- RESEARCH PAPER -

"I DO NOT TRUST THESE ORGANIZATIONS!" WHY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DO NOT VOLUNTEER IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Why some people do not volunteer? After doing a comprehensive literature review, we summarized all potential reasons that have been mentioned so far. However, we also found important discrepancies between different studies. Thus, we concluded that an exploratory research can be useful to understand why some people do not volunteer. In this study, by conducting nine focus groups we analyzed why university students from various disciplines of social sciences do not volunteer in Turkey. Focus groups were realized with 52 university students in Istanbul. Results revealed that the primary reason for the reluctance of university students to volunteer was related to trust issues. In other words, in Turkey, university students do not volunteer as they do not trust NGOs. Some other important reasons were also discussed in the article.

Keywords: *volunteering, non-volunteering, trust, university students, NGOs*

Jel Codes: *M00*

"BU ORGANİZASYONLARA GÜVENMİYORUM!" TÜRKİYE'DE ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN STK'LARDA GÖNÜLLÜ OLMAMA NEDENLERİ

Öz

Bu çalışmada yanıt aranan temel soru, bazı insanların neden gönüllü olmadıklarıdır. Gönüllülük yazınında bu konuya değinen kuramsal ve görgül çalışmalara ilişkin kapsamlı bir yazın taraması bize ilgili yazındaki çalışmaların bulgularının birbirleriyle çeliştiğini göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, keşifsel ve görgül bir çalışmanın faydalı olacağı düşünülmüştür. Bu bağlamda, 9 odak grup çalışmasında toplamda 52 üniversite öğrencisi ile odak grup görüşmeleri yapılarak İstanbul'da eğitim gören üniversite öğrencilerinin neden STK'larda gönüllü olmadıkları anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Sonuçlar, öğrencilerin STK'lara gönüllü olarak katılım göstermemesinin temel nedeninin bu kurumlara duyulan güvensizlikle ilgili olduğunu göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin STK'lara gönüllü olarak katılımının önündeki diğer engeller de araştırma bulguları içinde sunulmuş ve tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *gönüllülük, gönüllü olmama, güven, üniversite öğrencileri, STK'lar*

Jel Kodları: *M00*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In its most simplistic version, the research question of this study can be defined as "why some people do not volunteer?" Thus, in this study, volunteering literature is used for establishing a theoretical framework. On the other hand, the aim of this study is also to contribute to the volunteering literature. Volunteering means to offer support to others besides family members or friends without getting a salary or a payment in return. Also, there must not be any contract between the volunteer and any third parties to get the main benefit of the volunteer's effort (Tilly & Tilly, 1994). Therefore, volunteering denotes spending time by being useful to others and without monetary gain (Smith, 1981). In terms of behaviors' formality level, volunteering splits into two groups: formal and informal volunteering (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Our spontaneous help to others can be accepted as informal volunteering. However, formal volunteering is defined as being a member of a formal organization that focuses on solving a social problem and to take on some responsibilities for that organization. Differently from informal volunteering, formal volunteering is not a spontaneous act. Formal volunteering is structured, and it has a plan (Amato, 1990). Formal volunteering is related to restoring some unfavorable conditions in a local, regional or global environment (Parboteeah et al., 2004). It is important to note that this study only focuses on formal volunteering. In other words, why people are not inclined to volunteer informally is not a research question for this study and in this study, the terms formal volunteering and volunteering are used interchangeably unless otherwise stated.

Formal volunteering has four main characteristics. It is a longtime activity, it is planned, it contains volunteer aids and these aids are realized in an organization (Penner, 2002). With these features, formal volunteering becomes different from spontaneous help that people offer to their kith and kin (Clary et al., 1998; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998).

A close look at the volunteering literature reveals that the reasons for not being a volunteer have barely been studied in comparison with the reasons for being a volunteer. For this reason, in the next sections we look at the literature that focuses on both why people do and do not volunteer. Later, it is explained why it is still important to inquire why people do not volunteer, by showing what is missed in all this research. In other words, it shows the legitimacy of the research question.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: WHY PEOPLE DO AND DO NOT VOLUNTEER?

2.1. Demographic Factors

Some research on volunteering found that demographic factors had an impact on volunteering. The main demographic factors that were related to volunteering were age, gender, education and profession (e.g. Schoenberg, 1980; Brady et al., 1995). Moreover, some other demographic variables such as marital status, race, income level, urban life, and having children, have been used by researchers in volunteering studies. For example,

according to Gillespie and King (1985), the motivation for those in middle age to help others and contribute to society was higher than in young people. In some research, it was found that in individuals of middle and senior age, the motivation to volunteer originated from altruistic feelings; however, the volunteering motivation of the young was correlated with their career plans and their worry about future. Thus, the young saw volunteering as an opportunity to get a kind of education and to learn new things (Frisch and Gerrard, 1981). On the other hand, other research reported the exact opposite, by saying teenagers were more inclined to volunteer than young adults (Schoenberg, 1980). Another study on the relationship between age and volunteering found that young adults were usually interested in being a volunteer for political, ethnic or education related causes, while middle aged and senior individuals were interested in volunteering in social services (Wilson, 2000).

Another demographic variable that could have an impact on why people volunteer is age. Some researchers used a feminist approach to explain the differences between men and women in terms of being a volunteer. According to them, since women are more caring, they are more willing to volunteer than men (Gilligan, 1982). However, although women really were more willing and motivated to volunteer than men, practically, volunteer behavior between women and men was slightly different in favor of women (Einolf, 2011). Interestingly, some research that was conducted in the US revealed that the gender of volunteers was mostly female (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). All these discrepancies between different studies might imply that it is impossible to explain why people do or do not volunteer by referring to a simple independent variable like sex or gender.

