

Empowering Communities Through Volunteerism: Leadership, Compassion and Change
(*Memperkasakan Komuniti Melalui Kesukarelawanan: Kepimpinan, Belas Kasihan dan Perubahan*)

SRI MURUGAN SAGA DEVAN

ABSTRACT

Volunteerism is essential in nurturing leadership, compassion, and decision-making within communities. The Baratham Cultural Club (KKB) at the University of Malaysia Terengganu focuses on leveraging the potential of youth leaders to foster a culture of volunteerism among students, staff, and the broader community. This study explores the club's initiatives, including the Malaysian Book of Records, Fundraising Events, Multi-Cultural Nights, Mentorship Initiatives, and Health Awareness Campaigns, and their role in promoting volunteerism. Key initiatives like fundraising and public awareness programs emphasise the multifaceted benefits of volunteering. The objectives of this study are to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs in increasing community engagement, developing skills, and building social networks. It involves a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data on participation rates and qualitative feedback from participants. This approach helps assess the impact of both face-to-face interactions and online engagement in communicating the importance of volunteerism. The results reveal a significant rise in enthusiasm and participation among students, highlighting the effectiveness of these initiatives in instilling the values of giving back and community involvement. The study finds that volunteering not only equips participants with new skills and valuable work experience but also enhances their physical and mental well-being through social connections and a sense of purpose. These benefits contribute to personal growth and societal improvement, demonstrating the multifaceted advantages of volunteerism. The findings underscore the need for continued efforts to inspire and mobilize volunteers, reinforcing the transformative power of volunteerism to address social challenges and ensure a brighter future for all.

Keywords – Volunteerism, Leadership, Organizing, Compassion and Decision-Making

ABSTRAK

Sukarelawan adalah penting dalam memupuk kepimpinan, belas kasihan, dan pembuatan keputusan dalam komuniti. Kelab Kebudayaan Baratham (KKB) di Universiti Malaysia Terengganu memberi tumpuan kepada memanfaatkan potensi pemimpin muda untuk memupuk budaya sukarelawanan dalam kalangan pelajar, kakitangan, dan masyarakat umum. Kajian ini meneroka inisiatif kelab, termasuk Malaysian Book of Records, Acara Pengumpulan Dana, Malam Pelbagai Budaya, Inisiatif Mentorship, dan Kempen Kesedaran Kesihatan, serta peranan mereka dalam mempromosikan sukarelawanan. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menilai keberkesanan program-program ini dalam meningkatkan penglibatan komuniti, pembangunan kemahiran, dan membina rangkaian sosial. Kajian ini melibatkan pendekatan kaedah campuran, menggabungkan data kuantitatif mengenai kadar penyertaan dan maklum balas kualitatif daripada peserta. Pendekatan ini membantu menilai kesan interaksi bersemuka dan penglibatan dalam talian dalam menyampaikan kepentingan sukarelawanan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan peningkatan ketara dalam semangat dan penyertaan pelajar, yang menonjolkan keberkesanan inisiatif-inisiatif ini dalam menerapkan nilai-nilai berbakti dan penglibatan komuniti. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa sukarelawanan bukan sahaja membekalkan peserta dengan kemahiran baru dan pengalaman kerja yang berharga, tetapi juga meningkatkan kesejahteraan fizikal dan mental mereka melalui hubungan sosial dan rasa tujuan. Manfaat ini menyumbang kepada perkembangan diri dan peningkatan masyarakat, yang menunjukkan kelebihan pelbagai sukarelawanan. Penemuan ini mengukuhkan keperluan usaha berterusan untuk memberi inspirasi dan menggerakkan sukarelawan, memperkuatkan kuasa transformasi sukarelawanan untuk menangani cabaran sosial dan memastikan masa depan yang lebih cerah untuk semua.

Kata Kunci: Sukarelawanan, Kepimpinan, Penganjuran, Belas Kasihan, dan Pembuatan Keputusan

INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism has always been critical in shaping societies by fostering leadership, compassion, and community engagement. In the context of educational institutions, student-driven volunteer initiatives provide fertile ground for nurturing these qualities. The Baratham Cultural Club (KKB) at the University of Malaysia Terengganu stands as a beacon of such initiatives, actively engaging students, faculty, and the wider community in various volunteer-driven projects. This paper explores how KKB's programs contribute to personal development, skill acquisition, and the broader goal of community building.

The paper delves into the various initiatives undertaken by the club, examining their effectiveness and their impact on participants. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data on participation and qualitative feedback, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role volunteerism plays in the development of leadership and community engagement.

The Baratham Cultural Club is one of the active clubs at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. Baratham Cultural Club was established at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu in 1999 by the students. This club has organized various programs and competitions at university, national, and international levels throughout the establishment of this club. This club's students have actively participated in developing ideas and events to improve their involvement in the curricular activities. For instance, in 2014, KKB achieved the Malaysia Book of Records in the creation of the biggest 'Visit Malaysia Year 2014' logo using 28 000 coconut shells. Next in 2017, the Malaysia Book of Records was achieved again by KKB by organizing the largest recyclable domestic waste collected in a day, a total of 5.3846 tons. This legacy was continued by each highboard member of the club in each term by conducting various programs over the years. Existing programs were conducted every year and new programs were also established over recent years.

In the term 2022/2023, various programs were conducted, among them was Natyamela 6.0, a multicultural fundraising event, where I was the Program Director, which was organized to raise funds for the National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM) and the National Terengganu State Association for the Development of the Disabled (PAUT). We successfully donated a generous amount to this society by conducting two main events (Autism Awareness Tour, Autism Awareness Campaign, and Natyamela 6.0 Closing Ceremony) and various mini-programs to raise

funds. The Newscasting and Hosting 1.0 competition was organized as a platform for talented students in event management and news presentation. Judges from the hosting industry were invited to this program for the participants to be evaluated. They were exposed to various ways and experiences of presenting themselves and delivering texts confidently. Furthermore, the International Tamil Debate Competition 6.0 was organized internationally, involving students from other countries such as Singapore, India, and Sri Lanka. This competition aimed to unearth students' talents in the field of debate. A Colour Run competition was also conducted under the Blossom of Faith program to raise funds for the National Cancer Society of Malaysia. They successfully donated a sum of RM10,000 to this society in 2023. The Newscasting and Hosting 2.0 competition was organized in 2023 and focused on three language categories: English, Bahasa Melayu, and Tamil.

During the 2023/2024 term, under the leadership of Sri Murugan Saga Devan as the President of the Baratham Cultural Club (KKB), a total of 13 major programs and 95 mini-programs were successfully conducted. The mini-programs, held online, included awareness talks, quizzes, and poster competitions aimed at raising funds and sharing knowledge. In 2024, the Mutamizh Pongal Program was held on an international scale, with participation from international students at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). The event received media coverage from RTM, and participants were interviewed. Additionally, Sri Murugan Saga Devan represented all Indian students at UMT in the Student Representation Congress (KORUM), where various concerns were addressed.

