

Social Work Community Practice from a Government Discourse Perspective: Motives for Youth Volunteers in Controlling COVID-19 in Rwanda

**Pierre C. Bimenyimana¹, Paul Bukuluki², Eugene Rutembesa¹,
Ronald M. Synness³, Jean C. Byungura¹**

¹University of Rwanda, Rwanda, ²Makerere University, Uganda, ³University of Agder, Norway

ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, countries were in emergencies to contain the envisioned danger. Rwanda was no exception. Among strategies adopted by the country to control the pandemic were community interventions by youth volunteers. Using social movement and self-determination theories, the paper investigated the policy perspective of the motives for the voluntary engagement of these youths in controlling the pandemic so that these motives could be documented for future emergencies. A qualitative approach was adopted to explore what motivated these youths by analysing government discourses, where data were collected from six government policy documents. The content analysis was done after grouping the data into two categories and subcategories using MAXQDA 22, a qualitative data analysis software, for data mapping and visualization. The results indicate that youth volunteers have been mainly motivated by institutional-level motives, whereby government leadership mobilisation and coordination had a high occurrence, and under the individual-level motives category, civic-mindedness behaviour occurred high. The paper argues that conducive policies are a key motivation for social work community practices. Social workers should advocate for conducive policies to increase the productivity of voluntary activities. Another study involving talking to youth volunteers may complement the current findings.

Keywords: Social work practice, government discourse, motives, youth, COVID-19, Rwanda

Introduction

Engaging in volunteer work is a highly efficient method to gain significant and practical experience in the field of social work (Letts, 2017). However, policy-wise, it is not well-known what motivates volunteers to be involved in community interventions. In a previous study, citizenship was found to be the

most common reason why people spend time on volunteer activities (Bang et al., 2013). It was also found that youth community engagement is increasingly common in social science research, however, the question of why some young people participate in those activities is still an ongoing debate (Ballard, 2014). A study conducted in Canada examined the involvement of different Canadian youth in their development programmes and young community engagement. The study revealed a significant feature of positive youth development, highlighting that youth development programmes also serve as a tool for community engagement (Ramey et al., 2018). From this, it is clear that youth participation in social development is essential in the sense that it speeds up community development while empowering youth, and once the whole community is developed, the youth will benefit from the same as community members.

In an Algerian study on how young scholars contribute to the control of COVID-19, it was found that youth played an important role in minimising the spread of COVID-19 through activities that promote awareness of the dangers of the coronavirus as well as for the families and healthcare organisations that are distributing ways to protect against the coronavirus (Boutelal et al., 2020). The same authors revealed that it is compulsory to use youth in voluntary activities, especially during crisis times, but what motivated the youth to be involved was not covered. A study in Mozambique has shown that it is very important to engage youth in social development programmes, especially in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic (Marotta et al., 2021). It was also found that there is a great need to relate contemporary policy and practice to youth engagement, which was found to be very necessary (Lawson, 2013). A study in Indonesia on youth socialisation and participation in public spheres has revealed that youth is an opportunity for development at an early age, and young active people have to use the same opportunities to develop themselves and achieve success. Individuals must actively engage in civic participation and youth involvement, thereby making valuable contributions to the development of their community, and they have to go through different socialisation agents like families, friends, teachers, and the local environment (Saud, 2020).

In Rwanda, unlike the reality before the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, where young people were not recognised, research has shown that after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the initiative of the Rwandan government aims to build such a fast and developed country through, for example, universal access to education, which has led to promising developments for young people (Pells et al., 2014). This has a relation to youth representativeness in the structures of the government as well as general values consideration and involvement of youth in the development vision of the country.

The study used a combination of social movement theory and self-determination theory in the sense that the participation of the youth volunteers in curbing the spread of COVID-19 in Rwanda aimed at changing some behaviours of the citizens to prevent them from containing the pandemic, where the first theory fit. The involvement of youth volunteers in curbing the pandemic also necessitates the individual decision of the concerned youths, which was investigated on the side of policy individual-level motives, and this is more relevant to self-determination theory, which emphasises intrinsic motivation, which is driven by a desire for personal development and satisfaction. (Ryan & Deci, 2019). Social movement theory, widely employed in the social sciences, aims to elucidate the causes and manifestations of social mobilisation as well as its potential outcomes and ramifications, including the establishment and operation of social movements (Buechler, 2016).