As it was mentioned above, there are some claims which argue for a relationship between education and volunteering. Education can be seen a building block that transfers social norms, values and beliefs from one generation to another (Turner, 1997). Some research reported that the more the education level goes up, the more the volunteering behavior of individuals increases. In other words, if the education level is high, then it is plausible to expect to see a high level of volunteering in that country (Parboteeah et al., 2004). Since education supports the ability of the individual to develop empathy, and increase their self-confidence and self-awareness, it would be logical to expect a relationship between education and volunteering (Brady et al., 1995). According to Penner (2002), education does not only affect the possibility of being a volunteer, but it also positively affects the duration of volunteer activities and volunteering in general (Penner, 2002).

In addition to age, gender and education there were some other demographic variables that might affect volunteer behavior. For instance, DeVoe and Pfeffer (2007) argued that some professionals, whose salary was determined per hour, were less willing to volunteer since they evaluate the time by considering its material meaning; the money. As was indicated before, volunteer activities should not cause any direct material acquisition, and which is why some professionals see volunteering as a waste of money for themselves. On the other hand, if professionals have leisure time, then this would increase the possibility of volunteering. However, it is exact opposite for unemployed people. It was reported that although unemployed people had more free time than professionals, their volunteering time was less than employed people (Wilson, 2000).

As Curtis et al. (1992) indicated, it was more likely to see more volunteer effort in prosperous countries because the urbanization was higher in those countries. With urbanization, industry and professionalization advance; thus, the workforce advances as well. It was reported that people spent more time for volunteering when their life quality increased and their basic needs were met easily. It was also found that higher education, higher income, being married and having a permanent residence would increase the possibility of being a volunteer (Smith, 1994 & Musick et al., 2000).

Finally, in volunteering literature, it can be mentioned that there is evidence of some research arguing that there is a relationship between having children and volunteering. Wilson and Musick (1997), for example, claimed that since families with children were more inclined to be in touch with other parents, teachers and with children, they would be faced with volunteer options more easily than other people in society because these confrontations help them to seize social needs and to call them to take responsibility.

2.2. Religion

It would be plausible to think that religion might affect volunteering because almost all religions and belief systems advise their believers to help others by sharing both material and non-material acquisitions. However, a comprehensive review of volunteering literature reveals that the relationship between religion and volunteering is more complicated. Moreover, similar to the demographics-volunteering relationship, findings of different studies on how religion might affect volunteering, contradict each other.

Religions usually aim to achieve better societies by directing people to sacrifice and to have mercy for others (Ludwig, 2000). Some research found that if being religious was a common attitude among individuals of a society, then volunteering behavior was also common (Parboteeah et al. 2004). Some other research, however, claimed that it was too naive to expect a simple and linear relationship between religion and volunteering (Bekkers, 2003; Ruiter & Graaf, 2006). According to Social Network Theory, to be able to explain volunteering in terms of religion, one must take church attendance into consideration. Research found that church membership was not a factor that might affect volunteering and claimed that visiting church regularly is the main determinant (De Hart, 1999; Hodgkinsoni et al., 1990; Watt, 1991; Wilson & Musick, 1997). Research also reported that there was no difference between volunteer and non-volunteer church members in terms of intrinsic motivation -e.g. to help someone- (Cnaan et. al., 1993). However, church members, who visit their churches regularly, have a social network as a return from their visits. As Bekkers (2003) identified, being a part of this social network increases the potential of individuals to volunteer. There are several reasons for this situation. First, the volunteering related information diffuses rapidly in that social network (Bekkers, 2003; Wilson & Musick, 1997). Second, the call for volunteering is repeated until someone from the social network takes the responsibility (Bryant et al., 2003; Musick et al., 2000). And third, it is almost impossible to refuse these calls for members of that social network (Snow et al., 1980). Therefore, since individuals visit churches regularly in devoted societies it would be logical to expect more volunteering there (Kelley & De Graaf, 1997).

There are important differences between religions, though almost all of them advise their believers to help others. Thus, it would be plausible to ask this question: Do all religions affect volunteering in the same way? Research aiming to answer this question highlighted that there was a negative correlation between the hierarchical level of a religion and volunteering among the believers of that religion. The level of reciprocal trust between the believers of hierarchical religions is generally low and because of this, volunteering activities are rare. Traditional religiousness sees religion as a set of rules; it also resists change, is not in favor of diversity and is conservative. Thus, it can be said that traditional religion is quite different from secular religion. In volunteering literature, some researchers reported that there was no correlation between traditional religiousness and volunteering; moreover, some research found that traditional religiousness affects volunteering negatively (Van Tienen et al., 2011; Taniguchi & Thomas, 2011). It was seen that people who believed in religion by following a traditional way, without questioning or reviewing it or by taking the actual time into consideration, prefer to volunteer as a part of their religious duties. Additionally, those people usually prefer informal volunteering. As Uslaner (2002) indicated, people who traditionally believe in a particular religion usually trust only their religious brothers and see other people from different religions as a threat. As a result, it can be said that religion might influence trust and the level of trust might affect the formal volunteering behavior of individuals within a society.

2.3. Cultural, Social and Institutional Factors

Today, almost everyone mentions the variability in meaning of a social phenomenon from one culture to another. Due to this, "How a phenomenon is affected by cultural differences" is a widespread and popular research topic especially in social sciences. In this context, the possible effect of culture on volunteering has been studied by several researchers. A specific dimension of culture, individualism-collectivism, has in particular been the subject of numerous studies in volunteering literature.

