



Assessing the Motives of Active Volunteers: A Turkish Perspective

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Abstract This study aimed to measure the sociodemographic, economic, physical, psychological, and social characteristics of volunteers and the salient factors of their motivations for voluntary participation. The study employed a cross-sectional design and convenience sampling. Data were collected from 1046 volunteers working in eight non-governmental organizations in the field of child welfare. Specifically, a scale with ten factors of volunteer motivation was used to predict volunteer motivation within structural equation modeling. Questions were also asked to understand the relationship between volunteers' sociodemographic, economic, physical, psychological, and social characteristics and volunteering. The results show that the primary factors of recognition, reactivity, and understanding have the most significant positive effects on volunteer motivation, while social interaction has the least significant effect. Additionally, the diverse characteristics of volunteers were found to be an important source of motivation for them to volunteer. In conclusion, this research extends the existing literature and shed light on the main motivational processes that shape volunteering participation, considering the different characteristics of volunteers. Thus, understanding motivational factors can help to increase volunteer participation in Turkey.

Keywords Volunteering · Volunteers' motivation · Volunteer · Determinants of volunteering · Volunteer participation

Introduction and Literature Review

Volunteering, one of the most fundamental human behaviors, is a phenomenon that permeates every aspect of life. It can be observed in schools, hospitals, religious institutions, non-governmental organizations, and numerous other settings. Volunteering serves as a vital expression of human relationships, reflecting individuals' desire to participate in society and feel significant. This underscores the importance of volunteering for the well-being of individuals, communities, society, and the reinforcement of social connections.

Volunteering encompasses values such as solidarity, reciprocity, belonging, mutual trust, and empowerment, which significantly contribute to the quality of life (Cheung et al., 2012; Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). Consequently, volunteering exemplifies a phenomenon that strengthens both individuals and society. In this context, not only do volunteers benefit from their experiences, but they also provide advantages to the organizations they serve and society at large, including governments. For instance, in the USA alone, 6.9 billion hours of volunteering was performed in 2017, contributing nearly 7 billion hours of service with an estimated value of almost \$167 billion (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2018). Research indicates that volunteers' contributions constitute a significant portion of the gross domestic product (GDP) in many countries (McKeever, 2015). For example, volunteering accounts for 2.6% of GDP in Canada (The Conference Board of Canada, 2018),

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4.4% in New Zealand (Te Tari Taiwhenua, 2016), 2.0% in Australia (O'Dwyer, 2014), and 5.4% in the USA (McKeever, 2015).

The benefits generated by the act of volunteering point to a broad structure that extends from the individual to society. Therefore, it is of great importance for society to understand volunteers' motivations. In particular, understanding the motivations for volunteering can facilitate a better analysis of volunteering. In this regard, numerous approaches exist to analyze volunteer motivation, varying according to disciplines and the distinctive theories within the volunteering realm.

A critical aspect of volunteering is understanding why people volunteer. Answering this question is not straightforward. Various scientific research studies across many disciplines have been conducted with the sole purpose of addressing this inquiry. The primary objective of this study is to examine these factors more closely in the context of Turkey. When the concept of motivation is scrutinized, motivation is found to be inherent in personality, attitudes, and motivations. Specifically, motivations elucidate the underlying reasons why a person volunteers. Studying these motivations is perceived as a manifestation of the behaviors that engage people in volunteering (Macduff et al., 2009). Furthermore, motivations can be generally considered as the human need to achieve certain goals and fulfill desires, as well as the common thread of understanding motivations that attempts to comprehend an individual's behavior in terms of biological or psychological needs (Kotler et al., 2010).

The idea that various psychological functions on the axis of a functionalist theory of volunteer motivation alone would be insufficient to explain volunteer motivation has revealed the necessity to evaluate the sociodemographic, biopsychosocial, cultural, and spiritual characteristics of individuals (Matsuba et al., 2007; Grönlund, 2013). A multidimensional, multidisciplinary understanding of volunteer motivation can provide a broader framework for researchers. Many variables, such as age, gender, education, and marital status, directly affect the individual's tendency to volunteer (Do Paço et al., 2013; Lee & Brudney, 2012). As a result, individuals coming from different social backgrounds, harboring other characters, and having various sociodemographic differences may naturally act in line with a wide variety of goals when participating in volunteering, and one person's motivation for volunteering may be more potent than another person's (Snyder et al., 2000).

