

## STK EĞİTİMİNİN GÖNÜLLÜK EĞİLİMİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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### ÖZET

*Gönüllü kuruluşların en önemli sorunlarından birisi, gönüllü tabanını zenginleştirememeleridir. Bir kuruluşun etkinliği sahip olduğu insan gücüne ve onun niteliğine bağlıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin STK'lara ilişkin aldıkları derslerin, gönüllüğü nasıl algıladıkları ve gönüllü olma davranışı ve niyetlerine etkisini araştırmaktır. Bu amaca yönelik olarak toplam 234 öğrenciyi kapsayan bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Araştırmada, öğrencilerin ilgili dersi almadan önceki ve sonraki algılamalarında farklar olduğu ve derslerin öğrencilerin gönüllülük hakkındaki farkındalığını arttırdığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca bu konuda ders almanın öğrencilerin gönüllü kuruluşlara üye olmaları ve bağlı yapmalarında da artış sağladığı görülmüştür.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** STK, Gönüllü Organizasyonlar, Gönüllülük, Gönüllü, Eğitim.

**Alan Tanımı:** İşletme (Yönetim ve Organizasyon)

## THE EFFECT OF NGO EDUCATION ON VOLUNTEERING TENDENCY: A STUDY ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

### ABSTRACT

*One of the major goals of voluntary organizations is to expand their volunteer base. The effectiveness of an organization depends on its human resources and its qualities. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of NGO education on university students' volunteering perception, intention and participation. For this purpose research was conducted including 234 students. The findings suggest that there are differences in perception before and after taking the course and there is an increase in students' awareness about volunteering. Additionally it was found that taking a course about NGOs increased student membership of voluntary organization and students' donation to NGOs.*

**Keywords:** NGO, Voluntary Organizations, Volunteerism, Volunteer, Education.

**JEL Code:** M53, L31.

### 1.INTRODUCTION

Recently many problems concerning environment, economics and political administrations which affect individuals have become global issues. National governments cannot solve these problems by themselves.

One of the most important roles of voluntary organizations is successfully taking the initiative when states and international organizations cannot. They also must force to take action by influencing public opinion (Dinçer, 1996). Another role of voluntary organizations is taking part in processes and meetings related to social issues at the international, national and local level and also being active in decision making mechanisms as a partner and sometimes as an opponent (Yurttagüler and Akyüz, 2006a).

Young people are very important for the voluntary organizations in terms of volunteer participation. It is known that although the majority of Turkish society is young, they are not participating in voluntary organizations (Atılğan *et. al.* 2008).

In this context, the main aim of this study is to explore the change in perceptions about volunteerism, and membership and donating behaviour to NGOs of

students. To this end, we compare student perception of and participation in volunteerism before and after attending a formal NGO course about voluntary organizations.

## **2.CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Voluntary Organizations**

The term voluntary organization is mostly used in Europe and Canada (Scott, 1998). In the broadest sense, voluntary organizations are defined as formal or informal, temporary, flexible structures or organizations and activities consisting of associations, foundations, civic initiatives, platforms, relationship networks and the like, which are achieved by citizens who come together voluntarily on the basis of common views, common interests, public awareness and public demand outside the area of government's legal, administrative, production and cultural institutions. The associations built up by people who come together in accordance with common interests, ideas and goals are at the core of voluntary organizations (Akatay 2008). Paid staff is very uncommon and mostly there is no employment contract between the organization and its members in a voluntary organization (Catano *et. al.* 2001). Voluntary organizations are shaped by the values, goals and aspirations of the volunteers (McGill and Wooten, 1975).

Voluntary organizations can have different sizes, structures, consequences and concerns. Even though they vary in these aspects they all have three common characteristics. The first of these common characteristics is purpose. Levitt (1973) explains this as "to do things business and government are either not doing, not doing well, or not doing enough".The second characteristic is relying on volunteers to reach organizational goals. The third common characteristic is an operating style which can be explained as "social or moral pressure used in support of the technology of persuasion by voluntarily associated members" (Levitt, 1973).

Sometimes called "third sector organizations" (Levitt, 1973; McGill and Wooten, 1975) voluntary organizations are in their infancy in Turkey. They are in a difficult transition period from "structures based on individuals" to "institutions based on missions, goals and strategies". In Turkey, voluntary organizations need qualified volunteers and institutional leaders who are able to state existing demand accurately and take the risk of making an effort. Meeting all the needs of voluntary organizations is closely related to high awareness of volunteerism in the community (Akatay, 2008).

