

Volunteer Management and Its Impact on Overall Operations

Hidayet Zahid GÜRBÜZ

orcid.org/0000-0003-0857-0190
Arş. Gör., Karabük Üniversitesi
Res. Asst., Karabuk University
hidayetgurbuz@karabuk.edu.tr

Abstract

Management has long been a key factor in organizational success. Today, non-profit organizations are increasingly significant, expanding their influence both in Türkiye and globally. Like businesses, they rely on effective management to achieve sustainable operations. Volunteerism, historically essential to non-profits, is also crucial to their success, making volunteer management a strategic focus. This dissertation will examine the management style of non-profits, assess the impact of volunteer management on overall performance, and address key challenges in managing volunteers.

In this project, it shall be tried to find out managerial issues on volunteerism in a non-profit organisation scope of Türkiye as well as define the influences of the management style of non-profit organisation. Thus, it might be occasion for better management structure which is more profitable, sustainable and convenient management style to manage volunteers in Türkiye.

It shall be needed to undertake primary research which involves quantitative research. This research will include questionnaire separately to volunteers in non-profit organisations and managers of non-profit organisations. Further, this project aims to

examine the managerial issues and its influences on volunteers and voluntary operations of the non-profit organisation.

Keywords: Volunteer, Management, NPO, Voluntary Operations

Gönüllü Yönetimi ve Bunun Genel İşleyişe Etkisi

Öz

Yönetim uzun zamandır kurumsal başarıda önemli bir faktör olmuştur. Günümüzde, kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlar giderek daha önemli hale gelmekte ve Türkiye'de olduğu kadar küresel olarak etkilerini artırmaktadır. Kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlar, firmalar gibi, sürdürülebilir operasyonlar elde etmek için etkili yönetim anlayışına güvenmektedirler. Tarihsel olarak kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlar için önemli olan gönüllülük, başarıları için de hayati önem taşımakta ve gönüllü yönetimini stratejik bir odak noktası haline getirmektedir. Bu çalışmada, kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşların yönetim tarzı incelenecek, gönüllü yönetiminin genel performans üzerindeki etkisi değerlendirilecek ve gönüllüleri yönetmedeki temel zorluklar ele alınacaktır.

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'deki kâr amacı gütmeyen bir kuruluş kapsamında gönüllülükle ilgili yönetim sorunlarını bulmaya ve kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşun yönetim tarzının etkilerini tanımlamaya çalışılacaktır. Bu nedenle, Türkiye'de gönüllüleri yönetmek için daha kârlı, sürdürülebilir ve uygun bir yönetim tarzı olan daha iyi bir yönetim yapısı için örnek teşkil edebilir.

Nicel araştırma yöntemi ile gerçekleştirilen bu araştırma, kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlardaki gönüllülere ve kar amacı gütmeyen kuruluşların yöneticilerine ayrı ayrı gerçekleştirilen anket sonuçlarını içermektedir. Çalışma, kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşların yönetsel sorunlarını ve bunların gönüllüler ve gönüllü faaliyetleri üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gönüllü, Yönetim, STK, KAGK, Kar Amacı Gütmeyen Kuruluşlar, Gönüllü Çalışmaları

Introduction

Nowadays, non-governmental organisations that develop social capital via their volunteer operations have become an indispensable feature of social life. Moreover, in today's modern societies, non-profit organisations continue to proliferate, day-by-day, whereby these organisations are constituted of volunteers and are seen as a sign of advanced civilisation. Non-profit organisations play an active role in spreading human rights, freedom, equality, solidarity and global peace – aspects that have become new values in the world for increasing the social balance and welfare on the global level.

