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Change in the Cognition and Behaviors of Volunteers after Participation in the Service Work of Covid-19 in Ho Chi Minh City

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Abstract

Before the beginning waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, Vietnam was among the top countries that succeeded in fighting against the infection and had a low mortality rate (7,236 infections, 47 deaths, as of May 31, 2021). However, when the 4th wave of the Covid pandemic with the mutated Delta variant, Vietnam had to go through months of loss and pain, especially in Ho Chi Minh City, the economic and financial center of the country (with 916,286 cases measured, 22,083 deaths, as of October 31, 2021). A gloomy day in the overall picture of the response to the epidemic. With the high determination of the Vietnamese government and people, notably the volunteer force, the epidemic situation was also handled and controlled, and Vietnam gradually transitioned to a new, appropriate normal, being able to adapt to the current situation. The article focuses on researching volunteers participating in the epidemic prevention and management in Ho Chi Minh City. At the peak of the epidemic, the government of Ho Chi Minh City called for volunteers to participate in the fight

against the pandemic. The volunteer force includes people of all ages, religions, different professions.v.v. Participating in support in areas such as: searching and tracing F0, disinfecting infected areas, care and assisting in the treatment of patients, cooking for hospitals, collecting medical waste, etc. However, the vast majority of volunteers are active in high-contagion areas such as hospitals' Covid treatment area, mainly young people with ages ranging from 18 to 30.

This study aims towards volunteers who have participated while the pandemic was in its most damaging and complicating period in Ho Chi Minh City at hospitals treating Covid-19 patients with severe complications. With an interdisciplinary approach between psychology and culturology through data collection, surveys and in-depth interviews, the research focuses on changes in cognitive and behavioral factors in cultural spiritual life of volunteers after the end of the campaign to return to a new ordinary life.

Keywords: Vietnam, Cognition and Behaviors, Volunteers, Covid-19, Cultural Spiritual Life, Ho Chi Minh City

Introduction

Throughout history, humanity often has faced four terrible tragedies, including war, famine, natural disasters, and epidemics. These tragedies take away the lives of people on earth. Looking back at the end of 2019 with the first cases in Wuhan (China), the whole world still thought this was a common cold, but after 3 months of data collection, along with the rapid spread of the epidemic. On March 11, 2020, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus officially declared the COVID-19 acute respiratory infection a global pandemic. After 3 years, the epidemic situation seems to have settled down, although WHO has not officially declared the end of the Covid-19 pandemic and Sars-CoV2 is still changing, most countries and regions' territory is no longer too concerned about this disease issue, specifically Sweden declared the end of the pandemic on February 9, 2022, followed by the UK and the Netherlands. In Southeast Asia, Thailand is expected to consider the Covid-19 pandemic as an endemic disease, Cambodia announced that it has eliminated Covid disease on June 7, 2022,... Pioneering the process of opening the country is the opening of the tourism industry, customers do not need to have a test certificate to enter that country. All induction activities begin to be restored to the way they were before the epidemic period and take on a new name of the new normal.

Now that the issue of Covid-19 is no longer so important in people's lives, people have begun to focus on overcoming post-covid in both physical health and mental life, specifically, the sequelae are shown very clearly in biological aspects such as

insomnia, persistent cough, weight loss, blood clotting, heart failure, etc., and the post-covid-19 effects on mental health are just as important as the rising rate of depression, emotional problems, phobias and fear of death, etc. Besides the negative effects, the positive points after covid also need to be properly recognized, especially for the group who was volunteering to participate in the 4th epidemic wave taking place in Ho Chi Minh City.

