

Volunteering: A Versatile Platform for Building and Cultivating Robust Professional and Social Competence (CECIIS)

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Abstract. *Can volunteering affect an individual's business and personal development, remove biases, and direct an individual to pursue both personal and community goals? Volunteering entails dedicating time for the community's benefit. This research examines its impact on personal growth.*

The research focuses on how volunteering during the academic life of the respondents contributes to their individual development and career aspirations. Furthermore, this research delves into how volunteering influences the successful completion of the recruitment process for specific positions as well as further career paths, aiming to review its impact on social and professional competencies and its correlation with personal growth.

Qualitative research was conducted using a questionnaire on the influence of the respondents' volunteer experience on the development of personal, professional and social skills, as well as their formed opinions on the research topic. The questionnaire included 22 questions: demographic questions, Likert scale statements, and single or multiple-answer questions. The research process included a convenience sample of 125 respondents studying within the borders of the Republic of Croatia. Students were chosen randomly, regardless of whether they volunteered or not.

Statistical analysis of the survey data reveals a significant correlation between two variables: the number of volunteer hours and the perceived value of volunteer experience as a pivotal factor in career development and the acquisition of essential skills. In this context, a positive relationship between the variables was observed. As the number of volunteer hours and the level of responsibility increase, so do the opportunities to acquire new skills and develop existing ones. Additionally, long-term volunteer experience facilitates career path selection and obtaining the desired work position.

This research shows that students value volunteering and believe it should be more popularized. Increased volunteer engagement enhances placement prospects within organizations, highlighting the need to promote and practice volunteerism more.

Keywords. Volunteering, Personal Growth, Business Development, Community, Social and Professional Competences

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