

# Listening to the Hearts of Today's Heroes: Exploring Donors' Motivations and Feedback on UPOU Blood Donation Drive

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## ABSTRACT

Public service is a core value of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). In 2012, the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies (FICS) launched a blood donation drive to address the country's ongoing need for blood and support its employees' and their families' health and well-being. Since 2014, this has become an annual event, reflecting UPOU's commitment to community service. This paper examines the motivations of blood donors, highlights best practices, and identifies areas for improvement, employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to explore the role of communication in motivating participation.

Through key informant interviews and thematic analysis, the study finds that donors are primarily motivated by a desire to help others, access to blood, and the health benefits associated with donation. Best practices identified include accommodating staff, efficient organization, a conducive environment, and the provision of refreshments. However, areas for improvement include increasing publicity efforts, ensuring wider venue accessibility, and disseminating invitations earlier. The findings suggest the need for more strategic communication that emphasizes the scarcity of blood, the benefits of donation, and the importance of ensuring blood availability. The Theory of Planned Behavior helps contextualize how positive attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms influence donor participation. By incorporating these improvements, including better-targeted communication strategies, the drive can attract more donors, strengthen community engagement, and ultimately increase the impact of the UPOU Blood Donation Drive.

## BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the United States (US), someone requires a blood transfusion every two seconds (American Red Cross, n.d.). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019, para. 8), "blood transfusion saves lives and improves health, but millions of patients in need of a transfusion do not have timely access to safe blood." This highlights the ongoing global challenge of ensuring adequate and equitable access to blood for those in critical need. Unfortunately, the Philippines is not exempt from the global shortage of blood. In the country, over 2,000 units of blood units are needed daily to support patients undergoing surgery, recovering from accidents, or receiving treatments for diseases that require blood transfusions.

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) plays a crucial role in meeting this demand, supplying approximately one-quarter of the nation's total blood requirements (Philippine Red Cross, 2015). Recognizing the pressing need for blood and the possibility that UPOU employees may also require blood in the future, the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies (FICS) launched the UPOU Blood Donation (BD) Drive in 2012. Since then, the drive has been held annually, starting in 2014, as part of the university's commitment to supporting public health and the community.

As a public service-oriented university, UPOU has continued this initiative to support the community by providing blood to those in need. To expand its donor base, UPOU has collaborated with various institutions in and around Los Baños. Additionally, the university has received generous support from sponsors who have voluntarily contributed resources to ensure the success of the drive. To date, the UPOU Blood Donation Drive has benefited numerous patients, including UPOU staff, their families, and friends. In an effort to enhance its

impact and encourage more people to organize similar drives, this study highlights the best practices of the UPOU Blood Donation Drive, along with insights and narratives from the donors' perspective.

### **The Country's Need for Blood Supply: An Overview**

The lack of supply of blood products still causes many people to die in some countries. (WHO, 2019). In 2015, the Philippines fell short of its target, collecting only 770, 000 blood units – well below the goal of 1 million units, which is equivalent to 1% of the Philippine population (Ubial as cited by Geronimo, 2016). To reach this target, there is a need for more effective strategies to attract and retain blood donors, as well as a standardized system for blood donation. A key approach to achieving this is understanding the motivations and hindrances that influence individuals' decisions to donate blood.

### **Motivations and Hindrances for Donating Blood**

Various quantitative studies conducted worldwide have sought to explore the motivations behind blood donation. In Sweden, Sojka & Sojka (2008) found that the primary motivations for donating blood were “general altruism,” “social responsibility or obligation” and “peer influence.” The key reasons for continued donation were also rooted in altruism and social responsibility. On the other hand, the most common barriers to repeated donation were laziness (19.1%) and fear of needles (10.5%). In Leeds, United Kingdom, a study by Kuruvatti, Prasad, Williams, Harrison, & Jones (2011) identified altruism - specifically, a sense of reciprocation and ties with family, friends and strangers – as the predominant motivator. Meanwhile, the main reasons for not donating included personal, medical, donation center or procedure-related issues, along with age-restrictions and exclusions.

In Italy, Zito, Marconi, Saturni & Cremonesi (2012) found that young donors were motivated to donate blood during emergencies involving someone they cared about. However, several factors hindered their willingness to donate, including a lack of information in three key areas: (a) practical information (such as where and when to donate), (b) technical details (including the amount of blood taken, the analysis, and storage process), and (c) physical concerns (the experience of donating itself). In Iran, a study by Maghsudlu & Nasizadeh (2011) revealed that the main motivations for blood donation were altruism, health benefits, and religious beliefs, respectively.

In local research, a 2007 descriptive cross-sectional study at Philippine Heart Center, by Sia, Sagun & Orillaza discovered that altruism was the most recurring motive for donating blood while family influence was the primary factor for first-time donors. Similarly, a 2004 study by Pingoy, Domingo, Mirasol, and Ona at Philippine General Hospital identified the key reasons Filipino donors choose to donate blood, including general altruism, civic duty, social pressure, the desire for “mini-check-up”, family and friends in need, gratitude for God's blessing, a physician's personal invitation, and positive reinforcement from others. In contrast, the main barrier to donations was fear, which encompassed concerns about personal illness, potential health risks, blood loss, fear of needles, and the sight of blood.