In its general meaning, collectivism refers to a cultural value that represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in a society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. On the other hand, individualism is a value that highlights individual autonomy and self-benefits (Hofstede, 1984). House et al. (2004) deals with collectivism under two different subjects: social collectivism and in-group collectivism. In this context, social collectivism identifies the level of possibility of individuals to do something collectively, while in-group collectivism defines helping members' inner circles like family members and colleagues (House et al., 2004). It would be more appropriate to relate social collectivism with volunteering because social collectivism ensures a broader perspective than in-group collectivism. Parboteeah et al. (2004) found that the volunteering rate was quite high in collectivist societies that aimed to maximize society's welfare. In collectivist societies, individuals are concerned about the problems of others, which is why they also have social cohesion. This social cohesion makes it more probable that individuals of collectivist societies reach each other through volunteering.

A review of volunteering literature reveals that political factors and institutions have

been treated as possible antecedents of volunteering. One concept that was analyzed in this term was liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is related to the level of a political system in bringing freedoms and having democratic institutions and rules (Bollen, 1993). Societies that are ruled with liberal democracy give their citizens the right of organizing freely and independently. Moreover, in liberal democracies, citizens have a right to be a member of any legal organization. Thus, liberal democracy empowers social cohesion and communication between citizens (Wilson & Musick, 1997). In liberal democracies, citizens have a right to establish NGOs as well as being a member of them. Obviously, this freedom would affect volunteering. Moreover, in liberal democracies citizens can express their thoughts and ideas freely. All these conditions prepare the necessary infrastructure for volunteering and it was found that the rate of formal volunteering is considerably higher in liberal democracies in comparison with authoritarian regimes (Parboteeah et al., 2004).

Finally, it was frequently emphasized in volunteering literature that the concept of trust was one of the possible factors that might affect volunteering. In this context, Uslaner (2002), dealt with the concept of trust as one of the main moral values that encourages civic engagement. A study from the US reported that individuals who believed and trusted others perform more volunteer action than individuals who do not trust others. Additionally, the former group also donated more money to NGOs than the latter (Brooks, 2005; Wang & Graddy, 2008). However, it must be noted that the level of trust in a society is primarily related with how institutions, especially the legal system, perform.

2.4. Motivation and Personality

One of the factors that can trigger volunteering is motivation. A volunteer motivation model that was developed by Clary et al. (1998) also revealed the backbone of the Functional Approach to Volunteerism. This approach suggests that motivation leads individuals to long-term and consistent volunteering and it also determines how volunteering would be experienced. For example, according to the Functional Approach to Volunteerism, satisfaction from volunteering is highly related to motivation. So, if the gains from volunteering activities fitted to what individuals had expected before starting volunteering (their motivation) then they would feel satisfaction and would continue being a volunteer (Clary et al., 1998). Additionally, it was also found that understanding what motivated an individual to go to an NGO and targeting that motivation by giving inspiring speeches would positively affect volunteers (Clary et al., 1998).

Perception of autonomy affects the motivation to volunteer. It was argued that individuals should feel autonomy to be able to be motivated to volunteer (Deci et al., 2001).

Ryan and Deci (2000) classified motivation under two different categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. It was reported that intrinsic motivation of volunteering resulted in more satisfaction and continuity to volunteer (Deci et al., 2001). Extrinsic motivation, according to Deci and Ryan (2000), is usually related to meet the demands of others, to gain new values, or it sometimes related to the need to do something good because of feelings of guilt. In comparison with intrinsic motivation, the durability of extrinsic motivation

would be weaker.

In terms of the common personality traits of volunteers, research found that volunteers were more self-confident, self-sufficient and optimistic than non-volunteers (Allen & Rushton, 1983; Hart & Fegley, 1995; Pancer et al., 1998). Moreover, it was also reported that volunteers were more dedicated to work and had more successful academic records in comparison with non-volunteers (Kirkpatrick et al., 1998).

2.5. Organizational Factors

An analysis of volunteering literature revealed that both NGOs and other institutions within a society (i.e. education institutions) affected individuals' decisions for being (or for not being) a volunteer. In some social organizations, volunteers are not seen as key people; instead, they are treated as if they were supporting units for salaried employees (Bowman, 2009; Brudney & Gazley, 2002; Gidron, 1987). When this situation cannot be managed professionally, it is possible to observe interpersonal conflicts in an organization and how these conflicts would lead volunteers to leave the organization. Conflicts between salaried professionals of an NGO and its volunteers could be related to duty stations, roles, extra work hours, lack of trust, and differing priorities (Kruetzer & Jager, 2011; Macduff, 1995; Musick & Wilson, 2008). Some researchers suggested that it would be useful to apply human resources functions such as employment, performance evaluation and job exit meetings not only for professionals but also for volunteers (Connors, 1999; Forsyth, 1999; Haivas, 2009; Hood, 2002; McCurley & Lynch 1997).

Some macro institutions could also affect volunteering within a society. In some developed countries like the US, Canada and Australia, volunteering would be a prerequisite for applying for a job (Hall et al., 2001; Baum et al., 1999; Serrow, 1991). For this reason, high school teachers encourage students to perform volunteer activities as much as possible and to reveal the experience in their resumes. Thus, it has been observed that students having volunteering experience in NGOs were preferred by employers if they had all other required qualifications. The main reason for this is that students who have volunteer experience are seen as better than graduates who have not ever volunteered, in leadership, critical thinking, and problem solving. In addition, volunteers' self-confidence level is also better than non-volunteers (Astin et al., 1999; Astin & Sax, 1998). Thus, in developing countries young people face the necessity of being a volunteer because schools and employers attribute positive meanings to volunteering (Katz & Rosenberg, 2005). Thus, as Hart et al. (2007) indicated, organizational support for volunteering could increase the level of volunteering, especially in developed countries.

Like the US and Canada, China also supports volunteering by encouraging students to volunteer in an NGO. China invests large amounts to create opportunities in which students can perform volunteer activities. By doing so, China targets the establishment of a society that has better harmony (Xu & Ngai, 2011).

