

## Examination of ‘Volunteer Behavior’ of Students of the School of Physical Education and Sports

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to analyze the voluntary participation of Physical Education and Sports students to recreation, sports and social organizations. In this context, a three-behavior examination was conducted including the dimensions of: 1) voluntary participation and attendance, 2) terminating voluntary participation, and 3) in no way taking part in organizations voluntarily. Our research is a type of descriptive study and covers (n=400) students in Sakarya University School of PE and Sports. “Student Volunteer Behavior” developed by Auld (2004) as used as the measurement tool. SPSS 15.0 statistical software package program was used in evaluation of data. Results show that 64.3% of university students were found not to participate voluntarily, 16.3% were found to participate voluntarily but had left for now and 19.4% continue to participate in organizations voluntarily. Consequently, it was determined that new *motivational strategies were required to voluntarism*.

*Keywords:* Volunteer behavior, Sport volunteer, PE and sport

## Introduction

Participation of individuals to relevant studies is important to the success of volunteer human resources management and plays a significant role in management strategies of sporting organizations. In addition, community involvement also positively affects the achievement of such studies. Volunteer teams constitute an essential function and significant contribution to the success and effectiveness of many types of organizations. Therefore, organization managers should consider the satisfying of the expectations, participation, training, and study processes of volunteers as a priority (Farrel, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998).

There are many reasons motivating individuals to volunteer with a particular organization. Some key causes that motivate individuals to participate in sports organizations voluntarily include: 1) improving their personal skills and evaluating them during the organizational process, 2) contributing to the success of the organization, 3) social development, 4) the effect of social environment, and 5) an expectation of success in business life.

The efforts of university students serving as volunteers in sporting organizations hold a particularly important place in the Olympic Games. Organizing committees and educational institutions developed joint projects for university students to serve as volunteers in the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games. Fifteen thousand five hundred and thirteen (15,513) university students served as volunteers in Seoul 1988 Olympic Games. The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games Organizing Committee encouraged students from 25 universities to enlist voluntarily. Twenty thousand (20,000) students served in the games voluntarily following these efforts (Cashman & Toohey, 2002). Sports and sporting events provide a wide range of volunteer opportunities for individuals and especially young people. Organizers of major sporting organizations aim to inspire young people to volunteer as human resources.

Experiences of young people on sporting events and their participation to sports organizations will improve social awareness critical to the wider third sector. However, data about the volunteering behavior of young people is limited. In this context, determination of behavioral approaches of university students towards voluntary participation in sports, recreation and social organizations gains great importance (Auld, 2004).

Volunteer labor for organizations continues to get younger. Therefore, directors and organizers need to plan new types of training and approaches. The need for volunteers requires a new look at human resources management processes along with increasing the demand for applications at special event activities for young volunteers (Leigh, Lamont, & Cairncross, 2013). The purpose of this research is to analyze the voluntary participation of students studying in the School of Physical Education and Sports to sporting, recreation and social organizations. In this context, a three-dimensional study was conducted including the dimensions of: 1) *voluntary participation and attendance*, 2) *terminating voluntary participation*, and 3) *in no way taking part in organizations voluntarily*.

## Methods

The population of the study consists of university students studying in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Management during the 2013 academic year. The sample for the

study is n=400 students of Sakarya University Department of Physical Education and Sports Management.

“Student Volunteer Behavior” developed by Auld and Cuskelly (1999) was used as the measurement tool. SPSS 15.0 statistical software package program was used in evaluation of data [*voluntary participation and attendance (27 items), terminating voluntary participation (30 items), in no way taking part in organizations voluntarily (17 items)*]. The scoring for the items was between 1 to 5 and are defined as follows: (1) *strongly agree*, (2) *agree*, (3) *neither agree or disagree* (4) *disagree*, and (5) *strongly disagree*. These definitions are on the three-dimensional measurement tool. SPSS 15.0 statistical software package program was used in evaluation of data.

## Findings

**Table - 1**

*Age information of the university students who participated in the research*

Demographic	n	Min.	Max.	Mean
age	400	18,00	35,00	21

As seen in Table 1, the average age of the university students who participated in the research is 21 years.

**Table - 2**

*Gender information of the university students who participated in the research*

Demographic	n	%
Male	248	62,0
Female	152	38,0
Total	<b>400</b>	<b>100,0</b>

As seen in Table 2, the female participants constituted 38% and the male participants made up the remaining 62%.

**Table - 3***Volunteering behavior of the students for sports, recreation and social organizations*

Volunteering behavior		n	%
	I have never participated in sports, recreation and social organizations until today.	257	64,3
	I had participated in sports, recreation and social organizations as a volunteer but I left.	65	16,3
	I still serve as a volunteer in sports, recreation and social organizations.	78	19,4
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

As seen in Table 3, 64.3% of students stated that they have not participated in any sports, recreation and social organization as a volunteer.

**Table - 4***I have never participated in sports, recreation and social organizations until today*

I have never participated Because	Mean*
<b><u>I do not have the skills required</u></b>	<b><u>4,2</u></b>

\*Scored on a five point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (n=257)

As seen in Table 4, students who stated they had never participated in sporting, recreation and social organizations until today (n=257) reported with the highest rating that 'they do not have the skills required' with a score of **4.2**.

**Table - 5***I had participated in sports, recreation and social organizations as a volunteer but I left*

I had participated in sports, recreation and social organizations as a volunteer but I left. Because;	Mean*
<b><u>I do not have the skills required</u></b>	<b><u>4,3</u></b>

\*Scored on a five point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (n=65)

As seen in Table 5, students who stated that they had participated in sports, recreation and social organizations as a volunteer but that they have left (n=65) reported with the highest rating that ‘they do not have the skills required’ with a score of **4.3**.

