Gender Differences In Volunteering Behavior: Analysis On Korean Population

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1. Study Purpose

With rapid trend of aging society and family disorganization, the role of private resources in strengthening social welfare activities becomes more significant. With economic development, Korean citizens' giving culture has been settled solidly. In 2009, Korean citizen’s volunteering participation rate reached 23.9% which showed 8.5% increase compared to 2007 rate of 15.8%. Average annual volunteering time in 2009 also increased by 9.8 hours compared to 52.1 hours in 2007.

However, lack of research on the factors that affect citizens' volunteering activities in Korea has led to less systematic approach in further facilitating citizen's active participation in social issues. This study, therefore, aims at revealing major influencing factors on citizens' active participation. Specifically, the study focuses on how gender affects citizen’s volunteering behaviors (volunteering participation and time) by controlling for socio-demographic, psychosocial and prosocial factors. The study is based on the hypothesis that gender has difference on volunteering behaviors. It is expected to lead discussions on how non-profit organization could establish more efficient and systematic strategy on gender to foster citizens' volunteering participation.

2. Literature Review

Several different studies have showed different volunteering participation trends depending on gender. US MIDUS survey suggested female participated more in volunteering activities than male in terms of number of volunteering as well as time duration of participation (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Clary and Snyder’s Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), most commonly used psychological motivation theory on volunteering, stresses that female usually mark higher score than male on six influencing factors on volunteering motivation: value, enhancement, social, career, protective, and understanding (Clary et al. 1998; Clary and Snyder, 1991). In contrast to female who is usually self-motivated for volunteering participation, male needs to have detailed hooks that could lead them to volunteering (Christopher J, 2011). It has been also known that male views volunteering as a tool to achieve their other purposes (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Gilligan (1982) emphasized that the meaning of volunteering to female and male appeared to be different due to their different social learning. To female, volunteering is a way for them to express themselves whereas to male, it is a tool for accomplishment of a task. Other factors causing gender difference in volunteering reported are including female and male’s difference in culture, social structure, social position, working hours, kinds of occupation, and social network (Musick & Wilson, 2008). However, in Korea, there is no systematic research and
knowledge on gender difference in volunteering. It is necessary to build new knowledge in different societies on the research issue.

3. Research Method and Data

This study utilizes “Giving Korea 2012” survey data that was performed by the Center on Philanthropy of Beautiful Foundation in Korea. The 2012 survey is focused on Korean citizens’ giving and volunteering activities in 2011 and this study covers 1029 citizens as a sample group. For the analysis, this study will employ Heckman selection model to correct sample bias. With the data, the study will also analyze how socio-demographic, psychosocial and prosocial variables affect volunteering participation and participating time. Socio-demographic variables to be considered are age, place of residence, education, marital status, and monthly income level. Psychosocial variables are level of happiness and level of trust on social organizations. Finally Prosocial variables are volunteering education in schools, philanthropy education by parents, volunteering experience, giving experience, and mandatory volunteering requirement by school.

4. Contribution (Implication)

Results of this study can provide new knowledge on gender difference in volunteering in a Confucian but newly developed society. Results are also expected to contribute to elaboration of volunteer development strategies on gender. In addition, other variables on volunteering can be taken into account for promoting nonprofit organizations’ volunteering facilitation strategies. Practically, those variables and relationships can be translated into volunteer management strategies of social welfare organizations.

5. References