Research Methodology

The study used the following methods:

1. Methods of analysis and synthesis are applied to look up and refer to sources such as books, newspapers, related scientific research works, etc., in the direction of an interdisciplinary approach between culture and psychology theory to serve the research topic.
2. Quantitative research method: In order to increase the persuasiveness of the study, we designed a questionnaire, in which the questions related to the perception, behavior as well as changes in perception and behavior of volunteers when participating in epidemic prevention and control work. The target sample for the purpose of the survey is 150 volunteers participating in epidemic prevention and control.
3. In-depth interview method: We conducted interviews with 10 volunteers participating in epidemic prevention and control during the complicated epidemic situation in Ho Chi Minh City at Covid-19 treatment hospitals and disease control points.
4. Method of observation, participation: To fully understand the research problem, personal experience is very important. Moreover, the author is also one of the volunteers participating in anti-epidemic work in Ho Chi Minh City from June to December 2021.

Method View

By referencing research papers directly or indirectly related to the topic in limited time and capacity, we have divided the previous research into two directions. Research direction on the influence of the Covid-19 epidemic on the spiritual life, typically Dang Nguyen Anh (2021)^[4] in the article The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health concluded that social stigma and psychological trauma during and after epidemic outbreaks can lead to psychological disturbances and social instability, thus in parallel with the strict implementation of epidemic prevention policies during the new normal. It is necessary to have mechanisms and policies to maintain healthy mental health for people to create a positive mentality and overcome challenges. There has been no research done on volunteers in the fight against the Covid-19 epidemic, mainly short articles for propaganda or to express gratitude to volunteers participating in the frontline of anti-epidemic on social media. Media, such as Happiness when volunteering to participate in the fight against the epidemic (People's Army Newspaper, 2021), Volunteers contributing to the fight against Covid-19 in Binh Tan district (Party website portal) Ministry of Ho Chi Minh City, 2021), F0 recovered from the disease and volunteered to fight the

epidemic: A practical gratitude (Government e-Newspaper, 2021), Student volunteers amid the epidemic (Web portal of the Administration Science, Technology and Training, 2021), Promoting the volunteering spirit of union members and young people in the prevention and control of the Covid-19 epidemic (Quang Binh Province Portal, 2021),...

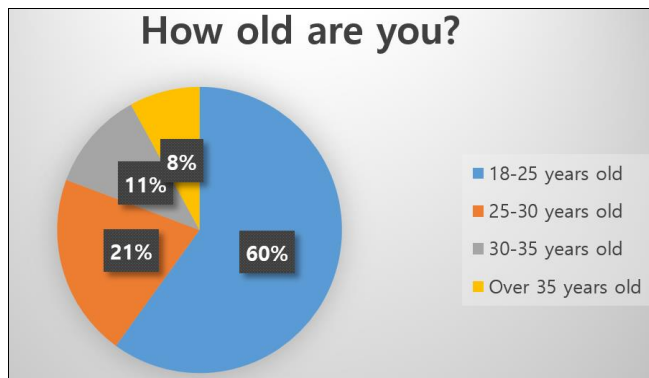
Through the analysis of the research situation, it can be found that the subject approached in our study Change in the Cognition and Behaviors of Volunteers after Participation in the Service Work of Covid-19 in Ho Chi Minh City is a new topic, yet to be in research.

Starting from the theory *Psychologist Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* refers to the motivation of human behavior through 5 types of needs. Based on this theory to explain the motivation hidden deep inside each individual is the need for self-actualization (Self-actualization needs). It refers to the person's desire for self-fulfillment (Maslow, 1943, p.382)^[8] through which to develop personal and peak experiences. It is the need for self-actualization needs that is an important motivation for volunteers to participate diligently, conscientiously, wholeheartedly, conscientiously as well as not afraid of danger, not afraid of difficulties. and not afraid of suffering during the time of the severe epidemic outbreak in Vietnam - volunteering is considered a meaningful activity.

Durkheim's social functional theory (1858 - 1917) which, according to him, "social facts such as institutions, laws, ethics, conventions, etc., are present before and on individuals and affect individuals. core. They are present before and on the individual because when the individual is gone, society and the social fact remain" (Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, pp.1,3). It can be understood that the individual is under the influence of social factors in the development process. That impact is called the process of socialization in which the family environment, school environment and social environment will shape the perception and behavior of that individual. Applying the above theory to predict that it is the working environment that the volunteers come into contact with as well as the socio-cultural factors where the volunteers belong that greatly influence their perception and behavior. in the process of participating in the prevention and control of the Covid-19 epidemic.

