

AN EVALUATION OF A GROUP OF NURSING  
STUDENTS' VOLUNTEERING PROJECT IN A  
NURSING HOME, JYVÄSKYLÄ FINLAND

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<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>The purpose of this study was to find out the experience of the voluntary nursing students and their sources of motivation for volunteering in a nursing home. The aim of this study was to evaluate the outcome of this pilot volunteer project in a health care facility by a group of nurse trainees and make recommendations to future students who might want to continue the project or start a similar project.</p> <p>Qualitative research method was used for the study that focused on the participants' narratives and descriptiveness of events as a result of their observations coupled with their own interpretations. It also focused on group and cognitive interviews, which were useful to collect data on the experiences and responses of participants. The group interview was conducted in April, 2014 and data collected was analyzed by using thematic analysis.</p> <p>The results of the research showed that the participants had challenging experiences but interesting one in volunteering at the nursing home. Language barrier, less interaction with nurses, organization problems and inadequate information were some of the challenging experiences. Experiences that were beneficial were new experience, career development, building confidence, and the opportunity to practice and learn Finnish culture. The findings also revealed several motivational factors to start and continue volunteering and what caused diminished motivation among the participants. Some of the factors were desire to help, to contribute to the society, to practice nursing procedures, and time flexibility and no time. Orientation, a more recognized group, Finnish students' involvement, work and rules specification, well organized activities were some of the recommendation for future development.</p> <p>The research was limited to only the experiences of unpaid staff or volunteers. Future researchers could therefore find out the experiences of all the stakeholders in order to provide a holistic picture.</p>		
Keywords Voluntary, nursing, students, nursing home, paid staff, unpaid staff		
Miscellaneous		

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The residents in nursing home understand the feelings of having to spend the rest of their lives in a home which is so different environment from their earlier lives. Some are lucky to have regular visits from their alienated family members on weekends. They might wish for an environment, where their integrity and autonomy are highly promoted, and where sufficient care is provided. Residents with more complex caring needs and inadequate staff have in most cases contributed to the insufficient care given to the residents. Things like lack of affectionate communication, immobility and lack of company add to residents' plight. Volunteerism at the nursing home helps to arrest the problem of insufficient care, and at least meet the social needs of the residents experiencing loneliness and safety issues. Interested individuals and groups have been volunteering to help residents in nursing homes to enjoy some quality of life. (Anderson, Issel, McDaniel 2003, 12-21) For this reason, a group of nursing students have offered themselves to volunteer in a nursing home in Jyväskylä, Finland.

The topic for this thesis is evaluation of a group of nursing students' volunteering project in a nursing home in Jyväskylä, Finland. The purpose is to find out the students' experience in the volunteering project in a nursing home. The researchers are also looking for the students' source of motivation for volunteering in the nursing home. The aim of this study is to evaluate the outcome of this pilot volunteer project in a health care facility by a group of nurse trainees and make recommendations to future students who might want to continue the project or start a similar one.

## **2 VOLUNTEERING AND ITS IMPACT**

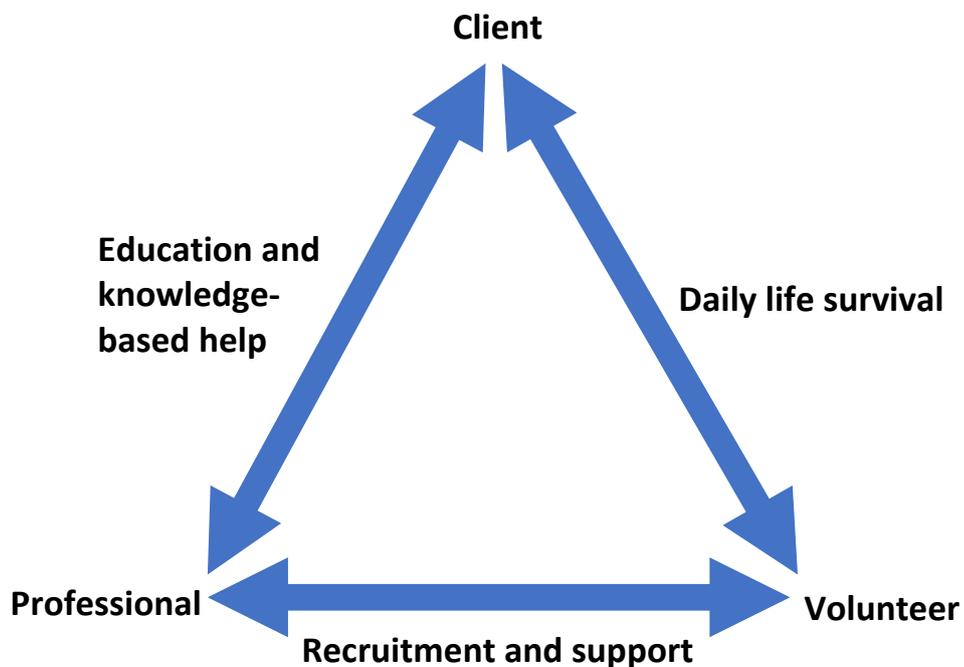
### **2.1 Voluntary work and its principles**

The Oxford dictionary has defined the word voluntary as free will done, give or acting and working, done or maintained without payment (Oxford dictionaries 2013). Ibsen and Habermann further explain voluntary work as any unpaid labor offered to non-profit institutions. (Ibsen & Habermann 2005, 9-13.)

Factors affecting the definition include the following, firstly, people from areas where there is a widespread of “forced” volunteering, and have negative perception of volunteering. Secondly, in some cultures, it is expected to help and or assist others of their community and people do not tend to give a special appreciation to volunteering. Thirdly, there have also been arguments whether coverage of out-of-pocket expenses such as meals or modest out-of-pockets expenses should be available to volunteers or un-paid workers. Finally, assistance offered to family members is generally unaccepted as a voluntary work, but the meaning and concept of family or “immediate family” differs marginally across cultures and countries. (Ilo 2011)

There are tens of thousands of individual volunteer workers, groups, churches, organizations in communities, national and international ones that organize volunteer programs and or help individuals to volunteer. Examples are The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program and The International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA). The UNV organization contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide (UNV 2014.) IVPA is an association of non-governmental organizations. It’s involved in international volunteer work and internship exchanges (International Volunteer Programs Association 2014.)

Professional work and voluntary work are two different things but they have something in common, which builds a relationship between the client, the professional and the volunteer. Figure 1 below summarizes how the professional and the volunteer are interconnected with regard to their services to the client graphically. Both of them are client oriented and they are based on the recruitment and support. Voluntary work has a variety of forms; support for productive activities, participating, supporting and services provider voluntary activities, events and gatherings, charity work, community outreach and organizational activities (Jyväskylän seudun Valikko-verkosto 2014).



