
Perceived Community Support in youth and volunteering

Apoyo comunitario percibido en jóvenes y voluntariado

年轻人和志愿者对社区支持的感知

Восприятие общественной поддержки в молодежной и волонтерской деятельности

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Abstract

The aims of the present work are two. On the one hand, to examine in young people the community support perceived and, on the other hand, establish whether this differs according to participation or not in volunteer activities. The initial sample was formed of 1685 participants and the final sample constituted 1567 young people. The minimum age was 17 and the maximum was 40 ($M = 22.89$ years, $SD = 3.85$), 28.7% was male and 71.3% female. An adaptation to Spanish of the Perceived Community Support Questionnaire (Herrero & Gracia, 2007), whose psychometric requirements were guaranteed (reliability and validity), was used as data collection instrument. Firstly, results show that the dimension of perceived community support with the highest scores is that of Community organization and the dimension with the lowest scores is Community participation. Secondly, there are differences in the perceived community support between those young people who carry out voluntary actions and those who do not, in the aforementioned dimensions, not existing in Community integration. The conclusions highlight the need to develop strategies that promote youth volunteering given the social and psychological implications that this entails.

Keywords: youth; community support; community participation; community organization; community integration; volunteering.

Resumen

Los objetivos del presente trabajo son dos. Por una parte, analizar el apoyo comunitario percibido en jóvenes y, por otra, establecer si este difiere en función de si participa o no en actividades de voluntariado. La muestra inicial estuvo formada por 1685 participantes y la muestra final por 1567 jóvenes. La edad mínima fue de 17 y la máxima de 40 años ($M = 22.89$ años, $DT = 3.85$), siendo el 28.7% hombres y el 71.3% mujeres. Se empleó como instrumento de recogida de información una adaptación al español del Cuestionario de Apoyo Comunitario Percibido (Herrero & Gracia, 2007), cuyos requisitos psicométricos se garantizaron (fiabilidad y validez). Los resultados muestran, en primer lugar, que la dimensión del apoyo comunitario percibido con puntuaciones más altas es la relativa a Organización comunitaria y la dimensión con puntuaciones más bajas la Participación comunitaria. En segundo lugar, se encuentran diferencias en el apoyo comunitario percibido entre aquellos jóvenes que realizan acciones de voluntariado y los que no en las citadas dimensiones, no existiendo en la Integración comunitaria. Como conclusión se destaca la necesidad de desarrollar estrategias que promuevan el voluntariado en los jóvenes dadas las implicaciones sociales y psicológicas que ello conlleva.

Palabras clave: jóvenes; apoyo comunitario; participación comunitaria; organización comunitaria; integración comunitaria; voluntariado.

概要

本文主要目的有两个：一方面，分析对年轻人的社区支持；另一方面，分析该社区支持是否与参加志愿者活动有关。初始样本为1685人，最终样本为1567个年轻人。参与者年龄为17到40岁 ($M = 22.89$ 岁, $SD = 3.85$ ，其中男性占28.7%，女性占71.3%。我们使用了西班牙语版本的感知社区支持调查问卷(Herrero & Gracia, 2007)作为信息采集工具，该问卷的心理统计学效力(可靠性和有效性)已得到验证。结果表明，首先，在感知社区支持中得分最高的维度与社区组织有关，得分最低的维度与社区参与有关。第二，从事志愿活动的年轻人与未参加上述活动的年轻人之间在对社区支持的感知方面存在差异，在社区融入方面未发现两者差异。最后结论突出了制定可促进青年志愿者服务策略的必要性。

关键词：年轻人；社区服务；社区参与；社区组织；社区融入；志愿者。

Аннотация

Это исследование преследует две цели. С одной стороны, проанализировать воспринимаемую молодежью поддержку со стороны общественности и, с другой стороны, установить, варьируется ли она в зависимости от того, участвует ли молодежь в волонтерской деятельности или нет. Первоначальная выборка состояла из 1685 участников, а конечная - из 1567 молодых людей. Минимальный возраст - 17 лет, максимальный - 40 лет ($M = 22.89$ года, $SD = 3.85$), из них 28.7% - мужчины и 71.3% - женщины. В качестве инструмента сбора данных была использована испанская адаптация анкеты "Воспринимаемая поддержка сообщества" (Herrero & Gracia, 2007), психометрические требования которой были гарантированы (надежность и достоверность). Результаты показывают, во-первых, что наиболее высокую оценку получила организация сообщества, а самую низкую - участие сообщества. Во-вторых, существуют различия в восприятии общественной поддержки между теми молодыми людьми, которые занимаются волонтерской деятельностью, и теми, кто не занимается этой деятельностью в вышеупомянутых аспектах, без каких-либо различий в отношении социальной интеграции. В заключение подчеркивается необходимость разработки стратегий, направленных на поощрение волонтерства среди молодежи, учитывая социальные и психологические последствия, которые это влечет за собой.

