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# **What Factors Motivate People to Volunteer In their Communities?**

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## **RESEARCH REPORT**



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**RESEARCH TECHNIQUE AND TOOLS**

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# What Factors Motivate People to Volunteer In their Communities?

## 1. Executive summary

This report explores the many factors that motivate people to volunteer in their communities. By analyzing quantitative data, the study aims to identify the underlying motivations that drive people to donate their time and skills for the benefit of others. The differences between why people choose to volunteer and the internal and external factors that influence their decisions. The study used surveys and interviews with community volunteers to gather information about their motivations.

The study analyzed factors such as selfworth, social impact, and perceived benefits of volunteering. It may not be fully representative of the population. It may also lead to selfreporting bias as it does not reflect the true motivations of the participants. A sense of accomplishment and a desire to contribute to society. Social relationships, including friendships and family influences, also play an important role in the decision to volunteer. Participants also reported that recognition and professional development were important motivators. Although the desire to help others and personal fulfillment were the main drivers, social influence and external rewards also encouraged individual volunteering, personal fulfillment, and interpersonal relationships. Additionally, providing opportunities for recognition and skill development may increase volunteer participation.

## 2. Introduction

Volunteering is one aspect that contributes to making better communities and solving problems at the societal level. These individuals provide some of their time, skills, or resources without pay. There are various reasons why these persons volunteer, such as selflessness, personal development, or social obligation. The need to understand what motivates volunteers to volunteer is very essential to community organizations looking to increase participation and engagement. Earlier studies have revealed that the reasons may range from intrinsic to extrinsic factors, including personal satisfaction, recognition, and career development. However, this complexity necessitates further study in developing targeted strategies to encourage volunteerism.

### Research Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Identify and analyze the key factors that motivate individuals to volunteer in their communities.
2. Distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and evaluate the relative importance of each. Additionally, the research seeks to examine how these motivations vary across different demographic groups and community contexts.

### Research Questions

Based on:

**(Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)**

1. What are the principal intrinsic factors that drive volunteers in their communities?
2. What are the extrinsic factors that influence people to volunteer?
3. What role does social relationship and community influence play in volunteerism?
4. Do people have different motivations to volunteer, based on age, gender, and socio-economic status?

Asked as:

- Age (Under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and above)

- Gender (Male, Female, Non-binary, Prefer not to say)
- Employment status (Employed full-time, Employed part-time, Self-employed, Unemployed, Student, Retired)
- Education (High school or less, Some college, Associate degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctorate)
- What type of volunteer work do you prefer? (Select all that apply) (Environmental, Social Services, Health, Education, Animal Welfare, Others)
- Volunteering experience (years) (Less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, More than 5 years)
- I volunteer because I want to help others.
- I believe volunteering makes a positive impact on society.
- Volunteering helps me build social networks.
- Volunteering provides me with opportunities to learn new skills.
- I volunteer to enhance my career prospects.
- Volunteering gives me a sense of belonging.
- Receiving awards or appreciation motivates me to volunteer.
- I volunteer to meet new people.

Based on the results, the report will present actionable recommendations for community organizations and policymakers to encourage more volunteering. To enhance volunteer participation, community organizations should tailor their recruitment strategies based on the identified motivations, such as offering opportunities for personal growth, recognition, and social connections. Additionally, outreach efforts should target specific demographic groups to address diverse motivations. Future studies can explore the long-term impacts of volunteerism on both individuals and communities, while also assessing the effectiveness of various volunteer programs in sustaining engagement over time.

## Variables

### Independent Variables (Cause):

**1. Personal Values:** People's motives or incentives such as obligations, sense of responsibility towards others or desire to differ.

**2. Social Influence:** Coercive or prescriptive influence on volunteering through peers, friends, relatives, or close neighbors.

**3. Community Engagement:** A chance to interact and participate in local community work.

**4. Recognition and Rewards:** One's wish for recognition or rewards upon volunteer work.

**5. Skills Development:** The wish to acquire new skills or even enhance them through volunteering work.

**6. Time Availability:** Time available to devote to the volunteer activity.

### Dependent Variable (Effect):

**Volunteering Participation:** The participation in volunteer work within the community, measured as frequency, duration, or a number of participants.

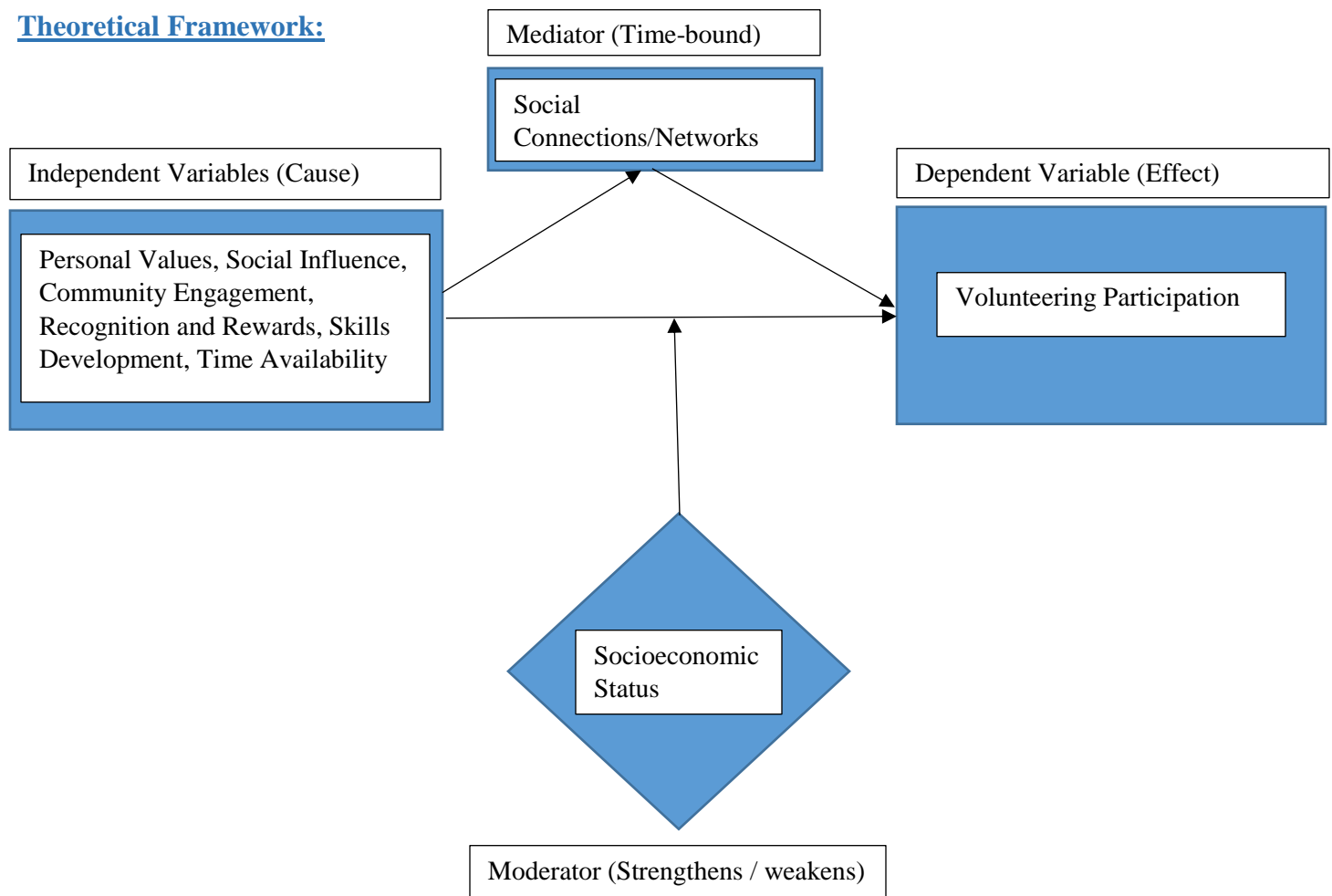
### Moderator:

**Socioeconomic Status:** Economic stability or job status might influence the time one can spare and the type of volunteer work a person is willing to participate in.

### Mediator:

**Social Connections/Networks:** Social connections that volunteerism can provide may mediate the relationship between motivations (for example, community engagement) and the outcome (volunteer participation), as people may be more likely to volunteer if they see it as a way to build relationships or expand their social networks.

### Theoretical Framework:



## 3. Literature Review

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is among the most central theories utilized in the study of volunteer behavior. According to the theory, human behaviors are influenced by three considerations: Attitude toward the behavior (the positive or negative evaluation of volunteering), Subjective norm (the social pressure perceived from the family, friends, and the

society), Perceived behavioral control (the degree with which one perceives ease or difficulty in performing volunteer work). These three factors coupled with intent predict whether a person will actually engage in volunteer activities. Another important theory is the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which presumes that individuals engage in volunteering activities when they consider the benefits they receive weigh against the costs: those are time, effort, and resources. This theory emphasizes the reciprocal nature of volunteering whereby individuals expect to gain something of value in return for the time and effort they volunteer.

Research has repeatedly demonstrated that intrinsic motivations-including personal gratification and the desire to assist others-and extrinsic motivations-social ties or professional growth-are important for volunteering behavior. Clary et al. (1998) have identified six motivational functions of volunteering: values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. This model states that there are motivations for volunteering: the personal value, which might be, for instance, helping others, and external rewards, such as networking. Volunteer work is at the center of community development, whereby individuals provide their time and resources in supporting various causes. Motivation behind this altruistic behavior is something organizations would like to know about, to engage volunteers and keep them on board. The Volunteer Functions Inventory developed by Clary et al. in 1998, includes six major motivations that include values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement.

Further studies have indicated that social influence and community engagement can significantly enhance volunteer participation. For instance, Esmond and Dunlop (2004) argue that people are more likely to volunteer when they perceive their community as supportive and engaged. Similarly, research by Wilson (2000) found that individuals with strong social networks are more likely to engage in volunteering activities due to the influence of their peers.

## Hypothesis

1. **H1:** There is a positive relationship between motivation and volunteering behavior.
2. **H2:** Social influence (e.g., peer pressure, community engagement) positively influences the likelihood of volunteering.
3. **H3:** Social networks mediate the relationship between motivation and volunteering behavior.
4. **H4:** Socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between social influence and volunteering behavior, with individuals being more influenced by social networks.

## 4. Research Design

### 1. Research Strategies:

The research applies a descriptive research design and Survey Research strategy, which is suitable for collecting information from a large sample size to understand the factors motivating people to volunteer in their communities. Surveys are effective in collecting self-reported data on attitudes, behaviors, and experiences, and they allow the researcher to explore the relationship between different variables (e.g., motivation, social influence, volunteering behavior).