Volunteering behavior is frequently driven by prosocial motivations to help others (Wilson, 2000). However, research indicates that there are differences in the significance of specific motivations and attributes in a person's decision to engage in various types of volunteering and

within cultural and organizational contexts (Lee et al., 2013). Consequently, volunteering is a subject that warrants investigation across a wide range, from individual to structural factors. The factors analyzed and the relevant theoretical perspectives for understanding volunteering motivations allude to a comprehensive context. Numerous theoretical frameworks have been applied to volunteering research, including quality of life theory (Shye, 2010), functional theory/motivation approach (Clary et al., 1998), associative-supportive motivation (Treuren, 2009), the integration of decision-making theory with the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior (Harrison, 1995), as well as altruism and egoism (Dageid et al., 2016; Hiatt et al., 2000). Regardless of the central theory attempting to explain volunteer motivation, the concepts of altruism and egoism appear to provide a foundational theoretical backdrop upon which most other constructs of volunteer motivation are built (Hoye et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2010; Treuren, 2009).

Numerous studies on volunteer motivation have been conducted across different regions, disciplines, and research groups (Bang et al., 2019; Hustinx et al., 2010; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). However, research on volunteering in Turkey, particularly studies on volunteer motivation, remains quite limited. According to the World Values Survey (WVS) conducted in 1999 and 2007, only 4.5% and 5.3% of Turkey's population were members of social and political non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Turkey also ranks low in terms of volunteer participation in published international reports. For instance, the results of the CAF World Giving Index 2018 report, announced by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) in 2018, show that Turkey ranks 131 out of 146 countries (CAF, 2018). While volunteering in social organizations was 2.5%, it was 4.2% in political organizations (İçduygu et al., 2011).

In Turkey, the aforementioned statistics reveal insufficient participation in the field of volunteering and inadequately structured policies concerning volunteering. The low level of individual participation in formal volunteering and the presence of significant gaps in both legislation and implementation within the volunteering field have made it necessary to investigate the motivational factors of volunteers engaged in formal volunteering activities in child welfare and to examine the national volunteering system. The field of child welfare more specifically, this field plays a vital role in ensuring that children develop physically and psychosocially healthy and develop their abilities in the best way possible through specific service offerings. Volunteers in this field provide services to build strong community relations and increase the well-being of children (Kobulsky et al., 2018; Martinez & McMullin, 2004). Volunteers work with children, and their motivation for

working, challenges, and working processes are noteworthy for the organizations and children they work with (Beyazova & Durmuş, 2020). In this context, the “Turkey Volunteer Survey 2019 (TGA)” stated that the main areas of volunteering in which volunteers work are children with 48.4% and education with 64.8% (TGA, 2019). The relevant research results indicate that child welfare is a highly preferred field for volunteering activities and that children constitute an important target group in volunteering activities. Therefore, the contribution of volunteer activities in this field to the biopsychosocial development of children cannot be ignored.

In summary, the author’s main aim in this study is to elucidate the factors influencing participation in volunteer activities (formal volunteering) and to reveal the sociodemographic, economic, physical, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics of volunteers.

Research Questions

Numerous studies have been conducted in various contexts on the motivations of volunteers (Bang & Ross, 2009; Clary et al., 1992; Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). However, only a few of these studies have utilized a ten-factor structure (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004; Phillips, 2013). Consequently, there remains a research gap concerning the ten factors of volunteer motivation in relation to volunteering intention. This underscores the need to investigate the validity and reliability of the prominent factors of volunteer motivation among actual experienced volunteers across different communities. In this study, an analysis was conducted on individuals who volunteered in non-governmental organizations in the field of child welfare. Moreover, there is limited research that emphasizes the relationship between a wide range of demographic, economic, physical, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics of volunteers and their intention to volunteer. However, few of these studies have incorporated a comprehensive range of different characteristics (Holdsworth, 2010; Prouteau & Wolff, 2008). Given the impact of volunteers’ motivations on their decision to volunteer (Hoye et al., 2008), understanding volunteers’ motivations is essential for retaining volunteers in NGOs and other organizations. Consequently, the following research questions are proposed.

We listed the research questions below:

Research questions:

1. What are the sociodemographic (gender, age, marital status), economic (working status, occupation, and income level), physical (general physical health status and post-volunteering physical health status),

psychological (emotional support for the volunteering process, psychological health status after volunteering), social (the state of performing and participating in social and cultural activities) characteristics of volunteers?