The social movement theory fits this study in the sense that investigating the policy motives for youth volunteers' involvement in controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Rwanda goes with understanding how these motives have pushed them to be involved in curbing the pandemic. From this perspective, the theory and the current study have a connection with the social mobilisation aspect of the theory. In the sense that youth volunteers could have been influenced by the policy statements to take part in the initiative, which can be considered social mobilization, social mobilisation, in this context, pertains to the concepts employed to effectively encourage a large number of individuals to engage in these activities (Rogers et al., 2018). In recent times, social movements have become more likened to networks, or how people in society may network for a given cause with attention to some needed changes in society, in the sense that the motivating power of social mobilisation is strengthened by the fact that others derive advantages from the promoted behaviours, and its overall influence is augmented by the fact that individuals are interconnected within social networks (Rogers et al., 2018; Jamison, 2016).

During the COVID-19 pandemic period in Rwanda, youth volunteers contributed a lot to the control of the pandemic at the community level and especially in public places (Louis et al., 2022). However, what motivated youth volunteers in Rwanda to be involved, particularly in the prevention and response to pandemics such as COVID-19, is not well known. From this point of view, curiosity was raised to investigate whether existing policies could have created an enabling environment for the interventions. This paper examined if existing youth-related policies created an enabling environment for youth volunteers' engagement in contributing to the control of COVID-19. The selected policy documents are the Volunteerism Policy, National Youth Policy, Rwanda Vision 50, COVID-19 National Response Plan, Rwanda Cultural Values, and Home-Grown Initiatives. The selected policies are the guiding

documents for volunteerism in Rwanda, the guiding document for youth-related activities, the document guiding the country's vision, the document guiding how the country was planning to contain the pandemic, the document guiding national cultural values, as well as the documentation of grassroots initiatives in Rwanda.

In Rwanda, youth means people who are between 16 and 30 years of age, and according to the regional analysis of youth demographics for Rwanda, the percentage of youth in the Rwandan population is about 29% (AFIDEP, 2018). Youth, being the major group among the population of Rwanda, is expected to play a considerable role in the social development of the country. The main argument supporting the rationale of this research is particularly that the intervention of youth volunteers during COVID-19 in Rwanda was a home-grown solution among others that the country has been adopting to address specific issues since after the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. The government of Rwanda reports having around 1.5 million youth involved in the activities of youth volunteer groups.

Home Grown Solutions (HGS) are Rwandan “branded” solutions developed by Rwandans. To expedite their progress, individuals might leverage local possibilities, cultural values, and historical context., as defined and enshrined in the 2003 Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, which was modified in 2015. The Rwandan people, based on their values, initiate local mechanisms to address issues of concern to them to build the country, promote national culture, and restore dignity. Created locally, HGSs were adapted to the local development context and were a cornerstone of the reconstruction and transformation of Rwanda following the genocide against the Tutsi (RGB, 2014).

In Rwanda, during this period when the COVID-19 pandemic affected the lives of many people, the youth volunteers' contribution to the community was essential in preventing the spread of the disease (UNCHR, 2021). In addition, despite various initiatives put in place by the government to control COVID-19 like the use of drones for public information dissemination, the use of robots for screening, the use of social media to combat misinformation, community cohesion, etc (Karim et al, 2021); the contribution of motives for youth volunteers in Rwanda is not well documented to demonstrate their role in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. In Rwanda, young people actively engage in local government processes through both formal and informal means, while also navigating the political and power dynamics that influence their participation (Oosterom, 2018). However, little is known about the drivers of government policies.

The above literature has shown that youth engagement in different initiatives was found critically important, and there is a need to relate policy and practice to the same. To contribute to filling this gap, the current study found it necessary and relevant to investigate the policy-side motivation of youth volunteers' involvement in the control of COVID-19 in Rwanda by researching the possible institutional and individual-level motives. As it is argued by the literature that there are individual/personal motives and leadership/institutional level motives (Dwyer et al., 2013), the study investigated particularly the institutional level motives as well as the individual level motives in creating an enabling environment for youth volunteers to contribute to the control of the pandemic.

Within the framework of the present study, the institutional-level motive refers to policy statements that explain how government institutions may have facilitated youth volunteers in being involved in controlling the pandemic. On the other hand, individual-level motives refer to policy statements explaining how intrinsic factors may have driven individual youth volunteers to be involved in controlling the pandemic. The same study intended to group and map those possible motives into two categories, namely, institutional-level and individual-level motives. This study is intended to investigate motivating statements from the selected existing government policies in Rwanda for youth volunteers' contribution to controlling the spread of COVID-19, where they have actively participated in the implementation of government measures to contain the pandemic. The paper researched the question: from a policy perspective, how were youth volunteers motivated to intervene actively in controlling COVID-19?

