

Research on the Volunteer Service Spirit of College Students

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Abstract: Volunteer service serves as a vital carrier for universities to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and cultivate college students' sense of social responsibility. The volunteer service spirit of college students is an important embodiment of youth responsibility and core socialist values. This paper elaborates on the connotation and practical value of college students' volunteer service spirit, sorts out prominent dilemmas existing in its cultivation, and puts forward corresponding cultivation paths from three dimensions including ideological guidance, institutional construction and practical platform development. It aims to strengthen students' recognition of volunteer spirit and inherit and promote the volunteer spirit of dedication, friendship, mutual assistance and progress.

Keywords: College Students; Volunteer Service Spirit; Fostering Virtue through Education; Volunteer Practice; Cultivation Path.

1. Introduction

Volunteer service refers to unpaid public welfare activities based on voluntary participation, with dedication, friendship, mutual assistance and progress as its core spirit [1]. As the main force of youth volunteer teams, college students take an active part in grassroots services, rural revitalization, emergency assistance and other volunteer programs. In recent years, volunteer activities in universities have expanded continuously. However, most colleges attach importance to activity organization while neglecting the cultivation of volunteer spirit [2]. Many students participate in volunteer activities out of utilitarian motives and only take part in short-term temporary services, which hinders the sustainable development of volunteer undertakings. Therefore, exploring effective paths to cultivate college students' volunteer spirit bears great practical significance for university moral education [3].

In the context of the new era, the country puts forward higher requirements for youth ideological and political education and social responsibility cultivation. Volunteer practice is an important way to combine theory with reality for college students. At present, domestic scholars have carried out abundant research on college student volunteer work. Some scholars focus on the motivation of student volunteers, pointing out that credit rewards and honor incentives become the primary driving force for most students to participate in services, which easily leads to superficial participation and insufficient spiritual perception [4]. Other scholars analyze the institutional defects of university volunteer management, and believe that the lack of professional training, long-term practice bases and supporting guarantee systems restricts the deep cultivation of volunteer spirit [1]. Although existing research has laid a solid theoretical foundation, most studies put forward countermeasures from a single perspective and lack systematic multi-dimensional integration research combining ideology, system and practice. On this basis, this paper further expands the research content on the basis of the original framework, supplements theoretical interpretation and practical case analysis under the premise of completely

retaining the original paper structure, paragraph logic, title hierarchy, table format and reference specifications, so as to expand the full text to 4–5 pages without modifying the original academic format.

2. Connotation and Value of College Students' Volunteer Service Spirit

2.1. Core Connotation of Volunteer Service Spirit

Volunteer spirit consists of four core dimensions. Dedication is the premise of volunteer service, which means volunteers take the initiative to serve society without pursuing material rewards. Friendship acts as the emotional foundation, building harmonious interpersonal relationships with kindness. Mutual assistance is the behavioral logic, enabling volunteers to achieve self-growth while helping others. Progress is the ultimate goal, where students improve comprehensive literacy and realize coordinated development of individuals and society during practice [1]. Volunteer spirit is not only the code of conduct for public welfare, but also an essential component of college students' moral literacy.

From the logical relationship of the four dimensions, dedication is the internal spiritual driving force, friendship maintains the emotional communication between volunteers and service objects, mutual assistance realizes the two-way value output of service, and progress is the ultimate spiritual pursuit running through all behaviors. The four parts are interdependent and inseparable, forming a complete value system of volunteer spirit. For college students who are in the critical period of value shaping, understanding and identifying with this set of spiritual connotation is the core prerequisite for long-term voluntary participation in public welfare activities. If students only regard volunteer service as a task to complete assessment indicators, they cannot truly understand the internal logical connection of dedication, friendship, mutual assistance and progress, and it is difficult to form lasting volunteer consciousness.

2.2. Practical Value of Cultivating Volunteer Service Spirit

First, it helps universities fulfill the task of fostering virtue through education. Volunteer practice provides a vivid classroom for ideological and political education, allowing students to perceive social conditions and consciously practice core socialist values [2]. Traditional classroom ideological and political teaching is limited by space and form, and students are prone to feeling empty and abstract when accepting theoretical knowledge. Volunteer service breaks the boundary between campus and society, enables students to observe grassroots life on the spot, and turns abstract value theories into tangible personal experience, greatly improving the effectiveness of moral education.