2. What are the motivations of the volunteers in their intention to volunteer?

Research Methodology

Design and Procedure

We conducted this study with volunteers in eight NGOs focused on child welfare in Turkey, specifically in the cities of Ankara and Istanbul, which have the highest number of NGOs and volunteers. The selection of these two cities was influenced by their status as the most populous cities in Turkey, their geopolitical positions, cosmopolitan population structures, and their ranking as the top two cities with the highest number of non-governmental organizations. In terms of the research population, there is limited information on the universe of NGOs and volunteers in the field of child welfare. The main reason for this is that there is no selection criterion for the field of child welfare within the official numerical information shared with the public, and not all volunteer organizations actively use volunteer management systems. In addition, the volunteers in the NGOs contacted in the study are active in NGOs in the field of child welfare, which are concerned with children’s access to education, access to health needs, distancing from child labor and protection needs.

The study, conducted between September 2020 and March 2021, involved 1046 volunteers and employed a cross-sectional design with convenience sampling.¹ Descriptive analysis was then performed, including evidence of asymmetry and kurtosis, to check the normality of the distribution. No multivariate outliers were detected, leaving $N = 1046$ records for data analysis.

¹ Ethical approval was obtained from Hacettepe University Ethics Committee and permission from the civil society organizations where the study was conducted. Before data collection, we piloted the questionnaire with randomly selected volunteers ($n = 90$) to assess the readability of the questions. An online survey form was then developed to test the research model and hypotheses and to collect data from NGOs. A total of 1168 participants were informed about the study’s objectives, that participation was voluntary and that all data would be kept confidential, and that the identity of the participants would not be disclosed. One hundred and twenty-two participants who partially completed the questionnaires and gave the same answers to all questions were excluded from the evaluation.

Instruments

Two data collection instruments were used in this study. *The first instrument* was created on the basis of the ecological approach in order to define and describe the characteristics of the participants. This aims to provide a contextual framework that includes biopsychosocial, economic, and cultural dimensions in order to understand people and their interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Germain & Bloom, 1999; Gitterman & Germain, 2008). Thus, it offers strategies that allow social workers to make intervene atro, mezzo, and macro levels. The first form (19 questions) defined the demographic, economic, physical, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics of the participants.

The second instrument used in the research was the *Volunteer Motivation Inventory (VMI)* to measure motivation in relation to volunteering. The scale was developed comprehensively to provide a robust assessment of volunteer motivation. Esmond and Dunlop (2004) collected data from 2,444 volunteers from 15 different organizations during the development of the scale. The development of the scale was considered to be one of the largest studies on volunteer motivation (Högstedt et al., 2022). In addition, the scale was developed with inspiration from the *Volunteer Functions Inventory-VFI* scale developed by Clary et al. (1992). The final version of the VMI scale was revealed with a total of ten dimensions. According to the reliability analysis of the scale by Esmond and Dunlop (2004), it was found that the Cronbach alpha value of ten structures in the scale was between 0.62 and 0.82. (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). VMI has 44 items and was measured using a five-point Likert-type scale consisting of ten dimensions. Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Higher scores reflect the motivations of greatest importance to participants, while lower scores indicate the motivations of least concern. These scores provide important information on the underlying motivational drives of survey participants who engage in volunteer work.

Statistical Analysis

The existing literature lacks research examining the validity and reliability of the ten factors of volunteer motivation specifically within the context of child welfare. The present study aims to address this gap by evaluating the validity and reliability of these factors in this particular field, providing a more comprehensive understanding of volunteer motivation in child welfare in Turkey.

In order to analyze the first instrument, descriptive results were presented using frequencies and ratios. Data

analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22. The demographic, economic, physical, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics of the participants were considered holistically when interpreting the results, providing a comprehensive understanding of the diverse factors influencing volunteer motivation in the context of child welfare.

The analysis of the second instrument involved a two-step process. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs and to determine if an appropriate model fit was achieved. This step helps ensure that the constructs used in the study are valid representations of the underlying theoretical constructs. Second, structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS 23.0 and maximum likelihood estimation were applied to test the relationships between variables using a statistical program. SEM procedures allow for the inclusion of both unobserved (latent) and observed variables in the proposed model, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between volunteer motivations and other factors. Correlations, construct reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability for the construct measures were taken into consideration in the analysis.