Another significant initiative was the LAHARA: The Tidal Tales of Triumph program, which aimed to spread awareness about sea turtle conservation. This program achieved national recognition by breaking the Malaysia Book of Records for the "Biggest Palm Print Banner," measuring 19 meters x 14.5 meters. Various mini-programs were also conducted to raise funds for the Sea Turtle Research Unit (SEATRU).

The club also collaborated with the Indian Cultural Society of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (ICS UniSZA) to organize a motivational camp, *Uyavom Uyarthuvom*, designed to instill positive change among Tamil students in SJKT Pulau Carey Timur, SJKT Pulau Carey Barat, and SJKT Pulau Carey Selatan in Selangor. In June 2024, Natyamela 7.0 was successfully held at Dewan Sultan Mizan, UMT.

Meanwhile, a Down Syndrome Awareness Campaign was organized, followed by Flashmob 2.0 in Kuala Lumpur to raise funds for the Malaysian Down

Syndrome Association. As a new initiative under the Baratham Cultural Club, the 2024 Global Mobility Connect Voyages Program was introduced for the first time. A total of 19 students participated in the mobility program to Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.

Over the years, the participation of students has either been constant or has increased. The highboards for this club will be chosen every term by election and upon selection, they will conduct an interview session with selection committee members according to their exco. They will be evaluated accordingly based on their experience and several important requirements. It is important to interview to evaluate the skills, experience, and expertise of potential committee members. This ensures that individuals who have the necessary qualifications and knowledge to contribute effectively to the club's goals will be selected. Through interviews, we can gauge a candidate's level of commitment, motivation, and enthusiasm for the role. This helps ensure that committee members are genuinely invested in the club's success. It also helps determine if a candidate's values, interests, and work style align with the club's mission and culture. A good fit is essential for smooth collaboration and achieving collective objectives. Interviews provide an opportunity to clearly outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations associated with the committee positions. This helps candidates understand what is required and allows for informed decision-making.

A well-established club offers numerous leadership opportunities for students, from executive board positions to committee roles. These positions help students develop and showcase their leadership skills, which are valuable in both academic and professional contexts. This enriches the overall student experience by offering opportunities for involvement, personal growth, and social interaction. It provides a platform for students to explore interests, develop new skills, and build friendships, contributing to a more fulfilling and enjoyable university life. Clubs often focus on

areas like leadership, communication, teamwork, and specific professional skills. A well-organized club can provide valuable training, workshops, and experiences that help students develop competencies relevant to their future careers. This can be particularly beneficial for networking and career advancement. Strong clubs often create networking opportunities by connecting students with professionals, alumni, and other organizations. This can lead to valuable collaborations, internships, job opportunities, and mentorship, helping students build a network that can be beneficial throughout their academic and professional careers. Active clubs play a crucial role in increasing overall campus engagement. They organize events, activities, and initiatives that contribute to a vibrant campus culture, encourage student participation, and enhance the university's social and intellectual environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the President of the Baratham Cultural Club, Sri Murugan Saga Devan remained committed to ensuring that each term introduced more impactful and meaningful programs than the last. With a strong and ambitious vision, he worked closely with the board members to plan and implement initiatives designed to leave a lasting impression on both the club and the community. Several key programs were envisioned and crafted to foster growth and engagement, with active encouragement for collaboration and contributions from other passionate individuals who shared the same enthusiasm for leading successful initiatives. By incorporating diverse perspectives, each program was designed to be innovative and capable of making a meaningful difference, with program directors taking the lead in execution. The following highlights some of the major programs conducted during his tenure as president, along with insights into their objectives and impact.

TABLE 1. Summary of the Programs Conducted and Achieved aspects

Name Of the Programs	Year	No. of Participants	No. of Other University Participated	Crew Members	Remarks
News casting And Hosting Competition 2.0	2023	121	4	71	Involve intergovernmental university students, providing them with opportunities to showcase their talents in news casting and hosting.

“Piala Debat Tamil Antarabangsa 6.0”	2023	76	36	36	The program fostered international relations among students from India, Sri Lanka and Singapore, enhanced their language skills and offered a prize of RM 5000, the highest among similar events.
“Puthumgam Arimugam”	2023	221	-	60	This program created a close-knit, intellectually vibrant, and morally grounded student community. It strengthened bonds among Baratham Cultural Club members, helped newcomers adapt to life at UMT, and fostered teamwork, mutual respect, and noble character, aligning with the university's goal of producing graduates who live sustainably and contribute positively to society.
“Moovendar”	2024	38	3	32	A small-scale debate competition to encourage speaking the Tamil language and showcase their talents.
“Mutamizh Pongal”	2024	300	100	35	Collaborated with a neighbouring university to bring international students to our university for the first time, celebrating cultural diversity through the Pongal festival, also telecasted in RTM TV2.
Down Syndrome Awareness Tour	2024	-	-	42	We collected funds from shops, stalls, companies, and the public, along with supporting documents, to donate to the Down syndrome community. With engaging flash mobs and support from a dedicated team, the project educated the public, fostered community support, and generated funds to support Down syndrome causes, contributing to meaningful change. Fund Raised: Rm 4785

“Uyarvom Uyarthuvom”	2024	47	-	20	The "Uyarvom Uyarthuvom" Motivational Camp successfully enhanced the educational experience of Tamil school students in rural Malaysia. It provided 47 students with valuable financial literacy and career exploration workshops, introduced them to unique university programs, and inspired them to consider diverse future opportunities. The camp fostered personal development and broadened their perspectives on career possibilities.
Down Syndrome Campaign	2024	300	100	35	The campaign focused on creating a memorable and supportive experience for children with Down syndrome and their families. The event featured a variety of booths offering information and resources on Down syndrome, health screenings, and a blood donation campaign. Special activities were designed to engage and entertain the children, while valuable information and support were provided to their parents.
Lahara Achieving Malaysian Book of Records	2024	1600	-	111	The campaign involved the collection of 10,000 handprints from both the university community and residents, which were meticulously gathered on a massive canvas measuring 19 meters by 15 meters over 24 hours, achieving, The Biggest Palm Print Banner
Lahara Closing Ceremony	2024	586	-	111	During the ceremony, donations were presented to the Sea Turtle Research Unit, a sum of RM 1500 only, supporting ongoing

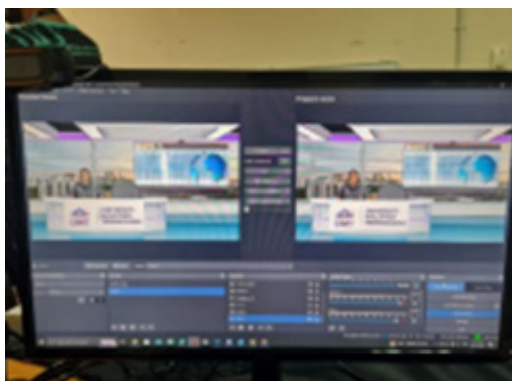
					conservation efforts. Additionally, the event included a knowledge-sharing session aimed at educating students about turtle conservation and the importance of environmental stewardship.
11.Club Election	2024	184	-	35	The election process is designed to be transparent and inclusive, with clear guidelines for nominations, voting, and campaigns. Candidates present their platforms and engage in debates, allowing members to make informed decisions. Creates a real-life election phase to give the experience to the students
12.Natyamela 7.0 (Aazhi The Splash Of Rhythm)	2024	800	39	79	This is a dynamic event that combines the Down Syndrome Awareness Campaign with a Cultural Dance Competition and the Baratham Cultural Night. The program is designed to raise awareness about Down syndrome and promote the inclusion of individuals with Down syndrome into society. The program raised RM 10,000, which was donated to selected charities, including the Down Syndrome Association of Malaysia (PSDM) and the ITQAN Terengganu Special Needs Children Association (ITQAN). By blending entertainment with advocacy, we aim to make a meaningful impact on public awareness and community support for individuals with Down syndrome.