Methods

Study design

The study aimed to look for institutional or individual-level motives for youth volunteers' involvement in controlling COVID-19 in Rwanda from a policy perspective. The article applied a qualitative approach to study the government discourse motivations for young volunteers' participation in controlling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda. The qualitative study used secondary data from government policies.

Sampling

The researchers selected six government policy documents. The criteria for selecting those policies were scope-related, where selected document policies were related to youth, volunteerism, COVID-19, and the government of Rwanda's vision. The selected policy documents are, namely: Volunteerism Policy (VP), National Youth Policy (NYP), Rwanda Vision 50 (RV-50),

COVID-19 National Response Plan (COVID-19-NRP), Rwanda Cultural Values (RCV), and Home-Grown Initiatives (HGIs).

Data collection

Data were collected from the six existing policy documents. The process was that the researchers had to read the above-mentioned government policy documents and look for statements that support either institutional motivation or individual motivation for analysis.

Data analysis

The content analysis was adopted, whereby the above policy documents were uploaded to a qualitative data analysis software known as MAQDA 22 for data categorization, visualisation, and mapping. In reading the motivating statements from those policy documents, the data were grouped into two main categories: institutional-level motives and individual-level motives, with subcategories grouping similar statements. Also, extracts from those policies were used to support the grouped themes of motives.

Ethical consideration

The University of Rwanda policies stipulate that all research that involves living things should first undergo ethical clearance. Since the current research did not involve living things and considering that the studied policy documents are available to the public, there was no need to apply for ethical clearance for the research.

Results

This section describes the current complexity of government discourse and the motivations that motivated young volunteers to be involved in controlling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda. The results presented below are organised according to the categories of data and subcategories needed to answer the research question. The first category of data, which has four subcategories, is named institutional-level motives, while the second category, which also has four subcategories, is named individual-level motives. The eight subcategories of government discourse motivations were assigned to their emergent institutional or individual categories. The identified subcategories for individual-level motives are (1) skill development; (2) integration of volunteerism into plans and management structures; (3) people togetherness; and (4) leadership mobilisation and coordination. Under the institutional level motives, the identified subcategories are (5) financial motivation; (6) mutual help and recognition; (7) giving back opportunity; and (8) civic-mindedness.

Identified Institutional level motives

From a policy perspective, the below figure (Figure 1) presents an analysis of how the statements relating to subcategories of institutional aspects have occurred in relation to encouraging youth volunteers to take part in controlling the spread of COVID-19. In this context, institutional-level motives refer to the fact that youth volunteers may have been influenced by their surroundings or by the actions of their coordinating government administration.

| Code System | HGIs | RV-50 | RCV | COVID 19-NRP | NYP | VP |
|--|------|-------|-----|--------------|-----|----|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Institutional level motives Skills development Integration of Volunteerism into plans and management structur People togetherness Leadership mobilization and coordination | | | | | | |
| | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 2 |
| | | | | 2 | 3 | 3 |

Figure 1: Visualisation of institutional-level motives and frequency of occurrence

The above figure presents the visualisation of institutional-level motives and frequency of occurrence per subcategory, whereby leadership mobilisation and coordination have occurred highly and the integration of volunteerism in plans and government structures has occurred less in the studied policies. The four themes/subcategories under institutional-level motives are discussed in detail below.

Skills development

In the context of this research, skills development refers to statements extracted from the concerned policies that show how the government of Rwanda is committed to providing skills development to young people. We also need to consider skill development as the process of acquiring, improving, and enhancing a wide range of skills and competencies.

Providing training opportunities can be a powerful way to show your team that you value their growth and development, and it can also help them feel more confident and competent in their work. The extracts from the policies show that skills development has three occurrences out of six policies. The finding under this subcategory can be supported by the statement from the HGIs policy document saying that " the government is committed to providing an academic orientation, discourse, and consultations to youth....." (Home Grown Initiative, p. 24)

Integration of volunteerism into plans and management structures

Here, the researchers were investigating if the existing policies have statements that justify the integration of volunteerism into the existing plans and management/administration structures of the country because, before you recruit or onboard any volunteers, you need to have a clear idea of what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. From the policy, the integration of volunteerism into government plans and administration structures of the country won occurrence in two policies, which makes it the last. The findings on the integration of volunteerism into plans and management structures can be supported by a statement in the NYP saying that the " law establishing the committee structure of the National Youth Council (NYC) stipulates that youth representation occurs from the national level to the cell level....." (National Youth Policy, p. 32)