**FIGURE 1. Professional work – volunteer work relationship (translated from Pessi 2014)**

There are also various principles aimed at quality volunteering, which may be common to almost all volunteering agencies and organizations. One of the important principles is reciprocity, which means that two people or groups agree to or allow each other to have the same/mutual rights and or treated equally. Also, all the

voluntary work upholds confidentiality as a matter of principle. For example, volunteers involved in the elderly care and rehabilitation centers have the responsibility to respect the same professional secrecy as the health care professionals who work there do. Another principle of quality volunteering is creating platform for learning and sharing new skills. This education involves knowing the background of the organization, their aims and purposes in voluntary work. The organization also makes sure that the volunteers are educated, well equipped and trained for their designated tasks. It is equally important that the volunteers are supported and guided. As a principle of quality volunteering, the organization concerned take charge of the risk management of all volunteers where possible. Insurance is an example of risk management in voluntary work. The organization's responsibility is also to evaluate the volunteers, their work, the aims and purposes, and then give feedback and recommendations for future improvement (Jyväskylän seudun Valikko-verkosto 2014.)

Besides the principles of quality volunteering, there are other related issues such as the right of volunteers, which says that each one has their own rights; right to enjoy the work, right to volunteer at more than one place, change the tasks and also leave the voluntary activities. The principles of volunteering usually depend on the place where one volunteers. Most of the organizations have created their own principles for volunteering, which all the volunteers have to know and follow. The voluntary work does not only give a meaning to the volunteers and the host organization, but it also gives a meaning to the whole community (Jyväskylän seudun Valikko-verkosto 2014.)

## **2.2 History of Nursing and Voluntary Work**

The history of nursing and voluntary work has been inseparable since pre-Nightingale days and time beyond the establishment of nursing as a profession by her. Many

were those who learnt nursing through volunteering by observing and caring for the sick on the battlefield, in mission houses, charity homes and individual homes.

During the pre-Florence Nightingale era, the then nurses learned their health care delivery art through observation of others delivering care to the sick and oral traditions passed from generation to generation. This was so because; there was no formal nursing training or education. The early Christians with the ideals of charity, service to others and self-sacrifice volunteered in nursing patients in their homes, because they thought helping others was in harmony with their teachings. There was no profession as nursing; people always relied on those who knew the skill from their family, clan, tribe or friends to care for them whenever they fell sick in their own home, the safest place according to common perception. One of the Roman matrons or widows with educational background from the church who is credited with the setting up and operation of first Christian hospital in Rome was Fabiola, and Phoebe also noted for her expert nursing home care. (Nutting & Dock 1907; Robinson 1946)

A German Lutheran pastor Theoder Fliedner established a Deaconess Home and Hospital to allow the church women take active part in the church caring for the needy or the sick, where Nightingale would later serve. The women felt it was a call to serve others and they remained in the voluntary work as long as they had that conviction. (Gallison 1954)

There were many women who believed that they had the calling to serve humanity, but one woman who made greater impact to the care delivery and later went on to reform and founded modern day professional nursing was Florence Nightingale. She had gone through evolution of nursing through volunteering before using her acquired knowledge to lay the foundation for professional nursing. She had her first voluntary opportunity at Pastor Fliedner's Deaconess Home and Hospital in Germany for 2 weeks. She later returned there for 3 months, where she had the opportunity to partner the deaconesses, learned basic nursing care and methods of instruction in nursing. She then returned to her home country, England and continued working as a nurse, but made trips to France to volunteer and observed the hospital work of the

Catholic Sisters of Charity. Nightingale continued her voluntary work later in 1854, on the battlefield in Crimea when war broke out between Russia on one side and England, France, and Turkey on the other side. She was not there alone, but organized other ladies who had similar social status for the Crimea journey. Whilst there, they cared for the sick and the wounded. (Woodham-Smith 1951)

Another wave of volunteering experienced throughout the United States of America also gave birth to nursing training within a decade of Nightingale and her volunteer team's return from the Crimea. Studies showed that about 3,000 women volunteers delivered care during the civil war to the sick and the wounded soldiers on the battlefields, in the field hospitals, and to the extent of using their homes as health centers. Those women acquired most basic nursing knowledge through caring for their loves at the time when the title "nurse" was rather a vogue one in the states. Women who had served the soldiers before these civil war volunteer nurses were the wives, mothers and or the relatives of the soldiers who had accompanied them to the battlefield. Upon their return from the war and realized how formal nursing training was crucial in the care of the sick, some of them became key players in setting up the first nursing training schools and sometimes called schools of nursing in the United States. (Livermore 1888; Larson 1997)

Besides, Nightingale, the women missionaries, and many groups of war nurses, several others names comes to mind when history of nursing and volunteering are being discussed. Several wealthy converts to Christianity such as Parabolani brotherhood in Rome cared for the sick and dying during the great plague in Alexandria, several orders of Knights such as Knights of St John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitallers) and Knights of St. Lazarus built hospitals, cared for the sick, injured, comrades, and set standards for hospital management. Also, Jane Woosley, Walt Whitman, Louisa May Alcott, and Mary Ann "Mother" Bickerdyke volunteered as a nurse for the Union Army and served in diverse ways from nursing, cleaning, sanitizing to solicitation and distribution of food. During the war, Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, worked against all odds and treated the soldiers with herbs and other home remedies. Clara Barton served in battlefield hospitals and prisoner of

war camps as a volunteer, later founded and became the first president of the American Red Cross. (Larson 1997; Healy 2014; Savona-Ventura 2012)

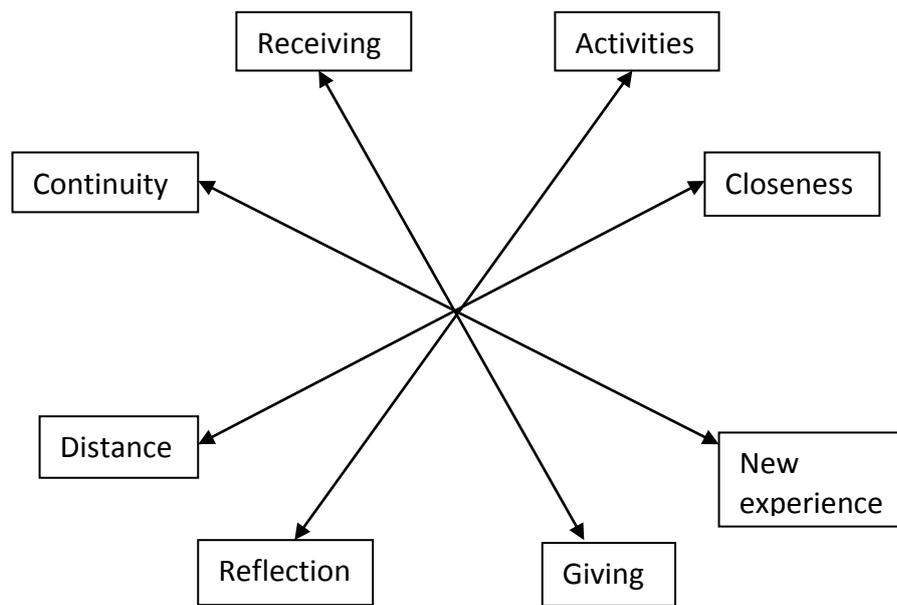
### **2.3 Benefits and motivational factors of volunteering**

It is undisputable fact that voluntary work aims at free service or helping others. However, it also a common knowledge that volunteers also benefit in one way or the other. Volunteering in a nursing home can be rewarding, life-changing experience for many and for a variety of reasons. Benefits from volunteering could range from personal, group, community, national to international. (Grimm, Spring, Dietz 2007; McCloughan, Batt, Costine, Scully 2011)

The UK's Department for Social Development (2012), identifies volunteering as an opportunity for people to practice their skills and build more confidence. People who volunteer are able to demonstrate to their potential employers, their competences. By volunteering one is able to gain or add to their practical experience and build up confidence, which are essential component on job seekers' resume.