13.Mobility Programme	2024	10	-	19	<p>The Global Connect Voyages 2024 initiative significantly impacted students by expanding their knowledge and promoting Malaysian culture and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) on an international stage. It provided invaluable opportunities for cultural exchange with students from Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) in Thailand, allowing them to explore diverse academic programs and cultural practices. The program fostered greater understanding and collaboration, enhanced diplomatic skills, and raised awareness about environmental issues. It also contributed to the students' personal growth and the global development of the Baratham Cultural Club, enriching their overall experience and international presence.</p>
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News casting And Hosting Competition 2.0

By giving students a stage to demonstrate their newscasting and hosting abilities, this event aims to improve their public speaking and presentation abilities. Expanding upon the triumph of the initial competition, the 2.0 edition, a second term continuation presented

increasingly demanding situations and a wider array of subjects, motivating competitors to use critical thinking and perform well under duress. The competition aimed to educate students for real-world communication issues in professional contexts, while also encouraging confidence and creativity in them.





“Piala Debat Tamil Antarabangsa 6.0”

This prestigious international Tamil debate competition, now in its sixth edition, was organized to provide a platform for Tamil-speaking students to engage in intellectual discourse on a global stage. The event brought together participants from various countries

such as Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, and Australia, fostering cultural exchange and deepening their understanding of critical issues. The competition emphasized the importance of logical reasoning, persuasive argumentation, and cultural pride, aiming to elevate the standards of Tamil debate while nurturing the next generation of articulate and confident speakers.



“Puthumgam Arimugam”

For this program to generate students who can be integrated, intellectual, and moral, it is intended that participants will have an awareness of the significance of intimate relationships and cooperation with one another. This program is designed to improve the bonds between Baratham Cultural Club members, assist

newcomers in adapting to life at UMT, and positively influence the development of their personalities and minds. The university wants to produce graduates who can live sustainably and who will be guided toward the campus way of life so that they can get to know one another with a spirit of friendship and mutual respect to create a noble character and personality.



“Moovendar”

This inter-university Tamil debate competition aimed to enhance students' debating skills and support the Tamil language by providing a dynamic and engaging platform for intellectual exchange. By bringing together participants from various universities, the

event encouraged lively debates and promoted a deeper appreciation for the Tamil language and its rich cultural heritage. The competition not only fostered eloquent and persuasive communication among students but also created an enjoyable and competitive environment that celebrated linguistic prowess and critical thinking.



. “Mutamizh Pongal”

This event, organized by first-year students as their inaugural project with the club, marked the transition to hosting an international Ponggal celebration on 19 January 2024. The initiative aimed to introduce and immerse international students in the rich cultural traditions of Ponggal. By encouraging active

participation and providing opportunities to learn about and celebrate this important Tamil festival, the event fostered a greater understanding of Ponggal's significance. It offered a platform for cultural exchange and appreciation, showcasing the festival's traditions and values to a diverse audience and strengthening community ties within the university.



Down Syndrome Awareness Tour

This initiative featured a detailed tour across six strategically selected locations in Kuala Lumpur, designed to raise awareness about Down syndrome and secure donations for related causes. The tour was carefully organized with the necessary clearance and permissions from local authorities, ensuring a smooth and impactful execution. The event included engaging flash mobs performed at each location to draw attention and foster community engagement. Supported by a dedicated team of 42 crew members, the tour was

facilitated by a university-provided bus, which ensured efficient transportation and logistical coordination on 6 & 7 April 2024. This project not only aimed to educate the public about Down syndrome through informative sessions and interactive activities but also sought to raise significant funds to support individuals and organizations working with Down syndrome. By merging awareness campaigns with fundraising efforts, the tour strived to enhance understanding, build community support, and contribute to meaningful change.





“Uyarvom Uyarthuvom”

This student-led initiative aims to enhance the educational experience and personal development of Tamil school students in Malaysia, particularly those attending rural schools. The first event of this initiative, a Motivational Camp titled "Uyarvom Uyarthuvom," was held at SJK (T) Pulau Carey Barat in Selangor on April 26 and 27, 2024. The camp brought together 47 enthusiastic students from three Tamil schools on Carey Island—SJKT Pulau Carey Barat, SJKT Pulau Carey Timur, and SJKT Pulau Carey Selatan. The event was led by ten participants from each university, under the guidance of Ashwinie Perumal and in collaboration with the Baratham Club of Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT).


The two-day camp featured a series of workshops designed to foster all-around growth among the students. The first session focused on financial literacy, emphasizing the importance of understanding financial concepts from a young age. Subsequent sessions explored various career pathways, with special attention given to unique courses offered at UnisZA and UMT, such as Agricultural Biotechnology, International Relations, and Nautical Science. The aim was to dispel myths about career choices and inspire students to consider diverse opportunities for their future (Agilandeswary Muniandy, 2024).

Mentorship Initiatives

Mentorship initiatives are another key aspect of KKB's volunteerism efforts. Senior students and alumni volunteer their time to mentor younger students, guiding on academic, professional, and personal matters. This initiative not only strengthens the bonds between different generations of students but also ensures the continuity of the club's culture of volunteerism.

Down Syndrome Campaign

Held on May 18, 2024, this impactful event was organized in collaboration with UniSZA, Persatuan Sindrom Down Malaysia, and ITQAN Terengganu. The campaign focused on creating a memorable and supportive experience for children with Down syndrome and their families. The event featured a variety of booths offering information and resources on Down syndrome, health screenings, and a blood donation campaign. Special activities were designed to engage and entertain the children, while valuable information and support were provided to their parents. Additionally, students from various institutions were actively involved, gaining firsthand experience in supporting and advocating for individuals with Down syndrome. The campaign aimed to raise awareness, foster inclusivity, and build a stronger community





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Empowering Tamil School Students, UniSZA's Students-Led 'Uyarvom Uyarthuvom' Movement

BY ADARSHAN NUNANDY / JUNE 12, 2024





TREI

- 1 VZK Group Or Posing Warm
- 2 Astro Celebrity Malaysia Day Campaign

The Indian Cultural Society (ICS) of University Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) undergraduate Bachelor of Law students have started a revolutionary project called "Uyarvom Uyarthuvom" with the goal of improving the lot of Tamil school students in Malaysia. The goal of this student-led initiative is to encourage social responsibility and self-improvement in Tamil schoolchildren, especially those who attend rural schools.

