

[DOI: 10.20472/EFC.2022.017.007](https://doi.org/10.20472/EFC.2022.017.007)

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## **INCREASING THE SOCIAL WARENESS OF GENERATION Z THROUGH PRO BONO ACTIVITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES**

### **Abstract:**

In modern societies, volunteering is a form of civic activity. Volunteering can also contribute to human development goals. It can also lead to services in the form of employment that a paid worker would not be able to provide. It also enhances social solidarity, social capital, political legitimacy and quality of life in society.

In this paper I would like to summarise the conclusions of an Erasmus KA2 project "Boosting Employability and Empowering Social Engagement in High Education through Pro Bono".

The aim of the project is to strengthen the social responsibility of students in higher education and to promote pro bono volunteering based on professional knowledge sharing.

In the framework of the BEESE pro bono Erasmus programme, we have also carried out an international research. In this context, a pre-tested standardised questionnaire survey was carried out among students from the universities participating in the project in the form of an online survey.

The research examined young people's openness to pro bono activities, what they know about this form of volunteering and how and to what extent they can be encouraged to engage in CSR activities.

I think that the empirical experience of the research and the participation in the programme could be useful for colleagues teaching at the university on how to increase the social awareness of young people, how to help them put their theoretical knowledge into practice while creating value for society.

### **Keywords:**

pro bono, social sensitivity, Z generation, volunteering

## **1 Introduction**

CSR, volunteerism, and pro bono activities are gaining popularity among businesses, organisations, and individuals. Companies are being encouraged to embrace CSR initiatives and strategies that are consistent with their beliefs and mission due to the increasing relevance of social values and more conscientious behaviour on an individual level.

CSR and volunteer work may help a business to differentiate itself, even to gain a potential competitive advantage over others.

CSR may, however, be a useful tool for educational institutions to improve their own values and reputation in addition to profit-driven corporate organisations. Additionally, pro bono activities are especially suitable for a higher education institution since they allow students to put their academic knowledge into practice while also imparting social value. In addition, it provides an excellent opportunity to open up to NGOs while strengthening relationships between higher education institutions and businesses.

In this paper, the results of a prob bono survey of CSR activities based on knowledge sharing will be presented. In particular, the focus will be placed on examining the relationship between young people's maturity and their involvement in volunteering in order to find out how to motivate young people to volunteer more effectively and efficiently.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 Examining values in consumer behaviour, theories of value-based consumer behaviour**

The internal context of consumer behaviour may be revealed by examining values in great detail. Value trends have a longer-term impact on consumer behaviour. The choices individuals make about their spending and consumption patterns can be seen as an external expression of their internal value system.

It is no coincidence that the fundamental context of lifestyle and values served as the foundation for consumer behaviour analysis and marketing research techniques in the 1960s, such as the AIO or VALSI and VALSII methods (Veres, 2004).

Value systems are connected to two environmental components, namely, cultural and social factors, according to the interdisciplinary approach to consumer behaviour. Each civilization creates a set of cultural norms and values inside its own framework that, within certain boundaries, guides how its members should behave. Through the aspects of lifestyle, manner of life, and status, social factors can be connected to value.

The cultural determination of value is emphasised by Andorka (2003), Giddens, (2003), Hawkins-Best-Coney (1992) who consider value as a cultural principle or ideal.

Other authors emphasize the social determination of value (Gauthier,1986; Hartmann, 1972) by considering value as the source of our standards. Müller (1986) also emphasises social determination when he defines value as a positive or negative perception of society, a kind of social or personality psychological category.

In contrast, some authors emphasise the individual determination of value. A subjectivist approach characterises, for example, Peter-Olson's (1987) definition of value as a cognitive representation of the consumer's basic needs and goals.

In my viewpoint, based on all the ideas, it is possible to draw the conclusion that values are formed by the culture of a particular group, but that group values are also impacted by the circumstances and situations that govern day-to-day living.

Understanding the reasons and context of individual decisions is substantially facilitated by the value system as a consumer criteria. Value-based models of consumer behaviour frequently presuppose a connection between the reasons behind customers' product and service decisions and their value system. These theories have inspired me to validate the relationship between value systems and consumer behaviour with my own primary research and explore additional components.

Our previous research also confirms that both value system and the ultimate outcome of consumer choice can provide nuanced explanations of the true motivations behind individual purchase decisions (Garai-Fodor & Csiszárík-Kocsir, 2018; Garai-Fodor, 2021.) Moreover, it is also an excellent way to differentiate consumers, treating it as a segmentation criterion. For this very reason, following the basic concept of value-based consumer behaviour models, I sought to investigate openness to volunteering and its relation to individual values.