Results

Respondents Characteristics

Demographic questions were asked to determine the characteristics of the volunteers (see Table 1). There were more female respondents (70.4%) than male respondents (20.6%). Most participants (89%) were aged between 18 and 34 years. Almost three-quarters of the volunteers were unmarried (74.3%), and the vast majority (96.2%) had some form of higher education (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees). Additionally, there was a fairly even distribution between the cities in which the volunteers worked.

In the research, participants were asked to indicate their occupational status and average monthly household income, and the data obtained were categorized for easier interpretation. As shown in Table 2, almost a third of the volunteers were students. The other two occupational groups with the highest number of participants were teachers (11.2%) and social workers (11.1%). Apart from these, 10 different occupational groups were represented. In terms of household income, about half of the volunteers (44.1%) reported that their monthly salary was between ₺6001 and ₺8000. The majority of participants (92.7%) were from a nuclear family, and 88% of volunteers had no children. Additionally, 68.5% of participants reported that

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the volunteers

Variable	Frequency (n)	Ratio (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	831	70.4
Male	215	20.6
<i>Age</i>		
< 24	522	49.9
25–34	409	39.1
35–44	80	7.6
45 >	35	3.4
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	269	25.7
Single	777	74.3
<i>City</i>		
Istanbul	549	52.5
Ankara	497	47.5
<i>Graduated or continuing level of education</i>		
High school or equivalent	12	1.1
Associate degree	28	2.7
Bachelor's degree	919	87.9
Master degree	68	6.5
Doctoral degree	19	1.8

volunteering did not affect the time they spent with their families.

To clarify the participants' physical, psychological, and social characteristics in relation to volunteering, specific questions were posed. Nearly one-third of the participants reported improved physical health due to volunteering. Additionally, most participants highlighted that their physical activities were not impacted by volunteering, and they felt more energetic. Regarding volunteering activities, 65.6% of participants mentioned receiving emotional support during the volunteering process, and 78.9% reported experiencing better mental health through volunteering. Furthermore, the majority of participants indicated that continuing to volunteer did not influence their engagement in social and cultural activities.

Results of Measurement and Structural Model

The measurement model consisted of ten latent factors and 44 indicators. *The Volunteer Motivation Inventory-VMI* had ten indicators (i.e., values, recognition, social interaction, reciprocity, reactivity, social, self-esteem, career development, understanding, and protective).

The measurement model was tested with AMOS. CFA using maximum likelihood estimation to assess the underlying structure of all of the measurement variables in the model, assessing for unidimensionality, construct validity, and reliability (Anderson & Gerbing, 1998). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 7.0 is used to examine the validity of the measures. The model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 3.768$, $p = 0.000$, $GFI = 0.91$, $CFI = 0.92$, $NFI = 0.92$, $RMSEA = 0.06$) demonstrate that the factor structure is a good fit to the data (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The results of the CFA showed an acceptable fit for the measurement model (see Appendix 1). The factor loadings were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, and met the factor-loading criterion of 0.36 (Byrne, 2010). In addition, the factor correlation estimates were statistically significant and in the expected direction (Tables 3 and 4).

We tested the measurement model by assessing the construct reliability and discriminant validity. The reliability of the research constructs is shown in Appendix 2. As it can be seen, our RP and CD's AVE values exceeded 0.54, which is greater than the 0.5 threshold required (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), however AVE value of others constructs is not providing desired AVE value. Therefore, we report that the combined reliability coefficient above 0.6 was considered to be the combination validity of the scale when the mean variance value was below 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). All the composite reliabilities were above 0.67. Moreover, all constructs are internally consistent, since each Cronbach alpha value far exceeds the acceptable level of 0.72 (Hair et al., 2010). These results of the analysis have established the reliability of the constructs.

We assessed the discriminant validity of the constructs using the interconstruct correlation matrix shown in Table 5. The square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the interconstruct correlations. The lowest square root of AVE of a construct in our data is 0.57 in addition the highest correlation ($r = 0.825$) between career development and self-esteem variables. Hence, the discriminant validity of our research constructs was also established. Taken together, these test results confirmed the measurement validity of the model.