Ключевые слова: молодежь; общественная поддержка; участие в общественной жизни; организация сообществ; социальная интеграция; волонтерство.

Introduction

Community social support is a focus of interest in the field of Community Psychology (Moritsugu, Vera, Wong, & Grover, 2016; Rappaport & Seidman, 2000). Community social support is defined as "help between people who share homes, schools, neighbourhoods, workplaces, organisations, and other community settings" (Barrera, 2010, p. 215). This concept is closely linked to central aspects, such as sense of community, neighbourliness, and social integration (Brissette, Cohen, & Seeman, 2000; Farrel, Aubry, & Coulombe, 2004).

Community support

The scientific literature presents a link between mental health and perceived community support (Lahey & Orehek, 2011; McLaren & Hawe, 2005). Similarly, psychological well-being and perceived community support are intrinsically interconnected (Binder & Freytag, 2013; Herrero, Meneses, Valiente, & Rodríguez, 2004). In this sense, Ng, Chan and Lai (2014) found that perceived community support mediated hope and life satisfaction in children from deprived backgrounds in Hong Kong. Community breast cancer support groups were found to emphasise social support, emotional expression, and problem solving, which have a positive impact on the cancer process (McDonald, Wall, Corwin, Brooks, & Koopman, 2013). Perceived community support was also indicated as a protective factor for depressive symptoms in adolescents (Mancini, Rigoli, Heritage, Roberts, & Piek, 2016).

Similarly, community support in low-income workers was found to positively mediate the possible occurrence of work and family conflict (Lambert, Casper, & Eby, 2013). The positive effects of community support on older people have also been identified

(Gadalla, 2010; Melchiorre et al., 2013). Older people who emerge from hospitalisation and perceive that they have community support outside the hospital are more likely to not be re-hospitalised compared to those who do not perceive such support (Coffey & McCarthy, 2013). Similarly, life satisfaction in young people is linked to perceived support from the different social contexts in which they develop, i.e., their family, school, neighbourhood, and peer group (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, & Zumbo, 2011).

Participation in volunteering activities by young people has been found to be positive in other studies (Brewis, 2010; Hyde & Knowles, 2013). Volunteering can be defined as “a form of altruistic behaviour. It aims to provide help to others, to a group, to an organisation, to a cause, or to the community at large, without the expectation of material reward” (Musick & Wilson, 2007, p. 3). García, Marcuello and Saz (2015) indicated that the factors that most influence young Spaniards to participate in volunteering activities are that their parents were role models for volunteering activities, as well as their parents’ level of education. Another, more extensive study, carried out in 20 European countries, showed that, although the socio-economic characteristics of young people are relevant in deciding to participate in volunteering activities, variables related to the formation of groups in non-governmental associations and attitudes related to different areas of life (toward family, work, religion, etc.) had a greater influence (Gil, Marcuello, & Saz, 2015). Complementing the above, Kumar, Calvo, Avendano, Sivaramakrishnan and Berkman (2012) linked perceived community support with volunteering activities and health in 139 countries.

Theoretically, the concept of community is defined by authors, such as McMillan and Chavis (1986), as a group of members sharing a sense of personal relationship. They also use the term influence, focusing on the types of groupings of those members, integration, and fulfilment of needs, and whose basis is the sense that the members’ needs will be met by the resources received through group membership and shared emotional connections focused on ideologies, history, commonalities, time together, and similar experiences.

Theory and research support the notion that subjective well-being is related to an individual’s evaluation of his or her own life and is an important element in understanding psychological well-being and general mental health (Gilman & Huebner, 2003). Subjective well-being can include cognitive judgments, such as life satisfaction or emotional responses to events, as well as feeling positive emotions (Diener & Diener, 2009). Life satisfaction is an important construct in the field of psychology because it is closely associated with happiness, as well as with positive personality, behavioural, and psychological and social outcomes (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

Subjective well-being has been consistently identified as a significant psychological factor associated with positive growth, health, and well-being in adults (Diener & Diener, 2009). This increases the understanding of life and life satisfaction in early adolescence and allows researchers to relate subjective well-being to critical contemporary developmental characteristics, such as social adjustment, mental health, and schooling.