People togetherness

Here, the researchers have investigated the policy statements relating to how the government encourages people's unity, and this could have been the reason why youth volunteers were motivated to take action in the initiatives to control the pandemic. After going through the policies, it was found that people togetherness has more occurrence in the selected policies, where it occurred in four policies out of six selected policies, which makes it the second after leadership mobilisation and coordination. The findings on the need for togetherness and collaboration can be supported by the policy statement in the RV saying that " all youth, women, men, and older people will contribute as agents of sustainable development, ensuring universal inclusion and leaving no individual behind. " (Rwanda Vision 2050, p. 7)

Leadership mobilization and coordination

Here, the researchers were looking for policy statements supporting how government institutions approach the mobilisation and coordination of youths, which might have been the motivation for youth to voluntarily take action in controlling the pandemic. After reviewing the policy, the leadership mobilisation was found in three policies, but it was occurring highly in those policies, which ranks it as the most influential to youth volunteers' involvement in controlling the pandemic as far as institutional motives are concerned. The finding of leadership mobilisation and coordination can be supported by a policy statement saying that " there is a need for robust coordination structures with functional national and district-level public health emergency operation centres..... " (COVID-19 National Response Plan, p. 8)

Identified individual-level motives

From a policy perspective, the below figure (Figure 2) presents an analysis of how individual aspects have encouraged youth volunteers to take part in controlling the spread of COVID-19. In this context, individual-level motives refer to personal factors that may have influenced the youth volunteers to be committed to the fulfillment of specific tasks to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda.

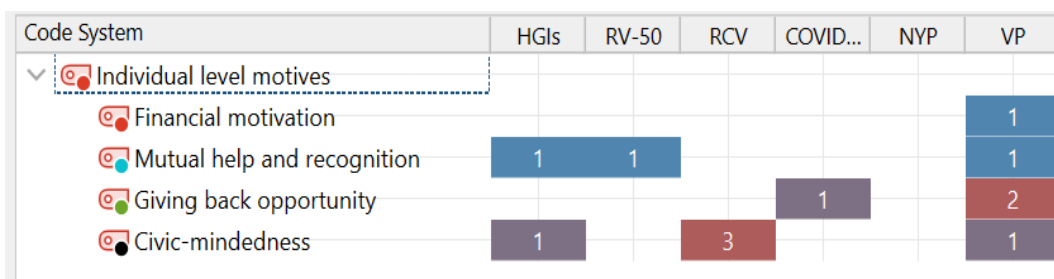


Figure 2: Visualization of individual level motives frequency of occurrence

Generally, figure 2 presents the visualisation of policy statements relating to individual-level motives and the frequency of occurrence for youth involvement in controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Rwanda shows that civic mindedness, as well as mutual help and recognition, occurred in a large number of policies compared to the rest. The next was the giving back opportunity, and lastly, the financial motivation aspect. The four subcategories/themes under individual motive categories are presented in detail in the next paragraphs.

Financial motivation

The researchers were looking for policy statements supporting how youth are financially supported, and this could have triggered their internal desires to take part in controlling the pandemic. After carefully going through the policies, the policy statements relating to financial motivation were found to have fewer occurrences compared to other themes under individual motives, which gives them a low weight as far as individual-level motives for youth volunteers are concerned. The findings on financial motivation can be supported by the statement extracted from one of the policies, which states that " however, volunteers may receive allowances to reimburse certain expenses that arise during their volunteer work " (Volunteerism Policy, p. 7).

Mutual help, and recognition

Here the researchers were extracting policy statements that may have influenced the self-generated helping each other and recognition of the colleagues for youth to voluntarily take part in the control of COVID-19 in Rwanda. It occurred in half

of the policies studied; however, it only occurred once in those policies, which makes it seconding the civic-mindedness of individual motives. The findings on mutual help and recognition can be supported by the statement extracted from one of the policies presented below: " Rwandans relied heavily on volunteerism through mutual help activities such as "ubudehe and umuganda,"or "umusanzu" " (Volunteerism Policy, p. 5)

Giving back opportunity

Here, the researchers were investigating the policy statements justifying that youth have voluntarily taken action in controlling the pandemic to appreciate what the country has done to them. It occurred in less than half of the studied policies. However, in one of the policies, it scored twice. The findings on giving back opportunity can be supported by the statement extracted from one of the policies presented that "volunteerism is carried out by nationals and non-nationals without expecting any pay for the work accomplished rather than giving back to their nation. ..." (Volunteerism Policy, p. 7)