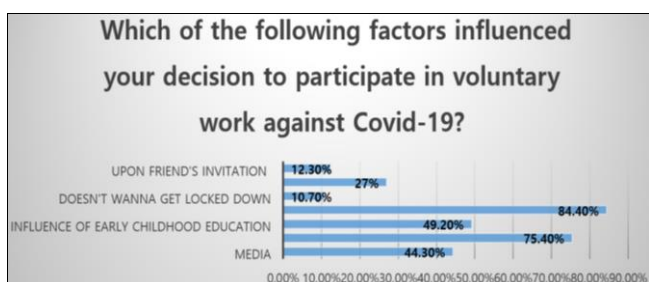
General Characteristics of Volunteers in the Process of Participating in the Fight Against the Epidemic

In the face of a problematic epidemic situation in the South, especially in Ho Chi Minh City with thousands of infections increasing continuously every day, to join hands with the health sector to cope with difficulties, thousands of volunteers have determined to register to participate in the fight against the epidemic. They may belong to different gender groups, different religions, different professions, different social backgrounds, and also different ages, but the majority of participants are in the age group of 18 to 30 years old (81%), this is the new generation of young people, who have never experienced the country's difficult periods before and will also be the future masters of the country. They are considered dynamic, free, and full of creativity.



According to the online newspaper of the Communist Party of Vietnam, while the epidemic situation is spreading, the country has established 34,030 volunteer squads to support concentrated isolation areas, and 49,360 squads to support checkpoints; 171,041 formations to propagate COVID-19 prevention. The total number of union members and young people participating in epidemic prevention and control activities is nearly 2.4 million turns of union members and young people. Total resources mobilized for epidemic prevention and control nationwide reached 161 billion VND. Particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, on May 30, 2021, the Youth Union cooperated with the Youth Union and the Vietnam Student Association in Ho Chi Minh City to establish the group Go Volunteer! to prepare to recruit volunteers to support epidemic prevention work. In just over 3 hours of operation, the Go Volunteer group has mobilized 2,000 volunteers and up to now, the group has about 72,000 volunteers in the group who are always ready to support. It can be seen that the spirit of participation of the Youth in Ho Chi Minh City in general and the youth in the country, in particular, is very strong.

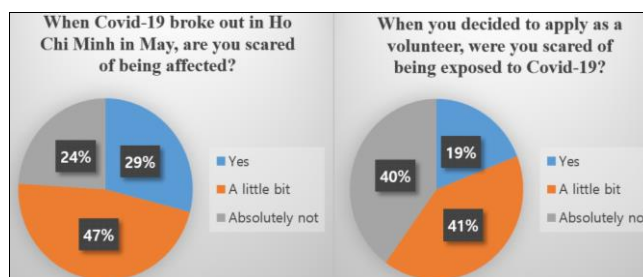
In the following survey of 150 participants with the question of what factors affect your decision to participate in the fight against the epidemic, most of them answered that they participated because they felt this was a meaningful activity (84.4%). Meaningful activity is the peak experience in the process of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970). From the in-depth interviews, the volunteers are well aware that the work they are doing will make a great contribution to the homeland. They have not experienced the process of building and defending the country as their forefathers did, but they hope to become pioneers in the cause of national defense and quality assurance for the people to contribute to the common mission of the nation to build a powerful Vietnam.



Through the survey, we found that factors such as media (44.3%), self-compassion (75.4%), and the influence of early childhood education (49.2%) are also influential in encouraging young people to become volunteers against the epidemic.