Community support in youth

Social relationships outside the family, school environment, and peer group are particularly important contexts that influence youth development (Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Luciana, 2010). Linking these relationships revealed that high levels of school con-

nectedness operate as a protective force for young people and are positively associated with self-esteem, academic engagement, academic achievement, motivation, and school adjustment (Anderman & Freeman, 2004; Furlong et al., 2003; Osterman, 2000; Whitlock, 2006). Conversely, low levels of school relationships were associated with an increased risk of peer victimisation (Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005) and depressive symptoms in adolescence (Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006). Experiencing a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to school can be considered a critical factor in overall positive youth development, contributing to social and emotional well-being as well as academic growth in early adolescence making it a type of prosocial involvement and likely the most important (Penner, 2004).

Understanding youth volunteering and the dynamics is relevant because it has positive effects on adolescent development. Youth volunteering is also a strong predictor of adult volunteering (Atkins, Hart, & Donnelly, 2005). The effect of youth volunteering is not merely palpable in the short term, it has lasting consequences (McFarland & Thomas, 2006). Thus, there is evidence of a positive relationship between youth volunteering and civic engagement in adulthood (Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003), and youth volunteers become adult volunteers at a much higher rate than average (Hall, Mckeown, & Roberts, 2001; Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). Stolle and Hooghe (2004) indicated that behavioural patterns in adolescence continue to develop into adulthood due to two mechanisms: (a) the integration into networks of relationships, which could become a source of recruitment for the future, and (b) the development of civic attitudes as a permanent personality trait that continues into adulthood (Gil et al., 2015).

While the capacity of community participation to favour the creation and maintenance of satisfactory social ties has been frequently pointed out (Barrón & Sánchez, 2001; Gracia, Herrero, & Musitu, 2002), the work of Herrero et al. (2004) indicated that a more community-oriented use of the internet is possible, and that such use—in terms of virtual participation—enjoys the same benefits as face-to-face community participation: satisfaction with social relations and improved psychological wellbeing.

Few studies have focused on the relationship between life satisfaction and school-specific assets, such as feelings of belonging and connectedness to school. Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane (2009) posited that there is a general lack of research that investigates the relationship between life satisfaction and developing assets, such as perceived adult and teacher support, school support, and positive peer relationships.

The growing research on life satisfaction in childhood and adolescence has great potential to discern a deeper understanding of the role of subjective well-being in personal development across a lifespan. The study of life satisfaction, as it relates to the ecological context variables in early adolescence, also needs to be approached with a longitudinal design, allowing researchers to investigate fluctuations in life satisfaction during early adolescence, as well as possible increases and decreases in asset salience during development (Carpiano & Hystad, 2011).

Research in this regard should include objective measures of neighbourhood assets, such as social efficacy, social capital, and social ties; and include measures that represent additional ecological contexts in early adolescence, such as community settings that later involve school activities, sports, and volunteering. In addition to indicators of well-being, more research is required on life satisfaction and indicators of dissatisfaction (e.g., depressive symptoms). Life satisfaction also needs to be investigated for specific subgroups of adolescents to determine whether the indicators for life satis-

faction differ for early adolescents who are considered at risk, and whether there are specific ethnic groups and cultural differences (Carpiano & Hystadb, 2011).

In general, young people are more vulnerable to precarious economic conditions compared with adults, so the effects of unemployment could have a greater impact on their well-being despite public spending on employment (Gil et al., 2015). This author indicated that, although individual variables are relevant for the analysis of volunteering rates, population information on behaviour and attitudes should also be considered. The social pressure that young people place on others is greater than the social pressure coming from the general population. Consequently, if groups in the specific population are to be addressed, actions focused only on them could be the answer.