Altruism emerges as the most apparent prominent motivation, while fear related to safety measures – such as concerns about needles, the procedure, and potential illness - is the most common barrier. While the majority of cited studies are international, it is important to recognize that cultural and contextual differences may affect the applicability of these findings to the Philippines, particularly among UPOU BD Drive donors. Given that the most recent local studies on this topic were conducted over a decade ago, there is a clear need for updated research with the same objectives to better understand the motivations and barriers specific to the Philippine context.

### **Benefits of Blood Donation to Donors**

Considering that health benefits may serve as a motivation for individuals to donate blood, it is important to examine these benefits in greater detail. Nall (2017) highlighted several health advantages of blood donations: (1) it helps reduce iron levels, which can lower the risk of heart disease and cholesterol (Fedhealth, 2015); (2) it provides an informal health check-up, offering insights into blood pressure, blood count, and overall health; (3) it can also burn calories, as reported by St. Mary's Medical Center, though this should be seen as an “occasional

benefit” rather than a substitute for regular exercise. Additionally, donating blood has been shown to improve physical and psychological well-being, leaving first-time donors feeling satisfied, happy, and proud (Hirichs et al., 2008). While there may be some negative effects, such as dizziness, tiredness, or mild discomfort, these are generally short-term and can be mitigated. Understanding these benefits may help alleviate fears and make blood donation a less intimidating experience for prospective donors, ultimately aiding in donor recruitment. Another critical aspect of ensuring a stable blood supply in the country is the establishment of standardized guidelines for safe blood donation. These guidelines would ensure donor safety, improve the donation experience, and help retain regular donors.

### **Standard Guidelines for Safe Blood Donation**

In the study “Management of Blood Donation System” by Seda Baş et al., it was noted that while the blood donation system has been somewhat addressed, it remains an area that requires further optimization and development within the broader healthcare system. Given that the shelf life of donated blood is limited, a more efficient BD supply chain is essential to ensure timely utilization. BD management challenges can be categorized into key phases of a blood bag’s life cycle: donor registration, blood collection or donation, screening, inventory storage, and distribution (Baş, Carello, Lanzarone, & Yalcindag, 2016).

While numerous studies focus on the storage and distribution phases of BD system, only 1% of research has concentrated on the donor registration and donation phases. The significant gap highlights the need for more research in these early stages of the BD process. To improve the overall effectiveness of the BD supply chain, it is crucial to strike a balance in research across all phases—from donor registration, and donation to distribution—since each phase directly impacts the efficiency and success of the entire system.

The WHO (2012) designed a standard guideline for BD, Blood Donor Selection: Guidelines on Assessing Donor Suitability for Blood Donation, intended for use by the policymakers in national blood programs, and blood transfusion services. The WHO and Blood Transfusion Services (BTS) established a guideline development group (GDG), responsible for the research of evidence-based recommendations for the assessment of the suitability of the blood donors. Additionally, an external review group (ERG) was formed to (1) oversee, review, and provide feedback on the guideline development process, and (2) serve as the WHO’s advisor on the feasibility, relevance, and applicability of the recommendations.

### **Local Blood Donation Drives and Existing Law and Policy**

The Philippines has long established the Republic Act No. 7719, or the “National Blood Services Act of 1994” which promotes voluntary blood donation and ensures a safe and adequate blood supply. The act encourages voluntary donations through public education, promotion in schools, professional education, and the establishment of a nationwide blood services network, including walking blood donors (National Blood Services Act, 1994). In 2017, the PRC entered into a memorandum of agreement with 62 organizations to celebrate World Blood Donor Month in July.

The partnership aims to secure a sufficient supply of blood products nationwide and expand the reach of blood donation drives, including through community outreach and online platforms (Plaza, 2017). UPOU also organizes an annual blood donation drive to help meet the community’s need for blood. In June 2017, the Los Baños Municipal Health Office (LBMHO) launched a Dugong Bayani blood drive in partnership with the Philippine Blood Center. Dr. Alvin Isidro, the Los Baños municipal health officer, highlighted the critical shortage of blood products in local blood banks. He emphasized that smaller blood drives may not be as large as others, but they still play a significant role in addressing the need for blood. Most importantly, Dr. Isidro reminded the community that “not all heroes wear capes” because the simple act of donating blood is itself a powerful act of heroism (Ayalde, 2017).

### **Synthesis of Literature Review**

In summary, the global and local demand for blood remains substantial. Both international and local studies indicate that altruism is the most common motivation for donating blood, while fear related to safety measures

is the most frequent barrier. Additionally, blood donation offers several health benefits, which could serve as a motivating factor for participants in this study. As a public service university, UPOU has initiated and sustained its annual blood donation drive to help ensure an adequate blood supply for the country. While most studies on donor motivation are international, the cultural and contextual differences between countries suggest that these findings may not be directly applicable to the Philippine context. Although local studies do exist, they were conducted over a decade ago, highlighting the need for current research on the same topic. Regarding the standardization of blood donation systems, the WHO has provided guidelines and recommendations; however, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on the early stages of the donation process such as donor registration and blood donation itself along with distribution. These areas warrant further exploration. Addressing these gaps, this study aims to identify the motivations behind blood donation, as well as assess the best practices and areas for improvement in the UPOU Blood Donation Drive, based on feedback from the donors themselves.