This initiative's first event, a Motivational Camp called "Uyarvom Uyarthuvom," was held at SJK (T) Pulau Carey Barat in Selangor. On April 26 and 27, 2024, 47 enthusiastic students from three Tamil schools on Carey Island, Selangor—SJKT Pulau Carey Barat, SJKT Pulau Carey Timur, and SJKT Pulau Carey Selatan came to this two-day camp.



Ten participants from each university led the camp with the guidance of Ashwinie Perumal, in cooperation with the Baratham Club of Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). The program included a variety of workshops focused on all-around growth, from financial literacy to empowering women in leadership roles.

The first session of the camp focused on financial literacy, highlighting the significance of financial literacy even for young children. After that, a career pathway session featured special courses offered at UniSZA and UMT, like Agricultural Biotechnology, International Relations, and Nautical Science, in an effort to dispel myths about career choices.

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through meaningful interaction and collaboration.

Health Awareness Campaigns

Health awareness campaigns organized by KKB have addressed various issues such as mental health, nutrition,

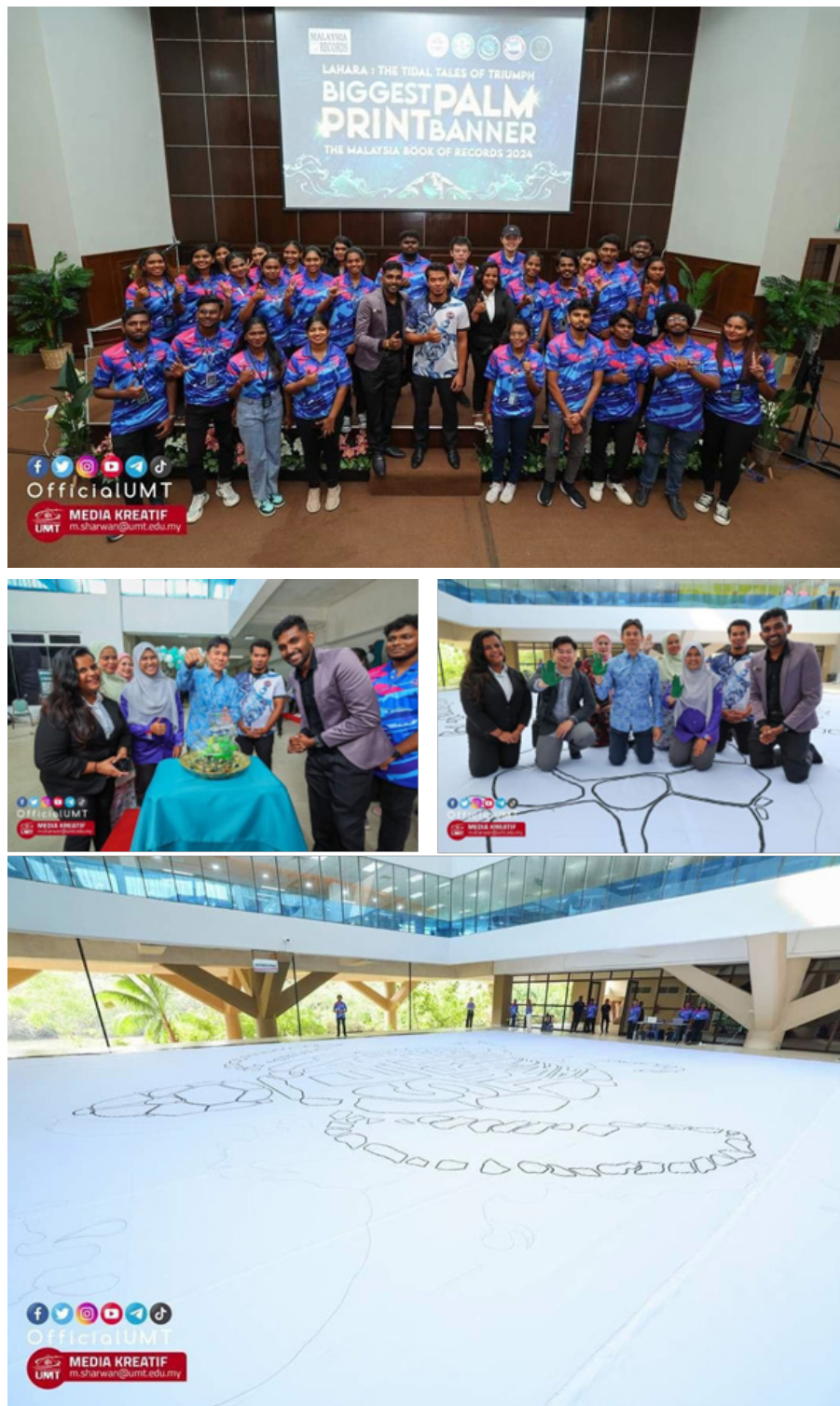
and disease prevention. These campaigns have included workshops, seminars, and free health screenings, providing valuable services to the university and surrounding communities. They have also contributed to reducing the stigma around mental health issues and promoting a culture of well-being.



Lahara Achieving Malaysian Book Of Records

We achieved a significant milestone by securing a place in the Malaysia Book of Records (MBOR) for our exceptional turtle conservation campaign. To organize and conduct this groundbreaking program, the club mobilized a dedicated team of students and staff to spearhead the initiative. The campaign involved the collection of 10,000 handprints from both the university community and residents, which were meticulously

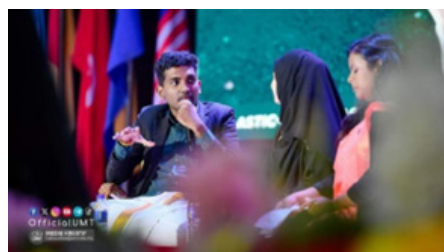
gathered on a massive canvas measuring 19 meters by 15 meters over 24 hours. This initiative aimed to raise awareness and support for turtle conservation efforts, showcasing a united commitment to environmental protection. The successful execution of this program not only demonstrated organizational progress but also highlighted the collective enthusiasm and dedication of the team and its community in championing a vital cause.



Lahara Closing Ceremony

To celebrate this historic event, we assembled a dedicated team of students and staff, who successfully collected 10,000 handprints from the university and local community on a 19-by-15-meter canvas within 24 hours. Following this achievement, a closing ceremony was conducted to mark the occasion. During the ceremony, a donation of RM 15,000 was presented

to the Sea Turtle Research Unit, supporting ongoing conservation efforts. Additionally, the event included a knowledge-sharing session aimed at educating students about turtle conservation and the importance of environmental stewardship. This comprehensive approach not only celebrated the campaign's success but also reinforced the commitment to marine conservation and educational outreach.