More needs to be investigated regarding how personal and ecological assets relate to social and emotional well-being and prosperity in early adolescence. Currently, supportive relationships with unrelated adults in the community are established along with a strong sense of belonging at school, which may be critical in determining life satisfaction or happiness. Adolescents were found to be adaptively advantaged when they are in systems that are coordinated (Benson, Scales, & Blyth, 1998). Research suggested that it is not appropriate to focus on individual relationships when aiming to foster social and emotional well-being in primary school students (Benson et al., 1998). Rather, the aim should be to encourage others to consider all contexts in young people's environments and to create caring and supportive relationships and configurations in which adolescents can develop and grow, from family and peer groups, to schools and neighbourhoods (Oberle et al., 2011).

In this regard, McMillan and Chavis (1986) established four elements as central to a sense of community: membership/belonging, influence, integration and need satisfaction, and shared emotional connection. Building on this idea, Glynn (1986) stressed that "the neighbourhood remains an important contributor to the development and maintenance of a sense of community" (p. 350). Therefore, it is important to consider that elements of the neighbourhood contribute to the development and maintenance of a sense of community. In this regard, the role of sense of community in mediating the relationship between neighbourhood stability and the frequency of neighbourhood behaviour with residents and well-being is highlighted (Farrel et al., 2004).

Community support and volunteering

Making public who volunteers and who does not may seem motivating, as Moseley et al. (2018) found that providing social information about other people's charitable giving can increase individual contributions. However, the effects of social information on volunteering are underexplored. Their study with English university students found that, for young people, social information had a demotivating effect, reducing their volunteering, suggesting that donating time is different from donating money.

As for the results of membership in non-governmental associations, once the macro-indicators are presented, the dummy variables in the identification of welfare systems lose explanatory power. National economic indicators are important determinants of a country's welfare systems. Voluntary participation in national economic programmes with earmarked government funds is significant (Gil et al., 2015). Increased government spending on unemployment issues encourages volunteering activity in all types of organisation, while public spending on unemployment is not an incentive for volun-

teering. One explanation for these results is that public spending on unemployment affects people with fewer economic resources (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

In addition, the macroeconomic figures that characterise countries' welfare systems help to understand contextual differences. Stimulating certain economic elements, e.g., specific government spending on unemployment, can strengthen young people's decision making toward voluntary action. Thus, the influence and effects of public spending and other environmental factors must be studied in more detail. For example, understanding who benefits and why from different types of government expenditures along with their associated objectives and externalities (Gil et al., 2015).

Social environments and the responses to them can have far-reaching detrimental effects. These effects are likely to be primarily caused through appraisals of one's social conditions as stressful and the consequent behavioural, endocrine, immune, and cardiovascular health changes in response (Cohen, 2004). This author stated that there are three different social relationship influencing variables: social integration, social support, and negative interaction. With respect to the influence of these variables on health, Cohen (2004) emphasised the need to understand who benefits most from social networks through the connectivity between subjects, creating and strengthening natural social diversity, increasing the availability of social support in natural networks, and reducing negative interactions within the network itself, all linked to the personality of the subjects.

Instead, the frequency of neighbourhood behaviour predicted a greater sense of community, consistent with previous findings that neighbourhood relationships predicted individuals' sense of community, which is often conceptualised as community involvement and feelings of community attachment (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi, 2001). One of the contributions of the latter study was to understand the relationship between neighbourhood characteristics, neighbourhood behaviour, sense of community, residents, and well-being. This work also showed that neighbourhood characteristics were important in influencing both the residents' sense of community and neighbourhood behaviour. In the present study, we also included the estimation of volunteering rate probabilities and found that the results for socioeconomic status and higher level of education positively affected volunteering, as did being single (Garcia et al., 2015).

According to Gil et al. (2015), volunteering contributed to social and community identity formation (Marta, Pozzi, & Marzana, 2010), following the volunteering identity model (Marta, Manzi, Pozzi, & Vignoles, 2014). The results of their study are promising because they align with important theoretical assumptions regarding the importance of community support in early adolescence and across the lifespan (e.g., Theokas, Lerner, Phelps, & Lerner, 2006). However, further research should be conducted to reveal meaningful connections between community support and indicators of well-being in young people across multiple developmental domains, such as positive social, emotional, mental, and academic development (Carpiano & Hystad, 2011).