2.6. Why Some People Do Not Volunteer

As was mentioned before, studies on why individuals do not volunteer are quite rare. One

example was conducted by Gaskin and Smith (1997) and according to this study, 40% of the respondents mentioned time constraint as a main reason for not being a volunteer in an NGO. In second place, 28% of the respondents said that no one had ever offered them a volunteer opportunity which is why they never experienced a volunteer activity.

In a study that was conducted in Texas, individuals were asked why they had never volunteered (Maritim, 2008). Respondents again mentioned the time constraint; however, interestingly they showed a lack of information as the main excuse for their inexperience in volunteer activities. They mentioned that they had no idea where and how they could be a volunteer.

2.6.1. Research on Volunteering in Turkey

Like international literature, it is hard to find a study that was conducted on why people do not volunteer in Turkey. However, it is important to add that it is also quite difficult to find a study on why people do volunteer in Turkey. Tayşir et al. (2013) analyzed what motivated top executives of leading NGOs in Turkey to volunteer, and their study revealed that the primary reason was altruism. This study also found that different age groups had different motivation for being volunteers, while the NGO's mission did not have any impact.

Palaz and Boz (2008) also reported that mainly altruistic motives drove adults to volunteer activities in Turkey. Searching for personal success and collectivism came in at second place according to this study. Thus, it can be thought that people in Turkey are inclined to volunteer by personal sacrifice and perform their volunteer activities by following a variety of moral, religious and traditional feelings.

The Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV) is an NGO that aims to be an umbrella organization for the civil sector in Turkey. TUSEV also regularly does research for understanding volunteer profiles and volunteer tendencies in Turkey. TUSEV reported that the volunteer ratio to population was not more than 10% while this number was 18.9% in Europe. In conjunction with this finding, 71% of NGOs in Turkey stated that they did not have adequate number of volunteers (http://www.tusev.org.tr/tr/arastirma-ve-yayinlar/tusev-atolye/sivil-toplum-ile-ilgili-istatistikler).

2.6.2. Critics of Volunteering Literature

A comprehensive analysis of volunteering literature revealed why individuals do not volunteer has not been studied adequately, although there was a large body of research on factors that motivated individuals to volunteer. It is understood from the literature review of the volunteering concept, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, it was presumed that if main motivators were covered then individuals would volunteer. In our opinion, this would be a problematic approach to a social concept like volunteering. In other words, it is necessary to conduct research that directly asks why people do not volunteer.

In addition to the lack of research on why people do not volunteer, research on what motivates people to volunteer seems open to criticism. The literature review of volunteering

revealed that research on what motivated people to volunteer did not analyze all potential antecedents; instead, each study treated one or two independent variables as if they were enough to account for why people volunteer. Obviously, this would be not enough to understand a deeply social concept like volunteering. For example, it was mentioned before the existence of studies that reported a positive correlation between welfare/being rich and volunteering. However, according to the Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) World Giving Index, Turkey was listed as 132nd among 135 countries. On the other hand, according to the World Prosperity Index Turkey was 78th among 142 countries. In this same index, Iran's position was 106th while being in 19th position in the World Giving Index. It should be stated explicitly that these are not exceptional examples. If the two indexes[3] were compared by considering the logic that we followed, it would be seen that countries at the top of the World Giving Index were not always the economically prosperous countries. To sum up, it could be thought that there is not a generalizable relationship between economic prosperity and volunteering.

Volunteering literature contains some studies that defend the statement that education affects volunteering positively. However, the Education Index of United Nations Development Program[4] revealed that Turkey was in 69th position among more than 187 countries while it was in 132nd place in the World Giving Index. Haiti on the other hand, was 168th in the UNDP's Education Index while their position in the World Giving Index was 40th. Thus, this evidence makes the positive impact of education on volunteering questionable. Besides, this argument is contradictory to the other argument that suggests volunteering is related to intrinsic motivation.

Religion was one of the other antecedents of volunteering in the literature. It seemed to us that religion would affect mostly the subject and the direction of volunteering instead of the decision to be or not to be a volunteer. For example, Thailand, the most religious country in the world according to Gallup International's survey[5], was in 21th place in the World Giving Index. 94% of Thailand's population defined themselves as religious. Hence, this result might lead us to an idea that there is a positive correlation between religiosity and volunteering. However, the second most religious country in the world, Armenia, was in 120th place in the World Giving Index. Finally, Turkey, a country in which 79% of its population defined themselves as religious, was in 132nd place in the World Giving Index.

It is possible to doubt that collectivistic tendencies of a culture would increase volunteering in a society. For example, the US was in 2nd place in the World Giving Index but is also the most individualistic country in the world[6]. Like the US, Canada is another country where an individualistic culture is dominant. However, Canada followed the US in the World Giving Index in 3rd place. Turkey on the other hand, has a collectivist culture but

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3 For 2014 World Giving Index https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/caf_wgi2014_report_1555awebfinal.pdf; for 2015 World Prosperity Index
http://media.prosperity.com/2015/pdf/publications/PI2015Brochure_WEB.pdf (Accessed, 29.11.2015)
4 For the Index http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index. (Accessed, 29.11.2015)
5 For the Survey http://www.wingia.com/web/files/news/290/file/290.pdf (Accessed, 29.11.2015)
6 Collectivism and Individualism levels of different countries can be seen at
http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/map/hofstede-individualism.html (Accessed, 29.11.2015)

as was mentioned, it was one of the worst three countries in the World Giving Index.

There was some empirical research in volunteering literature (e.g. Parboteeah et al., 2004) that reported liberal democracy would positively affect volunteering. Obviously, the existence of a deeply rooted democracy in a country might influence volunteering positively since it gives a better environment for organizing and for being a member of an organization. However, a country like Iran can be found in 19th place in the World Giving Index while being in 131th place among 142 countries in terms of personal freedoms. Thus, it can be said that the lack of a liberal democracy cannot be a fully explanatory reason for being or not being a volunteer.