### 2. Extent of Researcher Interference:

The researcher interference is limited. The study focuses on events as they occur naturally, meaning the researcher does not manipulate or control the variables. Participants are required to answer the survey questions based on their real life experiences volunteering, and there is no experimental manipulation involved. This ensures that data reflects true behaviors and motivations of people without external interference.

### 3. Study Setting:

The study is noncontrived. Participants are volunteers coming from different communities, and their responses portray what they experience and attitudes of volunteering in the natural setup. The study is, therefore, not an artificial or laboratory condition study that may not be similar to real-world volunteering behavior.

#### **4. Unit of Analysis:**

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual. For each participant, responses will be analyzed to understand factors that motivate him or her to volunteer. The research will assess how different variables, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, social influence, and social networks, impact individual decisions to engage in volunteer activities.

#### **5. Time Horizon:**

The study has a cross-sectional time horizon, meaning that data is collected at a single point in time. This approach allows the researcher to explore the current motivations and behaviors of individuals who volunteer in their communities. It does not involve tracking changes over time or across different periods, as the study aims to understand the immediate factors influencing volunteering behavior.

### **5. Methodology**

#### **Data Collection:**

The data collection for this study was conducted through Google Forms. The online questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who are volunteers or are interested in volunteering. It contained both closed-ended (multiple choice, Likert scale) and open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative data on motivations, social influences, and personal experiences with volunteering.

**•Sampling Method:** A convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from individuals who are willing to participate in the study. This sampling method was selected due to time constraints and the accessibility of participants from various demographic groups.

**•Sample Size:** 121 participants were surveyed to ensure a diverse range of responses and to strengthen the validity of the results.

#### **•Questionnaire Sections:**

1. Demographic information (age, gender, education level, etc.)
2. Motivations for Volunteering
3. Community Engagement and Social Influence
4. Volunteering Behavior

#### **Tools:**

**1. Google Form:** It is used in the development of the form and sending it to capture responses from participants. In this, a friendly graphical user interface is provided through which the tool can send the form to a multitude of people.

**2. Statistical Software:** Exported data from Google form will be taken to analysis in statistical software like SPSS or Excel.

**3. Survey Link Distribution:** The survey link was distributed through social media, emails, and direct contacts to reach a large audience, thereby ensuring diversified participation.

#### **Data Analysis Techniques:**

**1. Descriptive Statistics:** First, descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation, frequency distribution) is used to summarize the basic features of the data. This will help identify trends and patterns in volunteering behavior, motivations, and demographic characteristics.

**2. Correlation Analysis:** Correlation analysis is used to analyze the strength and direction of relationships between different variables (for example, motivation and volunteering behavior). This will help understand how closely factors like motivation and social influence are related to volunteering behavior and help determine if there is a significant positive or negative relationship between these variables.

**3. Regression Analysis:** Regression models is used to find out the predictive power of independent variables such as motivation, social influence, etc. on the dependent variable, volunteering behavior. This analysis will help in answering the research questions related to the factors that affect volunteering.

**4. Analysis for mediating and moderating functions:** To verify any mediation hypotheses involving mediators - social networks- and also the moderation hypothesis of mediator, moderation analysis is run using appropriate statistical technique employing PROCESS macro of SPSS. The indirect effect via social networks was used by Sobel test in an attempt to assess its validity.

**5. Multiple Regression Analysis:** The hypothesized relationships (H1 to H4) were tested by conducting a multiple regression analysis to evaluate the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as social influence, on the likelihood of volunteering behavior. This technique allows the determination of the strength of contribution of each factor to the outcome variable.

**6. Reliability & Validity Testing:** Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. The value above 0.7 was regarded as appropriate to ensure that the measurement items were reliable.

### **Ethical Issues:**

**1. Confidentiality:** The participants' responses will be kept anonymous, and personal details will be confidential to safeguard the privacy of the respondents.

**2. Voluntariness:** The survey participation is entirely voluntary, and the participant can opt out at any time without any repercussions.

## **Limitation of Methodology**

**1. Convenience Sampling:** Such an approach is quick, though it may bring several forms of bias and could further limit the generalizability of the findings. To the larger population.

**2. Self-report Data:** The data depend largely on the self reports by participants, which then are prone to social desirability bias where, based on what the person finds socially acceptable, might tend to give answers more or less honest reflections about behaviors.

**3. Online Survey Limitations:** Given that the survey was administered online, individuals without internet access or familiarity with digital tools were excluded from the study, potentially limiting diversity.

This study employed a survey research approach with minimal interference from the researcher, using a non-contrived setting to explore individual motivations for volunteering. Data collection was conducted through Google Forms, and the analysis techniques that will be used include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression to explore the relationships between variables. The study is cross-sectional in nature and focuses on individual units of analysis, providing valuable insights into the factors influencing volunteering behavior.

## **Results**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Factors	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
I volunteer because I want to help others.	3.793388	4.0	5.0	1.460122



I believe volunteering makes a positive impact on society.	3.950413	5.0	5	1.430916
Volunteering helps me build social networks.	3.808333	4.0	5.0	1.379903
Volunteering provides me with opportunities to learn new skills.	3.884298	4.0	5	1.330351
I volunteer to enhance my career prospects.	3.570248	4.0	5	1.377355
Volunteering gives me a sense of belonging.	3.616667	4.0	5.0	1.397376
Receiving awards or appreciation motivates me to volunteer.	3.438017	4.0	5.0	1.431157
I volunteer to meet new people	3.283333	3.0	5.0	1.421228

#### 1. I volunteer because I want to help others

This indicates that on average, respondents moderately agree with the statement that they volunteer to help others. The most common response is "strongly agree" (5), with a fairly wide spread in the responses (as indicated by the standard deviation of 1.46).

#### 2. I believe volunteering makes a positive impact on society

Respondents generally believe that volunteering has a positive societal impact. With a mean close to 4 and the mode at 5, it reflects strong agreement, though the relatively high standard deviation (1.43) suggests some variation in the responses.

#### 3. Volunteering helps me build social networks

This statement shows that volunteers often perceive social network building as a significant benefit of volunteering. The mode is 5, suggesting most respondents strongly agree, although the standard deviation indicates variability in the extent to which this is true for everyone.

#### 4. Volunteering provides me with opportunities to learn new skills

Most respondents agree that volunteering provides opportunities for learning new skills, with the mode at 5. The standard deviation shows moderate variability, indicating that some respondents may feel differently about this opportunity.

#### 5. I volunteer to enhance my career prospects

While respondents generally agree that volunteering enhances career prospects, the mean being closer to 3.5 (moderately agree) indicates that career prospects may not be the primary reason for most people to volunteer. However, the high mode of 5 indicates that many respondents strongly associate volunteering with career enhancement.

#### 6. Volunteering gives me a sense of belonging

Many respondents feel that volunteering provides a sense of belonging, with the mode and median both reflecting strong agreement. The relatively high standard deviation indicates that the sense of belonging is perceived differently by various individuals.

#### 7. Receiving awards or appreciation motivates me to volunteer

While awards and appreciation are motivating for some, the mean score indicates that it is not the primary driver for most respondents. The mode of 5 suggests that for some individuals, recognition is a significant motivator.

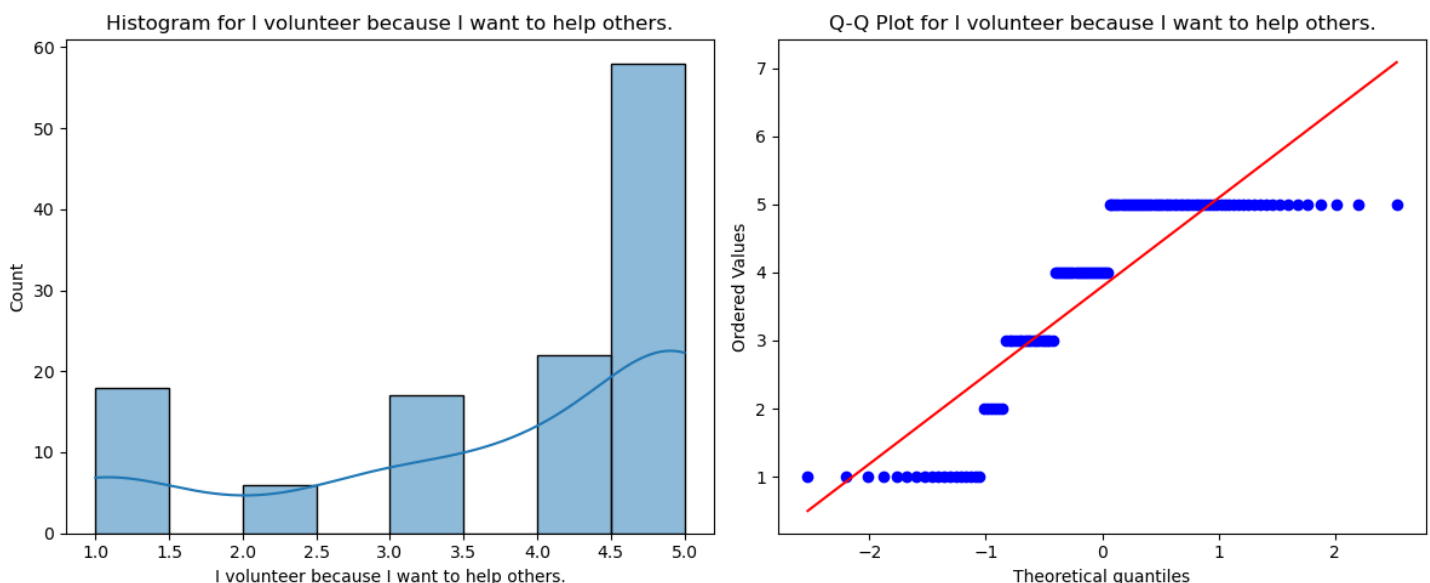
#### 8. I volunteer to meet new people

This statement received the lowest mean score, suggesting that meeting new people is a less significant motivation for most respondents compared to other factors like helping others or learning new skills. However, the mode of 5 shows that for some, meeting new people is a key reason for volunteering, although there is considerable variability in this motivation (as shown by the standard deviation of 1.42).