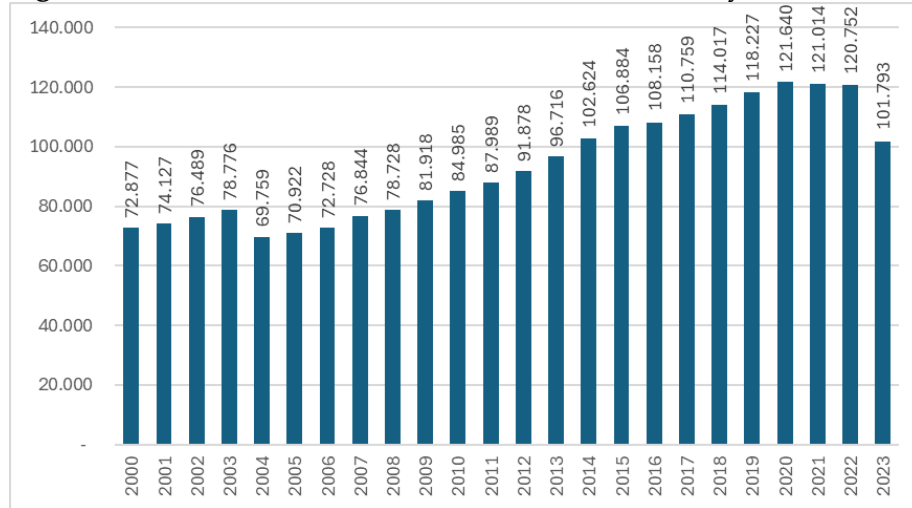
The most important factor for such voluntary operations, as constitute the main activities of non-profit organisations, may be human resources. Volunteers, as a human resource, fulfil a social responsibility by contributing to voluntary activities in non-profit organisations. However, to ensure volunteers perform effectively and thoroughly, professional volunteer management is needed. For these reasons, the management style of a non-profit organisation (as

includes volunteer management) will be investigated in regards to how it impacts on the overall activities undertaken.

The Current Scenario of Non-Profit Organisations and Volunteers in Turkiye

Non-profit organisations assume a significant position in many societies. For exturkytample, some studies have pertained to non-profit organisations in Turkiye – such as Gungor & Colgecen (2013) and Kurt & Tas (2015). It has also been found that the number of non-profit organisations increases year-by-year, as seen in Figure 1 In the case of Turkiye, more than 100.000 active associations and foundations operated as non-profit since 2014 (Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü, nd.).

Figure 1: Active Associations and Foundations in Turkiye

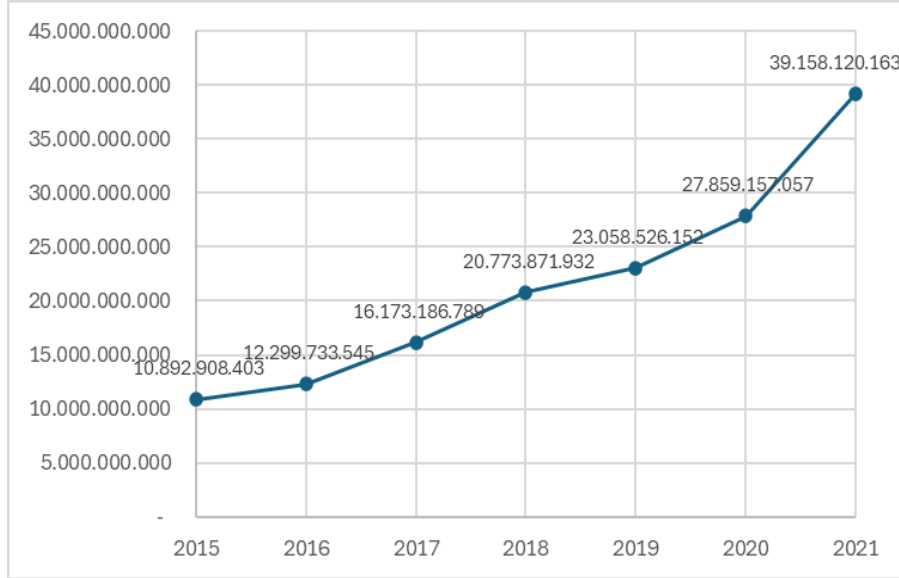


Source: Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü

It is important to highlight here that the revenue of the non-profit organisations has been going up year by year as seen from the Figure 2. When this graph showing the income of associations in Turkiye from 2015 to 2021 is examined, it is understood that the total

income of associations is effective in the country's economy. In 2021 it was almost 40 billion Turkish liras which is a huge amount as much as the budget of some of the ministries of Türkiye.