## Objectives

In general, this study aims to share UPOU Blood Donation Drive's best practices and capture narratives from the donors' perspective. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. explore the motivations behind donors' decision to donate blood
2. identify the best practices implemented in the execution of the public service project
3. highlight areas for improvement in the event, based on feedback from the donors themselves

## Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human decision-making and behavior. The theory posits that an individual's behavior is driven by three core components: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These components, in turn, influence behavioral intentions, which are the immediate precursors to actual behavior. In the context of this research, TPB helped explain why individuals choose to participate in the blood donation drive, and how various factors influence their willingness to donate.

## Motivations Behind Blood Donation

One of the primary objectives of this research is to identify the motivations behind blood donation among UPOU staff and faculty. Using the TPB framework, motivations were examined through the following lenses:

**Attitudes.** These are the personal evaluations or feelings toward donating blood. Donors who have positive attitudes toward blood donation may view it as a moral responsibility, a way to save lives, or a health benefit for themselves. For example, some participants may donate because they feel it contributes to community welfare or because they believe the act helps ensure blood is available during emergencies. This research explored these attitudes by interviewing donors to understand how they perceive blood donation in terms of personal and societal value.

**Subjective Norms.** Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. In the context of the UPOU Blood Donation, individuals may feel compelled to donate blood due to the influence of colleagues, supervisors, or community leaders who support or participate in the drive. Social norms, such as the idea that "everyone in the university is expected to participate," may shape an individual's intention to donate. The study assessed how the presence of peer influence and organizational support impact donor behavior, particularly focusing on how collective efforts in UPOU's community drive participation.

**Perceived Behavioral Control.** This component refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a behavior, which is influenced by factors such as resources, time, or barriers that may hinder the behavior. In the case of the UPOU Blood Donation, perceived behavioral control could relate to factors such as ease of access to the donation venue, availability of time, and physical health conditions that either enable or prevent donation. By evaluating feedback from donors, this study investigated how logistical issues like the location of the drive, the timing of the event, and the overall organization of the drive influence donors' willingness to participate. By



focusing on these three dimensions, the research aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the psychological and social factors driving blood donation behavior at UPOU. It allowed the identification of key motivators and barriers to donation, enabling the university to tailor its strategies to encourage greater participation in future drives.

### **Assessing Best Practices and Areas for Improvement**

Another key objective of this paper is to assess the best practices in the UPOU Blood Donation Drive, as well as identify areas for improvement. TPB offers valuable insights into how effective communication, organizational practices, and community engagement can enhance participation.

**Best Practices.** According to the theory, when an individual perceives high levels of control over their behavior and positive social support, they are more likely to act. In this context, best practices in the blood donation drive include a well-organized and supportive environment that makes the donation process easy and convenient. For example, practices such as providing refreshments, having a comfortable venue, and ensuring that the event is well-publicized may improve donors' attitudes toward the event. By applying TPB, the study examined how these organizational best practices align with the three core components of the theory—how they shape donors' attitudes, reinforce positive social norms, and remove barriers to participation.

**Areas for Improvement.** On the other hand, areas for improvement are directly linked to the perceived barriers to donation, as outlined by the TPB. If donors report challenges such as inconvenient timing, inadequate venue space, or limited communication about the event, these could reflect a low level of perceived behavioral control. For instance, donors may feel less motivated if they believe the donation process is time-consuming or if they lack information about the impact of their donation. This study used feedback from donors to identify specific aspects of the event that may hinder participation, such as limited publicity or access issues. By recognizing these barriers, the UPOU Blood Donation Drive can adjust its strategies to improve donor experience and increase participation in future events.

### **Integrating TPB into the Research**

The integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior into this research paper provided a structured approach to understanding the complex factors that influence blood donation behavior. By applying the theory to the study's objectives, this study not only identified the motivations of donors but also assessed how these motivations are shaped by attitudes, social influences, and perceived control. Furthermore, the TPB framework guided the analysis of best practices and areas for improvement, helping to identify specific aspects of the blood donation drive that can be optimized to foster a more sustainable and effective community initiative.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data for the three objectives were collected through key informant interviews with the blood donors themselves, who are the primary participants in the blood donation activity. A total of 31 donors took part in the study. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using a qualitative approach. A thematic analysis (TA) was employed, which Clarke and Braun (2013) describe as an effective method for identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data. Specifically, the interview data were analyzed using the six phases of TA: familiarization with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the findings. It is important to note that, as this is a descriptive study, the results may not be generalizable to all Filipino blood donors. However, the insights gained from this research can be valuable in attracting more donors and improving the effectiveness of future blood donation drives.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the entire research undertaking. To safeguard the privacy of the participants, unique identifiers (P1, P2, and so on) were assigned to each participant record instead of using any personal information during the data processing and analysis procedure. This practice was employed as a precautionary measure to adhere to ethical standards and reinforce the commitment to

protecting the identity of the participants. The assigned unique identifiers allow the derivation and analysis of data without compromising the individual's privacy. This practice of participant confidentiality ensures that the study upholds the highest ethical standards and fosters a sense of trust and security among the contributors, ultimately contributing to the robustness and credibility of the research outcomes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Blood donors who participated in the UPOU Blood Donation Drive were interviewed to explore their motivations for donating and to identify the drive's best practices and areas for improvement from their perspective.