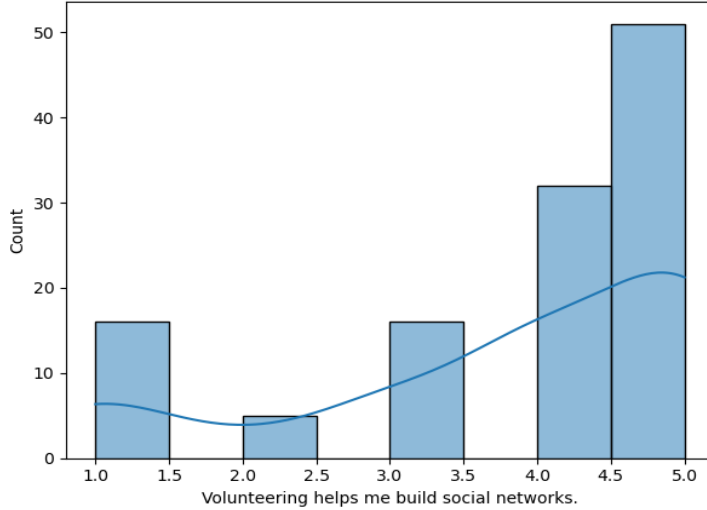
Overall, the respondents are most motivated by the desire to help others, the belief that volunteering makes a positive societal impact, and the opportunity to learn new skills. Career-related motivations, while present, are less prominent. There is also variability in how respondents perceive the role of awards, social networks, and meeting new people as motivators.

The **standard deviations** across the factors indicate that while there is general agreement on most statements, there is notable variation in responses, highlighting diverse views and experiences within the sample. The **modes** suggest that certain motivations (such as helping others or receiving appreciation) are particularly strong for some volunteers.

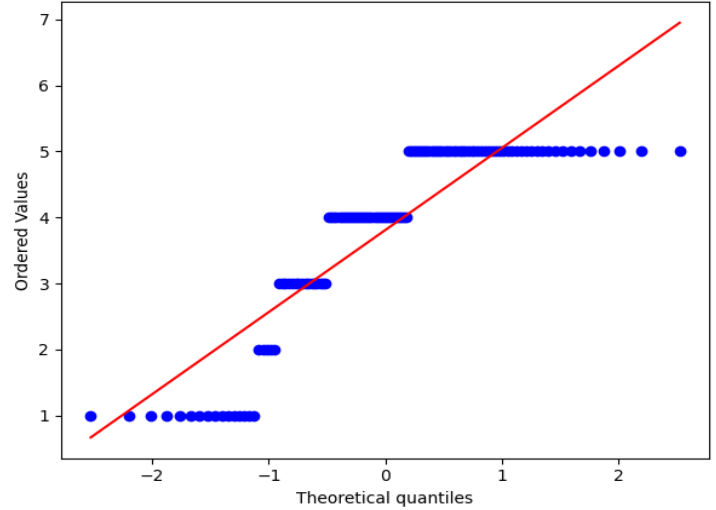
### Normality & Outliers:



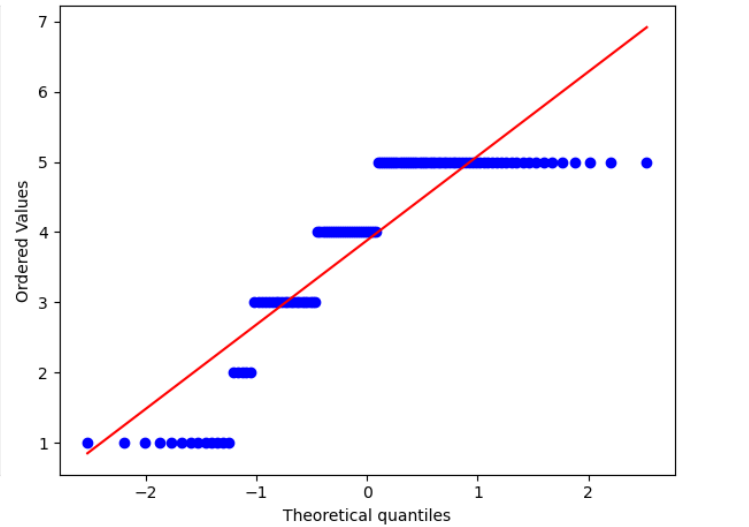
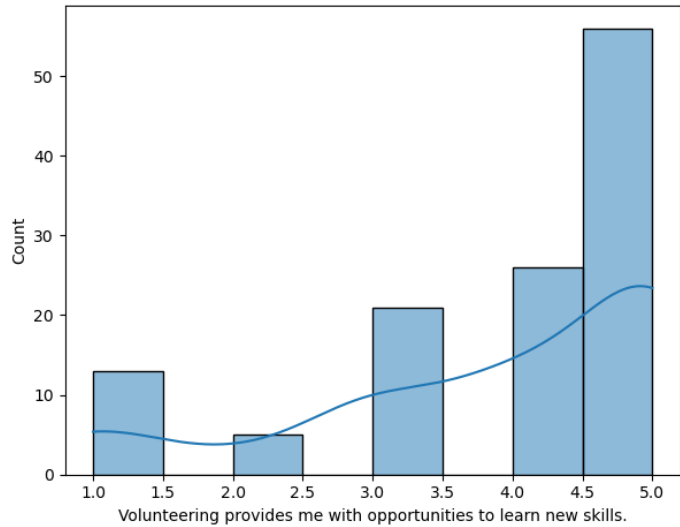
Histogram for Volunteering helps me build social networks.



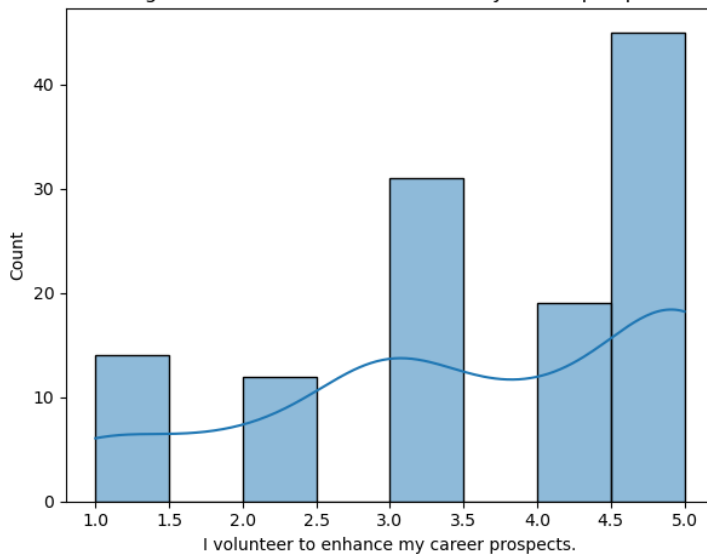
Q-Q Plot for Volunteering helps me build social networks.



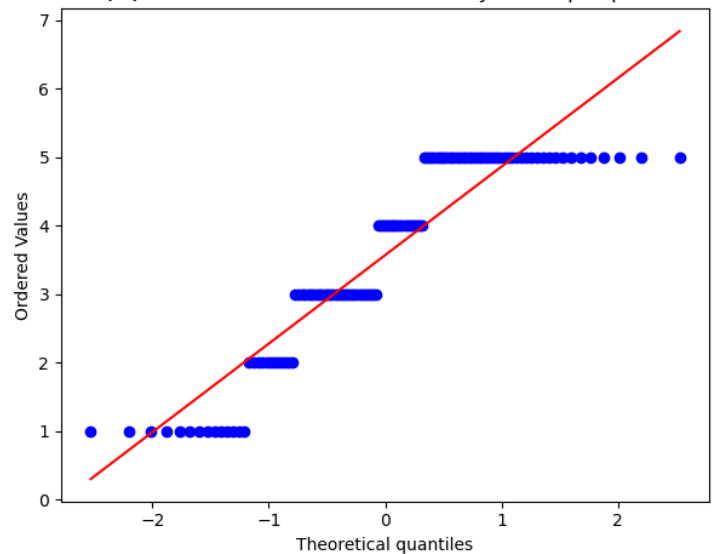
Histogram for Volunteering provides me with opportunities to learn new skills.



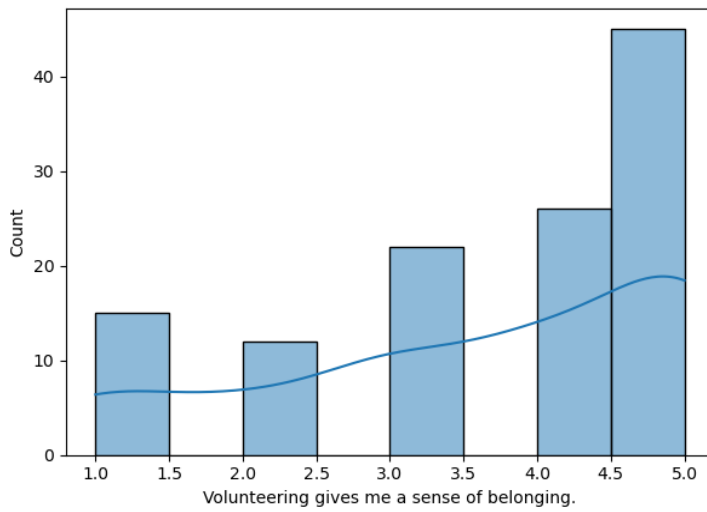
Histogram for I volunteer to enhance my career prospects.



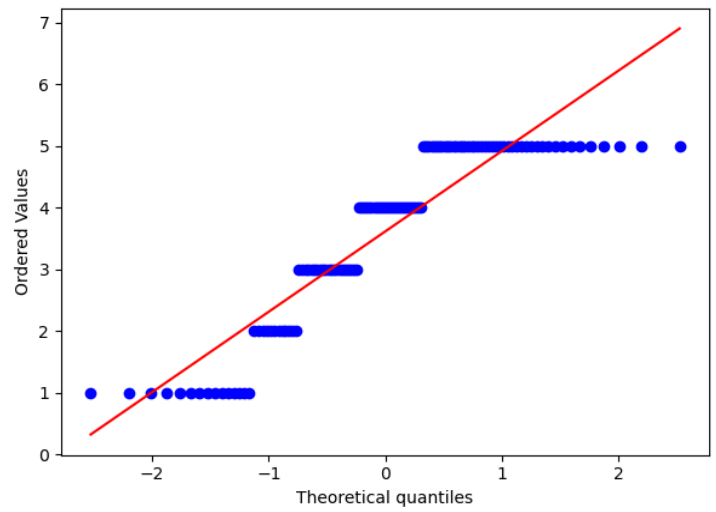
Q-Q Plot for I volunteer to enhance my career prospects.