The structural equation modeling (SEM) procedure was carried out to evaluate the proposed structural relationships among the study variables. The results demonstrated that the proposed model surpassed the recommended standards, effectively representing the relationships within the sample. The goodness-of-fit indices for the hypothesized model

Table 2 Economic and family characteristics of volunteers

Variable	Frequency (n)	Ratio (%)
<i>Work status</i>		
Employed	607	58.0
Unemployed	439	42.0
<i>Occupational status</i>		
Student	382	36.5
Teacher	117	11.2
Academician	63	6.0
Social worker	116	11.1
Psychologist	75	7.2
Sociologist	31	3.0
Child development specialist	16	1.5
Engineer	90	8.6
Lawyer	71	6.8
City and regional planner	4	0.4
Accounting and finance employee	12	1.1
NGO worker	12	1.1
Unemployed	57	5.4
<i>Household income</i>		
2000 TL and below	16	1.5
2001–4000 TL	171	16.3
4001–6000 TL	293	28.0
6001–8000 TL	461	44.1
8001 TL and above	105	10.0
<i>Family type</i>		
Nuclear family	970	92.7
Extended family	69	6.6
Single parent family	7	0.7
<i>Status of having a child</i>		
Yes	125	12.0
No	921	88.0
<i>The effect of volunteering activities on the time allocated for the family</i>		
Never affected	716	68.5
Somewhat affected	330	31.5

were as follows: ($\chi^2/df = 3.768$, $p = 0.000$, GFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.06).

The present study also tested based on the model shown in Fig. 1. The relationships about the ten factors of volunteer motivation. Specifically, the research findings indicated the factors of recognition ($\beta = 1.01$, t value = 16.121, $p < 0.001$), reactivity ($\beta = 1.00$, t value = 26.587, $p < 0.001$), understanding ($\beta = 1.00$, t value = 30.558, $p < 0.001$), social ($\beta = 0.68$, t value = 16.838, $p < 0.001$), values ($\beta = 0.60$, t value = 12.702,

$p < 0.001$), protective ($\beta = 0.58$, t value = 13.593, $p < 0.001$), reciprocity ($\beta = 0.38$, t value = 6.676, $p < 0.001$), self-esteem ($\beta = 0.35$, t value = 7.676, $p < 0.001$), career development ($\beta = -0.34$, t value = -6.165, $p < 0.001$), and social interaction ($\beta = 0.33$, t value = 9.146, $p < 0.001$). The final model is shown in Fig. 1.