Within this search for a connection between community support and indicators of youth well-being, Learning and Service (LS) is an active and experiential pedagogical methodology through which a service is offered to a vulnerable group or cause, while at the same time promoting academic curricular learning (Capella, 2016; Martínez, 2015). This pedagogical method is committed to the acquisition of curricular learning while prioritising the promotion of civic values, the development of critical thinking and the resolution of social conflicts, in the search for the comprehensive training of

participants (Chiva, Gil, Corbatón, & Capella, 2016). In this direction, there are multiple studies that highlight the academic, psychological, and social benefits of the use of the LS methodology in the university environment, and this could therefore be an appropriate strategy to promote volunteering among young people (Gil, Chiva, & Martí, 2013; Liesa, Arranz, & Vázquez, 2013; Lorenzo & Matallanes, 2013; Rodríguez, 2014; Salam, Awang, Abang, & Shoaib, 2019).

Based on the above, this paper aims to analyse the perceived community support of young people, as well as to establish whether this differs according to whether they participate in volunteering activities.

Method

This research was based on a quantitative cross-sectional research approach.

Participants

The initial sample of participants included 1685 people. A decision was made to include young people with a maximum age of 40 years in the sample, which would also include young adults (Belsky et al., 2015; Smith & Silva, 2011). Once those above this age were removed, the resulting sample consisted of 1567 young people with a minimum age of 17 and a maximum age of 40 ($M = 22.89$ years, $SD = 3.85$). A total of 28.7% were male ($n = 449$) and 71.3% were female ($n = 1118$). The majority were young Spaniards, mainly from Andalusia, the autonomous city of Melilla and Galicia, although there was also a small participation of English university students ($n = 26$). In terms of religion, 261 were Muslim (16.7%), 933 were Christian (59.5%), 7 were Jewish (.4%), 7 were of another religion (.4%), 351 had no religion (22.4%), and 8 did not answer (.5%). On the other hand, 74.5% did not volunteer ($n = 1167$), while 25.5% did ($n = 400$).

Instrument

An adapted version of the Perceived Community Support Questionnaire (PCSQ) by Herrero and Gracia (2007) was used. This questionnaire consists of 14 items with a five-point Likert-type response scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. It assesses three dimensions: Community integration (items 1 to 4), that is, the sense of belonging and/or identification with a community or neighbourhood; Community participation (items 5 to 9), concerning the degree to which subjects are involved in social activities in the community; and Community organisation (items 10 to 14), that is, the degree of perceived support from voluntary groups and organisations (e.g., recreational and sports clubs as well as services, political, and civic associations in the community). The authors identified the reliability, assessed through the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency index, as above .75. Likewise, there is a clear factor structure.

For the present study, the questionnaire was translated into Spanish following the indications of the International Test Commission (International Test Commission, 2005), whose criteria are widely accepted in the linguistic and cultural adaptation of assessment instruments (Muñiz, Elosua, & Hambleton, 2013). Similarly, its reliability was analysed for the total sample, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha value of .83. Its factor structure (construct validity) was also determined using factor analysis, where the

extraction methods were principal component analysis and Varimax rotation. In this sense, first, the suitability of carrying out a factor analysis was determined. The result of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin sample adequacy index was .854. Barlett's test of sphericity yielded a value of $\chi^2 = 6434.874$, $p = .000$. Therefore, it was pertinent to develop a factor analysis.

Three factors were found that explained 58.607% of the total variance. The first factor (Community participation), comprising items 5 to 9 (see Table 1), explained 24.869% of the variance; the second (Community organisation), comprising items 10 to 14, explained 20.113%; and the third (Community integration), comprising items 1 to 4, explained 13.624%.

Table 1

Matrix of rotated components in the Perceived Community Support Questionnaire

Ítems	Factores		
	Community participation	Community organisation	Community integration
I identify with my community	.364	.079	.739
My opinions are valued in my community	.440	.057	.685
Few people in my community know who I am	-.042	.160	.346
I feel like my community is my own	.447	.090	.673
I collaborate in organisations and associations in my community	.842	.123	.093
I take part in activities in my community	.883	.120	.134
I take part in some social or community groups in my community	.852	.106	.068
I respond to calls for support in my community	.769	.204	.116
I don't take part in socio-recreational activities in my community	-.507	.162	.281
I could find people that would help me feel better.	.095	.761	.077
I would find someone to listen to me when I feel down	.102	.836	.064
I would find a source of satisfaction for myself	.147	.834	.133
I would be able to cheer up and get into a better mood	.166	.662	.085
I would relax and easily forget my problems	.037	.503	.201

Note. All factors saturated above .30

Procedure

Information collection

The ethical principles established by the Declaration of Helsinki for human research were followed in this research. All participants were informed of the subject and purpose of the study and gave their informed consent to participate in the study, as well as for the dissemination of the results. The study was approved by the research ethics committee of the University of Chester, UK. Different procedures were used to collect information. On the one hand, in person (in universities, different associations, etc.) and, on the other hand, online through the Google Forms platform. In the latter case, mass e-mails were sent to the teaching staff of different universities for their students to reply. Different social networks were also used (Facebook, for example) in which the objective of the research was indicated and the link to the form located in Google Forms was included.