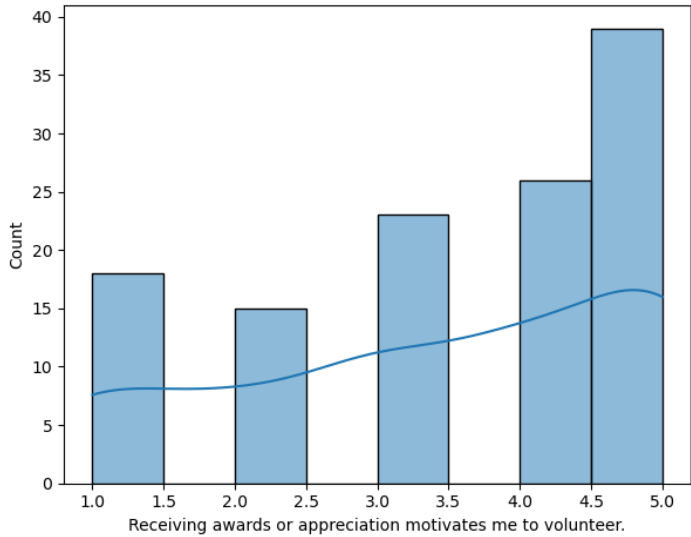
Histogram for Volunteering gives me a sense of belonging.



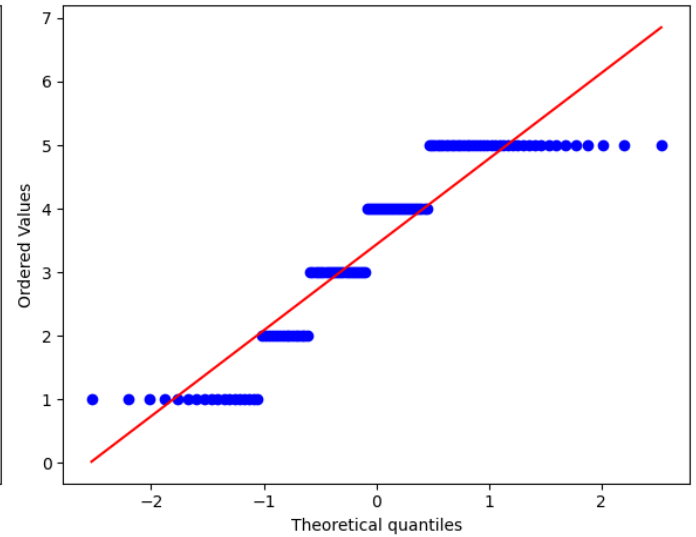
Q-Q Plot for Volunteering gives me a sense of belonging.



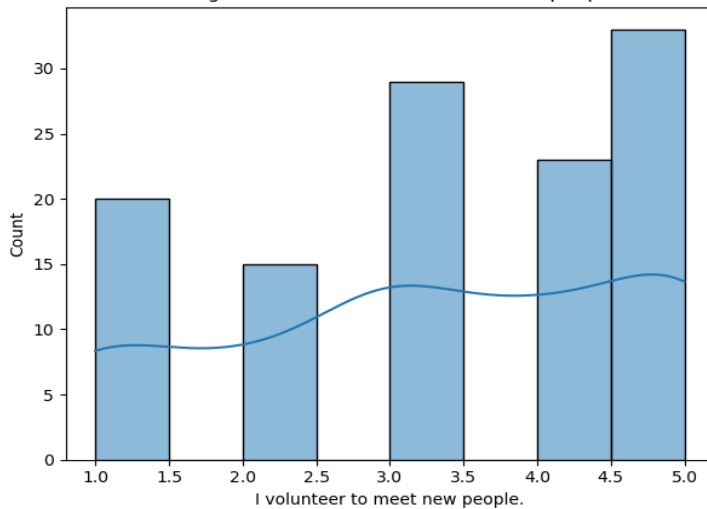
Histogram for Receiving awards or appreciation motivates me to volunteer.



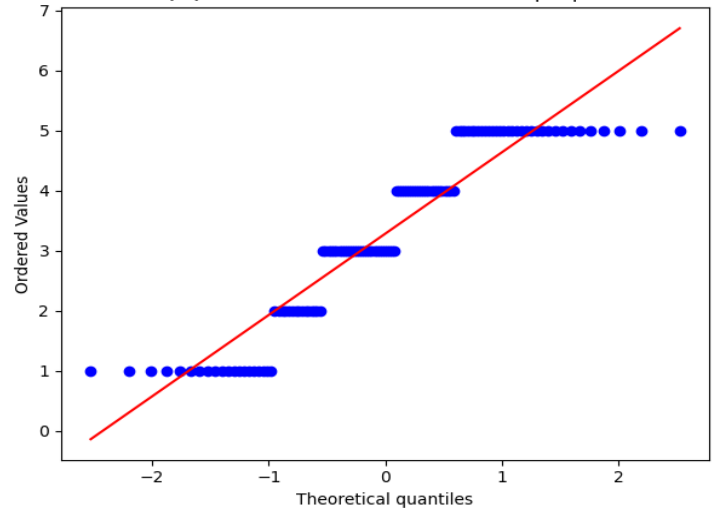
Q-Q Plot for Receiving awards or appreciation motivates me to volunteer.

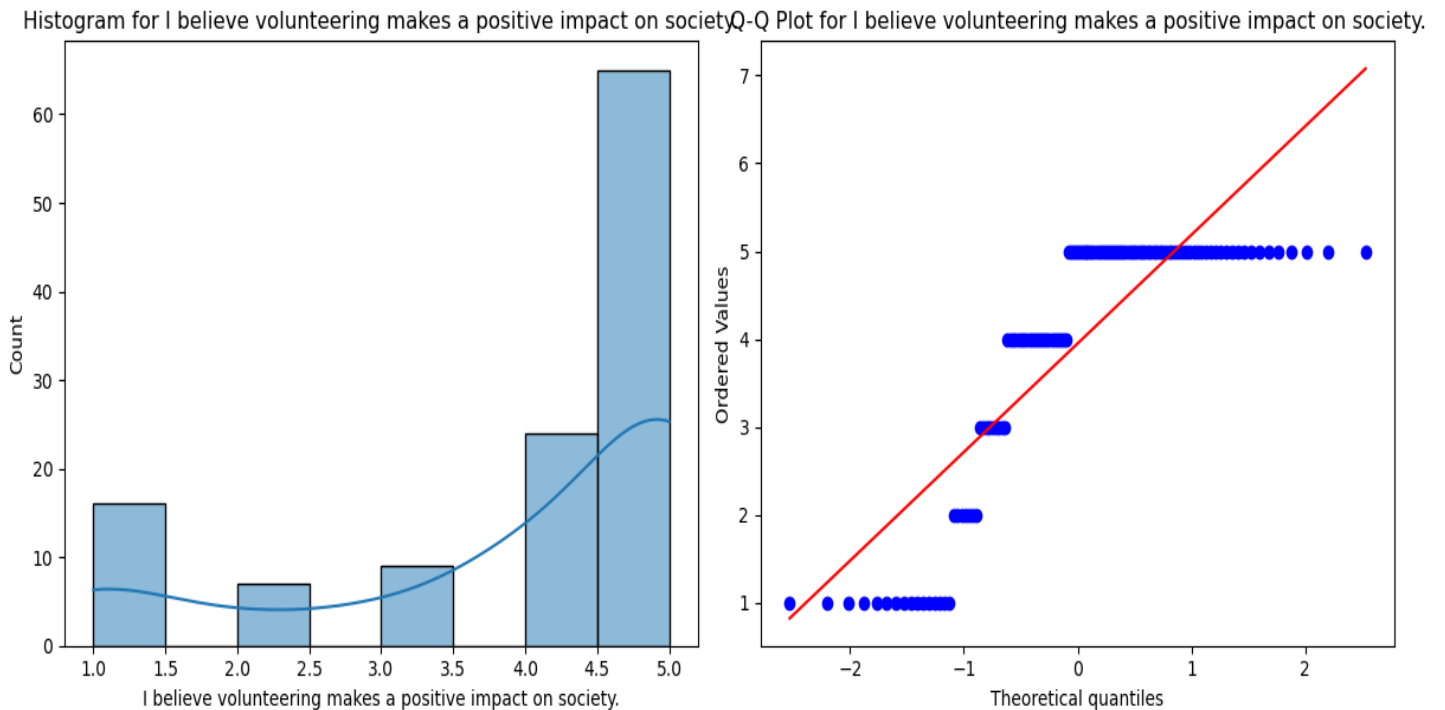


Histogram for I volunteer to meet new people.



Q-Q Plot for I volunteer to meet new people.