In year 2014, Pessi from Jyväskylän seudun Valikko-verkosto made a Motivation diamond (Motivaatio timantti), which processes the sources of motivation of volunteers. Volunteers might have different reasons why they are interested in voluntary work. The Motivation diamond has listed the most common reasons. One of them is receiving example credits and social network. Volunteering also give people some activities to do to occupy themselves and a clue on how to use their free time. Volunteers, who lack the sense of belongingness, can experience closeness and what happens in their environment, when they get to know the other members of the group and the people they are probably helping to get better. Voluntary work always gives new experiences and create platform for volunteers to share their experiences and do something about them, and that is a big motivation source for many of the volunteers. After getting the new experience, it is good to reflect and

think about how to develop and continue the volunteer work in the organization. The motivation diamond is created to all who are interested to volunteer and that gives an opportunity to think, reflect and list their own motivation sources in a concrete way (Pessi 2014). Below is the graphic presentation of Pessi's motivation diamond in Finnish and would be drawn or modified with English translation.



**FIGURE 2. Motivation diamond (modified from Pessi 2014)**

Volunteer's main role in the organization is to develop and take forward the mission of the organization. Each organization should decide what the volunteer's roles are and how they can be engaged to the paid members so they are able to work for their mission together. The volunteers are able to serve in many different tasks by contributing time, bringing energy and talents that helps to fulfill the organizations mission. The Volunteers are also able to give more time to focus on specific subjects or individual clients instead of the paid members. Even though the volunteers are serving without any salary they shouldn't ever be considered as "free help", because their contribution for the common mission is as valuable as the work of paid

members. The roles what volunteers can fill are only limited by the vision of the organization. When the organizations perceive the role of the volunteers for them then they are able to get the most benefit from the volunteers. (Merrill 2005)

Volunteers can help to create a positive image of the organization in the community. This positive image can increase organizations national profile and make an impact to individual people and other organizations. If the organization shows their commitment to the volunteers they can also increase their profile as a good organization to volunteer and that may increase the amount of voluntary workers in their organization in the future. Giving some tasks to voluntary workers instead of the paid members the organization can save a significant amount of money. (Volunteer Benevoles Canada 2014)

## **2.4 Benefits of volunteering in Finland**

There are various platforms in Finland for volunteering. Some of these are community based organized by groups, churches and organizations, and some national, which have branches in cities or regions. Examples are MaaIlmanvaihto Ry - ICYE Finland. Their places of volunteering include day care centers, schools, civic organizations, and foster homes for disabled or the elderly, schools and workshops for people with special needs, cultural centers, youth centers, eco-centers, and so on. (MaaIlmanvaihto 2014)

Researches by Ruralia – institution showed that Finland saves a substantial amount of money per year and would be in trouble without volunteering. (Yle Uutiset 2011) In the year of 2011, Laasonen from the University of Helsinki did a research about national importance of volunteering. According to the results of research the value of one volunteer hour is 12, 44 euros and each euro invested in voluntary work produces 6, 5 euros contribution to the national economy. The research used four big volunteering organizations in Finland; Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliitto (MLL),

Suomen Punainen Risti (SPR), Suomen 4H - liitto (4H) and Suomen Pelastusalan keskusjärjestö (SPEK). The research found that the monetary value of volunteering depends essentially on the following factors; the average hourly rate from the voluntary work to the organization, the value of volunteering for the organization compared to the value of organizations industry output and the organizations and similar fields wage replacement ratio to voluntary work. All the results show that the economical savings are huge to the nation and it is profitable and important to invest in voluntary work in the future. The voluntary organizations existence is expected to grow significantly in the future. (Laasonen 2011)

In Jyväskylä, there are several places in the city that offer voluntary placements, of which some are provided by the city government, churches and private organizations. Some of the voluntary placements and or organizations are discussed below. Jyväskylän Kaupungin Vapaaehtoistoiminnan Palvelut, Vapari is a voluntary company established by the city of Jyväskylä to help create a common platform for voluntary organizations and churches seeking interested individual volunteers to join their programs and individuals or groups seeking volunteer placements. (Jyväskylän kaupunki 2014)

## **2.5 Nursing education in Finland and Work-related development**

Like the UK, all universities of applied sciences (AMK in Finnish and UAS in English) in Finland offer bachelor's degree-level pre-registration nursing education to their nursing students according to the quality requirements set in the EU legislation, whereas lower or basic nursing diplomas are offered in the vocational schools. The ministry of Education approved the degree programs after a successful experiment of the AMK/UAS system followed by March 1995 parliamentary legislation establishing the system as permanent, and the innovation accomplished in 2001. Consequently, there is a strong legislation or law regulating the implementation of the AMK/UAS system and as such the training of health care personnel and nurses are no

exception. The national legislation on nursing education in Finland is based on that of the European Union's (2005/36/EU). This is to say that, nursing education in Finland is similar to their European counterparts. The ministry of Education competency requirements for graduates of AMK/UAS allows the individuals schools to independently verify that the graduating nurse is duly qualify to practice or work as a registered nurse right after graduation, and in some cases gaining employment after getting the minimum credit according to a municipality's own standard. (Kilpeläinen 2010, 5-8)

The bachelor of health care, which naturally attains a registered nurse, takes three-and-half years for 210 credits (one credit correspond to an average of 27 hours). One-third of the total study credit, approximately 90 credits is allocated to a guided practical training in various health care environments such as nursing homes, health centers, home care and hospitals in line with the European Parliament and European Council Directive 2005/36/EU on Recognition of Professional Qualification. However, the 210 credits studies could last longer according to individual student's study plan. Students may choose practical training abroad over placement in Finland as an exchange student in one of their university's partner schools abroad or as a free mover (a student moves to a place other than the partner schools). Recommended time to go on exchange is from the second year onwards, and at the same, the student may also qualify for a transfer to continue their studies in another place in Finland. The 210 credits are accrued from areas of study such as transferable skills, client oriented nursing, health and functioning promotion nursing, family oriented health and nursing, health promotion clinical nursing, developing nursing expertise, research and development, thesis, and elective studies. (Jamk 2014)

The nursing students undertaking the volunteering project in a nursing home stand to benefit immensely as one-third of the total study credit, approximately 90 credits is allocated to guided practical training in various health care environment such as nursing homes, in line with the European Parliament and European Council Directive 2005/36/EU on Recognition of Professional Qualification. Through practical training prepares students to be professionally competent as it a career-building exercise,

where students experience the real working situation, come in direct contact with the clients, their significant others and get familiar with the how the health system operates. Though, volunteering in a nursing home is less guided than the school sanctioned practical training, the experience gained can be described in as work-related development. Through observation, assisting nurses and serving the elderly in the home deepen the students' understanding of gerontology care which is an integral part of the nursing education in Finland.