## **2.2 Conceptual definition of CSR and pro bono**

There are several definitions of CSR in the literature (Bowen, 1953; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Moir, 2001; Foran, 2001).

Dahlsrud (2008) analysed a total of 37 CSR definitions, reviewing the work of 27 authors, mainly European and American, from 1980 to 2003.

The definitions show no consistency, thus demonstrating that CSR is an activity that can be approached from several angles.

Carroll's (2008) four-element pyramid, with economic responsibility at the bottom and legal responsibility at the top, followed by ethical behaviour, serves as the cornerstone of understanding CSR. Philanthropic obligation stands at the top of the pyramid. According to Carroll (2015), CSR is a set of activities that are driven by discretionary expectations rather than legal requirements.

Since the 1990s, and especially since the 2000s, the CSR movement has become a global phenomenon, and has been most evident in the European Community.

One form of CSR is pro bono activity, which is a voluntary activity based on knowledge sharing. In this case, the individual does not provide assistance through physical activity (e.g., painting the fence of a kindergarten) or financial support (donations), but offers his/her knowledge and experience without compensation to those in need.

The research also focuses on pro bono activities, with three pilot projects that were undertaken over a three-year period and had different durations and professional skill requirements. A group of students participated in the pro bono activities with the help of a university instructor. Relevant company representatives and practitioners were also involved in the professional assistance, assisting and mentoring the students.

A national volunteer organisation helped to find a suitable NGO to support, acting as a kind of intermediary, linking the academic and business professionals who wanted to help with the NGO that needed support.

The students of Óbuda University participated in three pilot programmes, supporting an organisation that cares for the elderly, a regional environmental institution and an organisation that helps disadvantaged children.

### **3 Methodology**

In this paper partial results of an international quantitative primary research are presented. The study was carried out in the framework of a KA2 international research project with the participation of Hungarian, Bulgarian, French, Portuguese and Spanish researchers, using a pre-tested, standardised online questionnaire.

The survey instrument was the same in all countries participating in the project to ensure comparability. The standardised questionnaire consisted of closed questions only, nominal measurement levels - single-choice and multiple-choice selective questions - along with a ranking question type, and a Likert scale to assess respondents' attitudes and value orientation towards volunteering. Attitudes towards volunteering were analysed in a triple relation: cognitive, affective and conative phases, in order to get a more accurate picture of the homogeneity of the attitude components and of the possible cognitive dissonance. For the scaling questions, a scale from 1 to 7 was used in order to obtain more differentiated results and also due to the international nature of the research, as there were Portuguese, Spanish, French and Bulgarian participants in the survey, an internationally accepted scale value had to be used (Malhotra & Simon, 2017).

The first set of questions of the standardised questionnaire aimed to explore the general value orientation of the respondents. The second block was designed to assess the perception of volunteering and to identify the factors that motivate volunteering. The third stage was aimed at analysing the activity in volunteer programmes and attitudes towards volunteering pro bono, i.e., based on knowledge sharing, followed by questions on information seeking habits and socio-demographic issues related to volunteering. The recruitment of subjects in each sampling unit was done by a snowball sampling procedure, resulting in 840 evaluable questionnaires in Hungary. A screening criterion for the sampling was that the respondent should be a member of Generation Z based on age.

The objective of the research was to investigate whether there is a correlation between young people's perception of values and their participation in volunteering, including pro bono activities. The research sought to test the following hypotheses:

Based on value perception, distinct segments can be realized (H1).

Openness to volunteering (H2/a) and willingness to participate in pro bono activities based on knowledge sharing (H2/b) are related to the core value perspective.

Descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis were used to process the quantitative results using SPSS 22.0 software. In the factor analysis presented in the results, I decided on the final factor structure based on the KMO value, the total variance value and the professional explanatory

power. For the factor analysis Principal Component Analysis was used and for rotational exirations Varimax with Kaiser Normalization was applied.

For the segmentation, a K-means clustering procedure was implemented, which is a statistically appropriate method due to the sample size of more than 800.

To test the correlation between clustering and volunteering (H2 hypothesis test), a Chi-square test was applied, using Pearson's significance value to determine the existence of a correlation between the two variables ( $\text{sig} \leq 0.05$ ). To explore internal correlations, the absolute values of the adjusted, standardized residuals (Adj.R) were used (Sajtos & Mitev)

## 4 Results

Young people aged 21-25 years old (Generation Z) made up 70% of the sample, while 30% were aged 16-20 years old. In terms of further socio-demographic characteristics, the sample was gender balanced: 52% female, 48% male. The distribution of the respondents by place of residence shows that the majority of respondents (55%) live in the capital and 45% of the sample still live with their parents. In terms of highest level of education, the absolute majority of respondents (72.8%) had completed secondary education. The influence of the family as the smallest social background can be decisive in many ways - even in terms of attitudes towards volunteering. Therefore, the highest educational level of the parents of the subjects was also examined. The results showed that both the mother (55%) and the father (58%) had a majority of secondary education, but also a significant proportion of parents with tertiary education within the sample (40% and 37% respectively).