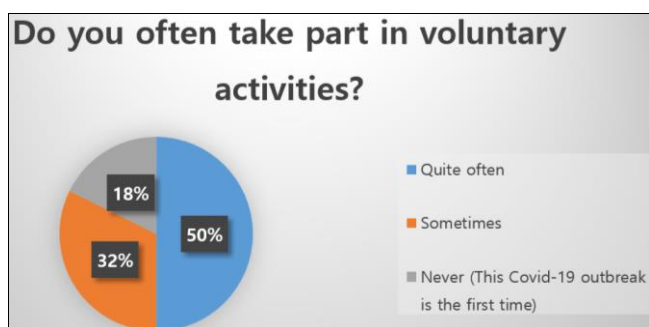
Looking back at the historical mark of Vietnamese society, the spirit of mutual love is always highly valued and appreciated. Vietnamese culture has made a great contribution to education through mother's lullabies, folk proverbs, and Vietnamese fairy tales, such as Bàu ơi thương lấy bí cùng, tuy rằng khác giống nhưng chung một giàn; Nhiều điều phủ lấy giá gương, Người trong một nước phải thương nhau cùng hay Thiếu cơm thiếu áo chẳng màng; Thiếu tình đoàn kết, xóm làng không vui,... To the generation of Ho Chi Minh, that tradition once again promotes the spirit as Uncle Ho once taught "Young people are there, where there are difficulties". Understanding this cultural factor, Vietnamese news agencies pay special attention to communication about the epidemic situation.

In the interviews that the anti-epidemic volunteers shared, it is the images of doctors and nurses working day and night against the epidemic that make them feel responsible and want to shoulder the burden, the image of young doctor Dang Minh Hieu shaving his head from Ho Chi Minh City to Bac Giang epidemic center to support, images of spraying disinfectant teams covering shoulder to shoulder to shelter from the rain, pictures of bicycles with military forces coming to each house people to distribute food, the image of officers on duty to isolate and keep tents when the storm came,... had a great impact and touched upon the sense of responsibility of each individual to the community and the love that people have for each other. Compassion can be seen as sympathy, sharing, or kindness that helps people overcome their own limitations to understand the feelings of others without any reason or purpose. At the core of compassion are love and the desire to alleviate the suffering of others. We conducted a survey on 150 volunteers about psychological problems in the process of facing Covid-19. The results showed that during the outbreak of the epidemic, about 47% of people felt a little scared and only 24% felt no fear. But when there was information about volunteering, you did not hesitate to decide to register. At this time, the percentage of answers that are not afraid has increased to 41%. In in-depth interviews with about 15 random volunteers working in Thu Dung hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City, they all shared that it is love that is the motivation to register to participate as well as accept the risk of infection. Some of them, before becoming volunteers, were patients with Covid-19. During the time of being treated at the hospital, you were touched by the enthusiastic support of the medical team and volunteers as well as the sympathy for the unfortunate patients who had a serious change. Therefore, after recovering from the disease, you decided to stay at the place where you were treated to support and become volunteers.



The family education background is also one of the factors that cannot be ignored when researching because the family is always the first educational environment and also the

educational environment that strongly influences the formation of personality and attitudes in life concept of every human being. It is the social environment in which the individual is born that indirectly educates that individual's behavior (Durkheim, 1982) [5]. We conducted a survey on the level of participation of volunteers in volunteer activities before becoming the frontline force against the epidemic, the results showed that 82% of the surveyed people had participated in volunteering activities. Continuing to conduct in-depth interviews with individuals in the survey group, we found that there is a consensus in the answers that the preference for participating in volunteer activities is also partly influenced by the family environment. Many friends shared that perhaps it was their parents who taught them to help others, or that many families often took their children along with charity groups to help the poor that influenced the idea of helping everyone inside of themselves.