Civic mindedness

Here, the researchers were extracting policy statements supporting that youth have voluntarily intervened in controlling the pandemic due to the sense of patriotism that they have towards their country and its citizens. After studying all the policies in question, civic-mindedness was found to have a high occurrence in the studied policies as far as individual motives or inner desires are concerned. The findings on civic-mindedness can be supported by the statement extracted from one of the policies (translation from Kinyarwanda to English) as presented: "Patriotism for Rwandans is reflected in the way they give it value and are passionate about loving it, serving it, and giving their lives if need be.....". (Rwandan Cultural Values, p. 15). The above findings under institutional and individual motives can be supported by Government Leaders' Conducive Statements, like what the President of Rwanda, HE Paul Kagame, said in 2018 when he was receiving a delegation of the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps the following:

“As young people you don't have as many limitations as you perceive. You have the potential in you to be anything you want. You can contribute to making your country and continent what it deserves to be. Volunteering is a matter of choice. When we got involved as young people in liberating our country, we did not expect any benefits. We wanted people to find a purpose beyond themselves.” (Kagame, 2018)

Mapping the Institutional and Individual levels motives

Previous studies have shown that self-motivation or personal motivation currently favours the motivation of social scientists; however, institutional pressures or incentives need to be further encouraged to better facilitate the data-sharing behaviour of social scientists (Kim, 2015). However, looking at the data visualised in the below figure, it is clear that, in the context of the current study, institutional motives played a big role.

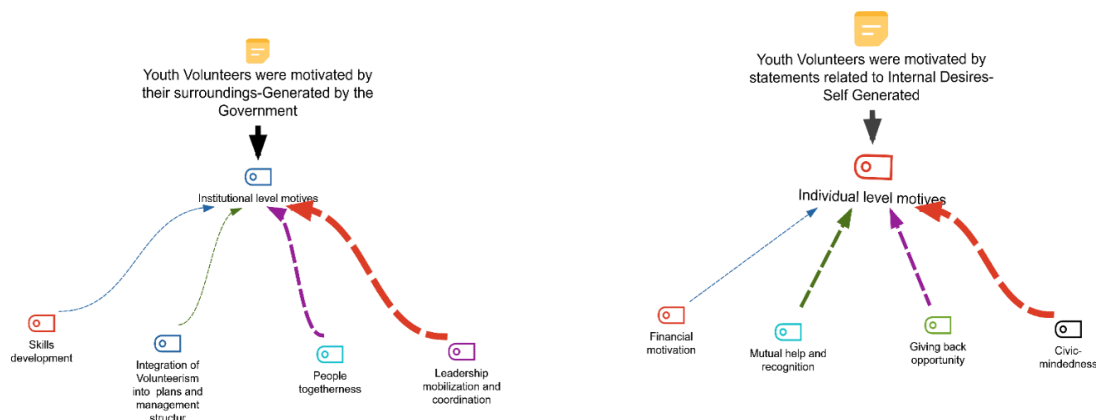


Figure 3: Perceived level of youth volunteers' involvement motives at both levels

Looking at the general mapping of all themes under both categories of data (Figure 3), it is clear that themes under institutional motives have demonstrated more occurrences in selected policies compared to occurrences of themes under individual-level motives. This means that from a policy perspective, the role of institutions surrounding the youth volunteers has been instrumental in their involvement in Controlling the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda.

Discussion

It is in line with the current research, which has investigated the motives for volunteering by studying existing youth-related government policies to see if these policies may have statements that may have influenced youth volunteers to contribute to the control of COVID-19 in Rwanda. The study has analyzed six selected government policies using MAXQDA software and content analysis.

The statements under each category were grouped into themes, whereby the institutional-level motives were assigned to four themes: skills development, integration of volunteerism into plans and management structures, people togetherness, and leadership mobilisation and coordination. On the other side, the individual-level motives were assigned to four themes as well, and those are

namely financial motivation, mutual help, and recognition, giving back opportunity, and civic-mindedness.

As far as the self-determination theory is concerned, the previous research has indicated that there are six motives that would be pursued by performing volunteering activities: expressing important values, obtaining a better understanding, enhancing self-esteem, fitting into one's social group, developing career skills and opportunities, and its protective effect' (Simona, 2012). In the same context, the self-determination theory is in line with the findings of the current study, where eight subcategories of policy motives were found to have contributed to youth volunteers' involvement in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Those identified motives are skills development, integration of volunteerism into plans and management structures, people togetherness, leadership mobilisation and coordination, financial motivation, mutual help, and recognition, giving back opportunities, and civic-mindedness. Comparing the findings of Simona (2012) and the findings of the current study, expressing important values can go with the value of civic-mindedness in the current study. In the current study, obtaining a better understanding as well as developing learners' skills and opportunities can be linked to skills development. Enhancing self-esteem as well as protective effects can be linked to mutual help and recognition in the current study. Fitting into one's social group may go with people's togetherness in the current study. In addition to the six motives for volunteering identified by Sumona, the current study identified two more motives, which are leadership mobilisation and coordination as well as financial motivation.