Table 3 Physical, psychological, and social characteristics of volunteers

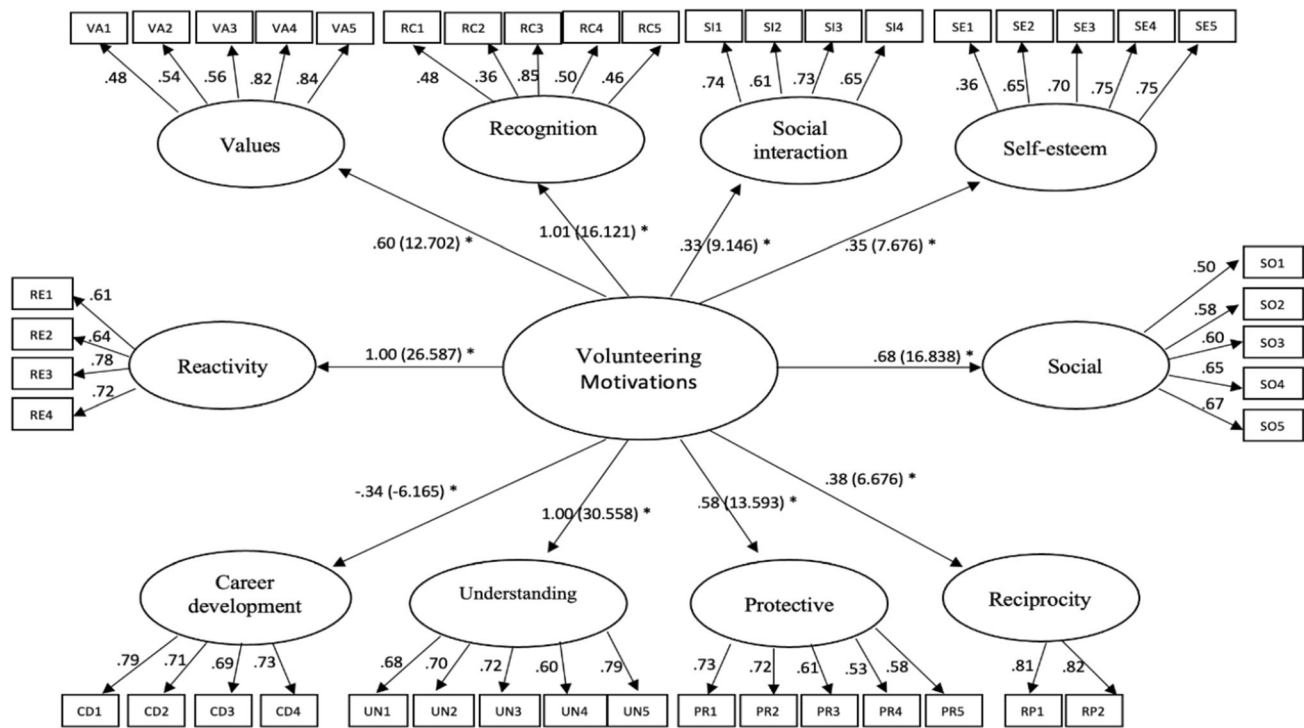
Variable	Frequency (n)	Ratio (%)
<i>Physical health after volunteering</i>		
Better	384	36.7
Same	662	63.3
<i>Duration of physical activities (running, walking, etc.) during the volunteering</i>		
Time has been decreased	19	1.8
Undecided	349	33.4
Time has not been decreased	678	64.8
<i>Feeling more energized during the volunteering</i>		
Sometimes I feel	547	52.3
I always feel	499	47.7
<i>Receiving emotional support from the environment in the process of be volunteer</i>		
I got support	686	65.6
I did not get support	360	34.4
<i>Mental health after volunteering</i>		
Better	825	78.9
Same	221	21.1
<i>The level of social and cultural activities in general life</i>		
Never	16	1.5
Sometimes	699	66.8
Everytime	331	31.6
<i>Frequency of performing social and cultural activities (n = 1030)</i>		
Three to four days a week	108	10.5
One to two days a week	572	54.6
One or two days a month	350	34.9
<i>Duration of social and cultural activities during the volunteering</i>		
Time has been decreased	57	5.4
Undecided	231	22.1
Time has not been decreased	758	72.5

Table 4 Correlations Between All Factors (Diagonal Elements are Square Roots of the Average Variance Extracted)

Variables	VA	RC	SI	RP	RE	SE	SO	CD	UN	PR
VA	0.80									
RC	.731**	0.74								
SI	.357**	.288**	0.73							
RP	.395**	.371**	.478**	0.57						
RE	.419**	.401**	.414**	.463**	0.74					
SE	.459**	.625**	.133**	.158**	.233**	0.80				
SO	.180**	.347**	.195**	.237**	.304**	.572**	0.77			
CD	.502**	.690**	.175**	.208**	.249**	.825**	.557**	0.76		
UN	.265**	.388**	.495**	.510**	.292**	.460**	.554**	.477**	0.83	
PR	.003	-.070*	.041	.023	.005	-.142**	-.200**	-.123**	-.107**	0.79

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$

VA = values; RC = recognition; SI = social interaction; RP = reciprocity; RE = reactivity; SE = self-esteem; SO = social; CD = career development; UN = understanding; PR = protective



* $p < .001$.

Fig. 1 Results of structural equation modeling in this study. * $p < .001$. Chi-square/ $df = 3.768$ ($p = .000$), GFI = .91, NFI = .92, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06, N = 1046

Discussion

The authors aimed to elucidate the factors influencing participation in voluntary activities and to uncover the sociodemographic, economic, physical, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics of volunteers. The findings reported in this study generally align with those of previous research.

Characteristics-Oriented Discussion

Sociodemographic factors (such as gender, age, marital status) are primary predictors of voluntary participation. Age can influence volunteer actions, practices, and performance (Caldwell et al., 2008). The higher participation rate among younger individuals in this study may be attributed to Turkey’s population consisting of about 37 million people aged 30 and below. Historical political and economic crises that significantly impacted Turkey’s civil society (Keyman, 2006; Keyman & İçduygu, 2003) may also explain older individuals’ reluctance to engage with civil society.