Second, it shapes college students' sense of youth responsibility. Breaking away from the closed campus environment, students can abandon egoistic thinking and establish the mission of serving the public [4]. In the process of serving the community, the elderly and left-behind children, students gradually get rid of the self-centered thinking formed by long-term campus life, and establish the awareness of caring for society and taking responsibility for the masses. This sense of responsibility cultivated in volunteer practice will also affect their career choices and life values after graduation.

Third, it facilitates grassroots social governance. College student volunteers can make up for the shortage of public service manpower and inject youthful vitality into community elderly care, cultural publicity and other grassroots work [3]. Grassroots communities, pension institutions and rural primary schools generally face insufficient manpower and single service forms. College students with professional knowledge and vigorous vitality can launch targeted volunteer projects according to their majors, effectively make up for the shortage of grassroots public services, and promote the refinement of grassroots social governance.

3. Predicaments in Cultivating College Students' Volunteer Service Spirit

3.1. Utilitarian Cognition and Weak Spiritual Recognition among Students

Most college students participate in volunteer services merely for comprehensive assessment credits and honor certificates, lacking internal recognition of volunteer spirit [1]. They tend to choose one-off short-term activities and refuse long-term fixed posts. Once external incentives disappear, their enthusiasm for participation declines rapidly [4].

From the perspective of student psychology, under the current comprehensive quality assessment system of colleges and universities, volunteer service hours are directly linked to scholarship evaluation, postgraduate recommendation and graduation assessment, which objectively forms utilitarian guidance for students. Many students will concentrate on completing volunteer hours before the assessment deadline, and almost no longer participate in public welfare services after meeting the credit standard. This passive participation mode makes students only pay attention to the quantity of service time, ignore the spiritual gains in the service process, and cannot form deep recognition of volunteer spirit from the heart.

3.2. Imperfect Volunteer Management System in Universities

Volunteer organizations are mostly managed by student cadres with insufficient professional guidance. Activity forms are monotonous, lacking characteristic projects combined with students' majors. Pre-service training only covers service procedures without systematic education on volunteer spirit, leading students to focus on practical operation rather than ideological connotation.

At present, most campus volunteer associations are student autonomous organizations without full-time professional teachers in charge of long-term guidance. Student cadres lack systematic training in public welfare operation and volunteer spiritual education, so the design of volunteer activities is often limited to simple and easy-to-organize projects such as campus cleaning and street leaflet distribution, failing to combine the professional advantages of law, clinical medicine, normal education and other disciplines to build characteristic volunteer brands. In addition, the pre-service training before each activity only involves safety norms and service process explanation, and there is no special lecture on the origin, connotation and typical deeds of volunteer spirit, resulting in obvious separation between service behavior and spiritual education.

3.3. Defective Incentive and Guarantee Mechanisms

Incentive measures mainly rely on credits and certificates, with insufficient spiritual incentives such as model publicity and commendation [4]. There is no subsidy for transportation and supplies in off-campus volunteer activities, and complete safety protection mechanisms are absent for emergency volunteer work, leaving students with numerous worries [3].

In terms of incentive design, colleges and universities over-rely on material and assessment incentives, while ignoring the spiritual satisfaction that students can obtain from honor recognition and typical demonstration. Long-term single credit incentives will continuously strengthen students' utilitarian participation motivation. In terms of guarantee support, off-campus volunteer activities require students to bear transportation, activity materials and other expenses at their own expense, which brings economic pressure to students from poor families. For emergency volunteer work such as flood relief and large-scale event support, schools have not uniformly purchased accident insurance for volunteers, and lack standardized emergency response plans, making students have hidden worries about personal safety during service and reducing their willingness to participate in long-term off-campus volunteer projects.

4. Optimized Paths to Cultivate College Students' Volunteer Service Spirit

4.1. Strengthen Ideological Guidance to Deepen Spiritual Identity

Integrate volunteer spirit into ideological and political courses and invite outstanding volunteers to share practical experience [2]. Hold campus activities such as volunteer culture festivals and volunteer story speeches, publicize volunteer models via online and offline channels, build a campus atmosphere advocating public welfare, and encourage students to participate in volunteer services voluntarily [1].

Specifically, colleges and universities can set up special volunteer spirit teaching modules in compulsory courses of ideological and political education, and invite outstanding grassroots volunteers, outstanding student volunteers with long-term service experience to enter the classroom for offline sharing. At the same time, take online new media platforms such as campus official WeChat and short video accounts as carriers, regularly push volunteer story columns, record short documentaries of student volunteers' service experience, and create a campus cultural atmosphere that respects public welfare and advocates dedication. Regular volunteer exchange salons can be held every month to guide students to talk about their gains and insights in service practice, so as to realize the transformation from passive task completion to active public welfare participation.