## **2.2. Concept of Volunteerism**

Volunteerism is a form of altruistic behaviour (Musick and Wilson, 2007). In a general sense, volunteerism can be defined as the use of knowledge, time, skills and resources through a voluntary organization which is motivated by individuals' own free will (Yaman, 2003) to reach goals that benefit society or improve quality of life of individuals other than, family members or neighbours (Güder, 2006) with a sense of social responsibility and without interest in financial gain or benefit (Akatay, 2009).

Yurttagüler and Akyüz (2006a) describes volunteerism as a mirror revealing two sides. The first side creates a reflection that erodes social rights, alienating individuals and causing them to become sources of cheap labor. The other side creates a reflection that enables individuals to advocate their rights and to become active citizens. Consequently, defining volunteerism according to only one point of view is partly correct but not certain (Yurttagüler and Akyüz 2006a).

The diverse definitions of volunteerism are caused by perception of the concept and the different viewpoints. Understanding volunteerism is going to have a positive effect on individuals to join voluntary organizations. Volunteering generally is considered as necessary for sustaining civil society (Bauer et. al. 2013). Without volunteers many NGOs would cease to function and many government agencies would need to curtail their activities (Son And Wilson, 2012). NGOs, sports organizations, welfare organizations and religious organizations are able to provide activities and services by the efforts of committed volunteers (Wu et. al. 2009). In this context it can be said that raising the awareness of society regarding volunteerism is a very important matter.

## **2.3. Literature Review**

There are a lot of studies on “volunteerism” and “voluntary activities participation” in literature. For example, Johnson, Bebe, Mortimer & Snyder (1998) tried to determine who participates in voluntary activities and how youth volunteerism effects volunteer activities. Their findings suggested that adolescents who participate in volunteering activities “have higher educational plans and aspirations, higher grades, higher levels of academic self-esteem and higher intrinsic motivation toward schoolwork” (Bebe et. al. 1998). Stukas, Snyder and Clary (1999) investigated the effects of mandatory volunteerism on intentions to volunteer. Their findings suggested that people who were not inclined to freely volunteer at the start were negatively affected by the experience and their intentions towards freely volunteering afterwards were lessened. People who had

a tendency to freely volunteer mostly had the same mindset after the mandatory volunteering process (Stukas et. al. 1999). Denny (2003) researched the effects of education on volunteering. The study suggests that every additional year of education increases the tendency to volunteer by 2 or 3% in most countries (Denny 2003). Boraas (2003) examined the time spent on volunteerism, the number of organizations which support voluntary activities and fields of activities participated in by these organizations. According to the findings, being a student is an important factor in the tendency to volunteer. Volunteer rates of individuals between ages 16 and 24 who were students at a school were double the rate of those who were not in education (Boraas, 2003). Hellman, Hoppes, Ellison (2006) researched the factors associated with college students' intention to volunteer. Their research suggests that "a sense of community connectedness, cost and benefit considerations, and the seriousness of community needs" are important factors in volunteering decisions" (Hellman et. al. 2006). Yurttagüler and Akyüz (2006b) published a guide on project analysis, strategy development, task assignment and orientation regarding volunteers and NGOs. Francis (2011) notes norms and functions that direct college students to volunteerism. The findings of the study revealed that volunteering by university students is dependent on the observed volunteering of peers (Francis 2011). Son and Wilson (2012) investigated the effect of religion and education on volunteering. Their findings suggests that education has a direct and indirect effect on adult volunteering (Son and Wilson, 2012). Hyde and Knowles (2013) researched what predicts Australian university students' intentions to volunteer and also explored students' motivations and constraints for volunteering. The findings of the study revealed that control perceptions and perceived moral obligations are important volunteering motivators (Hyde and Knowles, 2013).

In literature, there has not been an adequate level of study on the subject of the effect of education on the perspectives of individuals to volunteerism and their volunteerism tendency.

In connection with the theoretical content of this study, a survey was conducted and the data obtained. By this, it is determined that education creates a difference in students' perception of volunteerism and has effects on their volunteerism tendency. The hypotheses which intend to measure the effect of education on volunteerism perception and behaviours are given as follows:

H1: There is effect of NGO education on being member of a NGO.

H2: There is effect of NGO education on donating activity.

H3: There is effect of NGO education on being volunteer in the future.