Looking at the results, it was found that one of the themes under institutional level motives has scored high occurrence in selected policies, and that is leadership mobilisation and coordination, which means that the role that the government institutions have played in the voluntary involvement of youth was crucial, whereby it was influential for youth volunteers' involvement in taking part in controlling the pandemic. This is not far from previous studies, which have identified institutional and individual-level motives to be of great importance when combined to motivate a given group of people (Souto-Otero, 2022).

This brings new insight, as previous research has shown that transformational leadership is positively associated with volunteer satisfaction and not with volunteers' contribution (Dwyer et al., 2013), while the current study argues that leadership mobilisation and coordination have played a big role in the youth volunteers' contribution to controlling COVID-19 in Rwanda. Still under institutional-level motives, the role of government mobilisation and coordination was followed by people's togetherness. Generally, three themes

have scored the same occurrence, and these are integration of volunteerism into plans, giving back opportunities, as well as mutual help and recognition.

The application of social movement theory argues that a social movement is a loosely organised effort by a large group of people to achieve a particular goal, typically a social or political one (Earl et al., 2017). This is in the same context where youth volunteers were a group of young volunteers who intervened for the common goal of participating in curbing the spread of the pandemic. Youth volunteers were motivated by institutional and individual levels of motivation to curtail the spread of the pandemic in Rwanda.

As far as institutionalisation refers to a variety of processes in social movements, scholars often view movements as institutionalised when they appear to have become established interest groups that are formalised in structure and headed by professional leaders (Van, 2017). In fact, from the policy perspective as per the current study, youth volunteers were found to have been influenced by different institutional-level motives, and on top of those came leadership mobilisation and coordination, which is in line with the institutionalisation of social movement theory.

On the side of individual-level motives, civic-mindedness has scored a high occurrence in influencing youth volunteers' participation in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, which shows the love or patriotism that young people have towards their country. This is in line with the previous studies on civic-mindedness and social responsibility, where it was found that the emphasis on social responsibility is a precursor to sustaining volunteerism (Cheung et al., 2015). In the same category, financial motivation has scored low in influencing youth volunteers' involvement from a policy perspective, which supports the fact that youth were involved without expecting any direct payment from anyone. Someone may argue that youth volunteers were involved in looking at indirect payment as a route to future employment, as it was supported by previous studies that revealed that young people are increasingly encouraged to volunteer and see volunteering above all as a route to employment (Dean, 2014).

This study is more relevant to the field of social work, whereby previous studies have shown that it is important for social work educators, students, and employers to pay attention to the consequences of mismatches between motives and expectations about their involvement in social work practice (Stevens et al., 2012), which is the case for this important study whereby it investigated the motives for youth volunteers contribution in controlling the pandemic in Rwanda to meet the expectations of the citizens during an emergency setting. It was also found that volunteers are primarily motivated by the desire to help

those less fortunate than themselves and to express altruistic values (Stukas, 2016), which goes with mutual help in the context of the current study.

The social movement theory was relevant to this study in the sense that the key concepts of the theory include interaction, social construction, process orientation, collective actors, action systems, and engaged scholarships (Rucht, 2023). These concepts have communication with institutional-level motives, whereby, for example, interaction and collective actions can go for people's togetherness among the identified motives. Process orientation and action systems can go with leadership mobilisation and coordination in the identified institutional-level motives. The engaged scholarships can go with skill development in the identified motives. The integration of volunteerism into plans and management structures is an additional identified motive in the current study.

Concluding this section, from a policy perspective, that individual and institutional-level motives have played a big role in encouraging youth volunteers to take action in controlling COVID-19 in Rwanda, this is communicating to the previous research, which has shown that both personal and individual-level motives for volunteering and transformational leadership have been influencing volunteer satisfaction and contribution (Dwyer et al., 2013).

Therefore, there is a need to relook at the existing policies, especially by including volunteerism in plans and administration structures. There is another need to help youth volunteers understand the indirect benefits of being involved in volunteer activities, like how volunteering can be considered a free way of gaining work experience. The conducive policies play a big role in motivating the voluntary engagement of youth and the enhancement of conducive policies may contribute to more productivity of youth voluntary engagement in future emergencies.