In order to test the hypotheses, the sample was first segmented on the basis of the value approach. During the first round a factor analysis was carried out on the examined factors. It was the four-factor test which resulted in the best professionally explicable and statistically appropriate solution.

**Table 1 Groups of values based on consumers' opinions**

Value factors	Factors of values			
	adventure	empathy	status	inflexibility
I enjoy taking risks	<b>0.821</b>	-0.034	0.098	-0.097
I like adventures, I like trying new and different exciting things	<b>0.727</b>	0.091	-0.064	-0.113
To achieve anything in life, you have to take risks	<b>0.544</b>	0.162	0.147	0.042
Ideally, I would live every day as if it were my last	<b>0.489</b>	0.176	-0.044	0.157
I like to live in a stable and orderly environment and avoid activities that could compromise my safety	<b>-0.425</b>	0.345	0.384	0.113
I like protecting nature and supporting equality and social justice	0.122	<b>0.596</b>	0.104	-0.194

I smile at elderly couples holding hands	0.193	<b>0.576</b>	-0.117	0.170
When I see people suffering, I wonder how they feel about their plight	0.052	<b>0.573</b>	0.071	0.205
I love spending time on challenges that make the world a better place	0.312	<b>0.553</b>	0.211	-0.086
I am always polite, even to people I do not sympathise with	-0.070	<b>0.534</b>	0.020	-0.148
It would never occur to me that someone else should be punished for my bad actions	0.010	<b>0.510</b>	-0.092	-0.074
Work is the most important thing in my life	0.086	0.099	<b>0.695</b>	-0.027
My life is mostly determined by what happens in the world	-0.026	0.044	<b>0.536</b>	0.062
I like making decisions, gaining wealth and social status	0.430	-0.028	<b>0.454</b>	-0.013
I find it very difficult to visit the ill	-0.011	-0.287	<b>0.429</b>	0.247
I sometimes find it difficult to see things from a different perspective	-0.049	-0.038	-0.007	<b>0.697</b>
Sometimes I get hurt when I do not get my way	0.091	0.174	0.225	<b>0.663</b>
I sometimes get annoyed by people who ask me for favours	0.059	-0.199	0.329	<b>0.464</b>
When I do not know something, I am not afraid to admit it	0.191	0.208	0.239	<b>-0.420</b>

Source: author's own research, 2020, N=840 Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, KMO= 0,727; sum variance=41.128

In this sense, I could distinguish the adventure factor, to which the life-affirming, hedonistic values were added;  
the empathy value dimension, where I could include the classical values of social sensitivity and responsibility;  
the status factor, which included the values of conformity to external expectations and the importance of social status and  
the inflexibility group, characterised by a lack of adaptability and a value orientation of sticking to one's own opinion.

The resulting factors were subjected to cluster analysis using a K-means procedure. As a result, I was able to characterise statistically distinguishable (sig=0.000) segments based on value orientation (H1 confirmed).

**Table 2 Consumer segments by value orientation**

Factors of values	Segments by values			
	Life-affirming, helpful N=265	Living for appearances N=179	Self-centred adventurer N=186	Empathic, responsible N=210

Adventure	<b>0.61192</b>	-0.68739	<b>0.48091</b>	-0.61221
Empathy	0.46759	-0.03933	<b>-1.19568</b>	<b>0.50251</b>
Status	0.48533	<b>0.76983</b>	-0.36828	<b>-0.94243</b>
Inflexibility	0.48243	-0.82937	-0.14357	0.22532

Source: author's own research, 2020, N=840

"Life-affirming, helpful" are young people who, in addition to seeking adventure, excitement and risk, pay attention to helping others, social and environmental problems.

The "Living for appearances" group is made up of young people for whom achieving social status is the most important thing, they want to live up to the expectations of the world. They do not think in terms of helping others, nor are they driven by a sense of adventure, but they are also inflexible and do not stick to their own opinions.

What distinguishes "Self-centred adventurers" with hedonistic value pursuit, from the Life-affirming helpful young people, is that they are not open to social values in general. They are not concerned with the desire to help others, or even with social and environmental problems.

For young people with "Empathic, responsible attitudes", social values, social responsibility and the desire to help others are the most important. They are not particularly concerned with status and social standing.

I then investigated whether participation in volunteering and participation in pro bono activities based specifically on professional knowledge sharing is related to this values approach.