## **2.6 Finnish laws concerning voluntary work**

Finland has no law of volunteering as in many other European countries, but descriptions of voluntary work are scattered under a variety of laws. This voluntary work related laws are partly incomplete and unclear. When the law is unclear the solutions are depending on the relevant work of civil servants. For this reason, the volunteer organizations have to spend a considerable amount of time to become familiar with the law and that makes volunteering more difficult. Laws should not limit, but to encourage and support volunteering. (Kostiainen & Sademies 2013)

The laws do not directly define what kinds of tasks volunteers are able to do, but the tax authorities have separate instructions on the taxation of the voluntary work. All labor offered freely are assessed case by case basis. Per the tax administrations instructions, a voluntary work has to be temporary and the tasks cannot require professional skills. Professional work switching is taxable if the parties mutually agree to work for each other. According to the tax authorities, a limited neighbor help is tax free even with a small financial compensation provided it does not happen regularly. Unemployment Act (30.12.2002/1290) regulates the voluntary work for the unemployed. Under the law, the unemployed can participate in the normal non-profit voluntary work, but it cannot be regular, otherwise they are not entitled to get the unemployment benefit from the Finnish government. (Kostiainen & Sademies 2013)

For the unemployed immigrants the legislation is more clear and favorable. If an immigrant has lived in Finland three years and has been registered in Employed Office and is still jobless, it is possible to make an integration plan for her or him, which aims to support settling process in Finland. The integration plan may include language learning and voluntary activities. Volunteering is a good way for immigrants to explore the language and culture and to build up new skills and make new friends. Therefore it is especially good for immigrants that the opportunity to volunteering is supported. (Kostiainen & Sademies 2013)

Occupational Safety and Health Act (23.8.2002/738) has a separate part that mentions the voluntary work. Under the law, the organization that organizes the voluntary work must ensure that the voluntary workers' safety and health are not threatened. Respectively, the volunteers must follow the organization's safety instructions and use the possible protective equipments that they have been given. If a minor wants to volunteer, the Young Workers Act (19.11.1993/998) defines that it is important the volunteering does not harm the minor's school attendance, growth and mental development. (Kostiainen & Sademies 2013)

### **3 PURPOSE, AIMS, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to find out the experience of the voluntary nursing students and their sources of motivation for volunteering in the nursing home. The aim of this study is to evaluate the outcome of this pilot volunteer project in a health care facility by a group of nurse trainees and make recommendations to future students who might want to continue the project or start a similar project.

This study explores the following questions, drawing on the purpose, aims and the background of the project:

What are the experiences of nursing students volunteering in elderly home?

What motivate the students to continue volunteering?

What are the volunteers opinion on what could be done to sustain and improve the project?

## **4 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY**

### **4.1 Research methodology**

The choice of research method largely depend on the kind of the research and or the kind of research questions and answers the researchers aim to unearth rather than the personality, skills or the thoughts and perceptions of the researchers. The purpose and aims or finding unbiased answers to the research questions demand that the use of qualitative method. The choice of method was therefore determined by the research needs, which is to find the experiences of the participants and not researchers' preference. (Gorard & Taylor 2004)

There are a considerable number of reasons for choosing qualitative research method such as seeks participants' expressions, as this study sought to do (Nkwi, Nyamongo & Ryan 2001.) Like this study, qualitative research is interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam 2009, 13). Qualitative research uses methods that focuses on the participants' narratives and descriptiveness of events as a result of their observations coupled with their own interpretations (Parkinson & Drislane 2011), and focuses on group and cognitive

interviews, which are useful in developing surveys to collect data on the experiences and responses of participants (Oxford Journals 2014).

Qualitative research studies the phenomena from the perspective of the very people on the ground and in case of this study, the very participants or the volunteers undertaking the project. The aim is not to generalize findings of volunteering, but to consider issues and themes to be more context and time-specific (Lapan, Quartaroli, Riemer 2012.)

## **4.2 Participants and recruitment**

The only justifiable group or individuals the researchers could solicit opinions and feedback from are the participants involved in the project. There were two groups of participants whose feedback and opinions were sought for. The first group was the dormant members, who participated from time to time, and the second group actively took part in almost all activities. The need for groupings in the recruitment raised the need for the researchers to employ purposive sampling tool to solicit answers and opinions from the group of participants for accuracy and the purposes of this study. Purposive sampling could be described as non-probability or non-random technique that is most effective in a qualitative research of a smaller group within a bigger group. It is an informant selection tool that allows researchers to choose an informant according to their unique qualities, and allow researchers to determine the kind of information themes and set informant selection criteria considering informants knowledge on the information themes. (Bernard 2002, Lewis & Sheppard 2006)

Purposive sampling could be further described as sampling method, which focuses on depth of information and wide range of sampling techniques rather than nonrandom sampling. The determinant factors to picking the participants of this research was therefore been a nursing students, who have been involved in

volunteering in the nursing home for at least three months and how regular any of those volunteers had been participating in the voluntary activities. Consent forms (appendix 1), was sent to the participants earlier than the interview date and when the participants agreed to the terms of the consent form and signed it, the interview then followed accordingly. (Bernard 2002, Garcia 2006 & 2004, Lyon & Hardesty 2005, 287-294)

### **4.3 Method of data collection**

A data collection was done through interviews by selecting a few informants or participants according to their unique qualities and solicited answers and opinions from them for the purposes of this study. According to Bloom & Crabtree (2006), interviews are categorized into three kinds namely, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The researchers used semi-structured method, which is the most referred for qualitative research, because it focuses on open ended questions. (Bloom & Crabtree 2006, 314–321)