Club Election

The club election is crucial for choosing new leaders and boosting students' political knowledge. We organize workshops to educate members on democratic principles, leadership roles, and effective governance. The election process is designed to be transparent and inclusive, with clear guidelines for nominations, voting, and campaigns. Candidates present their platforms and

engage in debates, allowing members to make informed decisions. Additionally, we implement strategies to encourage active participation and ensure fair play. Post-election feedback sessions are held to review and improve the process, fostering continuous enhancement of club governance and leadership. This approach not only strengthens political understanding but also ensures the selection of effective leaders committed to the club's mission.



Natyamela 7.0 (Aazhi The Splash Of Rhythm)

This is a dynamic event that combines the Down Syndrome Awareness Campaign with a Cultural Dance Competition and the Baratham Cultural Night. The program is designed to raise awareness about Down syndrome and promote the inclusion of individuals with Down syndrome in society.

Our objectives are twofold: to ignite a passion for dance among university students and peers from various backgrounds, fostering unity and friendship across Malaysia, and to provide exposure to Down syndrome while highlighting the unique qualities of special children within the Terengganu community. The event features vibrant performances, cultural showcases, and engaging activities that celebrate diverse talents and contributions.

Additionally, the program raised RM 10,000,

which was donated to selected charities, including the Down Syndrome Association of Malaysia (PSDM) and the ITQAN Terengganu Special Needs Children Association (ITQAN). By blending entertainment with advocacy, we aim to make a meaningful impact on public awareness and community support for individuals with Down syndrome.

Multi-Cultural Nights

KKB's Multi-Cultural Nights celebrate diversity and promote cultural awareness through performances by students and also talented artists, exhibitions, and food from various cultures. These events broke down cultural barriers and fostered mutual respect among students and staff. The initiative included dance competitions and ticket sales to raise funds for donations.



Mobility Programme

Global Connect Voyages 2024 is a pivotal initiative by the Baratham Cultural Club (KKB) designed to extend the club's vision and mission onto an international stage for the first time ever among cultural clubs in the university. This program aims to provide KKB members from the 2023/2024 cohort with invaluable opportunities to expand their knowledge, promote Malaysian culture and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in Songkhla, Thailand, and engage in meaningful cultural exchanges. This marks the inaugural visit by KKB to PSU, establishing a unique platform for

students from both universities to explore each other's academic programs, facilities, and cultural practices. The program will feature engaging sessions on environmental sustainability, personal development, and cultural diversity, fostering greater understanding and collaboration. Key objectives include promoting Malaysian culture and UMT, raising awareness about environmental issues, enhancing diplomatic skills, and building international relationships. Additionally, the program aims to cultivate a competitive edge among students and contribute to the global development of the Baratham Cultural Club, enriching both personal growth and the club's international presence.



OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

- i. To assess the participation of students in volunteerism and its role in cultivating leadership qualities and community engagement over recent years.
- ii. To evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer programs in fostering compassion, social responsibility, and leadership skills among students.
- iii. To investigate the transformative impact of volunteer initiatives on students' personal growth, leadership development, and their ability to drive positive change within communities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustaining Volunteerism and Engagement

The club's various initiatives, such as the Malaysia Book of Records Fundraising Events, Multicultural Nights, Autism Awareness Campaign, and Down Syndrome Awareness Campaign, foster a strong sense of purpose among volunteers. These activities highlight how student volunteers can gain leadership skills, engage in community building, and positively influence societal issues through their involvement. Programs like mentorship initiatives and Natyamela 6.0&7.0 not only provide avenues for skill development but also create platforms for long-term personal growth and social contribution. Additionally, activities such as the Global Mobility Connect Voyages Program demonstrate how volunteerism expands beyond local borders, promoting international cooperation and cultural exchange.

The club's efforts emphasize the importance of volunteerism in developing compassion, leadership, and community engagement, resulting in volunteers' improved mental well-being, communication skills, and a sense of purpose. This leads to sustainable personal and social development, fostering a generation of socially responsible leaders.

SDG Goals Involved

Several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integral to the work of the Baratham Cultural Club:

- i. SDG 3 : Well-being and Good Health

The club fosters healthier communities by supporting mental and physical well-being

through its health awareness campaigns and autism awareness initiatives.

- ii. SDG 4 : Quality Education

Initiatives like Uyarvom Uyarthuvom, which aims to inspire Tamil schoolchildren, support the objective of guaranteeing inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education. The mentorship programs also help by providing direction and scholastic support.

- iii. SDG 10: Lessening of Inequalities

By encouraging inclusivity and equitable opportunities for individuals with disabilities, the campaigns to raise awareness of autism and support people with Down syndrome directly contribute to the reduction of inequality.

- iv. SDG 13: Climate Action

The Lahara Turtle Conservation Campaign and environmental awareness activities are in line with SDG 13, which focuses on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- v. SDG 14: Life Below Water

The Lahara Turtle Conservation Campaign perfectly aligns with SDG 14: Life Below Water, which emphasizes the need to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources. By organizing a record-breaking campaign that involved 10,000 handprints and donating to SEATRU, the Baratham Cultural Club actively contributes to raising awareness about the protection of endangered species, such as sea turtles, and promotes marine conservation. The knowledge-sharing sessions during the closing ceremony further reinforce educational outreach and long-term sustainability efforts aimed at preserving marine biodiversity. Additionally, the Natyamela 7.0 event was designed to raise funds and awareness, with its final category specifically themed around SDG 14: Life Below Water. Students performed creative and cultural presentations inspired by marine life and conservation efforts, emphasizing the importance of preserving aquatic ecosystems. This initiative showcased the power of the arts in promoting environmental consciousness and further supported the club's commitment to protecting life below water. Through this thematic focus, the event not only entertained but also educated participants and the audience

- about the crucial need for marine preservation.
- vi. **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**

By collaborating with other universities, organizations, and the international community, such as in the Global Mobility Connect Voyages, the club reinforces the importance of partnerships to achieve the SDGs.

These activities collectively illustrate the transformative power of volunteerism in achieving sustainable development, making a meaningful impact on individuals and the broader community.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the effectiveness of KKB's initiatives. The quantitative component includes data collected on participation rates, the number of events held, and the financial outcomes of fundraising activities. The qualitative component involves surveys with participants, including students, faculty, and community members, to gather insights into their experiences and perceptions of the programs.

Data collection was conducted over one academic year, from October 2023 to July 2024. The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and correlations, while the qualitative data were thematically analyzed to uncover underlying themes related to leadership development, community engagement, and personal growth.

Triangulation of Data

To enhance the reliability and validity of the study, triangulation was applied in both quantitative and qualitative components:

Quantitative Triangulation

- Data were gathered from multiple sources, including club records, student participation databases, and financial reports.
- Survey responses were compared with historical club data from previous leadership terms (2022/2023 and 2023/2024) to validate trends in participation and selection processes.
- The consistency of statistical findings was cross-verified using different analytical techniques, such as percentage distributions and correlation analysis, to ensure accuracy in

identifying patterns.