### Donor's Motivations for Donating Blood

#### Significance of Helping Others as Motivation to Donate Blood

All participants donate blood simply because they see the act as purposeful - a way to extend the lives of people, an opportunity to make a great positive difference. When asked about their motivation for donating, they all convey the same thought: to help those in need. Participant 1 (P1) treats the act as giving to the needy, P2 views it as a public service, P3 equates it to caring, while P4 named it as a "humanitarian purpose". Similar responses are as follows:

A simple act as donating blood can extend hope, possibly can extend other people's lives. - P5

[I donate] to help many people who need blood and find it hard to get help. Those people struggling with different illnesses; it's an opportunity to help make a difference sa buhay nila. - P6

Yang blood donation kasi parang nasa puso ko na din, Para makatulong sa iba na talagang nangangailangan. (it appears that it's in my heart, to help others who are truly in need.) - P7

Gusto ko talagang makatulong sa iba. (I really want to help others.) - P31

Remarkably, some participants also directly stated the sense of purpose and satisfaction that the act could give them. Ang sarap ng pakiramdam, ang satisfying yung feeling na makapagdonate. (The feeling is good, it is satisfying, that feeling of being able to donate.) - P8

Masarap sa pakiramdam na yung dugong binigay mo, magagamit ng iba. (It feels good that the blood you donated can be used by others.) - P5

These findings suggest that the primary motivation for donors to give blood is a selfless desire to serve the community, aligning with other research that shows people are often motivated by tasks that carry significant social purpose. This supports the conclusions of several international studies, which consistently identify altruism as the most common motivation for blood donation (Kuruvatti, Prasad, Williams, Harrison, & Jones, 2011; Sojka & Sojka, 2008; Maghsudlu & Nasizadeh, 2011).

This desire to selflessly help by donating blood is caused by two things: (1) awareness of the number of people needing blood and (2) their experience when they or their loved ones desperately needed blood in the past. First, participants want to help because they are aware that blood remains inadequate and expensive while many desperately need it, as evidenced by the following statements:

Yung nagmotivate sakin is yung other people na nakikita ko na they really need blood. (What motivated me is seeing other people who really need blood.) - P5

Alam ko naman maraming nangangailangan ng dugo. (I know that there are so many who are in need of blood.) - P9

Kulang lagi daw yung blood. (There's always a shortage of blood.) - P1Sa panahong 'to, napakamahal nga ng dugo at napakahirap hanapin. (At present, blood is very expensive and hard to find.) -P10

Kasi minsan madami ding nangangailangan ng dugo na minsan hirap silang bumili o kaya naman wala talagang mabili. So, kung magbibigay tayo, makakatulong tayo kagaya nung sa Red Cross na kumbaga ma-sustain yung dami ng supply para doon sa nangangailangan. (Because sometimes, many needs blood, sometimes it is hard for them to buy blood or it is not available. So, if we can donate blood, we can help; we can sustain the blood supply for those who are in need, like in the case of Red Cross.) - P7

In simple terms, the participant's awareness of the critical need for blood significantly motivated their decision to participate in the blood donation drive. Another reason for participants' willingness to help is that they or their family or friends experienced desperate times in the past when they needed blood. Having the rarest of all blood types, AB, P11 found it difficult to get blood donors when she needed it. Now that she recovered, she seizes opportunities to donate blood to help those with similar blood types as her.

Meanwhile, some donors already donated blood prior to UPOU BD Drive as they were compelled by a desire to ease the pain and sickness that their family or friends went through. Their experience made them appreciate the value of blood and enabled them to recognize the impact of BD on a lot of patients. Kasi yung chapati ko nagkasakit dati ng kidney failure so lagi akong magdonate sa kanya. Magaling na yung kapatid ko, magdonate nalang ako para sa iba din naman na nangangailangan. (Because my sibling had a kidney failure, I usually donate blood for him. My brother is well now, I am just donating blood for others who are in need.) - P12

Kasi one-time nangailangan din yung family ko. (Because there was a time when my family was also in need.) - P9

Kasi meron akong friend noon na nangailangan ng 19 bags ng blood, dengue patient. If you can donate at least a bag, malaking bagay na yon para sa kanya, kasi napakamahal noon. Tsaka meron kaming mga relatives na nahospitalize. For example, sa PGH, kita ko yung situation nung mga patient doon. If you could participate dun sa pag-donate man lang ng dugo, malaki yung impact. (Because I had a friend who needed 19 bags of blood, a dengue patient. If you can donate at least a bag, that's already a big help for him, because it is so expensive. Also, I had relatives who were hospitalized. For example, in PGH, I saw the situations of patients there. If you could participate in donating blood, the impact is immense.) - P13

These findings align with previous findings by Kuruvatti, et. al. (2011) which confirmed that one of the reasons why people donate blood is their ties with family, friends, and strangers. The experience of witnessing a loved one suffering from a terminal disease has led the participants to fully understand the tormenting situation that those patients and their families are going through. Their first-hand experience of the same situation breeds compassion which prompted them to act and help by donating blood.

### **Access to Blood as Motivation to Donate Blood**

Aside from significance or helping others, another prevalent answer for participating in BD is to gain blood access, the privilege that blood donors are entitled to.