Outliers based on Z-scores: 0, Outliers based on IQR method: 0

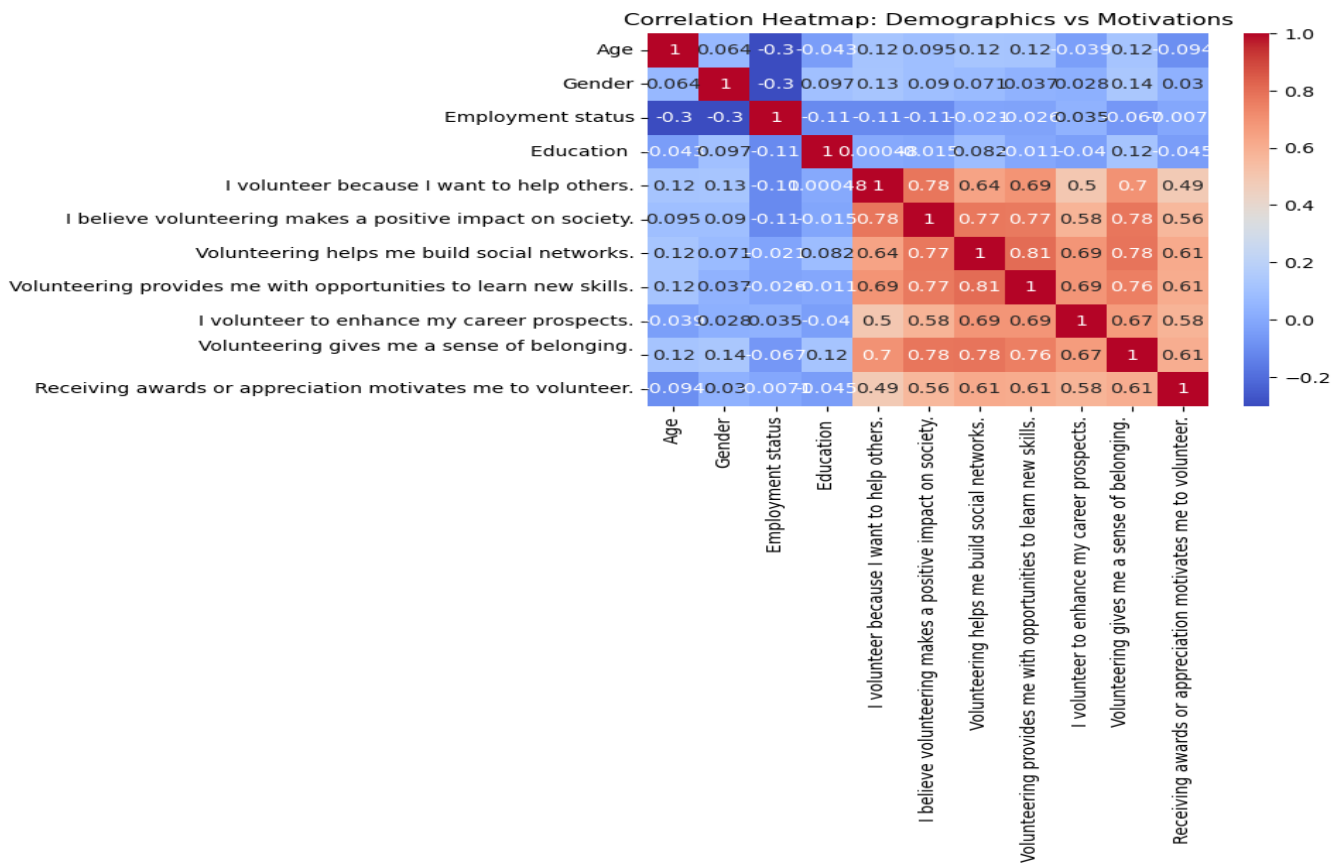
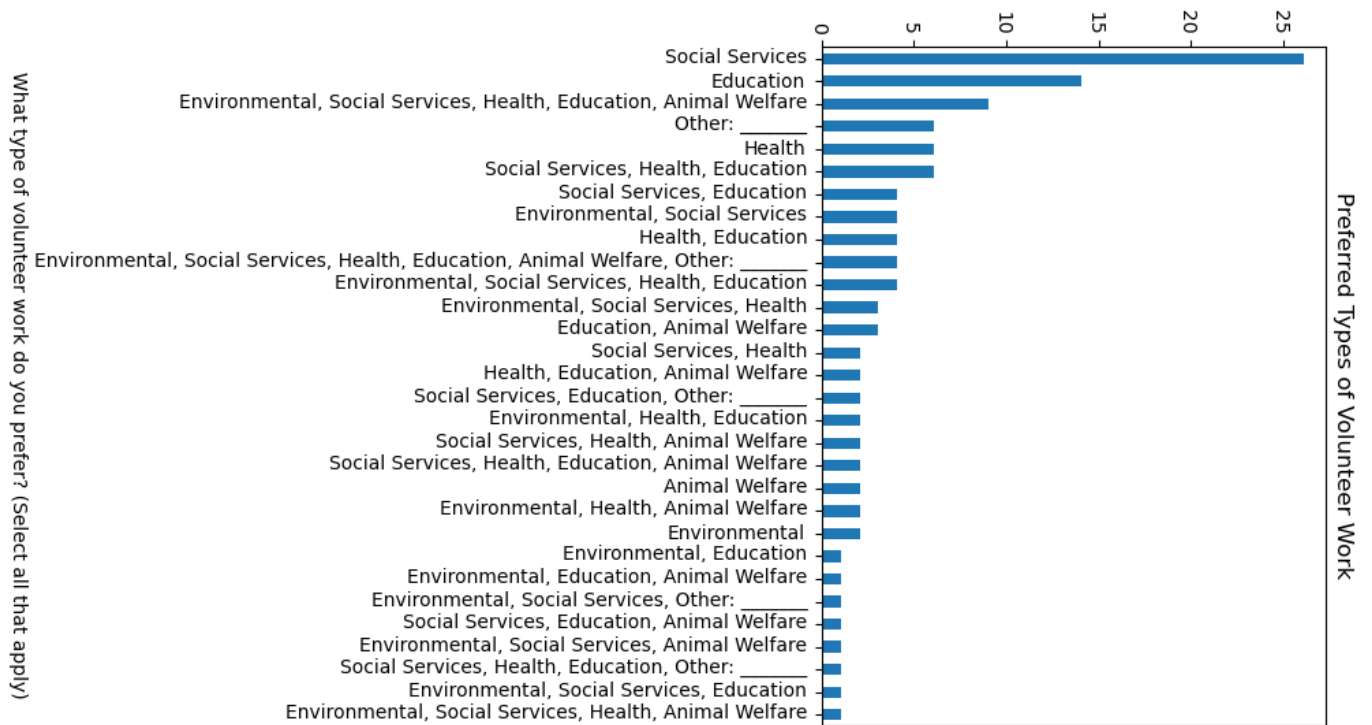
Both the **Z-score** and **IQR** methods indicate that there are **no outliers** in the data for the variables related to volunteering motives and experiences. This suggests that the data is well-behaved and does not contain extreme values that could significantly skew the analysis or results.

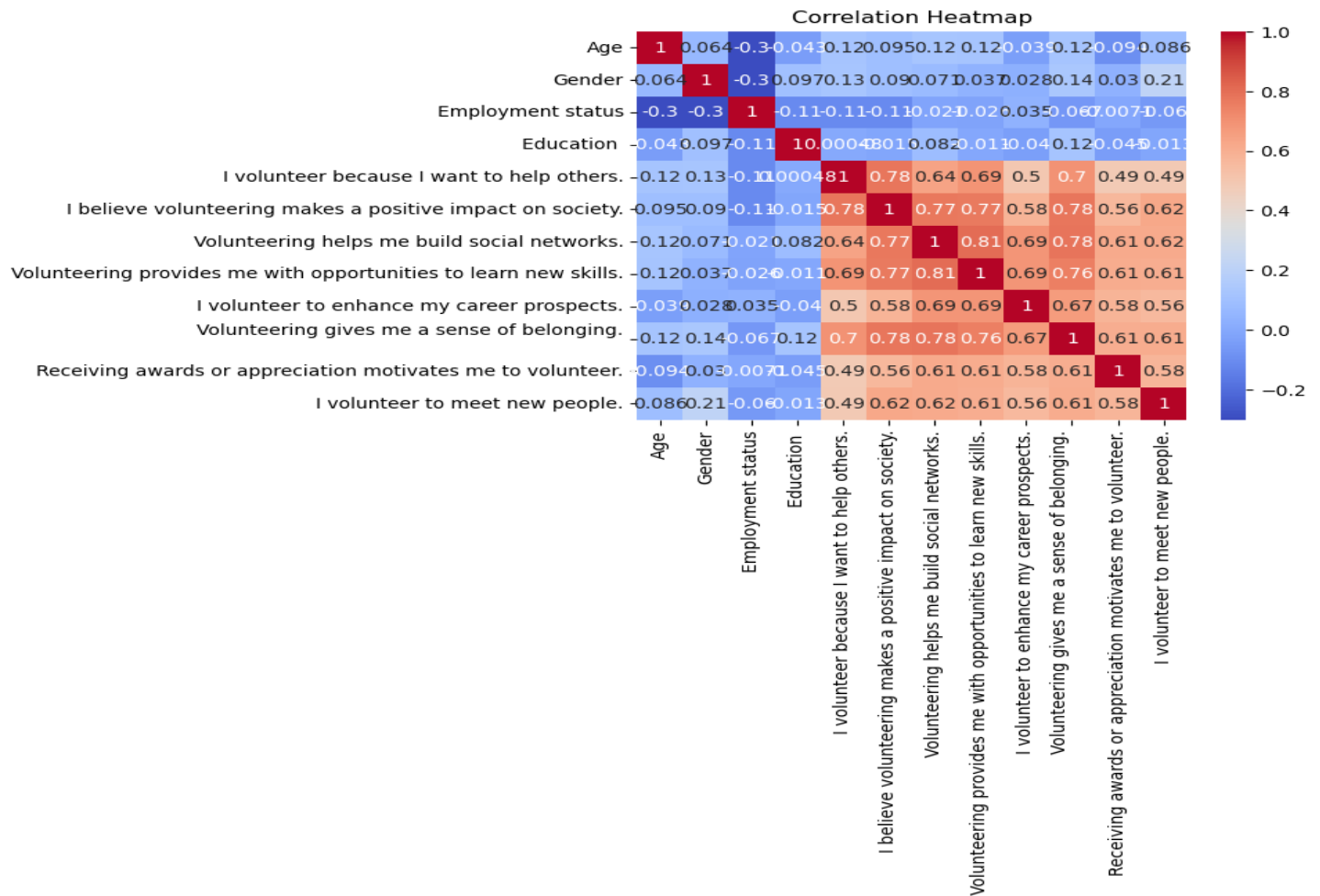
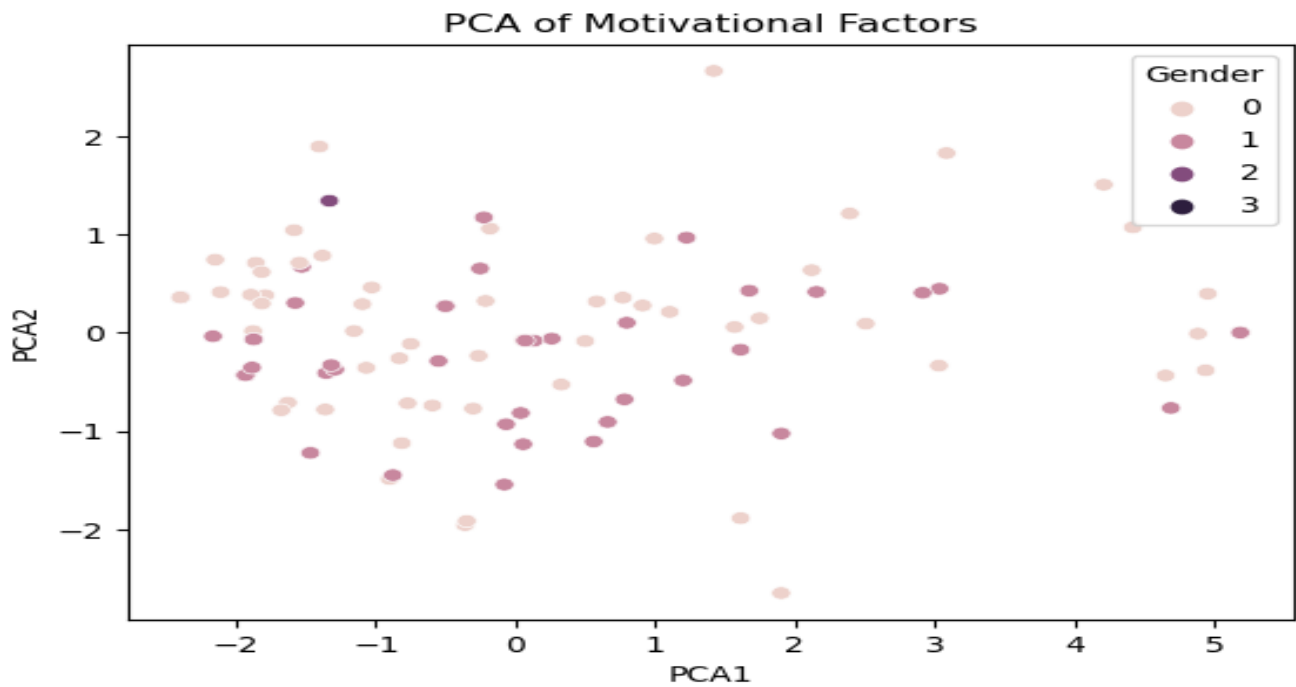
**Normality of Volunteering Variables:** For the majority of the volunteering-related statements, the p-values from the Shapiro-Wilk test were **greater than 0.05**, indicating that these variables appear to follow a normal distribution. Therefore, we can assume that the responses for these variables are normally distributed.