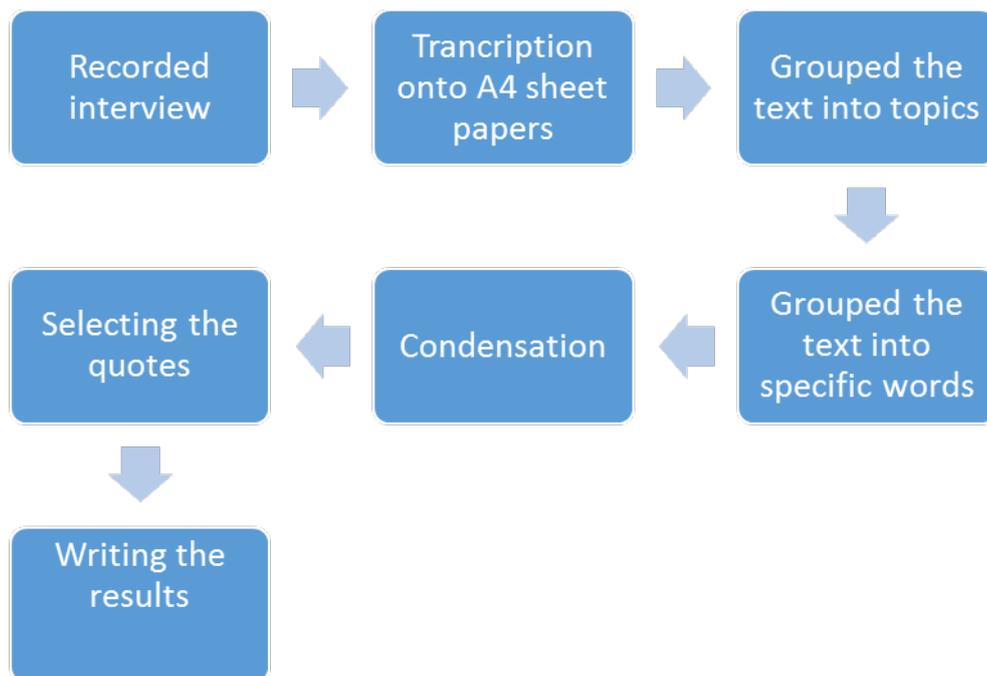
Participants were interviewed on campus, at a place both the interviewers and the interviewees felt more convenient and comfortable. The time for the group interview was about two hours and in April 2014. The researchers used theme interviews, which is about broad categories of information describing an event. In that case, the researchers or interviewers could delve deeper into a particular response from an interviewee. The themes in this case were deducted from the three research questions (Schorn 2000.)

A quick recap of the aims and the purpose of the study were be made to the interviewees and the consent form was also read to them again before the interview commenced as researchers' method of data collection was face-to-face, semi-structured interview. The researchers faced a group of interviewees for the purposes of creating more personal contact, understanding their verbal and non-verbal

communication, creating trust and confidentiality. The whole interview was recorded using tape recorders, so that researchers could replay participants' responses later and make a transcript of it. The transcript served as the main source of data for this study. (Woods 2006; Gorard & Taylor 2004)

#### **4.4 Analytical approach**

According to Thorne (2000), and Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003), the conduct of qualitative research generally demands the use of the obtained raw data, which is then analyzed to generate ideas for the purpose of the research. The outcome of the analytic process of structuring the data, reasoning to interpret and summarizing then becomes credible and relevant. Since open-ended questions were used in interviewing the participants, the researchers analyzed participants' responses to the same group of questions by mapping each interview questions to the interviewees' responses for the purpose of checking consistencies and differences. (Thorne 2000, 2-10; Taylor-Powell & Renner 2003, 1-10) Below is the graphical presentation of the analytical process of the data.



**FIGURE 3. Graphical Presentation of Data Analysis**

The researchers listened to the interview recordings several times and transcribed it onto 7-page A4 sheet papers. The font Palatino Linotype, font size 12, and spacing 1.5 were used. The transcribed data was read through thoroughly and any part of the data revealing participants' identity was omitted. The interview data was analyzed by focusing mainly on the research questions, which are based on participants' experiences, motives and suggestions. The transcript was categorized into themes formed from the research questions by detail reading of the data and highlighting quotes with markers.

Coding of quotes and themes according meaning and sorting them into coded groups then followed. The researchers differentiated themes with different color markings. Participants' responses that were marked with same color were compiled together. Their pattern was then described and summarized into common words, phrases, themes or patterns. (Weber 1990, 9-12; Burns & Grove 2005, 555 & Krippendorff 1980 21-27)

## **5 THE RESULTS**

The purpose and aim of the study was to find out the experience of the voluntary nursing students and their sources of motivation for volunteering in the nursing home; to evaluate the outcome of the pilot volunteer project in a health care facility by a group of nursing students and make recommendations to future students who might want to continue the project or start a similar project. The researchers had research questions to help them obtain the outcome. The results are categorized according to the research questions, which sought to know the experiences of nursing students volunteering in elderly home, sources of motivation to the students, and their opinion on what could be done to sustain and improve the project.