Figure 2: Annual Revenue of the Non-Profit Organisations



Source: Sivil Toplumla İlişkiler Genel Müdürlüğü

Literature Review

Volunteer management has been extensively studied across various contexts, with researchers highlighting its role in enhancing organisational outcomes. Shin and Kleiner (2003) emphasize the importance of structured management tools, including planning, recruitment, training, and recognition, to create effective volunteer programs. Their study underscores the need for clear job descriptions, proper screening mechanisms, and ongoing support to foster volunteer satisfaction and productivity.

Carvalho and Sampaio (2017) investigated volunteer management practices in Portuguese NPOs, identifying key dimensions such as strategic planning, recruitment, performance

appraisal, and volunteer retention. They found that organisations with formalised management practices, such as volunteer orientation and regular feedback, achieved higher levels of volunteer engagement and loyalty. These findings align with Hager and Brudney (2004), who reported that ineffective management practices are a leading cause of volunteer turnover, with 40% of volunteers citing poor organisational practices as their reason for leaving.

Gungor and Colgecen (2013) examined the role of volunteer management in Turkish NPOs, highlighting challenges such as resource constraints and low institutionalisation levels. They advocate for professionalised management approaches, including tailored training programs and motivation strategies, to address these issues. Similarly, Al Mutawa (2015) explored the impact of management practices on volunteer motivation and satisfaction, demonstrating a strong correlation between recognition efforts and volunteer retention. Al Mutawa's study further suggests that regular appreciation and acknowledgment significantly enhance volunteers' commitment to organisational goals.

Volunteer motivation is another critical area of study. Taysir et al. (2013) categorize volunteer motivations into altruistic and egoistic dimensions, noting that volunteers often seek personal growth and social connections alongside contributing to societal well-being. This dual perspective is supported by Inglis and Cleave (2006), who identify six motivational dimensions, including self-worth enhancement, community contribution, and individual relationship building.

According to Cuskelly et al. (2006), this planning process includes several steps – such as the provision of job descriptions,

succession planning, encouragement and the identification and targeting of potential volunteers. Nevertheless, without additional motivating factors, planning cannot motivate volunteers. Moreover, planning is expected to invoke some factors that are directly concerned with volunteer satisfaction – for example organisation policies and procedures and the job descriptions of volunteers.

Moreover, according to Cuskelly et al. (2006), Holtom et al. (2008) and Mudor & Tooksoon (2011), volunteer motivation, meaningful work, satisfaction, management practices, globalisation, the rate of technological advancement, supervision, job training and pay practice are the main factors to contribute to volunteer retention

Despite these insights, gaps remain in understanding the specific impacts of volunteer management practices on overall organisational performance, particularly in the Turkish context. This study aims to address these gaps by building on existing research and providing actionable recommendations for improving volunteer management in NPOs.

Methodology

A positivist philosophy and deductive research approach were employed. Quantitative data were collected via an online survey distributed to Turkish NPOs. The survey consisted of 25 questions covering demographic information and managerial practices, including planning, recruitment, support, and recognition. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 24.

The research targeted volunteers and managers within Turkish NPOs. The survey was designed to ensure accessibility, with questions

tailored to gather insights into the effectiveness of current management practices. Participants were selected to represent a diverse range of NPOs to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in volunteer management.

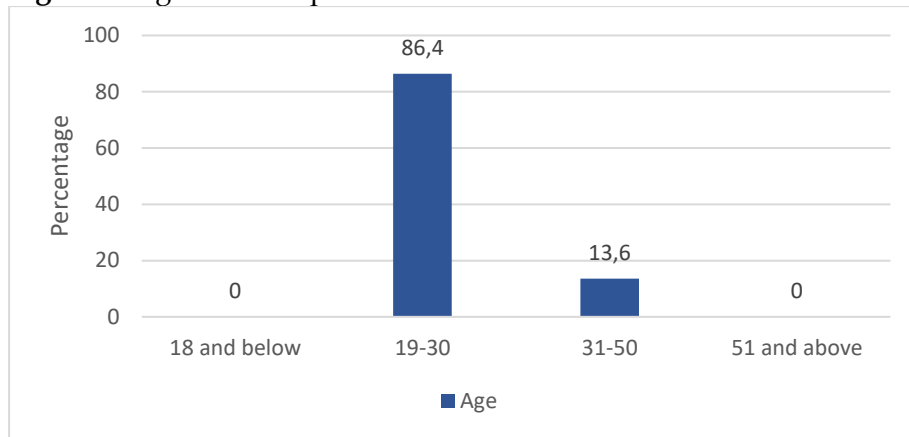
Results

Demographic Variables

The data includes six demographic variables: gender, age, educational status, job status, years of volunteer service, and voluntary position in a non-profit organization. Gender distribution was nearly equal, with females making up 55% and males 45%, indicating gender does not significantly impact volunteerism.