Di ba pag-nagdonate ka, member ka na. So once na nangailangan yung family mo, Bibiana ka nila ng chance o makalapit agad sa kanila. (When you donate, you become a member. When your family needs blood, you can easily go to them.) - P14

In the near future din naman, may Mabe benefit din ako dun sa card. Kapag regular donor ka, may priority para din, in case of emergency, sa family. (In the near future, I will get benefits from the card. If you are a regular donor, you are a priority. Also, this will be in case of emergency, for the family.) - P15

Di ba pag magdonate ka ng dugo, tapos Ikaw yung nangailangan, priority ka rin sa hospital na mabigyan ng dugo, Ayun part din yun. (Isn't it that when you donate blood you become a priority in the hospital whenever you need blood, that's also part of it.) - P16

Kasi noon, nung time naming, Nakakuma kami ng libre, basta may card kami. Pero ngayon, di ba parang for prioritization na lang sya. So Ayun, parang makakatulong ka ng Malaki kung at least you could donate 4 or less times a year. (Because in the past we were able to get free blood, as long as we have a card. But now, it seems like there is a prioritization. So that's it, like you can be a big help if you could donate 4 or less times a year.) - P13  
Gawa yung benefit na meron kang access sa dugo. Yung last year, sinabi sakín ng doctor na ang pinakabenefit niya ay magbigay ka ng dugo para magkakaroon ka ng access sa dugo pagnangailangan ka din. (Because of that benefit that you have access to blood. Last year, the doctor told me that the benefit of donating blood is to have access to it whenever you find a need for it.) - P17

In international studies, the literature did not mention having access to blood as one of the reasons for blood donation. In the Philippines however, this has been the PRC's consideration. The PRC used to issue cards to all the donors which can be used as their proof as donors and can be exchanged for free blood. However, at present, the PRC ceased this process; free blood can be availed of through endorsements from blood donation organizers who have available earned credits.

These statements implied that these participants are doubtful and looking for assurance that there will be available blood for them whenever they or their family need it. For them, donating blood is similar to having insurance with the assurance that they will have access to blood once needed. This perspective highlights a practical and personal reason for donating, rooted in the security of knowing that blood will be there in times of crisis. This reason appears to be unique to the participants in this study, suggesting a potential area for further research. It may be valuable to explore whether similar motivations exist in the countries where previous studies were conducted.

### **Health Benefits as Motivation to Donate Blood**

Notably, participants also donate blood for health benefits. They consider the act as "healthy" (P18, P19, P2, P6), a means to "cleanse" (P20, P21, P22), or "replenish" (P20, P23, P16, P6) blood. Additionally, P24 pointed out that it is also a way to determine one's health state, blood pressure, and blood type.

May health benefits ang pagdodonate ng dugo. Nakakataba ng puso. Sabi daw nila, yung narerenew yung dugo, kailangan din kasi na bago lagi. (There are health benefits from donating blood. It flatters the heart. Others say that it replenishes the blood, it should always be replenished.) - P15

Para din maging healthy ako. Para maging ok yung health ko, yung circulate ng blood flow, Nare replenishes. (So, I can be healthy. To improve my health, to circulate blood flow, to have it replenished.) - P8  
In other words, participants place a high value on their health and well-being.

Given that cardiovascular diseases (CVD) are among the leading causes of death in the Philippines (Department of Health, as cited by Gloria, 2019), it is not surprising that blood donors express a desire to maintain their health and take care of their circulatory system. Furthermore, citing health benefits as a motivation for donating blood aligns with findings from international studies (Kuruvatti, Prasad, Williams, Harrison, & Jones, 2011; Maghsudlu & Nasizadeh, 2011).

The participants' responses indicate an awareness that blood donation can be beneficial to their health. However, they primarily cite health benefits in terms of blood cleansing or replenishment, without a deeper understanding of the broader health advantages such as burning calories or reducing iron levels, which in turn lowers the risk of heart disease and improves cholesterol levels.

This suggests that while donors recognize the health benefits, there may be a need for greater awareness and education regarding the full range of positive effects blood donation can have on their health. Remarkably, one participant does not only have one motivation for donating blood. In most cases, s/he has varying reasons. For instance, P24 donated blood for all three mentioned reasons, namely (1) to help others, (2) to gain access to blood and, (3) to be healthy. All of which s/he could have done by doing the same single act.



## Project's Best Practices

For the next research objective, it was identified that the project's best practices are the accommodating staff, conducive environment, smooth organization, provision of refreshments, and the initiative itself.

### Accommodating Staff

Accommodating staff is the most prevalent answer of participants when asked about the most commendable things that should be continued in the drive. They refer to nurses and UPOU-FICS employees as staff, whom they describe as approachable and hospitable.

Napakaapproachable ng mga staff. At pati siguro the way they really take care of the donors. They entertain you, kakamustahin ka. Siguro one way to give you motivation na magdonate unit. (The staff are approachable. And also, maybe the way they take care of the donors. They entertain you, and ask you how you are doing. Maybe this is one way to motivate you to donate again.) - P5

From the registration, syempre yung mismong pag-entertain nung mga nag-assists samin sa loob. Maayos rin. Very entertaining lahat, tapos accommodating. Di nga ako iniwan nung isa eh. Kasi alam na di mabilis yung pag-ano [flow] ng dugo so very accommodating saka tactful yung mga nag-assists.