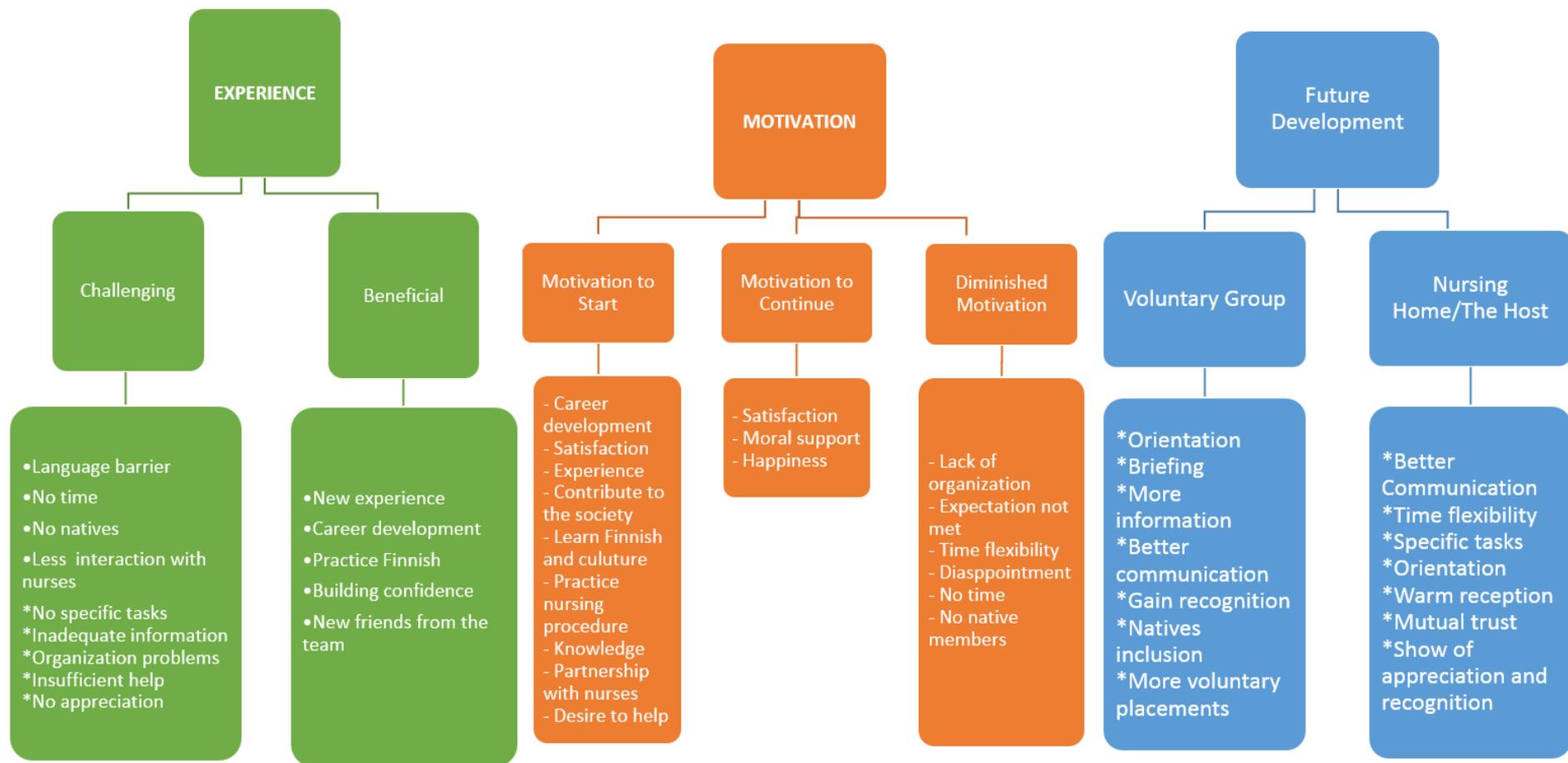


FIGURE 4. Graphical Presentation of the Results

## **5.1 Challenging but Interesting Experiences of Nursing Students Volunteering In Elderly Home**

### **Relationship Matters**

The participants shared their experience on various issues such as nurse-volunteer relationship, volunteer-volunteer relationship, client- volunteer relationship, and organization of the program.

The interviewees were not impressed about how some of the nurses on the ward related to them. According to them they received no help from most of the nurses when needed. They acknowledged the fact that the nurses had their own task to finish before the next shift, but the volunteers also needed someone to at least give them information on the day's task and about who among the clients they can serve each time they visited the ward.

*“Some of the nurses have not been so helpful. Sometimes, the nurses do not help you and they do not even say hi. I wonder if I am welcome as a volunteer. Some of their actions sometimes compel us to think they might not be interested about what we do there”*

The participants were sentimental on how they were sometimes received little attention when they were there for volunteering. Participants were not pleased about how they sometimes waste time waiting for the nurses to organize themselves and get clients available and prepared without any of the nurses attending to them at all. In those instances, they had to go to the nurses to remind them that they have been waiting, for example, to take the clients outside. Consequently, some would then get the clients ready, but others would still simply refuse to help, because a client wanting to go outside belongs to a certain team of nurses. Participants had wished those nurse would rather inform the other team since they had no idea of who belongs to what team. However, some participants, who still go to the ward till

date praised the nurse, who is in charge of the project and some few others, who showed keen interest whenever they were on the morning shift.

*"I would say that the relationship between the volunteers is good, we try to psych up one another, but the same cannot be said of me and the nurses, because the last time we went there, we just stood there, while the nurses carried on their work. Somebody could have told us they would be with us in a moment".*

*"...It's not because of the language, it's just relationship thing. I'm learning in the process, and if the nurses gave me the needed appreciation and recognition, my moral would be boosted to do more. "*

### **Time Factor**

Some participants felt that there was kind of mistrust on the nurses' side. They explained how they have showed interest in serving in very basic nursing task, such as feeding the patients, but they were refused to help in those areas. According to them, their reporting time to the ward is noon and by that time the nurses would still be feeding some clients. That means, they sometimes have to sit there idle and they see that as time wasting. They also wondered why the nurses could not trust them to dress the clients up or at least help the nurse do that before taking the clients outside for a walk. The participants stressed further on the time factor that if the ward was somehow flexible with their reporting time or made available wider options with regard to time, they would not have to get to the ward at certain times and sit there idle. Strictness on time is a factor compelling most volunteers to stop volunteering, because their school activities change from time to time.

*"I think there were just a day we were there and that day we had a lot of activities and everybody was happy"*

*"We are also asked to be there at a specific time. As a volunteer I expect them to be more flexible and give us more time options. Now we can only go after 12 and they*

*have to finish their lunch before we could do anything, so I don't feel that much thought went into the reporting time."*

### **Learning Continuity**

The participants also pointed out how their participation has been learning experience all the time. They said their presence on the ward and spending time with the elderly gave them chance to observe a lot of things and added to their knowledge in gerontology. They were also thankful of that chance, because they might begin their career in a nursing home, but have never practiced in such places before.

*"For me, I've never worked in an elderly home and even in my first practice I didn't go to an elderly home, so I didn't know what to expect and what to do, but in this voluntary thing, I got an idea of what things they do in elderly home and how to communicate with them. You know, they speak a bit differently, you have to get what they are saying".*

*"I've never been in elderly home before, I have done all my practices in the Central hospital and health centers so this gave me an idea about what it is. The patients cannot talk, but they smile and you can see that they appreciate".*

### **Step aside or Step up**

The volunteers who were interviewed expressed mixed feelings on why they stopped, why they keep their participation alive and why they have not been able to be that regular. One participant told the group that a first year student stopped, because she could not see point of volunteering when the native students were not involved. Some also said their participation exposed them to future working environment and gave them avenue to practice some Finnish, and that things would have been much easier if there were no language barrier. Others also felt discouraged because of the language barrier and also due to the fact that there were no interaction between them and the nurses, and less interaction between them and the clients. One participant expressed how she and her friends wish they could have

continued, but practical training and their part-time jobs made their schedule too tight.

*"I have not been there many times, but it has given me a bit of boost as far as I'm treating the patients. It has also helped me to build my confidence and practiced Finnish. The patients don't care if you made a mistake, because they can still understand what you mean."*

*"The time factor also plays a role. I got a job after I started. Volunteering is not a priority, well, it is, but sometimes, you have other things to do and that makes you exhausted and stressed"*

## **5.2 Sources of Motivation to the Students**

### **Career Development through Help**

There are various factors that affected the motivation of the volunteers in this project in general. Most of the participants started to volunteer, because they basically just wanted to help. Some of the volunteers explained that they have experienced the nursing homes to be busy and nurses there don't have enough time for the patients, so the volunteers wanted to give their time and hands to be used. Most of the participants felt that volunteering in nursing home as a nursing student might help them in the future to develop their nursing career. They were also looking for experience and knowledge, which were a source of motivation.

*"...I generally just wanted to help those old grannies and get experience so that motivated me, because I knew that at the end of the day it will be of benefit to my career..."*

*"... I did my practice in nursing home and realized the nurses there don't have so much time for the patients, example, to take them outside. What I see is that they just wait there to die, that was my motivation to start..."*

### **Appreciation to the Society and Practice Finnish**

Some participants were motivated to learn Finnish language and also learn some more about the Finnish culture, so they started to volunteer in this project. They were motivated to meet Finnish nurses and learn something new from them. These volunteers wanted to give something for the society in the form of voluntary work, because they like it and think that it's relevant. Some participants said that they have done some voluntary work before, so they decided to join this project, too and that is an activity that they like to do in their free time.

*"... I know I'm getting this free education from Finland, so I can also do something for this country, because those elderly people were protecting their country in the war and now they have this beautiful country, so that motivated me to do something for them too..."*

### **Moved by Expectations**

Before starting the volunteering in nursing home, most of the volunteers had some expectations about this voluntary project. Some participants have been disappointed, because their expectations were not met. All of them were expecting to do some basic nursing procedures like taking the patients outside, making the beds and help them eat. The participants were expecting to experience collaboration and or partnership with the nurses working in the unit. The participants were expecting a well - organized cooperation with the nursing students and the nursing home. They also said some vivid instructions could have been given from day one on what they are able to do with the patients and what they could not do.