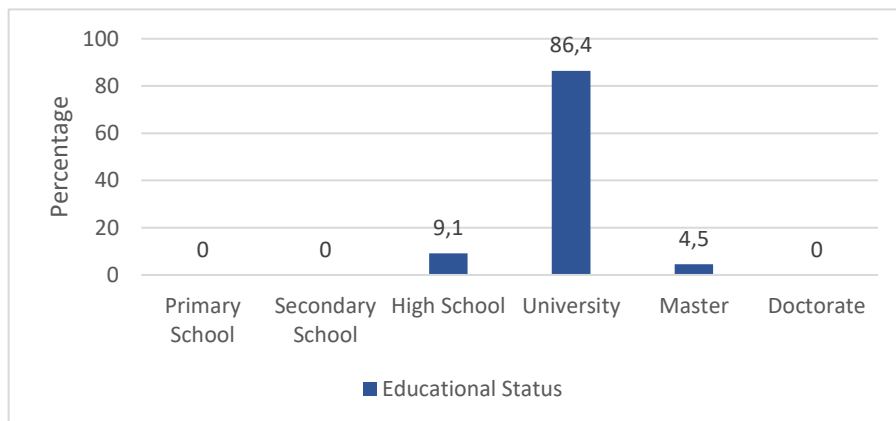
Age data (Figure 3) shows participants were aged between 19 and 50 years, with 86.4% falling in this range. The largest group was 19-30 years old (72.8%), and no respondents were under 18 or over 50.

Figure 3: Age of Participants



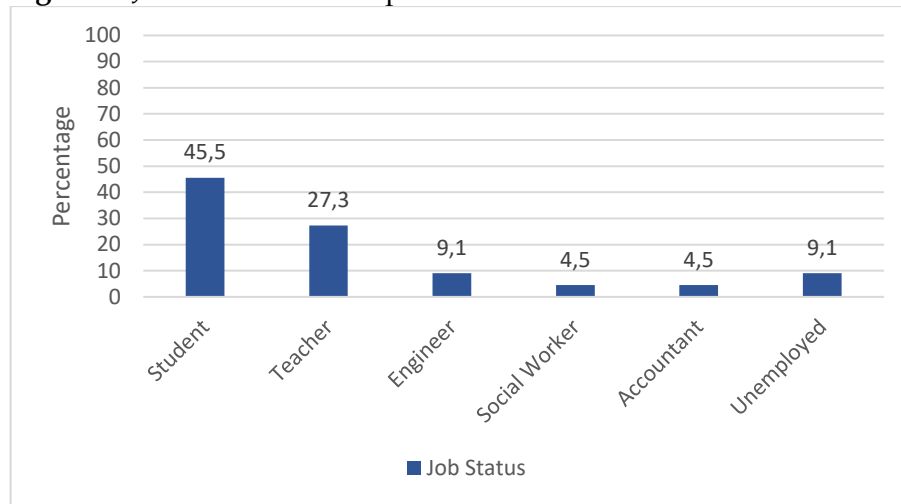
Educational status (Figure 4) reveals most participants held an undergraduate degree (86.4%), while 4.5% had a Master’s degree, and none had only primary or secondary education or a doctorate.