Yun yung maganda sa kanila. Very welcoming sila. (From the registration, of course how we are entertained by those assisting us inside, they did well, too. Everybody is very entertaining and accommodating. One of them never left me. Because s/he knows that the blood flow was slow; those who are assisting are very accommodating and tactful. That is what is good about them; they are very welcoming.) - P9

Maayos naman po kasi parang well-assisted naman po yung mga magdonate. (It was well, all donors were well-assisted.)- P25Yung mga nag-assist, very accommodating saka madaling i-approach. (Those who are assisting are very accommodating and approachable.) - P16

Then, yun ding nag-assist sasin, friendly tags na-explain talaga niya sakin yung [details]. Kasi nga first time ko, yung mga dos and donts. (Then, the one who assisted me is friendly and explained to me the details. Because it's my first time, s/he explained those dos and don'ts). -P8

Sa receiving okay naman, dyan sa pagtanggap. Pagdating naman sa personnel, okay naman. Maganda yung approach, kung papaano nila pakisamahan yung mga patients, paano asikasuhin. Maganda. (The reception is okay. Personnel are also okay. Their approach is nice, how they get along with the patients, how they take care of them. Nice.) - P7

Related to this, participants also appreciate the free transportation offered by the university. Evidently, donors felt the care and hospitality of the university through ushers, personnel, and nurses as well as through the provision of free transportation.

### Efficient organization

Additionally, participants were also asked regarding the organization of the event. They all replied "successful/well-done" (P3, P27), "smooth" (P4), organized (P18, P26), and "good" (P5, P30), which shows that they perceive it as one of the project's best practices. Smooth naman yung pagkuha ng dugo. Successful naman sa tingin ko, kasi marami nagdonate. (Blood-letting was smooth. I think it's successful because many have donated.) -P28

Maayos naman po kasi parang well-assisted naman po yung mga magdonate and okay lang po. (Organized because the donors were well-assisted and it's just okay.) - P25Lahat maayos naman lahat. From the registration, sempre yung mismong pag-entertain nung mga nag-assists samin sa loob. (Everything is well. From the registration, of course how we were entertained and assisted inside.) - P9

## Conducive environment

Another thing that donors commended in the drive, which was held in UPOU Oblation Hall, is the conducive environment. “Clean” (P15; P22) and “comfortable” (P11; P17; P8) are some of their descriptions of the said place.

Malinis yung place tsaka nasa lob, air conditioned. Isa yun sa mga primary things to commend. (The venue is clean and located indoors, air conditioned. Those are one of the primary things to commend.) - P26

Tapos yung facilities napaka-convenient, ganyan. Mahirap kasi pag yung sa open field na yung mainit, mas mataas yung possibility na may mag-collapse, minsan pagka hindi well-ventilated yung area. (Then the facilities are very convenient. It is very hard if it's an open field which is hot, there is a higher possibility to collapse when the area is not well-ventilated.) - P13

Siguro Kino commend ko na maganda yung location. Kasi yung mga ibang blood drives na napuntahan ko, ano, mainit ganyan. So, feeling ko, dagdag yun na factor sa magdonate na mas mahilo pa. (Probably, I am commending that the location is nice. Because in other blood donation that I went to, it was hot. So, I feel that it's an additional factor for donors to get dizzy.) - P1

## Provision of refreshments

In like manner, participants also appreciate the provision of refreshments, which includes rice porridge, boiled eggs, boiled bananas (saba), Filipino steamed cake, and pichi-pichi, a gelatinous dessert made from grated cassava and sugar. Participants were highly encouraged to eat after donating blood. Consequently, they expressed that they became full and satisfied. P1 commended that food is readily available, meaning it can be accessed by anyone in case needed (i.e. cure to dizziness and weakness after donating blood). P13 termed the UPOU “generous” for food as she had been in the other blood drives where food is limited, while also acknowledging that food is not her purpose for joining BD. The statements below further captured the gratitude and appreciation of the donors for the refreshments.

Okay naman yung event. Nabusog naman kami after the blood donation. (The event is okay. We got full after the blood donation.) - P20

Food, kasi yung iba naman di pa nakain, kailangan ng food. Para mag gain ng weight at pumasa dun sa test. (Food, because others have not eaten yet, they need food. To gain weight and to pass the test.) - P15

May pakain na maraming food. So available na agad yung access sa mga tao in case na kailangan nila. (There are lots of food. So, they are readily available if in case donors need access to them.) - P1

Maganda yung experience, well-provided. Sa iba nga juice lang, saka tinapay. (The experience was nice, well provided. In other blood donations, only juice and bread are being served.) - P19

Lastly, participants also mentioned the initiative itself as something commendable in the drive. They expressed their high regard and esteem for the university in implementing this project.

Gusto ko lang sana tuloy-tuloy sya. Kasi hindi lang sya basta university undertaking kasi merong value yung ginagawa mo talaga for a lot of people. Ang hirap kayang maghanap ng dugo. (I hope that this will continue on. Because it is not only a university undertaking, there is value in what you are doing for a lot of people. It is really hard to look for blood.) - P2

Maintain what you have started. - P13

Syempre yung initiative. Kasi di ba public service din natin to. Saka di ba narecognize din naman yung UPOU dahil sa ganitong initiative saka parang mas mad alas siya ngayon eh. Dati parang once or twice a year lang yata. Maganda din siya na regular. (Of course, the initiative itself.

This is our public service. Isn't it that UPOU has been recognized because of this initiative and it seems that it's more often now. It used to be only once or twice a year. It is also good that it becomes regular.) -P16

In other words, participants hope that the UPOU BD drive will continue, sharing the same heart with the university which is to offer public service to the community.

### **Things to Improve on UPOU Blood Donation Drive**

For the third research objective, the things to be improved from the drive based on recurring themes are wider publicity to gain more donors, venue expansion and accessibility, and earlier dissemination of invitation letters.