*"... I was expecting them to trust me to, example, feed those patients. Those things can be practically done by anyone with or without a few instructions. They could tell us what to do, because we don't work there so we don't know..."*

*"... I hope they knew that we are nursing students, and many people have done their practice even on the same ward, so I expected to do some more very basic nursing tasks..."*

### **Satisfaction from Volunteering**

The researchers were also interested to know about the factors that kept some of the participants to continue volunteering in this project despite some challenges. The reason was the satisfaction they got from volunteering. They described how good their feeling was after each turn of volunteering and they see expression of appreciation on the faces of the clients they helped. Most of the clients in the nursing home are speechless and could only smile or make other gestures to show their appreciation. They also enjoy helping the elderly take a stroll outside the ward to at least enjoy some fresh air.

*"... I still go there just taking those elderly people outside, because the nurses don't have time for that and seeing the smile on the patients' faces is what keeps me going..."*

*"... Helping those patients is enough for me and makes me go back every week, because when they are happy, they make me happy..."*

### **Diminishing Motivation**

Some of the participants started volunteering in this project but did not continue after a while. The biggest reason to stop volunteering was that they did not feel their effort to help was appreciated by the nurses in the unit. They observed that the nurses did not have so many tasks for them and they had a feeling about wasting their time. Others also said that they just did not have spare time after school and after attending to other equally important responsibilities. Some participants were

disappointed for the lack of organization on the part of the nurses and did not want to continue in this voluntary project anymore. The biggest reason for the extinct motivation was that they did not get what they wanted and their expectations were not met.

*“...That’s one reason why people don’t go anymore, because they expected do more and did less. For me it was about the lack of organization, if they would have had specific tasks for us to do I would have continued...”*

### **5.3 The Volunteers’ Opinion on What Could Be Done to Sustain and Improve the Project**

#### **Orientation and Dissemination of Information**

The group believes that it would be more helpful if future volunteers could go through some kind of orientation, however short it may be. They also suggested that briefing participants regularly as a routine would help as well. According to them, periodic orientation and the briefings would help do away with likely misconceptions and or wrong perception. Volunteers would get enough and vital information about the project as a whole and also learn about specific rules and wishes of the host institution for a better cooperation and mutual trust.

*“...Are there any rules or regulations that prevent you to do certain things? To be honest, maybe, there are rules and policies that kind of ban us to perform certain tasks. I don’t actually know, but if that is the case, we should know, so we won’t get the feeling that maybe, they don’t trust us. Tell us your rules and polices”*

#### **Formalized and Recognized group**

They went on to suggest that their education institution or school could adopt the program and represent the students, so that the host institutions may give the group the recognition it deserves. A recognized institution as the school is, would find it

easier to arrange volunteer placements in collaboration with voluntary organization such as Vapari. When a place is secured, the program could be officially sanctioned and progressed steadily. They also think the school is in a better position to negotiate some unfavorable terms on behalf of the volunteers, such as too much time restrictions and some others that may only be practical to non-student volunteers.

*“Another thing is that I would try to make a connection between the school and the nursing home a bit more closely, so the school can be our representative; not us the students representing ourselves. The school could let them know what we’ve been learning so far and when we are volunteering we still want to learn”*

### **Significant Finnish Students’ Involvement**

The participants suggested that Finnish students should also be encouraged to take part in the activity. They said most of the elderly would be more comfortable having Finnish around them or at least see Finnish among a group of volunteers serving them since they are more familiar with Finnish. Having Finnish in the group also help a group of volunteers communicate well with the host and that could also serve as a source of motivation to other students.

*“... Try to get many natives to join this group, because most of the clients were born in the 50s and are used to their country fellows”.*

### **Specifications and Organization**

Most of the volunteers are also of the view that the host institution could be more specific on their wishes, rules and regulations, and also make some more efforts to organize the volunteers work. Concerning the tasks, they wish the host could trust the volunteers to do more very basic nursing tasks that does not require much expertise and or take some initiatives under the supervision of the staff.

*“... I will suggest this project to be more organized and also be more specific in the beginning and tell us what we will be doing not just having us thinking that we will be doing more things than what we can actually do”*

“...that would be helpful and would encourage more volunteers to be regular, because we could practice what we’ve been learning at school; just something more nursing related”.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Discussion of the results**

#### **The Experiences of Voluntary Nursing Students**

According to Hager and Brudney (2004), organizational practices and characteristics have considerable effects on volunteer retention rate. This means that any host institution that have a higher rate of retaining their volunteers usually adopt hosting recognition activities for their volunteers and promotes professional development for them as well. The suggestion is that all institutions aspiring to use volunteers’ services should invest in training some of their staff members to have the required skills to engage the volunteers positively, because some popular practices among the paid staff might not be popular with the volunteers. It could be seen from participants’ response that their experience was not that of an enjoyable avocation largely due to organizational practices in the nursing home. They received less than expected collaboration with the nurses, and their task was far from a work-related development, which contributed to their diminished their desire to continue volunteering. The researcher curious findings revealed that earlier groups that came to the ward also gave up within months. It would therefore be proper if the nursing home and all other potential host organizations invest in staff training and staff awareness in order to give volunteers a worthwhile experience to ensure that they do not encounter retention problem.

### **Sources of Motivation for the Students**

The results of this research show that all of the volunteers in this project have some of the motivation factors mentioned in the Motivation diamond by Pessi (2014). As mentioned in her findings, the volunteers in this project were also looking for new experience and knowledge, which could help them build and develop their career as a nurse in the future. By this experience, the volunteers are able to receive credits and work experience, which could make their curriculum vitae richer. It could also be seen that the biggest motivation source was that the volunteers wanted to give their time to help the elderly in the nursing home. And for the volunteers, this was one way to spend their free time. The interview was a good platform for reflection and group discussion among the volunteers, and it was noticed that if all of them had continued volunteering in this project, they would have become closer as a group. And when the group is close enough the members might be able to share more of their experiences together and get to know each other better which could help them feel more belongingness. (Pessi 2014)

### **The Volunteers' Opinion on What Could Be Done to Sustain and Improve the Project**

The results of the UPS research (2003) showed that most volunteers quit helping, because they felt their respective host organizations were not making good use of their time. In order to sustain the volunteers' involvement, the UPS research has the following recommendation for future improvement of which most have been reechoed by the participants of this study. On volunteer involvement, the host organization must determine the best way to involve their volunteers and determine specific roles to give to the volunteers. Orientation and training is another thing that must not be ignored if the host aimed at sustainability. Two kind of orientation must be undertaken. The volunteers should be trained or oriented about their work and their host. Some training should also be given to the volunteers' coordinator(s) on the paid staff. Again, the host organization should look at how volunteers' contributions are recognized. The paid staff should be encouraged to accord the volunteers the needed assistance, collaboration, understand the psychology of

volunteering, and above all strive to show their appreciation and recognition. The host could also undertake periodic evaluation of the overall impact of the volunteers' involvement, give feedback and seek ways to improve the volunteers' work. (UPS 2014)