Qualitative Triangulation

- Insights from surveys were cross-checked with focus group discussions conducted with students, club coordinators, and community participants to verify recurring themes.
- Qualitative findings were validated against document analysis, including meeting minutes, event reports, and feedback collected from previous program participants.
- Thematic findings from interviews were compared with observational data from club activities and leadership development sessions to ensure consistency in perspectives.

Survey Implementation and Population

This study employs quantitative methods through the distribution of survey forms to assess students' willingness to engage in volunteer activities and their perceptions of the initiatives organized by the Baratham Cultural Club (KKB) at the University of Malaysia Terengganu.

The population for this study consists of students involved in KKB's volunteer programs on the UMT campus. The total population is 346 students, and a sample size of 143 respondents was selected for this study. Responses were measured using a Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The collected data were analyzed using percentage distributions.

Participation of students in Baratham Cultural Club (KKB)

According to the data collected from previous-term club leaders, in the term 2022/2023, a total of 78 students registered for exco selection interviews, and 49 of them were selected. Meanwhile, in the term 2023/2024, a total of 94 students came for the interview and 39 of them were selected. Every one of the applicants was evaluated based on their experience and critical thinking on how to solve problems faced by them.

Background of Respondents

The respondents consisted of 143 students currently studying at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. The breakdown of survey participants is as follows:

- Year 1: 48 students (33.6%)

- Year 2: 66 students (46.2%)
- Year 3: 23 students (16.1%)
- Year 4: 3 students (2.1%)
- Asasi: 1 student (0.7%)
- Diploma: 2 students (1.4%)

The highest participation was from Year 2 students (46.2%). The inclusion of multiple academic levels ensures a diverse range of perspectives in the study.

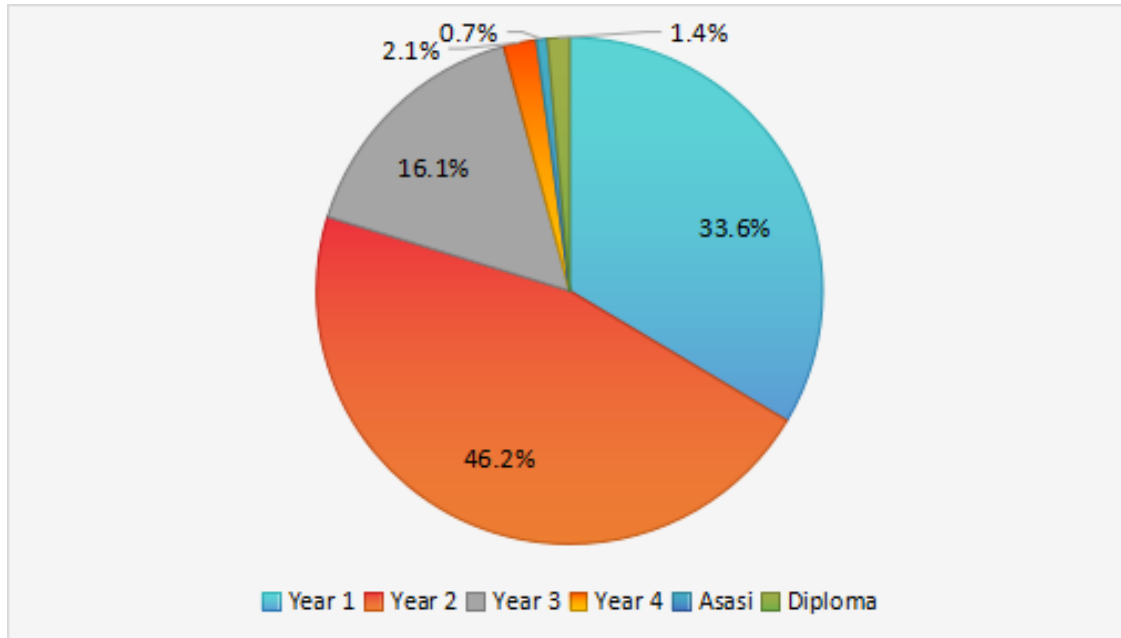


FIGURE 1. The percentage of respondents according to their enrollment in UMT

Quantitative Data of Respondents

The survey was conducted among UMT students, where they were required to fill in a Google Form. The survey was divided into 4 sections, General Volunteer Experience, Leadership Development, Community

Engagement, and Future Involvement. A score was given for each question, which starts from '1' (Strongly Disagree) to '5' (Strongly Agree). Each of the respondents was required to answer all the questions given in the survey, where each section has 3 questions.

Empowering Communities Through Volunteerism: Leadership, Compassion, and Change

Hi! Please help me fill in this evaluation survey regarding the performance and impact of Kelab Kebudayaan Baratham Term 2023/2024 on Universiti Malaysia Terengganu students. Thank You!!

s63149@ocean.umat.edu.my [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Enrollment in UMT (Term 2023/2024) *

☐ Year 1

☐ Year 2

☐ Year 3

☐ Year 4

☐ Asasi

FIGURE 2. Google Form used to collect data on the survey

General Volunteer Experience

In this section of the survey, the majority of the respondents chose 'Strongly Agree' for all three questions. For Question 1, 102 (71.3%) respondents strongly agreed that they were highly motivated to participate in the volunteer activities organized

by KKB. Next, for Question 2 and Question 3, 104 (72.7%) respondents fully agreed that these activities conducted by KKB were memorable and impactful and thus they agreed that their involvement in these initiatives has positively impacted their personal and professional development respectively.

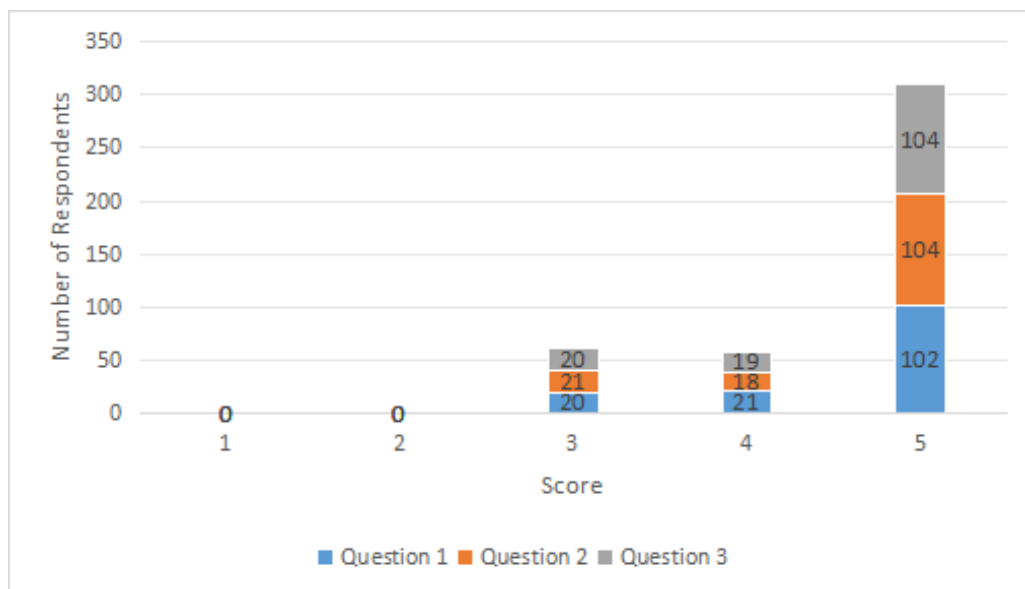


FIGURE 3: Respondents' responses on the General Volunteer Experiences section of the survey