Volunteering literature suggests that the level of trust in a society would affect the level of volunteering. Turkey could be an example of this claim. In a trust index[7] that was composed by considering the agreement level of people for the statement "people are generally trustworthy", Turkey was third from last among 57 countries. As was mentioned before, Turkey was also third from last in the World Giving Index. However, although Ghana was quite similar to Turkey in terms of trust level (53/57) the country had much higher place than Turkey in the World Giving Index (54/142). Iran is also another example of a country where the trust level is considerably low whereas the volunteering level is perfectly acceptable.

Volunteering literature emphasizes the importance of encouraging volunteering via institutions. In our opinion, encouraging volunteering by using institutions cannot be a sustainable way to increase volunteering in a society. In other words, if volunteering was required as part of educational life or careers, then it would probably not go beyond a onetime volunteering activity as individuals may perform volunteering just to have a legitimate resume. Besides, in most of the countries that were placed in top levels of the World Giving Index there is not this kind of institutional encouragement.

The concept of motivation and personality as a potential impact on volunteering has been studied by several researchers. However, these works focused on individuals who were already volunteers. In other words, these studies cannot provide an answer to the question of why people do not volunteer.

As a result, existing literature still needs new research to understand why people do not volunteer, and the following chapter will explain the methodology of our study that aimed to make a humble contribution to fill this gap.

3. METHODOLOGY

Although volunteering is an activity that is performed by people from different age groups, it is well known that what motivates individuals to volunteer may differ in accordance with age (Tayşir et al., 2013). By considering this fact we thought why people do not volunteer may differ in accordance with age as well. Thus, in this study we focused on

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7 For the Index http://ourworldindata.org/data/culture-values-and-society/trust/ (Accessed, 29.11.2015)

university students. For several reasons like having more free time, being socially aware, and needing social capital, it was logical to expect university students to volunteer. Thus, we presumed that understanding this group's reasons for not being a volunteer had a priority. We also presumed that students from social sciences related disciplines had more information about the civil sector and NGOs because the courses they took during their education contained topics related to these concepts. Thus, in this study we analyzed why university students from various disciplines of social sciences do not volunteer. All respondents who participated in focus groups were students in Istanbul area.

Our research question aimed to understand the reasons for specific behavior, which is why we undertook an in-depth analysis. Thus, it was preferred to use the focus group method, one of the qualitative research methods that makes possible to do an in-depth analysis. A focus group is a collective activity that aims to reveal different views about a specific concept (Kitzinger, 1994). As Morgan (1997) stated, during focus groups, respondents have the chance to interact with each other and these interactions provide an opportunity for the researcher to produce the desired phenomenon; however, one-to-one interviews or surveys do not have this advantage.

For this study, all focus groups were conducted in a silent room where respondents could see and hear each other easily. The respondents and the moderator sat around a round table during the focus groups and all the focus groups were recorded. Each focus group contained 6 to 10 people. In order to prevent one viewpoint dominating other ideas and influencing the comments of others, some methods were followed in the focus groups. First, at the beginning of each focus group, it was clearly stated that there would be no right or wrong answers to our questions. It was also highlighted that the diversity of answers would enrich our understandings. Second, for creating an ideal in-group diversity for a homogenous group (university students), diversified groups were formed by considering gender and grade as Bloor et al. (2001) suggested. Moreover, respondents were encouraged by the statement that there was no hierarchy between them and the moderator. Each focus group lasted 60-90 minutes depending on how many students a group contained, and respondents did not feel a time pressure to answer a question. In total, nine focus groups were conducted between February and April 2016. As Morgan (1997) suggested, during the focus groups general questions were asked first and then details were discussed. Thus, respondents initially started feeling relaxed and then later they started expressing their ideas and feelings more easily and comfortably.

Special attention was given to create a balance in terms of respondents' gender. Thus, focus groups were realized with 29 females and 23 male students. Since respondents were university students their ages varied between 21 and 25 and 71% of them had no job. All voice records were fully transcribed into a written form and analysis was done through those texts. Focus groups were conducted in the Turkish language as were the transcriptions. Excerpts that are used here in this article were translated to English by authors of this article and the back translation was done by a lecturer who is native in both languages. There was no any significant difference between the originals and translations.

4. FINDINGS

Considering the analysis of focus groups, it can be said that the main reason for university students not being a volunteer in an NGO is related to trust issues. In focus groups, students explicitly mentioned that they do not trust NGOs. Moreover, our focus groups revealed that also students had negative perceptions about NGOs. Under the following titles these findings will be discussed.

4.1. I Do Not Trust NGOs

Our focus groups revealed that university students in Turkey do not volunteer mostly because of a lack of trust in NGOs. When we expanded this finding by asking additional questions to the students, we discovered that there were different reasons for the lack of trust in NGOs and one reason was related to finding NGOs politically engaged in an ideology. In this context, A1[8] explained her reason for not being a volunteer like this:

"I do not volunteer because of the political environment. I imagine for example, if I was a member of an NGO or if I volunteered in an NGO, which political party would be the executives of this NGO? Do they agitate me? For example, I was taking a scholarship from Association for Supporting Contemporary Life (ÇYDD). 'If you do not come to our office we will cut your scholarship' they said. Since ÇYDD is a Kemalist organization, they try to impose its ideology, they force us to come. You can never know what the future brings. Maybe their Kemalist ideology will be destroyed and we would be on file. Because of this fear I cannot join any NGO. Since I avoid being involved in a political activity I hesitate to join any activity of NGOs."

Another student, I1, explained why she did not trust to NGOs with these words:

"There is no evidence that our help would reach people who need them. They (NGOs) cannot prove this. We do not know… That is why we cannot trust them. This problem may block our inclination to help. I cannot know if my help would reach people who need it."