## **6.2 Ethical considerations**

All quality research works are valued according standards and ethics. Researchers must therefore undertake their work strictly according to the accepted work ethics to achieve quality result, accuracy and relevance. (Fawcett & Garity 2008, 219)

According to JAMK's ethical principle with respect to research and development activities, this research in its conduct would be carried out honestly, meticulously and precisely in all its workings, its recordings, in evaluation of the project and its results. This study and the related theoretical background would be carried out using justifiable and ethically sustainable means of data collection. In line with JAMK's principles, this research would be documented taking due consideration of the work and achievements of other experts, by respecting their works and giving due credit and weight to their work and achievements. In overall this research would be written in accordance with good administrative practice. (Jamk 2014)

At every stage of the study and referencing related literature, credit is given to the original authors, thereby avoiding plagiarism and ethical fraud. This research would not turn in someone else's work as original work and all copied words or ideas would be duly acknowledged. Moreover, direct quotes would be enclosed in quotation marks, correct information would be given about the source of quotations, and where words are changed retaining original sentence structure, credit would be given to the original source. (Plagarism.org 2014)

Confidentiality of participants was another ethical issue considered. Accordingly, participants or the interviewee would be treated the way they deem fit. The researchers would therefore, solicit only participant's opinions without giving a hint of their personal information and make them remain anonymous. All participants have their right and freedom of speech on issues of the project they are involved in. And whenever this right is exercised, the researchers would ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity by excluding names or personality description. The participants' permission would also be sought before the interview is conducted through a consent form. The consent forms will contain introductory notes to the research, the participants' rights with regard to confidentiality and roles in terms of what is expected from them. (Polit & Beck 2010; Jane Malaso 2011, 37–39.)

### **6.3 Credibility, dependability and transferability**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), trustworthiness is the key criterion for a good qualitative research which is used to establish the merit of the research as determined by the readers of the study. The researchers therefore have the responsibility to provide the readers with in-depth information in order for them to make an informed decision and pass their own judgement. Generally, credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability are the four main criteria used to establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative research. (Daymon & Holloway 2011, 77-93)

Credibility is a kind of internal validity (Azham & Hamidah 2011), recognized as truth by the participants and those who matter (Daymon & Holloway 200, 93), who also agree that the research results is the true reflection of the reality (Babbie & Mouton 2001, 277). The results of the study are the combination of recent referential adequacy and current narratives of participants of an ongoing project, who could recognize and agree to the results as their own true reflection on the reality on the ground. Participants' reflections were recorded in a group interview, transcribed,

reported and discussed in details in the study. This process of data collection proves the credibility of the study.

Daymon and Holloway (2011, 94) explains dependability of research findings as one that is accurate and consistent. And the accuracy and the consistency are evaluated by other researchers and readers. That is made possible in this study as researchers have made public their research findings and the process of attaining them for public scrutiny by other researchers and readers (Pole & Lampard 2002, 207). The same results could be achieved if the study is repeated with the same context and the same participants, because the processes of the implementation of the current study have clearly and systematically been explained (Polit & Beck 2010, 492.)

Transferability discusses the applicability of the research to other contexts and or population (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, 277). How applicable a qualitative research is has a lot to do with how well the readers could apply the results to similar situations. This means that the researchers have a responsibility to provide adequate information and get their readers well informed to be able to effect application of knowledge received from the research. The researchers have been responsible enough to give vivid analytical generalisation of theories, data analysis, discussion of the results and practical situation, which make it easier for readers to transfer the information received to similar projects in the same facility, city, and country and beyond.

Conformability establishes the relation between the research results and corresponding interpretation that dispel the possible notion of assumptions. The research results must be a true reflection of the participants and not the thought and conviction of the researchers to arrive at conformability of the research work (Polit & Beck 2010, 492). In this research work, the researchers held a group interview and allowed in-depth discussion of participants' reflections and used as many of their quotes as possible to show the truthful answers without editing them.

## **7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The experiences of the nursing students volunteering in the nursing home have been challenging, but an interesting one. Some of the challenges are issues with language barrier and issues on nurse-volunteer relationship. The results also reveal some interesting issues such as clients' way of showing appreciation that keep volunteers interest alive, and factors that tempts the volunteers to believe that their work is not appreciated or disregarded by some paid staff.

The study also found what motivate the students to continue volunteering as the desire to improve their language and learn more about the Finnish culture. Some feel that the nurses have too much on their hands, so the desire to give their spare time in helping. Others believe they could also contribute to the society in their own small way, whilst another group thinks volunteering is way of pay back to the society for the greater sacrifices the older generation has made.

The volunteers shared various opinions on what could be done to sustain and improve the project. Some of the opinions include measures to make the project more formal, so as to receive proper recognition by other volunteering stakeholders that may concern in their operations. The student volunteers hope the host institutions could be more organized and committed to the voluntary activities, especially organizing orientation and information training, whenever volunteers are welcomed to their unit. Another factor that diminished their interest was time strictness. They entreat potential host institutions to be somehow flexible and allow more time options to choose from.

Though the study discussed some useful information, which are transferable and applicable in various places, the research results is limited to the discussion of only the experiences of unpaid staff or volunteers. Future researchers could therefore

find out the experiences of paid staff and voluntary organisations as well, in order to provide a holistic picture of all the stakeholders' experiences in volunteering.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1. Questions for the Impending Interview**

#### EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERS

1. How has your experience been in this voluntary project?
2. What would you say about nurse-volunteer and volunteer-volunteer relationship?
3. How has the volunteering activities helped you to develop?

#### MOTIVATION OF VOLUNTEERS

1. What motivated you to start volunteering?
2. What were your expectations about this project before you started?
3. What does volunteering give you?

#### RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. How would you develop this project in the future?

## Appendix 2. Consent Form for Interviewees

### CONSENT FORM

**Researchers:** Owusu-Afriyie Ebenezer and Saara Jolkkonen

The purpose of this study is to find out the experience of the volunteers and their sources of motivation. The aim of this study is to evaluate the outcome of this pilot volunteer project in a health care facility by a group of JAMK nurse students and give recommendation for the future improvement and development to students who might want to continue the project or start a similar project.

You will be asked to answer to a number of questions regarding your involvement in the voluntary project. Your answers will be recorded for the purpose of this research only.

Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or withdrawal of your consent or discontinued participation in this study will attract no consequence.

The results of this study will be presented anonymously – without your identity disclosed. The complete data will only be available to the researchers who are working on this project.

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK) has approved the procedures for this study. If you have any questions about this study, you should feel free to ask them now or anytime throughout the study by contacting the researchers:

Saara Jolkkonen, Degree program in nursing, [jolkkonen.saara@gmail.com](mailto:jolkkonen.saara@gmail.com)

Ebenezer Owusu-Afriyie, Degree program in nursing, [ebenjamk@ymail.com](mailto:ebenjamk@ymail.com)

I understand the nature of this study and agree to participate. I received a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant name and signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researchers