Leadership Development

In the second section of the survey questions, it was on leadership development. Most respondents selected the option "Strongly Agree" for all three questions. For Question 1, the 103 (72%) respondents strongly agreed that the volunteer activities helped me develop

my leadership skills. Meanwhile, for Questions 2 and 3, a total of 100 (69.9%) respondents strongly agreed that they often had opportunities to take on leadership roles during these initiatives and their perception of leadership has evolved positively since they began participating in these volunteer programs respectively.

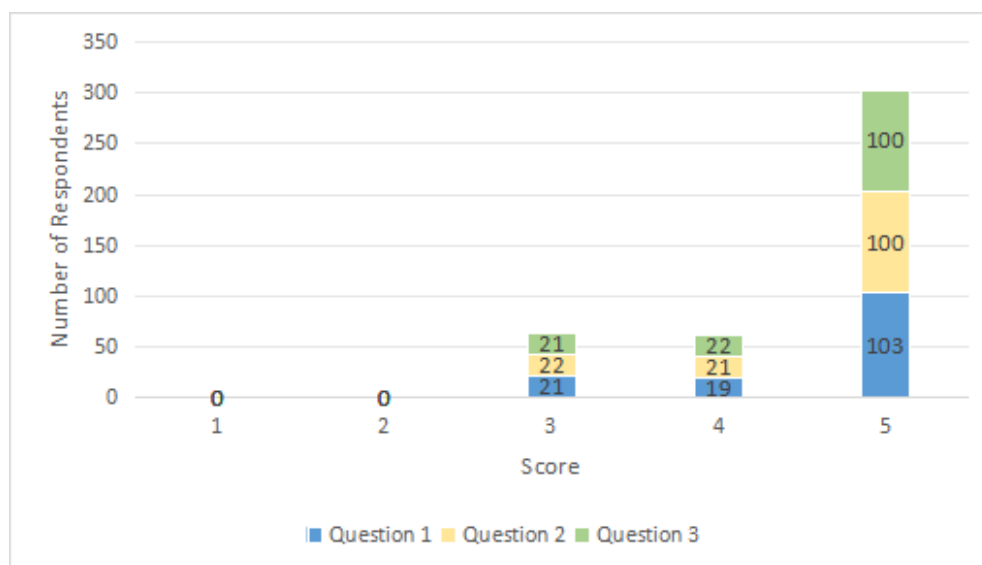


FIGURE 4. Respondents' responses on the Leadership Development section of the survey

Community Engagement

In this section on Community Engagement, most of the respondents 'strongly agree' to all three questions listed in the survey. In Questions 1 and 2, 102 (71.3%) respondents strongly agreed that they felt a strong sense

of community or connection with others during these activities and that they feel more confident in their abilities and skills as a result of their involvement in these initiatives. Meanwhile, for Question 3, a total of 100 (69.9%) respondents fully agreed that volunteering has enhanced their sense of purpose or direction in life.

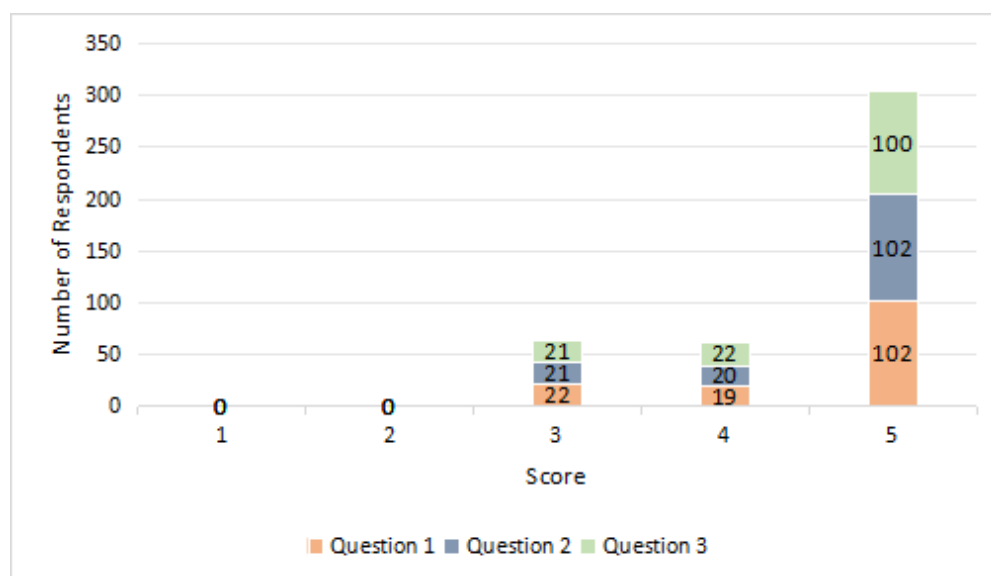


Figure 5. Respondents' responses on the Community Engagement section of the survey

Future Involvement

In the last section of the survey where future involvement of students in KKB programs was focused. In Question 1, a total of 99 (69.2%) respondents strongly agreed that they will continue their involvement in volunteerism after their current experience with KKB. In Question

2, 102 (71.3%) respondents agreed that they would like to see the club undertake additional activities or initiatives in the future. Finally, in Question 3, 103 (72%) respondents stated that they strongly agree that they will gladly recommend participating in these initiatives to others.