**Table - 6**

*I still serve as a volunteer in sports, recreation and social organizations*

I still serve as a volunteer. Because;	Mean*
<u>I want to gain some experiences which will be helpful in my work life in the future.</u>	<b>4.4</b>

\*Scored on a five point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (n=78)

As seen in Table 6, students who continue to serve as volunteers in sports, recreation and social organizations (n=78) report with the highest rating that ‘they want to gain some experiences which will be helpful in my work life in the future’ with a score of **4.4**.

## Discussion

The purpose of this research is to analyze the students of the School of Physical Education and Sports volunteering behaviors concerning sporting, recreation and social organizations. In accordance with the collected data, the average of age of the participants is 21 years. Of these university students, 38% are female and 62% are male. Of the study group 64.3% were found not to have participated in sports, recreation and social organizations voluntarily, 16.3% were found to have participated in sports, recreation and social organizations voluntarily but had left for now, and 19.4% continue to voluntarily participate in sports, recreation and social organizations.

Systematic efforts would be required and effective for inspiring university students as volunteer human resources for sports organizations. Relevant projects and studies, carried out by universities and organizing committees, would contribute significantly. There are 700 volunteers working with the North Australian Universities Championship and other sporting organizations. These volunteers participate in many sporting events organized by universities, sports clubs and other institutions. During the 2002 Australian University Games, volunteer involvement included the participation of 16 universities and 2300 technical and administrative persons ([www.unisport.com.au](http://www.unisport.com.au)). Volunteering of university students for sporting organizations and their relevant contribution play an important role and especially in the Olympic Games. Organizing committees and educational institutions developed joint projects for university students to get

involved as volunteers in the 1992 Olympic Games. There were 15,513 university students who volunteered in the 1988 Olympic Games. The organizing committee of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games encouraged students from 25 universities to volunteer and as a result of those efforts, 20,000 students volunteered during the games (Cashman & Toohey, 2002). The importance of the participation by university students as volunteer human resources in sports organizations is considered significant by many countries. Studies concerning this issues should be designed and planned systematically in our country as well.

In a research including 770 Turkish university students, 61.4% of the students mentioned that they could participate as volunteers in sports organizations (Karli, Sozeri, & Kocak, 2005). Volunteer youth were invited to participate in organization and recruitment programs structured through public schools and universities in Australia (Auld, 2004). In this research, the expression *“I do not have the skills required”* was how students stated they had never participated voluntarily in sports, recreation and social organizations until today and that statement rated the highest at 64.3% with a score of **4.2**; the expression that rated the highest and which was selected by the students who had volunteered in the past but had left it was also *“I do not have the skills required”* with a score of **4.3**; and the expression which rated the highest and was selected by the students who continue to voluntarily participate in sporting, recreation and social organizations was *“I want to gain some experiences which will be helpful in my work life in the future”* with a score of **4.4**.

In the research conducted by Auld (2004) with the participation of students from Griffith and Queensland Universities, 24% of the students reported they have never voluntarily participated with an organization, 63.9% said they had volunteered in the past but had left it, and 12.1% stated they continue to volunteer. The students who volunteer said volunteering would contribute to their career plans. This expression is similar to the relevant findings in our research (Auld, 2004). Individuals, who volunteer in sporting organizations, attempt to improve themselves, get involved with the organization and contribute to its success in addition to achieving their own economic expectations (Ronningen, 1999). The most significant reasons for continuing to be a volunteer include personal attitude and tendency, sacrifice, participation, social interaction and personal benefits (Auld & Cuskelly, 2001).

In a research with the participation of students studying in the USA, the main reason students participated voluntarily in sports organizations was determined to be the contribution to their own future plans and career advancement (Gage III & Thapa, 2012). In their research conducted on university students from 12 countries for analyzing volunteer behaviors, Handy, Hustinx, Cnaan, and Kang (2009) determined the most motivating factor for students in their volunteer behaviors to be its contribution to career planning and professional development processes. In another study conducted for analyzing volunteer behaviors of university students, it was seen that the reason for 42.1% of the participating students to work events voluntarily and continuously was its contributing to their career planning processes (McCabe, White & Obst, 2007). The results of a Canadian study with the participation of 14,724 volunteers in the year 2000 indicated that 81% stated that they had volunteered in order to gain skills, 19% volunteered to develop their skills with the organization volunteered with organizations in order to gain occupational experience and to be successful in business life (Lasby, 2000).

The study conducted by Strigas and Jackson (2003) examined the motivational factors that prove effective in gaining the participation of volunteers to an organization. Teleological factors with 4.28, which is the highest value of organizational and individual goal achievement, were brought to attention in this study (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). Results of a study conducted on students studying in the UK higher education system indicated that students participate in social organizations as volunteers with the aim of contributing to their individual backgrounds and careers (Holdsworth, 2009). As a result of the volunteer behavior analysis of the university students examined within the scope of our study, the principal reason for hesitancy in participating voluntarily in sports, recreation and social organizations is their own opinion that they do not have sufficient skills or abilities to be effective and therefore cannot be successful. Despite this fact, students who do participate voluntarily in these activities believe that their behavior is a positive factor in their own career plans. It is our conclusion that studies and investigations regarding effective volunteer training and career planning processes should be part of university strategy plans, the educational curriculum for students, and other social endeavors and projects. The increased interest and participation of university youth will provide a positive contribution to social volunteerism and the social responsibility processes.

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