A male student, O1, stated that his lack of trust did not only relate to NGOs but also related to politics and even to sports.

"I have started being afraid of our people, for example, recently, Deniz Feneri[9]… We have transformed into schizophrenics, we doubt everything, we do not know where our money goes to. Politics, sport, NGOs, all fraud… I do not think that I can be helpful in this environment."

Uslaner (2002) argued that if general trust, which symbolizes an individual level of trust for strangers, is low then it can be expected that that individual probably will not

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8 Names were not revealed in order to maintain contributors' anonymity.
9 Deniz Feneri is a Turkey based international aid agency. It was accused of corruption; however, in 2015 this organization was acquitted by the Court.

volunteer. It was mentioned that trust level is extremely low in Turkey. Coherently with this situation, in our focus groups, students expressed their lack of trust in both people and institutions and they also stated that this was the main reason for them for not being a volunteer in an NGO.

In addition to their lack of trust to NGOs, most of our participants stated that they thought NGOs were not sincere in their causes and they boasted. In this context, a male student's comments could be an example. Ş1 mentioned his uneasiness when seeing popular people on TV in terms of volunteering:

"I do not know if you have ever seen (celebrities), especially on TV? In my opinion those people are always pretentious. I cannot be like them. I cannot try to be popular through volunteering…"
E1 on the other hand, criticized people who contributed NGOs as a volunteer with egoistic motivations and blamed them for being self-seeking:

"There are people who come to (NGOs) with various aims other than goodness. I feel sorry when I hear this. There are people who volunteer just to add this experience to their resumes. That is why I found some parts of volunteering as just for show. Even if we do good things there, since there is a "show" I do not want to volunteer."

Interestingly, as was indicated earlier, volunteer literature contains dozens of studies that indicate how important the encouragement of schools and other institutions is for volunteering. For example, in some western countries like the US, Canada and Australia, volunteering experience is asked for as a prerequisite for applying for a job (Hall et al., 2001; Baum et al., 1999; Serrow, 1991). However, although volunteering literature insisted that this kind of approach may cause more volunteering activity in a society, our findings revealed that volunteering that comes from egoistic needs and enforcement would alienate youth from volunteering. Obviously, this finding can be related to culture and religion because in Turkey, where Islamic culture has a primary role to shape one's norms, values, behaviors and perceptions, it is shameful to show your help to others. Additionally, it is suggested to help others confidentially since the opposite of this behavior would harm the feelings of the person who is in need. However, in our opinion, this finding can also be generalizable to other cultures where the impact of religion is strong on shaping individual's values because "the left hand should not see what the right hand does" is common advice in almost all divine books. It is a well-known fact that the motivation to volunteer can be egoistic, altruistic or mix of both. However, our findings told us that seeing volunteers whose motivation was mostly egoistic would be a reason for others not to volunteer.

4.2. Nobody Taught Me How to Volunteer

For university students, the second reason for not being a volunteer in an NGO in Turkey is that they cannot see positive examples in their close circles, and their families do not want them to be involved in organizational activities. In other words, instead of motivating their children for volunteering, families ask them not to volunteer in an NGO mostly

because of having trust issues in organizational activities. I1 explained this situation with these words:

"There are no such people in our environment; we do not have friends who volunteer. It might have been different if a friend of mine had taken me to an NGO."

Like us, Oliveira et al. (2013) found that it was highly important for the young to have the perception that their volunteer efforts would be appreciated by their friends and families. Otherwise, their intention to volunteer would disappear.

Another participant, D1, said that not only her friends but also her family have never encouraged her to volunteer. Interestingly, D1 gave an example and mentioned how her family treated beggars when they knocked their doors. She said her family always refused beggars by saying "you are healthy, so you can work". In our opinion, this reaction to beggars, which is common in Turkey, is again related to having trust issues because it is a very ordinary situation to see healthy people who pretend they are disabled or are in need. Even the news on television always displays these kinds of images.

Gaskin and Smith (1997) found that 44% of volunteers indicated that they learnt volunteering from their families or friends. Thus, our findings showed that volunteering is not encouraged enough by either families or friends. Since students did not have encouragement, guidance or information from their friends and families, as Maritim (2008) indicated, they have not volunteered in an NGO.

Finally, some students also explained why they did not volunteer by indicating that they did not want to worry their families. For example, S1 mentioned this situation with these words:

"Recently I told my mom people were protesting about preserving environment in Artvin (a city of Turkey closes to the Georgian border) and she replied to me by asking what I would do there. Therefore, I could not go."

As Callero et al. (1987) indicated, the effect of parental attitudes was one of the three factors that would direct people to volunteer in the first place. So, if a young person thought that their parents would worry about them, then they would hesitate to volunteer.

4.3. Personal Reasons: I Do Not Have Enough Time to Volunteer…

Some of the reasons that the participants mentioned could be collected under the title of "personal factors". Among these personal reasons, the lack of time was the most often mentioned one for not being a volunteer. For example, M1 explained his lack of time, which makes impossible for him to volunteer, with these words:

"Business rush, school rush… I can hardly create time for going to the cinema at weekends and that is why it is really hard for me to find time to volunteer."

Another male student, O1, thought that volunteering was a full-time job that would demand all his time. For this reason, O1 thought that it was impossible for him to volunteer. O1 stated that he wanted to make a big contribution for people who are in need and for O1, it was useless to create small impacts by being a volunteer in an NGO.

"If I was a volunteer I would fully dedicate myself. Now I have very limited time. I desire to make a huge contribution."

This perception (to want to make a huge contribution) was also mentioned by some other students without establishing its relation to time. Therefore, it will be discussed later under another title.