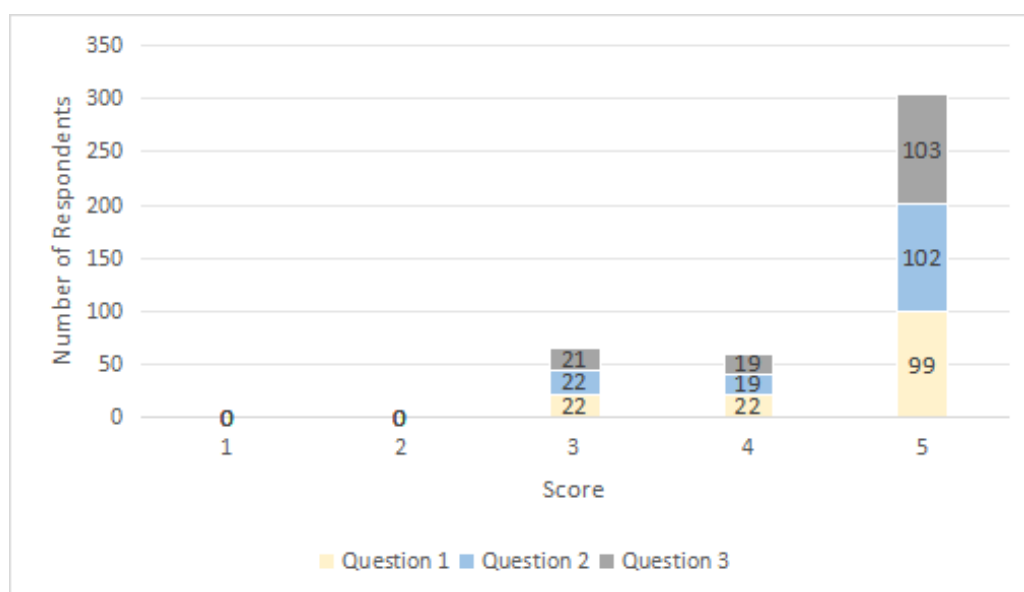


FIGURE 6. Respondents' responses on the Future Involvement section of the survey

Qualitative Data of Respondents

The qualitative data gathered from respondents provided deeper insights into their motivations, challenges, and experiences with KKB initiatives. Key themes that emerged from the qualitative responses include:

- **Leadership Development:** Many respondents expressed that participation in KKB helped them build confidence, enhance problem-solving skills, and develop leadership qualities through event planning and community engagement.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Students highlighted that KKB provided a platform for understanding and appreciating different cultural traditions, which contributed to a sense of inclusivity and respect for diversity.
- **Challenges Faced:** Respondents mentioned time management as a major challenge, balancing academic responsibilities with volunteer commitments. Some also noted a need for better coordination and communication within the club.
- **Personal Growth:** Several students shared how their involvement in KKB improved their interpersonal skills, networking abilities, and adaptability, preparing them for future leadership roles.
- **Community Impact:** Many participants reflected on the positive impact of KKB programs, particularly in fostering stronger connections between students and the local community through cultural events and volunteer work.

TABLE 2. Summary of Qualitative Analysis

Survey Section	Strongly Agree (%)	Summary of Qualitative Findings
General Volunteer Experience	71.3 - 72.7%	Respondents expressed high motivation and appreciation for KKB volunteer activities, citing personal growth and professional development.
Leadership Development	69.9 - 72%	Many students found that KKB activities enhanced their leadership skills and provided valuable opportunities for personal development.
Community Engagement	69.9 - 71.3%	Strong sense of belonging and confidence gained through engagement in KKB programs.
Future Involvement	69.2 - 72%	Most students were eager to continue volunteering and recommended KKB programs to others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact of KKB's initiatives on leadership development, community engagement, and personal growth among participants. Quantitative data indicate a steady increase in participation rates over consecutive years, suggesting heightened interest and sustained engagement in volunteer programs. This trend reflects the effectiveness of structured activities and targeted outreach efforts in attracting a diverse range of students.

Qualitative insights further support these

findings by offering a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. Many respondents reported increased confidence, improved communication skills, and enhanced leadership abilities as a result of their involvement in KKB activities. Thematic analysis of survey responses identified leadership development as a recurring benefit, with participants frequently citing opportunities to take on responsibilities, make decisions, and manage event logistics as valuable experiences that contributed to their professional growth.

Additionally, the role of cultural awareness

and inclusivity in volunteerism emerged as a key theme. Events such as Multi-Cultural Nights were highlighted as instrumental in fostering intercultural understanding and strengthening social cohesion. Respondents emphasized that these activities not only promoted mutual respect among diverse student groups but also provided a platform for meaningful dialogue on cultural heritage and traditions.

Despite these positive outcomes, certain challenges were identified. Time management was frequently cited as a difficulty, with students struggling to balance academic responsibilities and volunteer commitments. Some respondents also pointed to the need for improved coordination and communication within the organization to enhance overall efficiency. Addressing these challenges could further improve the volunteer experience and increase long term engagement.

Notably, KKB's environmental initiatives,

such as the Malaysia Book of Records-recognized turtle conservation campaign, demonstrated the club's commitment to broader social causes. The campaign, which involved the participation of over 10,000 individuals, successfully raised awareness about marine conservation and engaged students in hands-on environmental stewardship. Participants expressed pride in contributing to this large-scale initiative, reinforcing the notion that meaningful engagement in volunteerism extends beyond personal development to encompass wider societal benefits.

Overall, the findings indicate that KKB's initiatives have successfully fostered leadership skills, cultural awareness, and a sense of community among participants. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data underscores the effectiveness of these programs while also identifying areas for improvement, ensuring continued growth and impact in future volunteer activities.

TABLE 3. Summary of Volunteerism Outcomes

Outcome	Evidence	Impact
Leadership Development	Increased confidence, event management skills	Empowered future leaders
Community Engagement	Higher participation rates, diverse involvement	Strengthened community ties
Skill Acquisition	Financial management, public speaking	Enhanced employability

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Baratham Cultural Club's initiatives have proven to be highly effective in advancing volunteerism, leadership, and community engagement. By creating diverse opportunities for students to develop skills and interact with various groups, KKB has significantly contributed to both the personal growth of its members and the broader goal of societal improvement. The successful outcomes, including increased participation rates, enhanced personal development, and notable achievements such as the Malaysia Book of Records for turtle conservation, underscore the program's impact.

The support from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and the dedicated involvement of university staff have been crucial to the success of these initiatives. Their guidance, resources, and logistical support enabled the smooth execution of programs and reinforced the club's ability to deliver impactful experiences. The collaborative efforts between the university, staff, and KKB have been instrumental in fostering an environment that encourages volunteerism and cultural exchange.

The findings highlight the importance of continued investment in these programs to sustain the culture of volunteerism and ensure its benefits are widely experienced. It is essential to maintain and build upon the existing support from universities and staff to further enhance the effectiveness and reach of these initiatives. Future research could explore the long-term effects of these programs on participants' career trajectories and their contributions to society. This would provide deeper insights into the sustained impact of the Baratham Cultural Club's efforts and help guide future strategies for fostering volunteerism and community engagement.

Volunteerism is a powerful catalyst for community empowerment, driven by the principles of leadership, compassion, and change. Leaders within volunteer organizations and initiatives provide direction and inspiration, while compassionate actions foster understanding and connection among community members. Ultimately, these combined efforts lead to meaningful and sustainable change, enhancing the quality of life and fostering a stronger, more resilient community.

By harnessing the collective energy and

commitment of volunteers, communities can address immediate needs, drive systemic change, and build a foundation for a better future. Through active participation in volunteerism, individuals not only contribute to their communities but also grow as leaders and compassionate citizens, reinforcing the cycle of positive change.

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APPENDIX

Survey Google form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScUjWNuFa_ybt7HqES3geDAwT5bpUr9kLIRjLizRLCwlTp8NQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

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