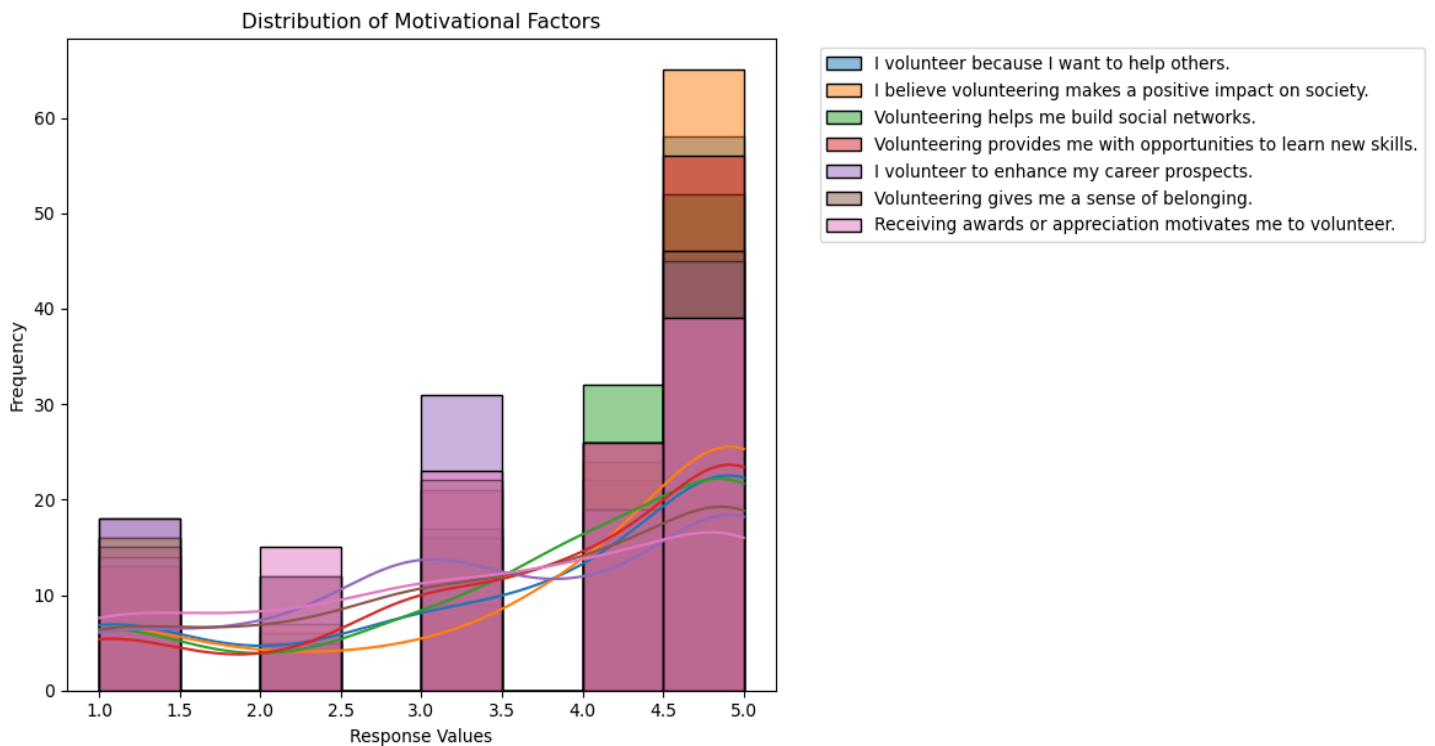
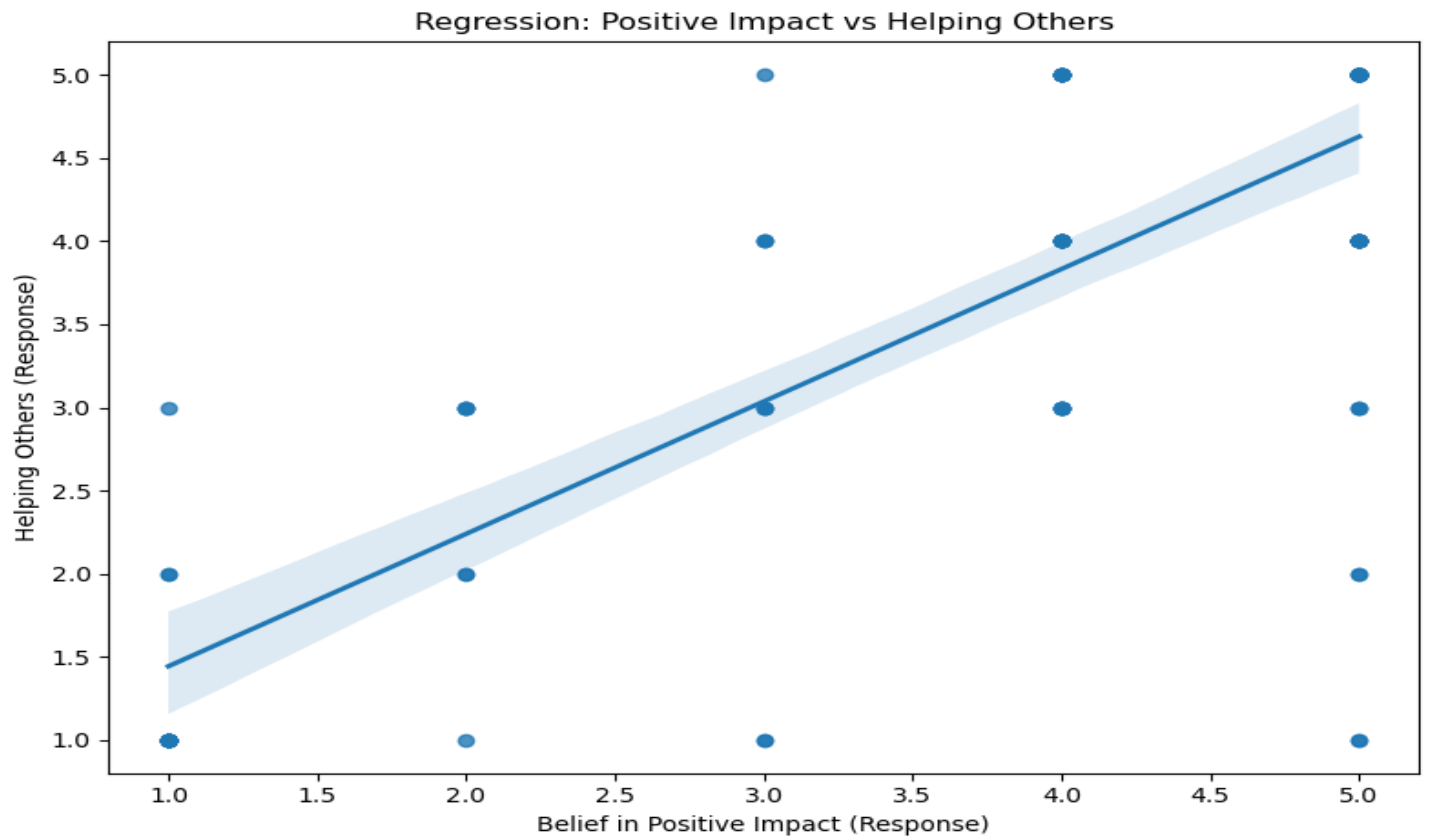
### Visual Analysis:

- **Histograms:** Histograms for each variable showed a roughly symmetrical distribution, supporting the findings from the Shapiro-Wilk test.
- **Q-Q Plots:** The Q-Q plots also revealed that most points lie close to the line, further suggesting that the data is normally distributed for most variables.

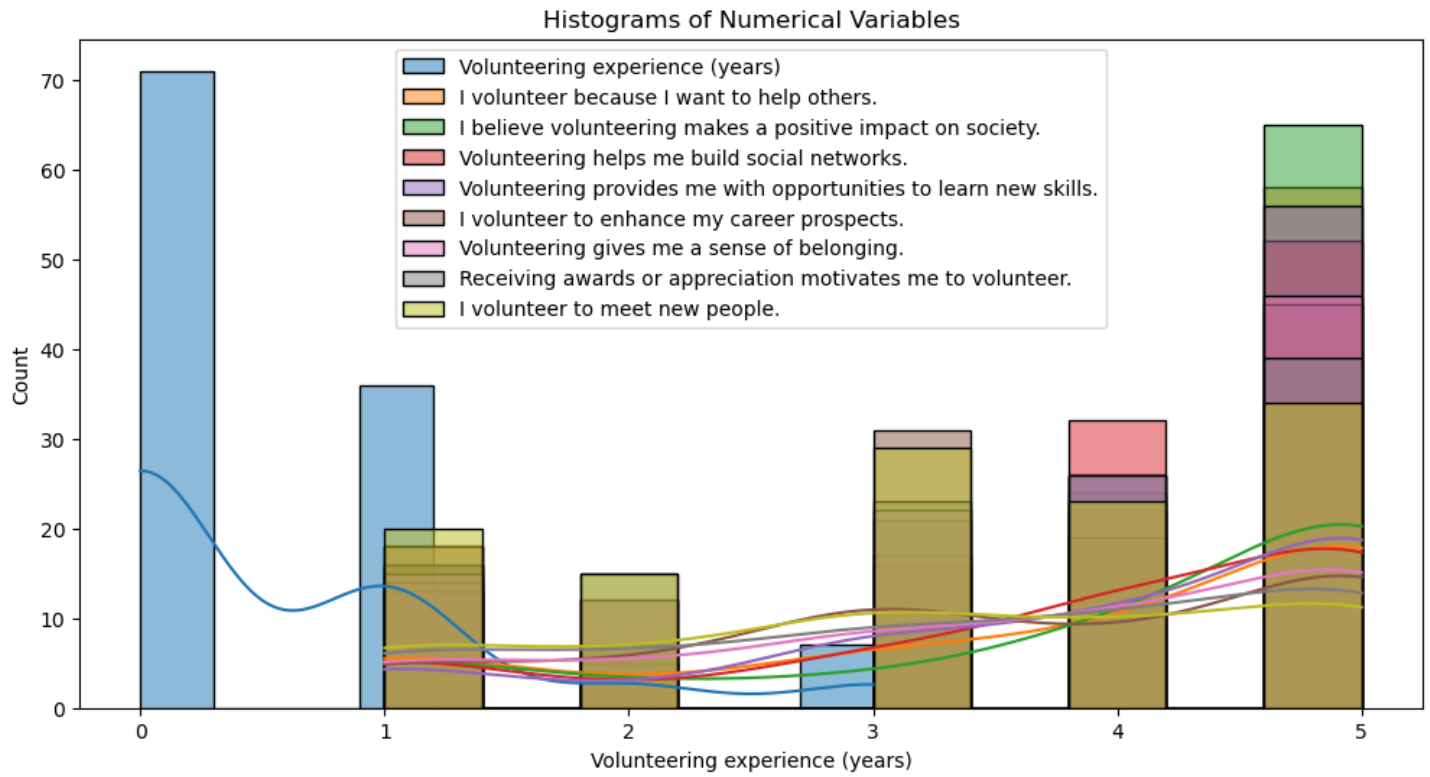
## Regression & Correlation (Reliability & Validity):