### 3.METHODOLOGY

The data are collected from a sample of students studying at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey. The sample consists of first and second year students from Business Administration and Public Administration departments who took a NGO Management course in the 2014-2015 academic year. Data are collected by using a structured questionnaire form before and after attending the course in a classroom setting. 250 questionnaire forms are distributed to students and after eliminating uncompleted ones, 234 of them are available for analyzing.

Five Point Likert-type scales adopted by Yurttagüller ve Akyüz (2006b) are used to determine students' volunteerism perceptions. Eight statements relating to how volunteerism are perceived by students are presented. These statements are "volunteerism is" being appreciated by society, social responsibility, leisure time activity, learning process, building social relations, winning recognition of others, helping others, political position stance. Also, membership and donating behaviour of students are questioned.

#### 3.1. Findings

Differences in the volunteerism perceptions of students before and after taking the course are analyzed by comparing means. As seen in the Table 1, there are significant increases in five of the statements, namely, leisure time activity, learning process, building social relations, winning recognition of others, political stance. While there are slight increases in the other three statements, it is not statistically significant.

**Table 1. T-test for differences in volunteerism perceptions before and after education**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Being appreciated by society	Before	4.25	1.04	-.566	233	.572
	After	4.30	1.08			

Social responsibility	Before	4.32	1.07	-1.073	233	.284
	After	4.41	1.10			
Leisure time activity	Before	3.81	1.27	-2.386	233	.018
	After	4.02	1.15			
Learning process	Before	4.23	1.02	-2.341	233	.020
	After	4.41	0.96			
Building social relations	Before	3.94	1.12	-2.241	233	.026
	After	4.12	1.07			
Winning recognition of others	Before	2.59	1.40	-3.606	233	.000
	After	2.97	1.42			
Helping others	Before	2.93	1.50	-1.692	233	.092
	After	3.11	1.45			
Political stance	Before	2.69	1.48	-7.764	232	.000
	After	3.58	1.37			

Cross tabulation analyzes show that there is an increase in the number of students who are member to a NGO after taking the course (Table 2). According to Chi-Square Test, the increase is also statistically significant ( $p = ,000$ ). The findings support hypothesis 1.

**Table 2. Cross Tabulation for NGO membership before and after education**

		Membership after education		Total
		Yes	No	
Membership before education	Yes	27	2	29
	No	18	187	205
Total		45	189	234

Another cross tabulation is set for analyzing change in donating behavior before and after education (Table 3). Analyzes show that number of students donating to NGOs increased from 42 to 89. Chi-Square Test show the increase is also statistically significant ( $p = ,000$ ). The findings support hypothesis 2.

**Table 3. Cross Tabulation for donating behavior before and after education**

		Membership after education		Total
		Yes	No	

<b>Membership before education</b>	<b>Yes</b>	42	7	49
	<b>No</b>	47	138	185
<b>Total</b>		89	145	234

The effect of education on students' intention to be a member of a NGO in the future is investigated. Statistically significant difference in membership intention before and after education is found (Table 4). The findings support hypothesis 3.

**Table 4. T-test for differences in membership intention before and after education**

		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Membership intention	Before	3.81	1.263	-3.523	233	.001
	After	4.13	1.08763			

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

One of the most fundamental problems of voluntary organizations is being unable to increase their volunteer potential. This is significantly associated with the awareness of community in the area of volunteerism and voluntary organizations. It can be said that education has an important role in raising awareness. In this context, the main purpose of the research is to investigate students' perceptions about NGOs and their membership and donating behaviours before and after taking a NGO course. In this manner, the effect of formal education on student intention and behaviour is explored. For this purpose, a field survey was conducted on university students. Results reveal that there are increases in all statements about how students perceive NGOs after taking the course. These findings show that formal education made students more aware of volunteerism. Also, as a result of education, the number of students who are members of a NGO increased. Furthermore, there is an increase in intention to become a member of a NGO. Also, the number of students donating to NGOs increased. These findings show that formal education influence students to take part in voluntary activities. It may be suggested that developing a curriculum involving NGOs or volunteerism courses to facilitate student awareness and motivate them to be active members of voluntary organizations. In the study, the survey was applied only to students taking the course in one faculty. This can be considered as a limitation of the study. Also cultural differences may affect the attitudes and



behaviours regarding volunteerism. Thus it is recommended that extending the sample framework might enhance the generalizability of these findings.

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