To add to that, this manuscript used only secondary data. Hence, it is recommended that future research also reach out to volunteers themselves, beneficiaries of their services, and local government officials to capture their opinions on the motives that brought youth volunteers to actively participate in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda.

Conclusion

The current study has investigated the policy perspective of youth volunteers' involvement in community interventions aimed at controlling COVID-19 in Rwanda. This is a contribution to the field of social work, whereby earlier it was presented that social work volunteerism had little attention in the social

sciences, yet it is crucial; therefore, knowing what motivates volunteers is a trending subject in the field of social sciences.

The current study demonstrated that, from a government discourse perspective, youth volunteers were more motivated by institutional-level motives, and to be specific, government mobilisation and coordination scored highly in the sense that statements around this theme were found to be more prevalent in the studied policies. On individual-level motives, the policy statements on civic-mindedness were found to have scored highly in motivating the youth volunteers' contribution to controlling the pandemic. As a result, it is recommended to combine multiple strategies and tools to manage the volunteers for successful contributions.

It is suggested that understanding a volunteer's motivation can create a better experience for both the volunteer and the organisation or government. Volunteer managers will be able to find the right volunteer for the task and the right task for the volunteer. Governments can have a more meaningful impact by meeting people's unique needs, and volunteers can feel more fulfilled. In the same vein, to successfully benefit social work volunteerism, there is a good need to understand the motives for volunteerism and invest in the same area. Therefore, it is recommended that the government enhance themes that scored high but also put in place measures and policies to improve the areas that scored less, like investing more in volunteerism integration into planning.

On the theory side, the study recommends the possibility of borrowing theories from other sciences and utilising them in the field of social work. This is the case of self-determination theory, which is broadly used in the fields of public administration and psychology. Social movement theory is broadly used in political sciences and sociology; however, in the context of the current study, it can also be borrowed by the social work profession in explaining motives for volunteering interventions conducted by social workers.

Volunteerism is crucial in humanitarian interventions and public health education, such as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, social workers have to strive to create an environment that will appeal to the youth to participate in voluntary activities towards a thriving society. Volunteerism among youths is an area that social workers must explore more, because volunteerism not only seeks to effect change but also carries community members along in the effort to effect positive change, hence giving room for a bottom-up approach.

References

- AFIDEP, A. I. for D. P. (2018). *Regional analysis of youth demographics for Rwanda*. AFIDEP. <https://www.afidep.org/publication/regional-analysis-of-youth-demographics-Rwanda/>
- Ballard, P. J. (2014). What motivates youth civic involvement? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(4), 439-463.
- Bang, H., Ross, S., & Reio, T. G. (2013). From Motivation to Organizational Commitment of Volunteers in Non-Profit Sport Organizations. *The Journal of Management Development*, 32(1), 96–112. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711311287044>
- Buechler, S. M. (2016). *Understanding social movements: Theories from the classical era to the present*. Routledge.
- Boutebal, S. E., Benkhelifa, F., & Madani, A. (2020). The Covid-19 Outbreak in Algeria: What is the university youth help in controlling the epidemic. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development*, 11(11), 326–332.
- Cheung, C. K., Lo, T. W., & Liu, S. C. (2015). Relationships between volunteerism and social responsibility in young volunteers. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 26, 872-889.
- Dean, J. (2014). How structural factors promote instrumental motivations within youth volunteering: a qualitative analysis of volunteer brokerage. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 5(2), 231-247.
- Dwyer, P. C., Bono, J. E., Snyder, M., Nov, O., & Berson, Y. (2013). Sources of volunteer motivation: Transformational leadership and personal motives influence volunteer outcomes. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 24(2), 181-205.
- Earl, J., Maher, T. V., & Elliott, T. (2017). Youth, activism, and social movements. *Sociology Compass*, 11(4), e12465.
- Government of Rwanda, (2015), *National Youth Policy Towards a HAPPi Generation*, <https://www.miniyouth.gov.rw/1-1/about>
- Government of Rwanda, (2015), *Vision 2050*, https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minecofin/Publications/REPORTS/National_Development_Planning_and_Research/Vision_2050/EnglishVision_2050_Abridged_version_WEB_Final.pdf
- Jamison, A. (2010). Climate change knowledge and social movement theory. *Wiley Interdisciplinary 2600 Reviews: Climate Change*, 1(6): 811-23.
- Karim, N., Jing, L., Lee, J. A., Kharel, R., Lubetkin, D., Clancy, C. M., ... & Ndebwanimana, V. (2021). Lessons learned from Rwanda: innovative strategies for prevention and containment of COVID-19. *Annals of Global Health*, 87(1). doi: 10.5334/aogh.3172.
- Kim, Y., & Adler, M. (2015). Social scientists' data sharing behaviors: Investigating the roles of individual motivations, institutional pressures, and