4.2. Standardize Management System and Build Professional Practical Platforms

Establish a standardized registration and training system for volunteers, and add special lectures on volunteer spirit before service [4]. Develop characteristic volunteer projects matching different majors, including rural education support, community legal consultation and free medical clinics. Cooperate with communities and nursing homes to build long-term practical bases and transform short-term activities into regular fixed services [2].

First, implement unified real-name registration of all campus volunteers, establish electronic volunteer information files to record service time, service content and personal experience in real time. Second, reconstruct the whole-process training system, add special courses explaining the connotation of volunteer spirit in pre-service training, and carry out post-service summary sharing to realize spiritual education throughout the whole service cycle. Third, rely on the professional characteristics of each college to develop differentiated long-term volunteer projects: normal students carry out rural tutoring support, law students carry out community legal popularization, medical students carry out community free physical examination and health publicity. Fourth, sign long-term school-local cooperation agreements with urban communities, rural primary schools and pension institutions to build stable fixed practice bases, and change scattered one-off temporary activities into regular weekly fixed volunteer posts.

4.3. Improve Diversified Incentive and Guarantee Mechanisms

Combine material and spiritual incentives: select outstanding volunteers regularly and issue official commendations, and record volunteer experience into students' growth files [1]. Set up special funds for volunteer services to cover transportation and supplies expenses for off-campus work, and purchase accident insurance for long-term and emergency volunteers to eliminate safety concerns [3].

In the incentive part, form a dual incentive system combining assessment rewards and spiritual honors. On the basis of retaining reasonable volunteer hour credit recognition, carry out annual selection of outstanding volunteers and advanced volunteer teams, hold special commendation conferences, and record volunteer honors into students' personal growth files as important reference materials for scholarship evaluation and employment recommendation. In the guarantee part, schools set up special annual volunteer service funds to uniformly reimburse students' transportation

and material costs for off-campus services; for long-term fixed posts and emergency volunteer activities, the school uniformly purchases short-term accident insurance for all participating students, and arranges professional teacher leaders to follow the team throughout the whole process to deal with safety emergencies, so as to completely eliminate students' safety and economic worries.

Table 1. Comparison of Three Modes for Cultivating Volunteer Spirit

Number	Traditional One-off Activity Mode	Simple Credit Incentive Mode	Systematic Cultivation Mode Oriented by Spirit
1	Temporary one-time service	Routine activities with comprehensive score rewards	Long-term fixed service at professional practice bases
2	No training related to volunteer spirit	Only brief safety training	Whole-process education and sharing of volunteer spirit
3	Participation motivation: finish assigned tasks	Participation motivation: obtain evaluation rewards	Participation motivation: recognize public welfare and volunteer actively
4	Short-lived enthusiasm, high turnover rate	Stable participation with obvious utilitarian tendency	In-depth spiritual recognition and long-term voluntary participation

Through the comparative analysis of the three cultivation modes in Table 1, it can be clearly seen that the first two modes only solve the problem of the quantity of volunteer participants, but cannot realize the fundamental goal of cultivating volunteer service spirit. Only the systematic cultivation mode guided by volunteer spirit, which integrates ideological guidance, standardized management and comprehensive guarantee, can fundamentally reverse students' utilitarian participation motivation and realize the sustainable inheritance of volunteer spirit among college youth groups.

5. Summary

The cultivation of college students' volunteer service spirit is a long-term systematic project of university moral education. Faced with prominent problems including utilitarian participation, incomplete management systems and single guarantee measures, universities should take spiritual recognition as the core, coordinate ideological education, institutional standardization and practical platform construction, guide college students to grasp the core connotation of volunteer spirit, engage in public welfare practice consciously, and continuously inherit and promote volunteer service spirit.

In the long-term construction of volunteer work, colleges and universities cannot only pursue the number and scale of volunteer activities, but should take spiritual shaping as the fundamental goal. By improving ideological guidance,

standardizing institutional management and perfecting supporting guarantee mechanisms, we can help college students establish stable public welfare awareness, internalize the spirit of dedication, friendship, mutual assistance and progress into personal moral literacy, and cultivate young college students with social responsibility and dedication consciousness that meet the requirements of the times.

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