# A Preliminary Study of the Perceived Usefulness of Media between Expert and Newcomer in Volunteer Service: Comparisons of Japan and Korea

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**Abstract**: This study was to conduct a preliminary survey to identify how a user could differently perceive the usefulness of SNS for volunteer activities between Japan and Korea. The role of mobile media has been increased to share information and ideas. It facilitates the communication as well as shares experiences. Particularly this study focused on how social service volunteers utilized the mobile device. Initial research interest was to delineate how many volunteer projects utilized mobile media such as Facebook and micro-blog in order to engage participants. Although the usefulness of mobile media can have a considerable impact on volunteer activities, level of perceived usefulness can be different from levels of expertise and cultural basis. In other words,, expert volunteer and newcomer have different perspective for applying mobile media in their volunteer society. Community of practice is a theoretical framework to explain how members of community shares knowledge, commitments, and ownership. This research will focus on the different perceptions of using mobile media between expert and newcomer. For this study in-depth interview method will applied for each country based on qualitative analysis.

*Keywords: community of practice, perceived usefulness, volunteer activity*

# Introduction

The purpose of this study is to compare the usage of media such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and so on, in the field of volunteer work in the community of practice. A 'community of practice' is an approach by people who take part in the work of the practice and learn to some extent as a co-participant in the work of the organization (Wenger, 1998). Learning from them is partially social activity as they interact with other co-workers. From the volunteerism point of view, People use them not only to make friends and to kill time within community participating volunteer program but it is also new trend for some organizations or companies (Bingham et al. 2010). In this case, Wenger (1998) explained that these relationships are mutual engagement that binds members together into a social entity. Volunteer organization had similar structures related to community of practice. Especially, using mobile media is increasing within members of volunteer for effective activity. In this perspective, this research could draw in-depth implications for finding our patterns using mobile media between members of volunteer community.

# Method

## Participant Information & Research Design

This research was conducted by interviewing four university students, 2 South Koreans and 2 Japanese students, who had some experiences in volunteer work inside or outside their countries. Demographic information of interviewees was labeled in Table 1. Participants from each country, one in each country had a lot of experience volunteering and the other two lacked experience in volunteer work. Two Korean participants belonged to university club called 'HUMAN SCHOOL' directing international volunteer program. Japanese one had major at international welfare development. They had curriculums which is doing volunteer program regularly.

**Table 1. Summary of demographic information of interviewees**

|  | Expert | Newcomer |
|---|---|---|
| **Korean** | • Age: 23 years old<br>• Gender: Female<br>• Career: 3 years | • Age: 24 years old<br>• Gender: Male<br>• Career: 6 months |
| **Japanese** | • Age: 21 years old<br>• Gender: Female<br>• Career: 2 years | • Age: 18 years old<br>• Gender: Female<br>• Career: 6 months |

## The Interview

Open-ended questions were used to explore extensive information followed by probing more closed questions for clarification. Questions were extracted from construct by related reference in terms of community of practice, especially, focused on usage of mobile media. The interviews were video-taped, fully transcribed and anonymized. Each participant was given approximately forty-five minutes. Coding of each transcription identified both descriptive and interpretive meaning. After further coding of the remaining interviews, all transcripts were re-read and a preliminary writing-up made of the findings.

# Result

## Communication & Data Recording

The results were drawn from the table described in Table 2 and Table 3. Newcomer were using mobile by means of tools for communication between members. They were frequently used mobile media such as KakaoTalk, Facebook, and Twitter for chatting within group members. Although they felt high perceived usefulness of mobile media, they didn't recognize diverse ways using media in volunteer works. Korean and Japanese participants just focused on social networking. Furthermore, they were also used media for data recording because this record could give adequate information whenever appropriate.

**Instructional Material**

Expert volunteer were using mobile in multiple ways with a plenty of diverse experience. Especially, Korean participant acknowledged usefulness of media when they are operating education programs. She said that showing PowerPoint or animation make learners to pay attention to materials. And Japan volunteers were using mobile media for advertising their organization. They built groups in Facebook or micro blog for facilitating newcomer's participation and advertise other people by encouraging positive aspect of volunteer activity.

**Table 2. Comparative Table between Korean and Japanese of usage of mobile media**

|  | Expert | Newcomer |
|---|---|---|
| **Korean** | ● Social networking: Chatting, Team meeting<br>● Instructional materials: Showing presentation as visual stimulus | ● Communication tools between members |
| **Japanese** | ● They feel positive about using mobile media for voluntary service.<br>● They can recognize higher levels of perceived usefulness than newcomer. | ● Data recoding for compiling data |

**Table 3. Summary of similarity and difference in perceived usefulness between Korean and Japanese**

| Japan and Korea | Similarity | Difference |
|---|---|---|
| **Expert** | ● Experts focused on using media for extra-activity in their community | ● Japanese experts focused on using social networking with mobile media rather than Korean ones. |
| **Newcomer** | ● Newcomers depend on using media for strong relationship with each other. | ● Korean newcomer pay attention to increase own ability for entering core members in groups rather than Japanese ones. |

## Discussion

**Implication**

Results from interviews gave three implications about research in terms of community of practice. At first, expert members had diverse ways to using mobile media. Expert member and newcomer had significant empirical gap due to compiled knowledge conducting practical volunteer programs. While expert members are using instructional materials, newcomer only communicates within members using mobile media. Because expert member had already prior experiences which were trying to do volunteer program effectively. So these experiences made them facilitate how to use mobile media in their community's work. In other word, expert member retained knowledge in "living" ways and manner that responds to local circumstances and thus is useful to practitioner. Second, Newcomer put emphasis on tools for communication. Because newcomer might not have relationship within members yet, so they used mobile media for sufficient communication between co-workers as legitimate peripheral participation in community. In addition, Newcomer also used media for data recording. The reason why newcomer concentrates this work is for compiling knowledge related to volunteer experiences because they had no prior knowledge for doing volunteer program. Within framework of community of practice, newcomer learns the practice in concrete terms from volunteer organization by recording specific information (Wenger, 1998).

**Literature Reference**

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