecologic	18	4,7%
	protectia animalelor	8	2,1%
	politic	10	2,6%
	cancer	3	,8%
	sanatate	12	3,1%
copii	20	5,2%	
sport	5	1,3%	
mame	3	,8%	
Valid		382	100,0%
Missing		248	
Total		630	
Subpopulation		127 ^a	

a. The dependent variable has only one value observed in 108 (85,0%) subpopulations.

Source: Data processed using the SPSS statistical program

All variables have multiple response variants, so that dummy variables were created for each variant. Table 2 shows information on the estimated model.

Table 2 Information regarding estimated models

Model	Model Fitting Criteria			Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	AIC	BIC	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	604,679	620,460	596,679			
Final	488,132	977,364	240,132	356,547	120	,000

Source: Data processed using the SPSS statistical program

Table 2 shows that the 2Log Likelihood statistic is significant. The simplest model does not contain any predictor variables, just the constant. The final model uses the group of the best predictors, which is significant.

The results obtained in Table 3 and Table 4 provide information on the extent to which estimated coefficients explain the phenomenon studied more effectively.

Table 3 Estimation efficiency

Goodness-of-Fit			
	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	759,125	384	,000
Deviance	196,677	384	1,000

Source: Data processed using the SPSS statistical program

Consequently, we conclude that there is no significant difference between the two models and we can assume that the estimation is correct.

Table 4 The link between variables

Pseudo R-Square	
Cox and Snell	,607
Nagelkerke	,714
McFadden	,492

Source: Data processed using the SPSS statistical program

R² statistics indicate the correlation between a set of predictors and category variables. In our case, we used 3 calculation methods and we notice that the result has values greater than 0,5. This result indicates a combined general correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 5 Sequential elimination of the independent variables

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria			Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	AIC of Reduced Model	BIC of Reduced Model	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	488,132	977,364	240,132 ^a	,000	0	.
timp	530,132	987,801	298,132 ^b	58,001	8	,000
ocupatie	537,800	963,906	321,800 ^b	81,668	16	,000
cauza	549,123	991,011	325,123 ^b	84,992	12	,000
stare_materiala	488,916	946,585	256,916 ^b	16,784	8	,032
domeniu	544,445	733,825	448,445 ^b	208,313	76	,000

The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.

- a. This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.
- b. Unexpected singularities in the Hessian matrix are encountered. This indicates that either some predictor variables should be excluded or some categories should be merged.

Source: Data processed using the SPSS statistical program

Table 5 shows what happens if each independent variable is sequentially removed. In our case, we have five predictors. In each case, there is a significant decrease in the correspondence between forecasted data and actual data. In other words, each predictor, less the material state, has a significant effect and should be preserved.

The significance of each regression coefficient is given by the Wald test. In our case, the significant level of this test (Sig column) is less than 0,05, so the parameters can be retained in the model.

Table 6 presents a precision classification of estimates. Taking into account the parameters obtained, it shows what predictions could be obtained considering the independent variables and how accurate these predictions could be.

Table 6 Precision of estimations

Classification						
Observed	Predicted					Percent Correct
	satisfactie	autorealizare	socializare	dezv oltare	implinire	
satisfactie	258	0	5	8	0	95,2%
autorealizare	17	16	1	3	0	43,2%
socializare	18	0	15	0	0	45,5%
dezv oltare	14	0	0	24	0	63,2%
implinire	0	0	0	0	3	100,0%
Overall Percentage	80,4%	4,2%	5,5%	9,2%	,8%	82,7%

Source: Data processed using the SPSS statistical program

CONCLUSIONS

Why do some people engage in unpaid support activities, known as volunteering? Analyzing the volunteers in terms of reasons, purposes and motivations that underlie human behavior, personal , economic and social variables have been identified that influence the volunteer's benefits.

The study explored the role of benefits in volunteering processes, especially decisions to become a volunteer in the first place and decisions on the continuation of volunteering.

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