In addition to lack of time there were other personal reasons for not being a volunteer. These are laziness/instability, running from responsibility, phobia, obsessions and shyness. For example, E2 indicated that she has never experienced a volunteer activity because of her instability:
"In fact, it (NGO) should be visited regularly but I am against regularity. I cannot wake up and go there each Saturday; I do not even attend my classes regularly. This is the only reason. If it was little bit flexible, if there was no schedule, I may go."

B1 also mentioned that not only being a volunteer but also performing any action that requires regularity, bored him:

"If something became regular and took an ordinary shape then it is boring for me. Then it is not volunteering but obligation. Thus, I do not want to do it."

N1 also stated the same by criticizing herself with these words:

"For example, I enrolled in a course for learning English; however, after a point I did not continue. Or, when I was at high school, I started learning music but I left after two or three classes. Always instability..."

As Kirkpatrick et al. (1998) indicated, volunteers are more consistent individuals than non-volunteers and volunteering requires dedication to work.

Laziness is also another personal factor that keeps students away from volunteering. Like T1, so many respondents stated that although they thought of being a volunteer, due to laziness, they did not apply to any NGO to be a volunteer:

"I am so lazy; I do not condescend to move from here to there. I always had it in my mind to join (being a volunteer) but since I am lazy I have never joined (in a volunteer activity)."

Some students explained their reason for not being a volunteer by saying that it requires an individual to take on responsibilities. M2 for example, stated that she saw volunteer activity as a burden and because of this she has never tried to volunteer:

"Being a volunteer seems to me to be a responsibility and I am not sure whether I want to take on that responsibility. Sometimes I think about it, but it seems to be to me a real burden."

S2 and Ö1 mentioned their phobias and they said because of their obsessions and/or their fears they could not join volunteer activities. Although we did not ask any question specifically about animals, Ö1 imagined NGOs that take care street animals and said:

"I cannot even touch them. I run away even if I see a cat around me."

S2 stated that she perfectly understood Ö1's situation by adding she also had similar phobias about animals:

"It is not because I am uncompassionate but it is because I do not have sympathy for animals."
It is important to highlight once again, students were not asked why they did not join any volunteer activities for saving animals; instead, they automatically remembered their phobias by thinking about animals when they were asked why they have not volunteered so far.

Allen and Rushton (1983), analyzed volunteers' common characteristics and found out that volunteers were more self-confident and optimistic than non-volunteers. Thus, it can be thought that having obsessions and phobias may decrease the chance of being a volunteer. Correlatively, another female student, Ç1, said that she was shy and explained how this shyness prevented her from volunteering:

"I guess because of shyness I have not been able to get involved with volunteer activities. Since volunteering is not a widespread behavior in our society I hesitate to take to the initiative. For example, if I see people or an organization that volunteer, then I would join them with pleasure, but I do not want to lead."

As can be understood from her explanation, because of her shyness and hesitation, Ç1 did not want to start any volunteer efforts but she was ready to be directed. Since she did not observe any volunteers among her peers, who may help her to join an NGO, Ç1 has not dared to volunteer so far.
Another interesting reason was stated by B2. B2 established a relationship between his unwillingness to volunteer and his despair for the future. B2 stated that nobody in Turkey was hopeful for the future and he added that because of this he has never taken any action for society. Thus, his pessimism led him not to volunteer:

"I am hopeless for the future. I also have learned helplessness. It is all over. Only the conditions of hopelessness change, that is it."

B2's comments were compatible with Janoski et al. (1998) who suggested that individuals would volunteer if they believed that their efforts will have a positive impact on society. Thus, individuals who think that their efforts would not be beneficial in terms of social

change, would not volunteer.

4.4. Prejudices, Biases, and Early Experiences

Our focus groups revealed that some students had prejudices which emerged from their perception of needy people that they may be in contact with during their volunteer activities in NGOs. Some students explained their reason for not a being a volunteer by stating that they hesitate to have contact with old, disabled and/or sick people. Needless to say, we did not ask them any specific questions about this topic; however, some students brought these concerns as some of their reasons for not being a volunteer. For example, M3 explained his perception of a needy person with these words:

"A friend of mine was visiting orphans. He asked me to join him, but I refused. …Or you go to hospital… Some people have no arms; some of them have no legs or some of them are blind. This makes me uncomfortable. When you get in touch with (sick) children on the other hand, there will be a tie between you and them. Then I start thinking that they would die. This also makes me uncomfortable. That is why I do not go (to an NGO that supports orphans, cancer patients, children etc.)"

Ş1 also shared the feelings and ideas of M3:

"A lot of people feel peaceful and happy when they join an NGO. Since I thought it would not happen to me I have never attempted to volunteer. I thought I would feel uneasy if I joined an NGO as a volunteer. It may make me feel happy to make them happy but I would feel very bad when I see them."

It was interesting for us to see that, like M3 and Ş1, some other respondents imagined disabled, old and sick people when they were asked their reasons for not being a volunteer, and they did not think of other kinds of volunteer activities. In other words, our respondents mostly imagined volunteer activities for individuals and they rarely imagined the social movements or think tanks or projects for protecting the environment. In our opinion, the media might have been a reason for this situation because TV channels especially, always air some ads or other announcements that ask for donations for sick children.

In our focus groups, some respondents mentioned their childhood experiences in terms of volunteering and added that this early experience caused a kind of trauma for them. This "traumatic" experience, later, turned into a hindrance for being a volunteer. E3 explained her negative experience and the impact of this experience on her with these words:

"It might be my trauma. I actually prefer not to talk about it but let me explain… I was at elementary school and we visited an orphanage; the orphans were really small, like 5-6 years old. I was 9 or 10. We played together, we chatted… We gave some things (presents) to them. And one little girl cried a lot when we were leaving. I won't join an NGO because I don't want to experience a similar incident again."

Although E3 criticized herself by calling herself selfish, it is obvious that her early

experience now creates a distance between volunteering and herself because she explicitly has a fear to face with the same negative experience.