Statistical data analysis

Once the psychometric requirements of the assessment instrument used, i.e., the reliability and validity, were guaranteed, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to determine whether the normal distribution of the data was met and, therefore, to carry out parametric or non-parametric tests. Since the values were significant in all items of the questionnaire, $p < .001$, the Gaussian distribution was not met. On the other hand, the homoscedasticity or homogeneity of the variances was calculated. In the case of the independent variable volunteering, with two values, the Levene statistic was used with the t-test for independent samples, and the significance level, $p > .05$, was not reached. Consequently, the homogeneity or equality of variances between the comparison groups was met.

In light of these results, although some authors indicate that, when normality is not met, non-parametric tests should be used (Osborne, 2012), given the size of the sample and that the requirement of homogeneity of variances was met, parametric statistical analysis tests were used, in the direction indicated by different authors (Norman, 2010; Warner, 2008). The following descriptive statistics were used to describe the data: frequencies, percentages, minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. The Chi2 test was used to estimate the differences in the observed frequencies. Likewise, an analysis of variance was carried out to evaluate the perceived community support according to whether one participates in volunteering activities. The Bonferroni statistic was used for post-hoc comparisons.

Results

Perceived Community Support

Table 2 presents the responses to the different items of the Perceived Community Support Questionnaire.

Table 2

Perceived community support for young people

Ítems	1	2	3	4	5	Chi ²	p
1. I identify with my community	53 4.6%	146 12.8%	352 30.8%	359 31.4%	233 20.4%	305.815***	.000
2. My opinions are valued in my community	81 7.1%	158 13.8%	402 25.7%	347 30.4%	153 13.4%	335.543***	.000
3. Few people in my community know who I am	125 10.9%	226 19.8%	344 30.1%	294 25.7%	153 13.4%	149.077***	.000
4. I feel like my community is my own	71 6.2%	112 9.8%	378 33.2%	367 32.2%	212 18.6%	351.675***	.000
5. I collaborate in organisations and associations in my community	250 22.0%	242 21.3%	267 23.5%	217 19.1%	162 14.2%	29.337***	.000
6. I take part in activities in my community	209 18.4%	224 19.7%	299 26.3%	241 21.2%	165 10.5%	41.982***	.000
7. I take part in some social or community groups in my community	256 22.6%	244 21.5%	271 23.9%	222 19.6%	141 12.4%	46.238***	.000
8. I respond to calls for support in my community	178 15.7%	204 17.9%	345 30.3%	253 22.3%	157 13.8%	98.633***	.000
9. I don't take part in socio-recreational activities in my community	291 25.6%	241 21.2%	274 24.1%	182 16.0%	149 13.1%	64.245***	.000
10. I could find people that would help me feel better	69 6.1%	152 13.4%	318 28.1%	336 29.7%	258 22.8%	228.205***	.000
11. I would find someone to listen to me when I feel down	63 5.5%	90 7.9%	238 20.9%	399 35.1%	348 30.6%	395.471***	.000
12. I would find a source of satisfaction for myself	48 4.2%	91 8.0%	288 25.4%	381 33.6%	327 28.8%	387.551***	.000
13. I would be able to cheer up and get into a better mood	18 1.6%	33 2.9%	156 13.7%	422 37.1%	509 44.7%	895.893***	.000
14. I would relax and easily forget my problems	88 7.7%	139 12.2%	303 26.6%	341 30.0%	266 23.4%	208.255***	.000

Note: The valid percentage of responses given has been included.

1= Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree

*** $p < .001$

The frequency analysis was significant for all items. The item with the highest level of agreement was, "I would be able to cheer up others and be in a better mood" (44.7%), and the item with the lowest level of agreement was, "I do not engage in socio-recreational activities in my community" (25.6%).