Gender outcomes are largely based on social role theory (Eagly & Crowley, 1986), with Switzer et al. (1999)

arguing that women are socialized into “nurturing” roles, while men are socialized into “heroic and chivalrous” roles. As an extension of patriarchy, women tend to engage in long-term helping behaviors, while men participate in short-term, spontaneous efforts, even if unrelated to voluntary activities (Fletcher & Major, 2004). In a patriarchal structure like Turkey (İlkkaracan, 2012), women’s caregiving and helping roles contribute to their increased involvement in volunteering compared to men.

Marital status has been examined in relation to voluntary activities (Mesch et al., 2006; Reed & Selbee, 2001). Studies show that married individuals donate more than single individuals if they perceive volunteering as charity (Mesch et al., 2006). However, single individuals are more likely to participate in voluntary activities than married individuals (Reed & Selbee, 2001). Education levels are considered the most consistent and often the strongest indicator of volunteering (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Economic and family characteristics also play a role in the volunteering process. There is a relational link between volunteer occupations and their volunteering behavior (Webb & Abzug, 2008). Participants working in certain professions related to social and human sciences and educational sciences may be more likely to participate in

voluntary activities (Webb & Abzug, 2008). Income is another variable with positive correlations to volunteering (Son & Wilson, 2015).

Having children can affect volunteers' decision to volunteer. Children often encourage their parents to volunteer (Park & Smith, 2000). Researchers suggest that children's socialization in school settings provides an incentive for parents to participate in civic activities such as volunteering (Taniguchi, 2006). The time volunteers spend with their families can be affected by their volunteering. The social costs of volunteering must be considered (Lewton & Nievar, 2012), as the time devoted to volunteering may hinder strong family relationships (Reilly & Vesic, 2002). In this study, approximately one-third of participants were affected by the time they spent with their families after volunteering. This result highlights the importance of creating flexible and short-term volunteer programs in collaboration with volunteer managers (McCurlley & Lynch, 2011).

Thirdly, volunteers' physical, psychological, and social characteristics are closely tied to the volunteering process. Volunteer activities impact individuals' health status, both physically and mentally. Factors such as increased fatigue and stress can affect the volunteering process and its continuation. The research results mostly relate to positive effects in this regard.

There are numerous studies in the literature examining the effects of volunteering on individuals' health (McDougle et al., 2014; Morrow-Howell et al., 2003). Specific longitudinal studies focusing on physical health indicate an improvement in the physical health of individuals who engage in volunteer activities (Gilster, 2012; Wilson & Musick, 1999). In this study, about one-third of the participants reported improved physical health through volunteering, aligning with the literature.

Reviewing the literature in connection with the research results, individuals participating in voluntary activities experience positive increases in mental and physical health (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001), life satisfaction (Wilson & Musick, 1999), self-esteem (Morrow-Howell et al., 2003), and happiness (Musick & Wilson, 2003). Conversely, psychological distress (Greenfield & Marks, 2004), mortality rates, and functional disability (Konrath et al., 2012) decrease, while lower depressive symptoms are observed (Kim & Pai, 2010). In this study, participants' received emotional support during the volunteer process and the positive change in their psychological health after volunteering support the literature.

Participating in social activities with family and friends allows for healthier social relationships (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001). As such, it is essential for individuals to maintain their social activities despite the social costs of volunteering (Lewton & Nievar, 2012). In this respect, the literature supports the study's results.

Motivation-Related Discussion

In this study, the largest effect size was found in the area of recognition ($\beta = 1.01$). This suggests that acknowledging and recognizing individuals' abilities and contributions in volunteering activities plays a significant role in their participation. Appreciation involves understanding and valuing individuals' skills and contributions (Olberding, 2017). In other words, people value having their talents and skills in volunteering acknowledged and recognized by others. In a multidimensional study by Bautista-Chavez et al. (2012), the motivation to be appreciated emerged as one of four motivations across all dimensions of the study. Moreover, the same research suggested that the appreciation dimension is crucial for volunteer participation and sustainability. Other literature on volunteering motivations highlights that volunteers are more motivated when they feel needed (Bass & Caro, 1995; Marx, 1999). Based on this context, the results suggest that knowing their help is appreciated (even without explicit thanks) is significantly more appealing to volunteers than other forms of motivation (Bass & Caro, 1995).