Volunteer Activities during the Fight Against the Epidemic

Ho Chi Minh City, the economic center of the country, has suffered the most severe consequences after the outbreak of the disease. Following are the two leading provinces in the Southeast region in terms of industry, namely Dong Nai and Binh Duong. Facing the complicated situation, the number of infections increases exponentially every day and quickly spreads across the country, putting more pressure on the medical team and mass organizations in the provinces and cities, forcing them to cooperate with medical units to call on people to participate in the fight against the epidemic. In response to the above call, thousands of people have signed up to participate (typically the Go Volunteer! group with more than 72,000 volunteers). Each person has a different role, and a different mission to participate in different formations such as the group that cooks rice for Covid patients, the group that goes to each house, each blockade area to spray disinfectant, and the group to transports food and other products to each household in the isolation area, the group caring for infected patients, the group coordinating the medical declaration of the central markets of the district; especially at wholesale markets, the vaccination coordination group, the group taking samples in the community or high-contagious areas, the group collecting waste, the group entering the number of infections on the portal of the Ministry of Health, The group that controls traffic on the road according to the government's social distancing directive, even assisting in handling the bodies of patients infected with Covid with a high risk of infection still has a lot of volunteers to support...

Through a survey on perceived hardship of work, the results showed that over 63,9% of volunteers felt hard, but they never felt tired and discouraged, always wholeheartedly in

their work to protect the country against social crises. Through in-depth interviews with volunteers, we can summarize according to the formula 3K - 4T, in which 3K is not afraid of danger, not afraid of hardship, and not afraid of difficulties. And 4T is dedicated, faithful, devoted, and conscientious. With the spirit of 3K, not being afraid of danger is the leading factor in volunteers. Surveying over 150 volunteers participating in the fight against the epidemic with the question "When you decided to participate in the fight against the epidemic were you afraid of danger?", the results showed that 39,4% were not afraid at all and 41,9% felt a little scared. According to interviews with a group of volunteers participating in anti-epidemic support, especially at Thu Dung hospitals, about the understanding of the danger of the disease to health, 100% of the participants anti-epidemic replied that they understood the situation. A small number of volunteers feel afraid to participate, but most of them are confident in their own health, so they feel it is not an important issue. Volunteers often operate in a highly infectious environment, so the risk of infection is very high, especially during the peak of the epidemic when they have to come in contact with a large number of patients, even when there is a shortage of protective gear. out in some places is also one of the reasons that volunteers get infected. However, the majority continued to participate. The second is not afraid of hardship. Many volunteers when participating in the fight against the epidemic can only sleep 4 to 5 hours a day, even less when the support message is usually an urgent message. The proof is that in the 4th outbreak of the work of transporting goods to the gathering area, then distributing to the quarantined points, there were night trains from Lam Dong to Ho Chi Minh City at about 12 at night or 2 am, but the team of volunteers is always very crowded, not only men but also many women, all enthusiastically participating in porting with shipments up to a 100kgs. The epidemic situation is very dangerous, when consecutive outbreaks arise, Vietnam in the period of June still applies the policy of Zoning - Isolating - Epidemic suppressing. There are days when the Binh Tan area discovered 3 infectious outbreaks, and the government mobilized to take samples to screen the community, in the face of such an emergency and unexpected situation, the volunteer force participating in support was still very supportive and enthusiastic. Although the organization is somewhat hasty due to not knowing how to operate at first, they can still wait for more than 2 to 3 hours to be assigned and supported for nearly 18 hours a day.

Three is not afraid of difficulties. The vast majority of volunteers participating in the fight against the epidemic are aged between 18 and 25 years old (accounting for 60%) and are currently studying at universities and colleges. With not much life experience and varying situational skills, especially in the medical field, they have "defied" to become a volunteer soldier, trying to care for themselves while managing to observe, learn and receive instruction from the Covid support management force in the area. Many of you shared about facing discrimination in the area you live in or the opposition from parents in the family. Many cases even find ways to circumvent the law so that they can apply for a travel permit during the strict enforcement of social distancing in order to be able to participate in helping the community.

With the spirit of 4T, the volunteers always show themselves as dedicated person in support work when ready

to spend the whole day in full service. Many volunteers participated in community sampling from 17:00 to 21:30 in Binh Tan (Ho Chi Minh City), then received orders to continue taking community samples in District 7 from 23:00 to 4 am.

Two, dedicated to helping those in need. In interviews at Trung Vuong Hospital (Ho Chi Minh City), most of the doctors and nurses said that the volunteers were very supportive, taking care of the patients quite well. such as always completing the correct medical skills during the support period.