Figure 4: Educational Status of Participants



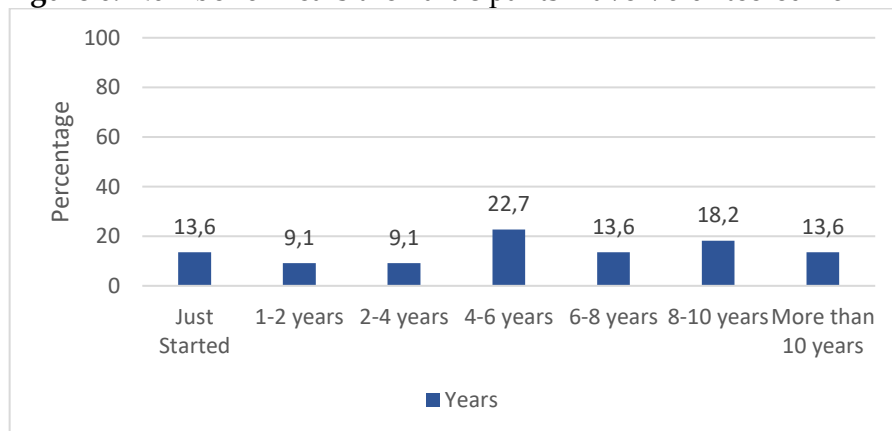
Regarding job status (Figure 5), 45.5% were students, followed by teachers (27.3%). Engineers and unemployed individuals each comprised 9.1%, while social workers and accountants made up 4.5% each.

Figure 5: Job Status of Participants



Years of volunteer service (Figure 6) were evenly distributed, indicating a mix of experience levels among participants.

Figure 6: Number of Years the Participants Have Volunteered For



Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used as the first step of analysing the data in the research model. The mean of the data collected ranged from 3.71 ('Recruiting') to 4.21 ('Supporting'). The mean of the 'Planning' and 'Recognising' factors was 3.77 and 3.74, respectively.

The standard deviation is related to all topics in Table 1. It can be seen that the deviation has a maximum of 1.06 (Recognising’).

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<i>Planning</i>	3.77	0.84	83 %
<i>Recruiting</i>	3.71	0.95	74 %
<i>Supporting</i>	4.21	0.90	86 %
<i>Recognising</i>	3.74	1.06	80 %

Exploration Factors

This section will include survey results on managerial issues such as planning, recruitment, support and recognition. These sections of the survey will be evaluated.

The mean scores for the planning section ranged from 3.27 to 4.05, with the highest standard deviation of 0.94 observed for the first issue. This indicates that identifying potential volunteers before events is uncommon in non-profits and had the most varied responses, being deemed the least significant issue. Conversely, the third issue, with a relatively high mean, was considered the most significant, reflecting the importance of detailed communication for general operations.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Planning Questions

<u>PLANNING</u>	<i>Never</i> (1)	<i>Rarely</i> (2)	<i>Sometimes</i> (3)	<i>Often</i> (4)	<i>Always</i> (5)	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<i>1-Identified potential volunteers before events begin.</i>	4.55%	13.64%	36.36%	40.91%	4.55%	3.27	0.94	76%
<i>2-Which task the volunteers will perform is certain.</i>	-	4.55%	22.73%	63.64%	9.09%	3.77	0.69	82%
<i>3-Detailed information is provided about the task to be performed.</i>	-	4.55%	18.18%	50%	27.27%	4.00	0.82	88%
<i>4-Tasks are given according to the experience, skill and qualification of the volunteer.</i>	-	4.55%	22.73%	36.36%	36.36%	4.05	0.90	86%

The survey addressed recruiting in three questions. The second issue had the highest mean (4.32), with half of the participants stating their organizations were always open to volunteer admissions, making it the most significant. The third issue had the largest standard deviation (1.40) and the lowest mean (2.59), indicating varied responses and the minimal use and importance of advertising for volunteer recruitment.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Recruiting Questions

<i>RECRUITING</i>	<i>Never (1)</i>	<i>Rarely (2)</i>	<i>Someti mes (3)</i>	<i>Often (4)</i>	<i>Always (5)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standar d Deviati on</i>	<i>Signific ance</i>
<i>1-Recruit volunteers from diverse backgrounds.</i>	-	-	13.64%	50.00%	36.36%	4.23	0.69	79%
<i>2-Constantly open to volunteer admissions.</i>	-	-	18.18%	31.82%	50.00%	4.32	0.78	82%
<i>3-Advertising is used for volunteer searches (i.e., printed, online.)</i>	22.73%	36.36%	18.18%	4.55%	18.18%	2.59	1.40	61%

The survey addressed resource support in five questions, with mean scores ranging from 4.00 to 4.36. The second issue had the highest mean (4.36) and significance (89%), indicating that most participants believe non-profits introduce new volunteers to others, making it the most important issue in this section. Additionally, all significant percentages exceeded the 80% threshold, reflecting strong agreement.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Supporting Questions