#### **Wider publicity**

The most common suggestion from participants is to have wider publicity or more advertisements to gain more donors. P3, P11, and P13 directly stated this. Other similar answers are as follows. Siguro yung mas palawakin pa siguro yung kaalaman ng mga taga Los Banos para malaman nila. Kahit hindi taga Los Banos. Basta taga Laguna. Para makatulong makapagbigay ng dugo sa Red Cross. And pagka nangailangan sila edi maibabalik naman siguro ng Red Cross yun. (Probably widen the information dissemination among Los Baños residents, so they would know. Even non-residents, as long as they reside in Laguna. So as to help in giving blood to Red Cross.) - P28

Siguro mas matagal yung advertisement. Kasi yung iba minsan parang hindi sila aware din. Sabi "ah parang ngayon ko lang nalaman, sayang. Sana nakapagdonate ako. (Probably longer period for advertisement. Because others don't seem to know. It's only now that I learned about it, alas. I could have donated early on.) - P18

Pagdating sa pagpopromote, tingin ko hindi pa lahat alam na may donation ngayong araw. Mas ipromote nyo nalang din. Saka mas mag-invite pa kayo ng mga maraming, kagaya ng samin, yung grupo sa pagbababike, ganun. (When it comes to promoton, I think not everybody is aware that there is blood donation today. Do more promotion. And invite more donors like us, group of bikers.) - P12

Marami pa siguro dapat makipagparticipate sa mga ganitong donation drive. Kasi makatulong sa mga taong nangangailangan. (Probably, there should be more participants in blood donation like this. Because those who are in need can be helped.) - P10

This further proves that participants share the same heart and goal with the university (public service) so they also wanted to have more donors.

#### **Venue expansion and accessibility**

Meanwhile, participants also noted the venue expansion as one of the things to be improved on the drive. This is in line with gaining more donors as more spaces are needed to accommodate them. Participants communicated their want for well-ventilated areas or rooms. P13 has a strong point regarding this.

Dun sa Pakala nung information, ang kalakip kasi noon, mas dadami ang donor. Mas Kailanni Nyo siguro ng mas spacious na area. Kasi mas sisikip po kayo dito. Unless okay lang sa kanilang mag-intay sa labas. (On information dissemination, this will result to more donors. You may be needing more spacious area. Because you will get tighten here. Unless it's okay for them to wait outside.) - P13

P15 pointed out that a longer covered court can be utilized to accommodate more people. For him, this will aid in having a regulated temperature to avoid others from having high blood pressure or being hot-tempered. Likewise, P25 and P29 suggested to make the place cooler. P7 and P26 expressed the same concern.

Siguro managing buskin yung aircon. Mas Maganda kasi Talega kung well-ventilated yung area, yung bang mga Ganong criteria. (Probably, turn on the aircon earlier. It's really better if the area is well-ventilated, criteria like those.) - P7

Yun lang mainit sa labas. Yung iba kasi open, especially yung iba sa labas Lalo na dun sa Kalanga ng maraming Tao. (Only that it's warm outside. Other venues are open, especially those which require many people.) - P26

With the venue's expansion comes the need for more facilities and having the equipment ready in case of emergency, as stressed by P24. Participants also cited that the venue accessibility can be improved. Some of them think that UPOU Oblation Hall is far considering the elders who have difficulty walking from place to place, and people who are residing in distant communities. P1 and her friend even became confused and nearly misled in finding the UPOU Oblation Hall.

Madami yung pumunta kahit handy sa OU. Kung meron sigurong lugar na mas mapupuntahan nung iba, kahit yung mga nasa community na pwedeng puntahan na mas kita yung place, Ayun siguro mas Maganda. (Many can come even not in OU. If there is a place which is more accessible for others, that even those in the community can easily find the place, maybe that's better.) - P5

Yung venue. Baka kasi malayo siya para sa iba. Kasi nandito siya sa lob. And after mo magdonate, Kalanga muna, bawal ka mahilo, rest rest. Eh, maglalakad pa sila, malayo pabalik, yun lang naman. (The venue. Maybe it's too far for others. Because it is here inside. And after you donate, you need to rest first, you should not get dizzy. But they need to walk back, which is far.) - P16

### **Earlier dissemination of invitation letters**

Another thing to be improved includes earlier dissemination of invitation letters, especially to organizations. P9 mentioned that this is crucial so that potential donors from their organization can prepare days before the BD by not smoking or drinking alcohol. P12 also suggested that the BD drive be held during weekends to gain more donors since some have rigid work schedules or are working far from UPOU.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Theory of Planned Behavior provided a valuable lens through which to understand the findings of this study, particularly in relation to the motivations, best practices, and areas for improvement in the UPOU BD Drive. The TPB suggests that an individual's intention to engage in a behavior is influenced by their attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. By analyzing the data through this framework, we can better interpret the findings and identify strategies to improve the drive.

**Altruistic Motivation (Attitudes).** One of the most significant findings of the study is that altruistic motivation is the primary driver for participants in donating blood. The desire to help others, often fueled by personal or familial experiences of needing blood, demonstrates a strong positive attitude toward the behavior. This aligns with the attitude component of TPB, where individuals who perceive blood donation as a moral or compassionate act are more likely to form positive intentions to donate. For these participants, the belief that their donation can directly benefit others serves as a powerful motivator. To further harness this positive attitude, the UPOU BD drive can enhance its messaging to emphasize the life-saving impact of blood donations, further reinforcing the altruistic nature of the behavior.