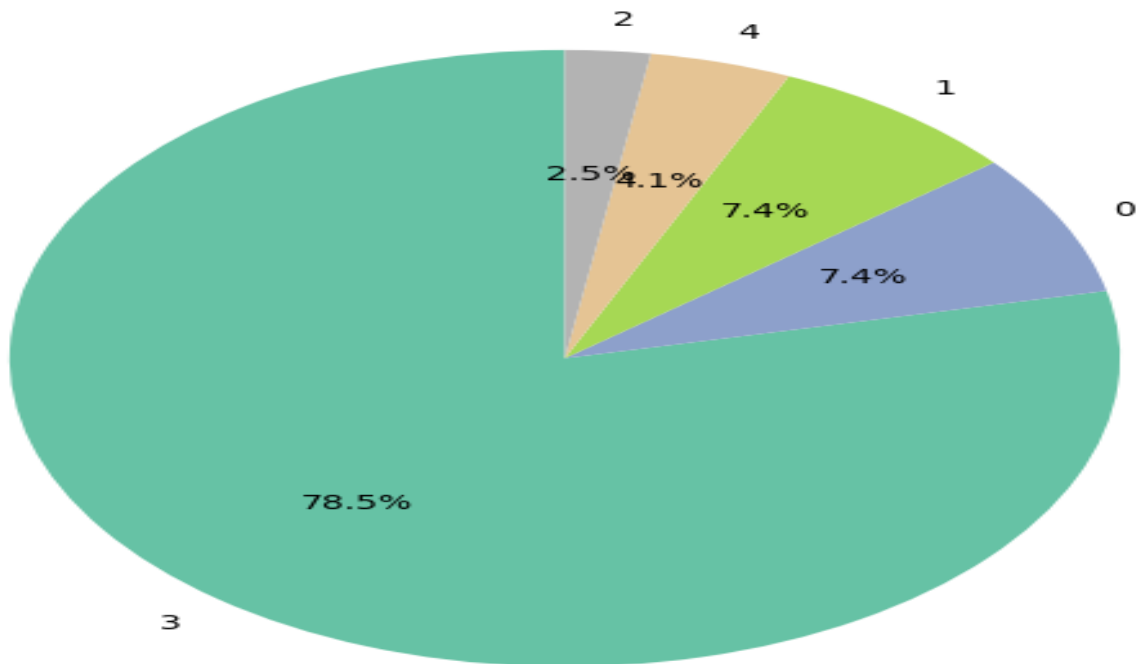


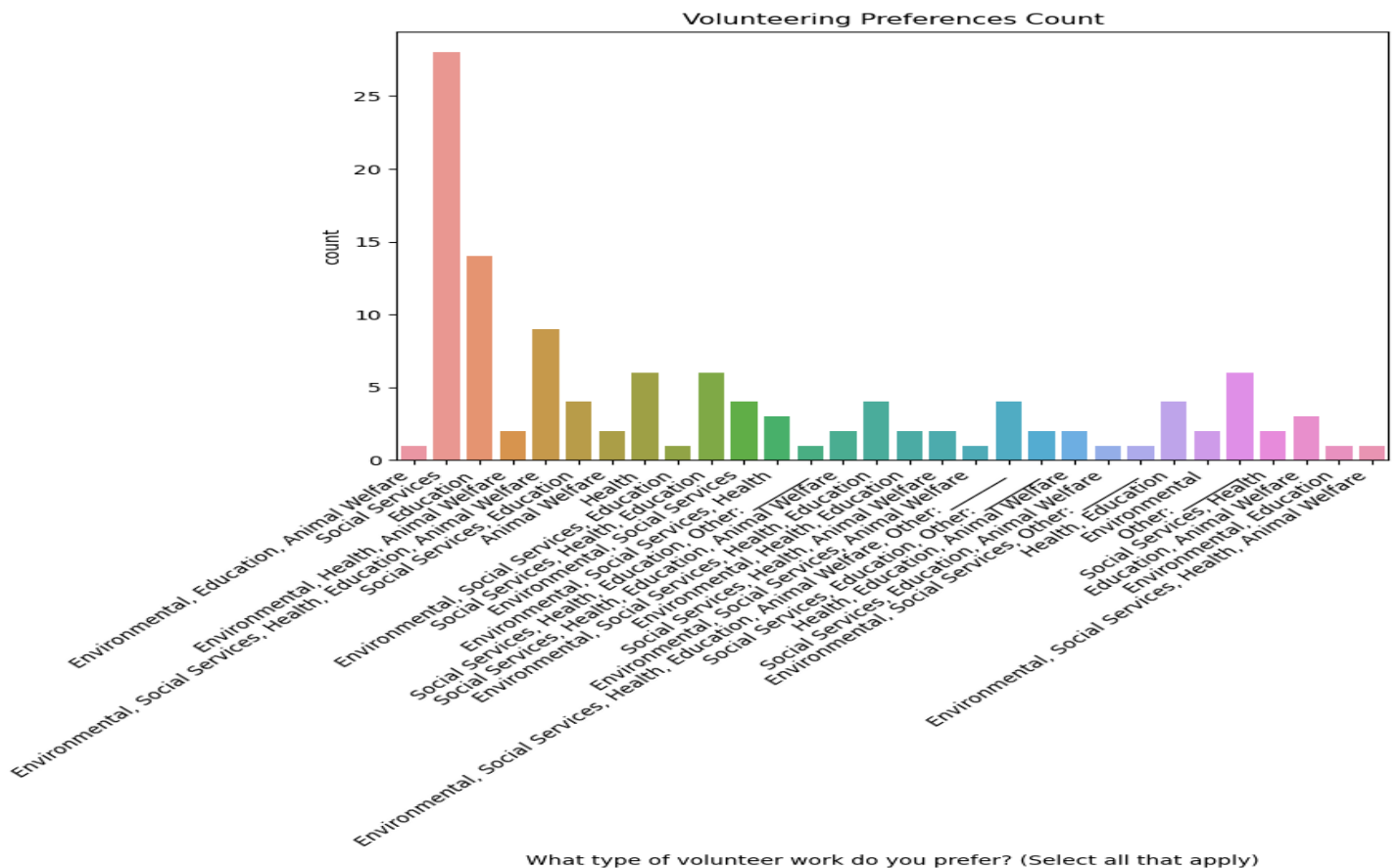
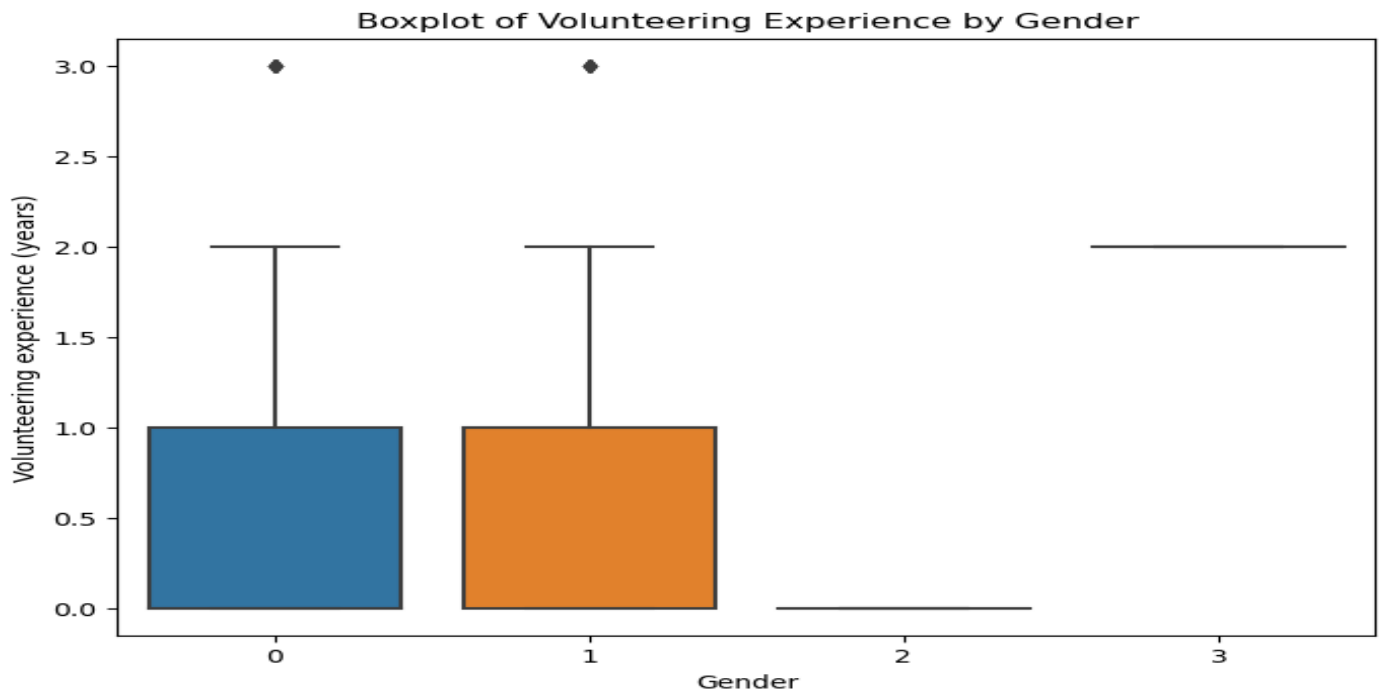