<i>SUPPORTING</i>	<i>Never</i> (1)	<i>Rarely</i> (2)	<i>Sometimes</i> (3)	<i>Often</i> (4)	<i>Always</i> (5)	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard</i> <i>Deviation</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<i>1-Ensure that volunteers operate within a code of acceptable behaviour.</i>	-	4.55%	4.55%	45.45%	45.45%	4.32	0.78	86%
<i>2-Introduce new volunteers to others.</i>	-	4.55%	13.64%	22.73%	59.09%	4.36	0.90	89%
<i>3-Provide support to volunteers in their roles.</i>	-	4.55%	9.09%	36.36%	50.00%	4.32	0.84	89%
<i>4-The volunteer's workload is determined.</i>	-	9.09%	13.64%	40.91%	36.36%	4.05	0.95	83%
<i>5-Provide opportunities or support for volunteer skill development.</i>	4.55%	4.55%	9.09%	50.00%	31.82%	4.00	1.02	82%

The survey on 'recognising' showed mean scores between 3.41 and 4.18, with the second issue having the highest mean, indicating that non-profits often thank volunteers for their efforts and that this is considered the most significant. Conversely, providing special awards to active volunteers was seen as the least important. Standard deviations were above 1 for all issues except one, showing varied opinions among participants regarding recognition practices.

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of Recognising Questions

<i>RECOGNISIN</i> <i>Ç</i>	<i>Never</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>Rarely</i> <i>(2)</i>	<i>Someti</i> <i>mes</i> <i>(3)</i>	<i>Often</i> <i>(4)</i>	<i>Always</i> <i>(5)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standa</i> <i>rd</i> <i>Deviati</i> <i>on</i>	<i>Signific</i> <i>ance</i>
<i>1-The skills of volunteers are determined.</i>	4.55%	18.18%	9.09%	31.82%	36.36%	3.77	1.27	82%
<i>2-Thank volunteers for their efforts.</i>	-	9.09%	13.64%	27.27%	50.00%	4.18	1.01	89%
<i>3-Volunteer job is clearly appreciated.</i>	4.55%	9.09%	36.36%	18.18%	31.82%	3.64	1.18	79%
<i>4-Provide special awards for active volunteers.</i>	4.55%	9.09%	45.45%	18.18%	22.73%	3.45	1.10	74%
<i>5- Performance of the volunteer is monitored.</i>	-	-	31.82%	36.36%	31.82%	4.00	0.82	82%
<i>6-Feedback to the volunteer is made about the performance.</i>	-	18.18%	40.91%	22.73%	18.18%	3.41	1.01	76%

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Discussion

The findings indicate that professional volunteer management practices significantly impact the efficiency of NPOs. For instance, providing training and recognition fosters volunteer commitment, while strategic recruitment ensures a steady influx of motivated individuals. Planning practices that align with organisational

objectives can enhance the effectiveness of volunteer programs, ensuring that resources are utilised efficiently.

Challenges such as limited resources and inadequate planning were identified as significant barriers to effective volunteer management. Many NPOs in Turkiye operate with constrained budgets, which limits their ability to invest in comprehensive management systems. Addressing these challenges requires innovative solutions, such as leveraging digital platforms for recruitment and engagement or collaborating with corporate sponsors to secure funding for volunteer programs.

This study highlights the necessity of adopting a formalised approach to volunteer management. Insights from existing literature (Al Mutawa, 2015; Gungor and Colgecen, 2013) support these findings, showing that effective management practices not only improve volunteer satisfaction but also enhance organisational outcomes. For example, recognition strategies, as suggested by previous studies, have a profound impact on volunteer retention, demonstrating the universal applicability of these practices across different contexts.

Conclusion

Volunteer management is a cornerstone for the success of NPOs. By focusing on structured planning, effective recruitment, and ongoing support, organisations can improve both volunteer satisfaction and operational efficiency. The study underscores the importance of recognising volunteers' contributions and providing them with the necessary resources to perform their roles effectively.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of appreciation and inclusivity can strengthen the bond between volunteers and organisations.

Future research could explore the integration of digital tools in volunteer management and comparative studies across different regions. Additionally, examining the long-term impact of effective management practices on volunteer retention and organisational sustainability could provide valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers.

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