The results of the Chi-square test showed that in both cases the association was statistically verifiable ( $\text{sig} \geq 0.05$ ; H2/a and H2/b confirmed).

**Table 3 Participation of segments by value system in voluntary activities**

Segments by value system		Participation in voluntary activities, programmes, projects			Total
		Yes, and would definitely take part again	No, but would like to participate	No, but would not like to participate	
<b>Life-affirming. helpful</b>	Persons	126	112	27	265
	% of the given cluster	47.5%	42.3%	10.2%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	<b>3.1</b>	0.0	-4.0	

<b>Living for appearances</b>	Persons	66	68	45	179
	% of the given cluster	36.9%	38.0%	25.1%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-0.9	-1.3	<b>2.8</b>	
<b>Self-centred adventurers</b>	Persons	67	70	49	186
	% of the given cluster	36.0%	37.6%	26.3%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.2	-1.4	<b>3.4</b>	
<b>Empathic. responsible</b>	Persons	76	104	30	210
	% of the given cluster	36.2%	49.5%	14.3%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.3	<b>2.5</b>	-1.6	
<b>Total</b>	Persons	335	354	151	840

Source: author's own research. 2020. N=840. sig=0.00

The results show that "Life-affirming helpful" and "Empathic responsible" are the most open to volunteering. "Living for appearances" and "Self-centred adventurers", as determined by their values, are not considering volunteering.

**Table 4 Participation of segments by values in pro bono programmes based on sharing expertise**

<b>Segments by value system</b>		Willingness to take part in pro bono programmes based on sharing experience			Total
		Yes, I would like to participate, but only if I am not participating alone	Yes, I would like to participate, but only if I know the people involved in the cooperation	I would not participate in such a programme under any circumstances	
<b>Life-affirming, helpful</b>	persons	199	56	10	265
	% in the given cluster	75.1%	21.1%	3.8%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	<b>2.2</b>	-0.3	-3.2	
<b>Living for appearances</b>	persons	117	42	20	179
	% in the given cluster	65.4%	23.5%	11.2%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.5	0.6	1.5	
<b>Self-centred</b>	persons	119	40	27	186

<b>adventurers</b>	% in the given cluster	64.0%	21.5%	14.5%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-2.0	-0.1	<b>3.5</b>	
<b>Empathic, responsible</b>	persons	152	45	13	210
	% in the given cluster	72.4%	21.4%	6.2%	100.0%
	Adjusted Residual	<b>2.9</b>	-0.1	-1.3	
Total	persons	587	183	70	840

Source: author's own research, 2020, N=840, sig= 0,002

The willingness to participate in a pro bono programme based on sharing experience has also yielded similar results for each of the value segments. Again, the "Life-affirming helpful" and "Empathic responsible" were the most open to volunteering. The "Self-centred adventurers" were also characterised by reluctance and restraint in this case.

According to the results, the basic concept of value-based consumer behaviour models is valid when examining the willingness to participate in volunteering, including pro bono activities. I believe that the reflection of basic human values in volunteering is a good explanatory principle and a good segmentation criterion. At the same time, it is important to stress that young people's values can be shaped, moulded and influenced. Based on the results, the attitudes of self-centred adventurers and those living as outsiders, who show a sense of isolation and inactivity, can be shaped and moulded if the right programmes, activities and communication are implemented.

## 5 Conclusion

In this study, young people's openness to volunteering from a value orientation perspective has been investigated. Based on the values included in the research, four distinct segments were characterised as follows. Self-centred adventurers who are followers of hedonistic values; then a group of those living for appearances who are rather motivated by achieving social status than by helping others. The Empathic responsible people, who are sensitive to social and environmental problems and are eager to help others. The group of Life-affirming helpful, who seek adventure and excitement, but are also characterised by a desire to help others.

For the segments by value systems, a statistically verifiable correlation with volunteering was detected, including the willingness to participate in pro bono activities, thus the validity of the basic concept of value system-based consumer behaviour models was proved.

I believe that value orientation can appropriately explain the motivations behind our decisions and can be used as a segmentation criterion.

However, the specificity of the sample is that it is focused on Generation Z respondents, so the limitation of the research is that it does not take into account generational differences. In my view, the values of young people can still be shaped and influenced, so that young people who are currently shying away from volunteering can be included in some form of volunteering provided the right tools are used.

Experience of pro bono activities among students in the framework of an international project has shown that programmes which are integrated into education can be good examples and

sufficiently activate students. Involving students in persuading each other has proved to be the most effective communication method for promoting pro bono programmes.

In the continuation of this research, I am planning to investigate generational differences and adapting the sampling accordingly. My objective is to investigate which generation is most open to volunteering and how generational differences can be effectively used to promote pro bono activities.

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