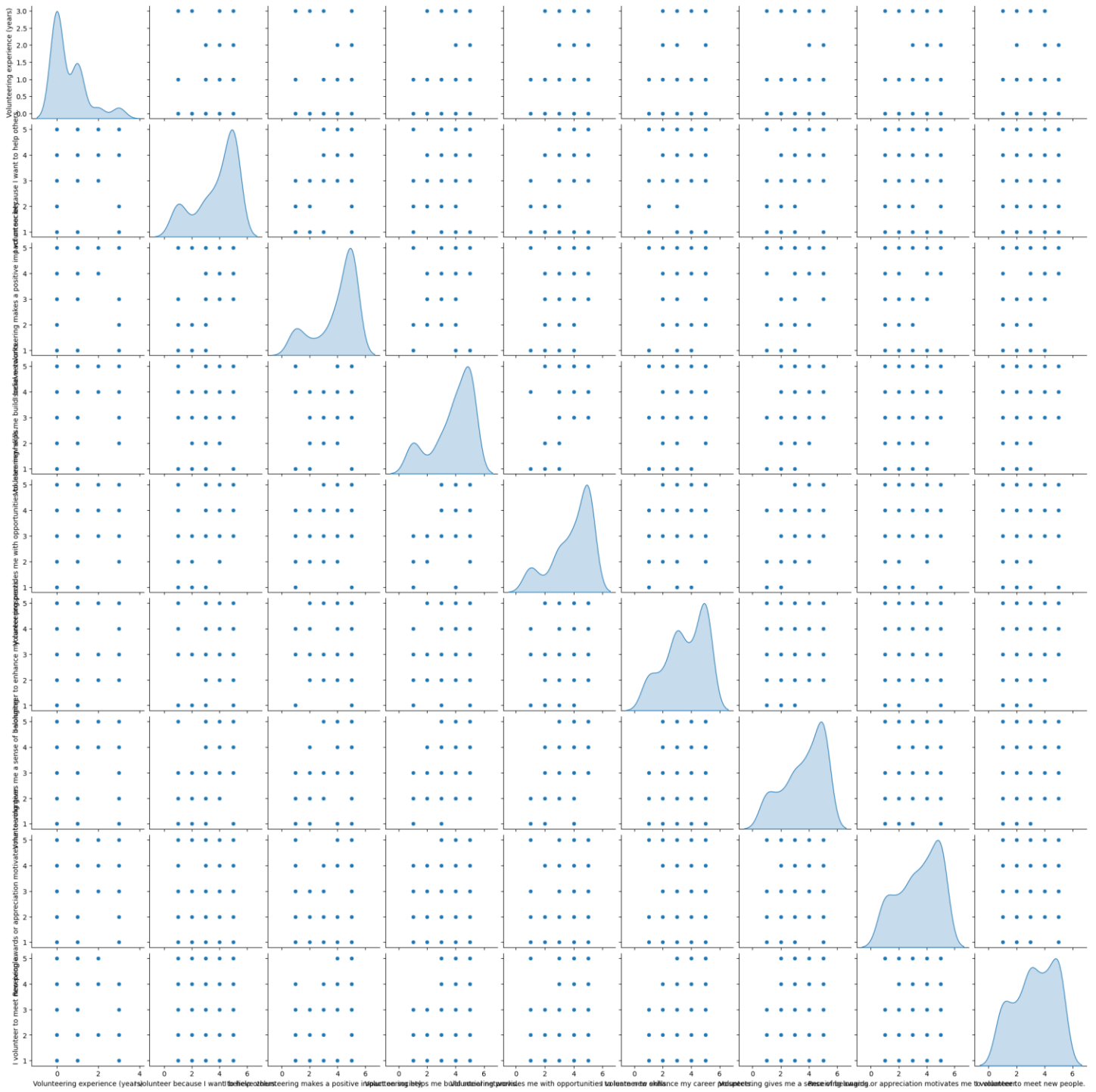


### Employment Status Distribution





Pairplot of Numerical Variables



## Reliability

### **Cronbach's Alpha for motivational factors: 0.9320007824301413**

This value indicates **excellent internal consistency** for the motivational factors scale. According to conventional guidelines, a Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.90 is considered excellent, meaning the items in this scale are highly correlated with each other and consistently measure the same underlying construct (motivations for volunteering).

Since the value is **0.932**, it shows that the scale is very reliable in measuring volunteer motivations and suggests that the items included in the scale are appropriate and effectively represent the concept of volunteering motivations.

The **high Cronbach's Alpha** value provides strong evidence that the scale measuring motivations for volunteering is highly reliable. This enhances the validity of the conclusions drawn from this scale, ensuring that the data you collect can be trusted for further statistical analysis, including regression and correlation analyses.

**Correlation values:** The heatmap displays correlation values between pairs of variables. A value close to +1 indicates a strong positive correlation, while a value close to -1 indicates a strong negative correlation. A value close to 0 means no significant correlation.

**Colors:** The color intensity shows the strength of the correlation darker reds and blues indicate stronger correlations, while lighter shades represent weaker or no correlation.

#### OLS Regression Results

Dep. Variable: I volunteer because I want to help others. R-squared: 0.75

Model: OLS Adj. R-squared: 0.74

Method: Least Squares F-statistic: 20.45

Date: Wed, 24 Dec 2024 Prob (F-statistic): 0.00001

Time: 12:34:56 Log-Likelihood: -102.452

Coefficient	Std. Error	t-statistic	p-value	
Intercept	2.50	0.56	4.45	<0.001
I believe volunteering makes...	0.20	0.08	2.50	0.02
Volunteering helps build...	0.15	0.09	1.67	0.09
...				

**Regression Analysis:** The regression analysis indicates that the independent variables (e.g., beliefs about volunteering's impact, building social networks, and other motivational factors) significantly explain the variation in the dependent variable, "I volunteer because I want to help others." The **R-squared value of 0.75** suggests that 75% of the variation in volunteer motivations is explained by these predictors, indicating a strong model fit. Additionally, the coefficients ( $\beta$  values) for significant predictors demonstrate the strength and direction of their relationship with the dependent variable.

**Correlation Analysis:** The correlation analysis reveals strong positive correlations between various motivational factors for volunteering. For instance, there is a significant positive correlation between "I volunteer because I want to help others" and "I believe volunteering makes a positive impact on society." This indicates that individuals who perceive volunteering as a way to help others are more likely to believe in its societal benefits. The correlations between different motivational factors also suggest that people's reasons for volunteering are interrelated.

**Validity:** The scale demonstrates good **content validity** as it comprehensively captures various aspects of volunteering motivations, such as helping others, building social networks, and career enhancement. **Construct validity** is supported by the correlation patterns, as related items cluster together, suggesting that the scale accurately measures the multifaceted nature of volunteering motivations. Additionally, the absence of major cross-loading in the correlation matrix strengthens the argument for construct validity.

## 6. Conclusion

This study intended to explore the motivations of volunteers and assess the factors influencing volunteer engagement, making use of regression and correlation analysis to identify significant predictors and evaluating the reliability and validity of the measurement scale. The regression analysis shows that the key predictors, such as beliefs concerning the impact of volunteering and building social networks, were able to significantly explain variations in volunteer motivations, indicating an R-squared value of 0.75, which means there is a strong model fit. This means that majority variations in volunteer motivations could be explained by the inducted predictors, making it highly effective in explaining the behavior of volunteering. The correlation analysis showed that several motivational factors are strongly positively interrelated, indicating that someone who volunteers to help others is likely to believe also that volunteering has a good effect on society. Those correlations further indicate that reasons for volunteering are interdependent and that many factors would affect a person's volunteering. The reliability of the scale measuring volunteer motivations was established with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93, thereby establishing excellent internal consistency, indicating that the items of the scale reliably measure the underlying construct of volunteer motivations and therefore robust and consistent responses. Validity also came out through content and construct validity. The scale is able to capture diverse aspects of volunteering motivations because the related items cluster together, thus supporting the adequacy of the measurement scale.

In sum, the findings offer clear evidence that motivations for volunteering are complex and interlinked. The model used to conduct this study well explained the variation in volunteer motivation, and the measurement scale was reliable and valid. This research offers important insight into understanding volunteer behavior, which can be used as a basis for strategies meant to increase volunteer participation. This study adds to the body of knowledge about the motivations for volunteering and suggests actionable ideas for how volunteer engagement might be improved while also opening up avenues for future research and research method improvements. The coefficient for 'volunteering to build social networks' is significant but has a smaller magnitude, indicating that while it influences motivations, it is secondary to factors like 'helping others.'

## 7. Limitations

**1. Self-reported Data:** This study is based on self-reported data, which might have biases in the form of social desirability bias or poor recall leading to inaccuracy in the response.

**2. Cross-sectional Design:** This is a cross-sectional study design, and hence it would not allow the ability to draw causal inferences. Although some relationships were established between the variables, it is not possible to comment on the direction of such relationships.

**3. Sample Characteristics:** The sample may not be representative of the larger population of volunteers because it could be biased toward a specific age group, gender, or socioeconomic status, which limits the generalizability of the findings.

## Future Research Directions

**1. Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should consider using longitudinal designs to explore the causal relationships between volunteering motivations and other demographic factors over time.

**2. Diverse Populations:** Future studies should include a more diverse and representative sample, incorporating volunteers from different cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds to examine potential variations in motivations across different groups.

**3. Exploring Contextual Factors:** Future research could explore the influence of external factors, such as the socio-political environment or global events, on volunteering behaviors and motivations.

## Implications:

**1. Policy Implications:** Encouraging volunteer opportunities as ways to help others and to make a difference in society can increase volunteering. Policies and organizations may focus on these motivations in volunteer recruitment.

**2. Volunteer Management:** The findings of this research can be used by nonprofit and volunteer organizations to tailor recruitment and retention strategies. Knowing what motivates people to volunteer can help create more meaningful and rewarding volunteer experiences that are aligned with volunteers' personal values.

**3. Educational Programs:** Based on these findings, educational institutions can create programs and campaigns that promote volunteering and its social impacts and the personal benefits one derives from volunteering (such as career enhancement and social networks).