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the three dimensions that make up the PCSQ.

Table 3
Dimensions of perceived community support

PSCQ dimensions	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>DT</i>
Community participation	1.00	5.00	2.84	.94
Community organisation	1.00	5.00	3.74	.80
Community integration	1.00	5.00	3.34	.77

Community Organisation was the dimension with the highest score ($M = 3.74$) and, in the opposite position, was Community Participation ($M = 2.84$).

Perceived community support as a function of participation in volunteering activities

The dimensions of the PSCQ were analysed according to whether one participated in volunteering activities (see Table 4), resulting in a significant analysis with $F = 52.287$, $p = .000$, and $Eta^2p = .125$.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics and Anova results on the PSCQ according to participation or non-participation in volunteering activities.

PSCQ dimensions	Volunteer	<i>M</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Eta</i> ² <i>p</i>
Community participation	No	2.67	.93	124.317***	.000	.102
	Yes	3.36	.76			
Community organisation	No	3.70	.81	8.019**	.005	.007
	Yes	3.86	.78			
Community integration	No	3.32	.78	1.796	.181	.002
	Yes	3.39	.72			

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Volunteers scored significantly higher than non-volunteers on the dimensions of Community Involvement, $t = .698$, $p = .000$, and Community Organisation, $t = .160$, $p = .005$, based on post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni statistic.

Discussion and Conclusions

In terms of the perceived community support, in general, the dimension Community Organisation, which refers to the degree of perceived support from voluntary groups and organisations, scored the highest, while Community Participation, i.e., the degree to which people are involved in social activities in the community, scored the lowest. Therefore, community support was perceived to be more important compared with community participation.

The proportional imbalance perceived by young people between the support received and the support given shows a possible way of inviting them to participate in social volunteering activities, considering them as a necessary reciprocity in the face of a community that offers support but that, at the same time, needs it. This invitation to reciprocity must be based on the implicit awareness of not doing enough to reciprocate the perceived support. In this regard, the main motivations that may lead to initial involvement in volunteering activities include empathy, prosocial behaviour, altruism, and learning among others; however, it is also important to consider the benefits of volunteering, such as the value of the learning acquired, self-fulfilment, empowerment, and well-being (Aydinly-Karakulak, Bender, & Chong, Yue, 2016; Ng et al, 2014; Patrick, Bodine, Gibbs, & Basinger, 2018; Silva, Proença, & Ferreira, 2018).

On the other hand, the perceived community support analysed, depending on whether they participate in volunteering activities, revealed that volunteers reached higher values in the dimensions of Community Participation and Community Organisation, which was to be expected given that the first dimension refers to involvement in social activities in the community and the second to the perception of the support received from organisations and volunteers. No differences were found between those who were and those who were not volunteers in the Community Integration dimension; thus, both groups felt identification with their community.

In this direction, the possibility of linking academic curricular learning to the experience of volunteering actions, through the LS methodology, would facilitate a more comprehensive training of students (Chiva et al., 2016). In this way, the integration of community activities within the formal educational process of young people can be a tool to achieve greater youth participation in volunteering (Aramburuzabala, 2013). In fact, experiences developed in the university environment highlight its academic, personal, and professional benefits (Chiva, Pallarés, & Gil, 2018; Hervás, Fernández, Arco, & Miñaca, 2017; Lorenzo, Mella, García, & Varela, 2017).

In conclusion, we highlight that, in order to promote participation in volunteering activities, volunteers should feel supported by their community (Abascal et al., 2004; Zurdo, 2011): (a) receiving and being part of volunteer organisations; (b) being active members, making it possible to organise with relative autonomy; (c) allowing reforming contributions in pursuit of the organisation's purpose, which become part of the rules and norms according to the organisation's constituent purposes; (d) creating internal environments of communication and trust; (e) coordinating the appropriate people for the activities, in search of a better distribution of time in the voluntary action; (f) coordinating the appropriate means for the activities, in search of a better distribution of time in the voluntary action; (g) creating a more efficient use of time in the voluntary action; and (h) promoting the participation of volunteers in the organisation's activities to promote participation in the voluntary actions.

One of the limitations of the study is that it was based on a single evaluation instrument, i.e., a questionnaire. It would be interesting, in future research, to add interviews to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information that would allow for a more in-depth study of perceived community support, as well as the motivations for starting volunteering, its maintenance, and its benefits.

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