Despite the volunteering literature mentioned the possibility that having contact with volunteering in the early years of life would increase the possibility of being a volunteer in later years, it is also possible that this early experience may cause a phobia, especially if confronted with a negative incident in that first meeting.

4.5. I Need Autonomy and I Want to be a Superhero

In our focus groups, respondents consistently emphasized that instead of being a volunteer in an NGO they preferred to volunteer individually. When we questioned the reasons for this desire, we found that students mostly desired to be a social hero. In other words, students are inclined to underestimate the impact that they can create through social projects at NGOs. In this context, K1's comments would be an example:
"Doing small works like carrying bricks does not give me the feeling that I am realizing myself in terms of volunteering. In fact, I want to see the big picture; I want to create big impacts. Otherwise, it seems to me, we do that job just for the sake of it. Or, it is like keeping a child busy…"

K1 and others, who shared her opinions, stated that they found it insufficient to volunteer in different NGOs and at different times. Instead, students said that they wanted to focus on a single field (i.e. protecting environment) and to create a substantial change to it.

Y1 also expressed his feelings by saying that to help needy people personally was more satisfying for him in comparison to volunteering in an NGO. Y1, who thought that it was his responsibility to help people, also thought that it was unnecessary to volunteer in an NGO as long as he could fulfill his responsibility personally:

"I volunteer as much as I can in my social environment; but, for me, it is not meaningful to volunteer through an NGO and just for one cause. If people take their responsibilities on in their daily lives, then they do not feel a necessity to be a part of those organizations (NGOs). People join NGOs mostly for socializing. People can do lots of things individually. However, they find it easy to be led by others… If you are part of a group, then, all your personal efforts would be attributed to that group."

4.6. Recalling Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The final most mentioned reason by the students for not being a volunteer in NGOs is related to students' ideas that they first should get their life in order. What they mean by saying "get my life in order" can be understood through the analysis of D1's comments:

"I can help others only after I fulfill my own needs. I guess that is why I am waiting (to be a volunteer). If I can reach the level of self-actualization in Maslow's pyramid, then I would be able to volunteer."

Like D1, most of the other respondents implied that they would volunteer only after fulfilling some of their primary needs like education, having a job and family. B2 also associated the possibility of being successful in a volunteer effort with getting his life in order. According to B2, he first needed to have economic, social and intellectual capitals to create a social change and social awareness. B2 explained his idea, which argued that his career advancement would bring better opportunities in terms of social responsibility with these words:

"If I was in a better position in any company, I would make my voice heard by using my title. I would ensure there is more help…"

As Musick et al. (2000) indicated in their Resource Model, having socially accepted resources like a better education, wealth, family etc. would increase the potential to volunteer. Thus, it can be plausible that the idea that students first should get their lives in order (Smith, 1994 & Musick et al., 2000). Similarly, Allen and Rushton (1983) implied that people who become self-sufficient were more likely to volunteer. On the other hand, they also added that having resources and capabilities assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, we tried to understand why university students in Turkey do not volunteer through NGOs. Results revealed that the primary reason for the reluctance of university students to volunteer was related to trust issues. In other words, in Turkey, university students do not volunteer as they do not trust NGOs. Obviously, the recent scandals that took place in national and international NGOs are the main reason for this trust issue. These scandals, which were related to the corruption of executives, child abuse or embezzlement of donations etc., have appeared in the mass media and some of them occupied headlines for days. Although these were just a small number of NGOs it can be said that their negative impact is quite wide. Thus, NGOs that function properly, ethically and legitimately, could be negatively affected by the illegal and unethical activities of others. As a result, it would be hard for them to find volunteers. In addition to corporate scandals in NGOs and having no confidence in institutions might have caused students to have trust issues with NGOs. In our opinion, there would be a relationship between students' distrust in NGOs (and non-volunteering) and the country's political, economic and cultural history. Since some NGOs are targeted to capture the government or since some NGOs serve groups that aim to capture the government, young people, justifiably, ask this question: "to whom would I serve if I volunteered in this NGO?" Obviously, it is necessary to change this perception by establishing new transparency and accountability tools; otherwise, it would be too optimistic to hope that young people would volunteer through NGOs. In this context, it might be useful to develop a national transparency and accountability index and encourage NGOs to compete with each other for being at the upper levels of this index.

However, having trust issues is not the only reason for non-volunteering. Students mostly see volunteering as a resource demanding job that requires taking considerable

responsibility, although it is not a fact. It is not a fact because most of the times NGOs do not ask volunteer to take on important responsibilities or they do not ask volunteers to spend a significant amount of time for volunteering. Thus, it would be useful for NGOs to explain what a volunteer does more properly. In our opinion, social media tools can be an effective channel to present volunteer options to the young. These kinds of efforts can also change some other perceptions of students which cause a distance between them and volunteering. For example, our results revealed that some students underestimate the social change or value that can be created through volunteering. In other words, they think that a volunteer should be a kind of superhero. Thus, NGOs should explain the importance of volunteering by showing how small help creates big differences. For example, Change.org always sends feedback to its supporters when a change initiative reaches its aim. Or, NGOs can create some small social entrepreneurship options for potential volunteers who desire to lead big social change.

Finally, how volunteering is introduced to a potential volunteer may create an impression. Thus, it is important to be careful about the personalities of potential volunteers, their phobias and obsessions, because otherwise they would eternally be kept away from volunteering.

Like any study, this one also has some limits. The main limit of this study is about its sample because most of the students who participated in our focus groups came from business administration and economics. Although we created heterogeneous groups by selecting students from different schools and grades, in the future it might be useful to increase diversity in terms of disciplines. Moreover, it would also be useful to develop a scale by using the findings of this study-and to study the same research question in a bigger sample.

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