- data repositories. *International Journal of Information Management*, 35(4), 408-418.
- Lawson, M. A., & Lawson, H. A. (2013). New conceptual frameworks for student engagement research, policy, and practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 432-479.
- Louis, E. F., Eugene, D., Ingabire, W. C., Isano, S., & Blanc, J. (2022). Rwanda's resiliency during the coronavirus disease pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12, 589526.
- Letts, C., & Holly, D. (2017). The promise of skills-based volunteering. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 15(4), 41-47.
- Marotta, C., Nacareia, U., Estevez, A. S., Tognon, F., Genna, G. D., De Meneghi, G., Occa, E., Ramirez, L., Lazzari, M., & Di Gennaro, F. (2021). Mozambican adolescents and youths during the COVID-19 pandemic: Knowledge and awareness gaps in the provinces of sofala and Tete. *Healthcare*, 9(3), 321.
- Ministry of Culture and Sport (2018), Indangagaciro Z'umuco W'u Rwanda, <http://www.rwandanationalibrary.gov.rw/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=2245>
- National Itorero Commission (2012), Volunteerism Policy Paper, <https://www.minaloc.gov.rw/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=17773&token=bfd42a4ba0d47edc9dcfff50014662d863f6552a>
- Oosterom, M. (2018). *Youth Engagement in the Realm of Local Governance: Opportunities for Peace?* IDS.
- Paul, K. (2018), President Kagame receives African Union Youth Volunteer Corps, <https://www.paulkagame.com/president-kagame-receives-african-union-youth-volunteer-corps/>
- Pells, K., Pontalti, K., & Williams, T. P. (2014). Promising developments? Children, youth and post-genocide reconstruction under the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8(2), 294-310.
- Ramey, H. L., Lawford, H. L., Rose-Krasnor, L., Freeman, J., & Lanctot, J. (2018). Engaging diverse Canadian youth in youth development programs: Program quality and community engagement. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 94, 20-26.
- RBC (2019), Rwanda COVID-19 National Response Plan, https://www.rbc.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/annoucement/National%20Response%20Plan.pdf
- RGB (2014), The Assessment of The Impact Of Home Grown Initiatives, https://www.rgb.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/RGB/Publications/HOME_GROWN_SOLUTIONS/Impact_of_Home_Grown_Initiative_2014.pdf
- RGB (2023), An overview of Rwanda's Home-Grown Solutions, <https://www.rgb.rw/1/home-grown-solutions>
- Rogers, T., Goldstein, N. J., & Fox, C. R. (2018). Social mobilization. *Annual review of psychology*, 69, 357-381.

- Rucht, D. (2023). *Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach*. Oxford University Press.
- Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2019). Brick by brick: The origins, development, and future of self-determination theory. In A. J. Elliot (Ed.), *Advances in motivation science*, Vol. 6 (pp. 111-156). Cambridge, MA: Elsevier Inc. doi: 10.1016/bs.adms.2019.01.001
- Saud, M. (2020). Civic engagement, youth socialisation and participation in public spheres in Indonesia. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119, 105669.
- Simona H., Joeri H. & Roland P. (2012). Self-determination theory as a framework for exploring the impact of the organizational context on volunteer motivation: A study of Romanian volunteers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0899764011433041>
- Stevens, M., Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Hussein, S., Sharpe, E., Orme, J., ... & Crisp, B. R. (2012). Helping others or a rewarding career? Investigating student motivations to train as social workers in England. *Journal of Social Work*, 12(1), 16-36.
- Stukas, A. A., Snyder, M., & Clary, E. G. (2016). Understanding and encouraging volunteerism and community involvement. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 156(3), 243-255.
- Souto-Otero, M., Favero, L., Bašná, K., Humburg, M., Oberheidt, S. 2022. „Erasmus (+) student mobility: individual and institutional motivations and effects.“ Tierney, R.; Rizvi, F.; Ercikan, K. *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Elsevier. ISBN 978-0-12-818629-9.
- UNCHR, (2021), Youths in Action: Youth Volunteers Support their Community and Peers, <https://www.unhcr.org/rw/16633-youths-in-action-youth-volunteers-support-their-community-and-peers.html>
- Van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2017). Individuals in movements: A social psychology of contention. *Handbook of social movements across disciplines*, 103-139.