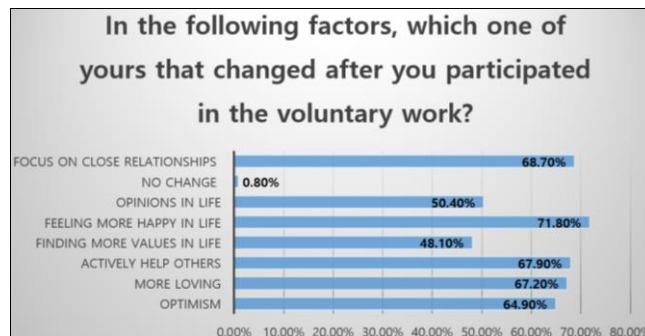
Third, do their best to fulfill their duties to ensure that the anti-epidemic work takes place in the best way. In some cases, volunteering comes from the field of psychology. In the process of supporting the anti-epidemic, you have taken advantage of your expertise to support patients in terms of mental health, alleviating trauma, stress, or anxiety disorders from the Covid issue.

Four is conscientious. Creativity is a very important factor in dealing with difficult and unexpected situations, especially during crises. In many cases, the number of patients is more than the number of oxygen tanks available before, requiring volunteers to coordinate with doctors to think of a solution to save the most patients. Through a number of interviews with groups of volunteers, especially the group of volunteers who supported the transportation of F0 with severe complications from home to the nearest hospital. In many cases, the patient's house was located deep in the alley, the roadway. Due to the blockade, patients who can't walk tend to change their capacity, it requires volunteers who not only have quick skills but also has good intelligence to come up with the fastest and best solution.

Change in the Cognition and Behavior of Volunteers after Participating in the Fight Against the Epidemic

Up to now, the Covid-19 pandemic is no longer a prominent issue in government meetings as well as a major report in the mass media. Vietnam with high vaccine coverage has moved to the new normal, but the post-Covid problem is about to become the next "long wake-up call". Besides the negative points that post-Covid causes to the body of previously infected patients such as fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, shortness of breath, sore throat, heart palpitations, difficulty sleeping, easy numbness of limbs, etc., depression, Anxiety disorders, and phobias are 3 common post-Covid-19 psychological symptoms in terms of mental health.

Through becoming volunteers to support the fight against the epidemic, volunteers are also affected by post-Covid problems but more positively. By synthesizing survey results from more than 150 volunteers, it can be seen that your spiritual life has changed in terms of awareness and behavior, specifically:



The first is being happier in life. In today's society, people are no longer so concerned about what they wear and how they dress as previous generations. They focus on enhancing and ensuring the quality of life. Quality of life is one of the factors that make people happier. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has also helped people re-evaluate what happiness is. Sometimes it's simply the normalcy that accompanies good health from the perspective of many volunteers. Others shared that after the epidemic subsided, they felt happier and happier in life because they were proud to have been a soldier against the epidemic, and they were left in the history of the nation with their spirit of participation.

The second is knowing how to love more. Many volunteers in the early stages of participating in the fight against the epidemic when witnessing the high number of infections and the rate of severe changes suffered from mild psychological trauma. Some of you shared the scene of elderly people alone by the hospital bed without loved ones to take care of, sick people suffering when intubated, many people struggling with their breath by the oxygen respirator... especially separations without rejection, no clothes on, no one close to you. These images touched the hearts of volunteers. Most of you think that you are more forgiving and tend to easily accept differences when you see the elderly, sick, and children in trouble, they feel compassion and empathy.