**Access to Blood as a Safety Net (Perceived Behavioral Control).** The second major finding indicates that participants view blood donation as a form of "insurance" for themselves and their families, demonstrating a desire for security in times of medical emergencies. This reflects the perceived behavioral control component of the TPB, as participants believe that by donating blood, they can ensure a reliable supply of blood products in the event of an emergency. Donors who feel they have control over ensuring blood availability may be more likely to continue participating in future donation drives. To strengthen this sense of control, the UPOU BD drive could emphasize how donations directly contribute to the security of blood supply and public health, reinforcing the importance of regular blood donation.

**Lack of Awareness of Health Benefits (Attitudes and Perceived Behavioral Control).** A key finding is that many participants are unaware of the additional health benefits of blood donation. This lack of knowledge could impact their attitudes toward donating, as they may not fully appreciate the personal advantages that come with



regular donation, such as improved cardiovascular health and the opportunity for health monitoring during donation. According to the TPB, attitudes toward a behavior are influenced by the benefits perceived by the individual. To address this gap, UPOU should increase awareness of these health benefits as part of its outreach efforts. Providing informational materials about the health benefits of blood donation may increase participants' positive attitudes and, consequently, their intentions to donate regularly.

**Best Practices (Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control).** The study also highlighted several best practices that can serve as models for other BD drives, including accommodating staff, a conducive environment, smooth organization, and the provision of food. These practices are closely tied to both subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. The presence of well-organized, comfortable, and supportive environments likely encourages positive social norms (subjective norms) where participants feel encouraged to donate due to the positive experience and communal effort. Furthermore, these practices lower perceived barriers (perceived behavioral control), making the donation process easier and more enjoyable for participants. To enhance these practices, UPOU can continue fostering a positive and welcoming environment, which will likely influence others to participate as well.

**Areas for Improvement (Perceived Behavioral Control and Subjective Norms).** This study identified several areas for improvement, including expanding publicity efforts, improving venue accessibility, and disseminating invitations earlier. These issues primarily relate to perceived behavioral control, as participants may have faced logistical barriers that prevented them from participating. For example, limited venue accessibility and late invitations could have reduced the ability of potential donors to engage with the drive. Addressing these barriers could increase the perceived ease of donation, ultimately encouraging more participants to join. In addition, enhancing the drive's publicity could foster stronger subjective norms, where potential donors feel a sense of collective responsibility or social pressure to participate. More targeted and widespread communication efforts could increase awareness of the event, normalize participation, and make blood donation a more common and valued activity within the UPOU community. By applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to this research, we can see how the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control of potential donors shape their participation in the UPOU Blood Donation Drive. The findings suggest that the drive's success is rooted in the positive attitudes of donors, supported by well-organized events and community engagement. However, addressing the gaps in awareness of the health benefits of blood donation, expanding publicity, and improving accessibility is crucial for increasing donor participation. By leveraging the insights provided by the TPB, UPOU can enhance its blood donation efforts, making them more effective and sustainable in the future.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations for future research

**Quantitative Study to Validate Findings.** A quantitative study using statistical analysis should be conducted to confirm, expand, or challenge the findings of this research. Such a study could provide a more robust understanding of the motivations behind blood donation and help generalize the findings across a larger population.

**Socio-Demographic Analysis.** Future research could explore how donors' motivations and perceptions of best practices and areas for improvement in blood donation drives vary according to socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and occupation. This would provide insights into how different groups perceive the blood donation process and contribute to tailoring future BD drives to better serve diverse communities.

### Recommendations for UPOU and other BD Drives

**Enhance Promotion and Publicity.** To increase participation, blood donation drives should improve their promotional efforts: 1) Develop promotional materials that highlight the multiple benefits of blood donation, such as saving lives, ensuring access to blood in emergencies, and promoting the health benefits to donors; 2) Strengthen partnerships with local government units and community organizations to broaden the reach of publicity efforts and raise awareness about the importance of donating blood; 3) Leverage social media platforms

by posting during peak engagement times, following recommended posting schedules, and using targeted campaigns to reach specific demographics.

**Timely Invitation Letters.** Invitation letters for the blood donation drive should be sent at least one week in advance to give potential donors sufficient time to prepare physically. This includes engaging in healthy behaviors (e.g., exercise, proper sleep, adequate nutrition) and avoiding harmful ones (e.g., alcohol consumption, smoking) to ensure they meet the health requirements for donation.

**Optimize the Donation Venue.** 1) Ensure that the donation venue is cool, clean, comfortable, and conducive to a positive experience for donors; 2) Make the venue easily accessible, ensuring it is convenient for all potential donors. If the location is far from the main campus or community, consider providing transportation options to facilitate attendance.

**Ensure Smooth Organization and Provision of Refreshments.** Blood donation drives should ensure smooth operations by having clear, efficient registration processes and well-organized donation stations. Additionally, providing nutritious food and beverages before and after donation will help ensure donor comfort and contribute to their overall positive experience.

**Improve Staff Training.** Staff members should undergo comprehensive training to ensure they exhibit kindness, courtesy, and attentiveness throughout the donation process. From registration to post-donation care, staff should provide a supportive, respectful, and caring environment to enhance donor satisfaction and encourage future participation.

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