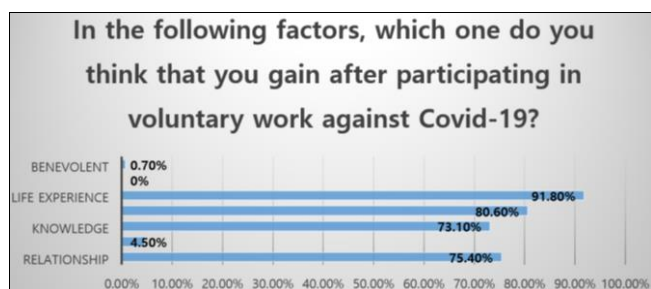
The third is to actively help people. Volunteers shared that since participating in the fight against the Covid-19 epidemic, especially in contact with patients with severe complications, their compassion has greatly increased. They want to help more people so that everyone can have some joy in life. According to the volunteers, helping has now become a responsibility of their conscience rather than volunteering.

Four is spending more time on family relationships and close friends. In the past, if you only called your family once a week on Friday or Saturday night, now you are "harder" to contact, the frequency has increased compared to before volunteering. In interviews with a group of volunteers working in hospitals treating Covid-19, when seeing so many patients die, you shared that the most important thing

you feel right now is to have spent more time with relatives and strengthen close friendship relationships so that you do not have to regret anything.

The fifth is a more optimistic spirit. There are those of you who often have negative thoughts or bad habits before participating in volunteering against the epidemic such as blaming, avoiding, complaining, etc. about life, but after participating in the support, you feel more empathetic. Many of you shared that being alive is a blessing. Many of you become more confident, happier, and less envious.

Participating in becoming an anti-epidemic soldier not only brings pride to yourself, but the volunteers also receive a lot of practical things in their life. The survey results are based on the question, what factors do you think you can get after participating in the fight against the epidemic?



When interviewing volunteers, they most emphasized the element of life experience. Life experience is very important in the process of adulthood according to the concept of psychologist Carl Rogers. The fact that the volunteers became anti-epidemic fighters because human nature is kind (similar to Mencius' point of view) and it is compassion that motivates the acts of helping people. It is through this life experience that people live usefully and become happier. Medical knowledge is what volunteers receive and have the most access to in anti-epidemic work, along with lessons learned from mistakes or witnessing dark aspects of epidemic prevention and control, they can become so much more mature. Finally, new relationships, especially making friends with people with a high spirit of social service, help the volunteers themselves better nurture love. Love is the only way to finally resolve the root of conflict or as the Dalai Lama once said, "Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without it, humanity cannot exist." (Dalai Lama, 2020) [3]. In addition, many of you shared that having a good relationship with your doctor is what you enjoy most in relationships because frankly, everyone will get sick or go to the hospital at least once in their life.

Conclusion

The more society develops, the more people have to face a lot of risks in life, psychologically preparing for all unexpected situations is obvious and should be done to achieve a state of "Calm". Staying calm, although it sounds simple, is extremely important when facing and dealing with unexpected situations.

Volunteering during a pandemic is such an unexpected situation. The volunteers' calmness and decision to participate helped them to better understand themselves, about compassion with an emphasis on empathy and love. A society rich in love is a society that says no to violence, respects democracy, and comprehensively develops both material and spiritual life. If a world is built on the foundation of love, that world will have no wars, no ethnic

cleansing, no discrimination, and no mutual annihilation, like the volunteers. To support the Covid season, they do not have a refugee at work, are self-conscious and proactive, and do it wholeheartedly, with all their might, without being influenced by the magic of the money. More broadly, we might propose to consider volunteering as formal education, primarily in schools. A humanistic education approach will help people "stronger, healthier, and would take their own lives into their hands to a greater extent. With increased personal responsibility for one's personal life, and with a rational set of values to guide one's choosing, people would begin to actively change the society in which they lived" (Maslow, 1971, p.195) [9]. The target audience is young people, specifically students. The goal is to practice love and empathy through experience and self-awareness. In our opinion, all issues of conflict and contradiction can be thoroughly resolved by the two factors above. The spiritual life of the volunteers has changed a lot since becoming a soldier participating in the fight against the epidemic in a positive way. It is a demonstration of the effectiveness of the educationally rational approach we suggested earlier. A peaceful world is a world where everyone is heard, respected, understood with love, and all towards a "Win-win" state.

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