The study also revealed that the other largest effect size was in the area of reactivity ($\beta = 1.00$). This indicates that individuals' desire for self-improvement in relation to past or present problems plays a role in their volunteering. Reactivity involves addressing past or present issues (Olberding, 2017). In a study by Al Saraidi et al. (2020) to understand volunteer motivations within the national health system, the reactivity dimension emerged as the third most significant volunteer motivation.

The study found that the third most influential motivation was understanding ($\beta = 1.00$). This suggests that individuals' desire to learn and gain more insight into the world through volunteering plays a role in their participation. Understanding can be seen as engaging in activities that satisfy the desire to learn and gain a deeper knowledge of the world (Bautista-Chavez et al., 2012; Clary et al., 1992). In this regard, many volunteers working in health and, in particular, mental health institutions (Maes, 2015) may prioritize this dimension, seeking benefits related to

personal development, learning, and experiencing diverse aspects of life (Clary et al., 1998).

Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

This study aimed to fill the knowledge gap regarding the sociodemographic, economic, physical, psychological, and social characteristics and motivational factors of volunteers in Turkey. The findings indicated that recognition, reactivity, and understanding are the most influential sources of motivation for volunteering. The implications of this study are essential for organizations in Turkey that rely heavily on volunteers, as understanding these motivational factors can help increase volunteer participation. Therefore, the present study contributes to the literature by testing the validity and reliability of the ten factors of volunteer motivation in the field of child welfare. This research provides valuable insights that can inform the development of targeted recruitment strategies and the design of meaningful volunteer roles, ultimately leading to more successful volunteer programs and positive outcomes for children and families.

Considering the study results and model fit, future researchers should focus on the various characteristics of volunteers and the ten factors of motivation in the volunteering field. Different sectors (government agencies and private companies) need to develop tailored management and motivational strategies for volunteers, depending on their specific characteristics and the level of the ten factors. Volunteers seeking personal development and community motivation factors, who want to gain experience and interact with others while sharing their skills and knowledge, desire appreciation for their efforts during the volunteering process. Volunteering can also help resolve past problems.

Administrators should establish strategic relationships with organizations, universities, and other educational institutions to reach potential volunteers on a wider scale. For example, university students should have opportunities to volunteer at events. Addressing volunteers' needs and aspirations can lead to a long-term volunteering experience. Understanding the key drivers of volunteer motiva-

tion enables organizations to reduce budgets, recruit new volunteers, and retain existing ones by considering appropriate work areas in an effective event management strategy.

Despite the study's significant implications, some limitations must be noted. Firstly, the study only focused on the volunteers' characteristics and the ten factors of volunteer motivation in an exploratory model. Future research should employ structural equation modeling and include mediating (e.g., volunteer attitude, involvement, commitment) and/or moderating (e.g., old age group vs. young age group) factors to better understand volunteer motivation in different contexts. Secondly, the findings may not be generalizable across nations due to the limited geographical diversity of participant recruitment. Future research should include a geographically diverse pool of volunteers for broader sampling, allowing researchers to examine the relationships between the ten factors of volunteer motivation and the volunteering process in Turkey or other countries. Lastly, this study is quantitative research; qualitative studies on this topic would add further insights to the field.

Future research in the field of volunteer motivation should also focus on several key areas to expand the understanding of volunteer experiences and behaviors. First, cross-cultural studies that compare volunteer motivations and experiences across diverse cultural contexts can provide valuable insights into the global patterns of volunteering behaviors. Second, longitudinal research can track volunteers over time, identifying differences in motivations and evaluating the long-term impact of volunteering on personal and professional development. Investigating the role of technology, such as virtual volunteering and social media, is also important to understand how these advancements influence volunteer motivations, experiences, and management strategies. Lastly, examining the impact of policy and funding on volunteer motivations, experiences, and retention will help in understanding the implications of these factors on nonprofit organizations and social service provision.

Appendix 1

See Table 5.

Table 5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of a Full Measurement Model

Items	Standardized coefficients (n)	Standard error	Critical ratio	P
<i>Values (VA)</i>				
(V1)	.485	–	–	*
(V2)	.543	.082	12.566	*
(V3)	.565	.081	12.852	*
(V4)	.828	.106	15.310	*
(V5)	.849	.109	15.401	*
<i>Recognition (RC)</i>				
(R1)	.480	–	–	*
(R2)	.367	.067	10.924	*
(R3)	.854	.088	16.300	*
(R4)	.508	.081	12.610	*
(R5)	.462	.067	11.869	*
<i>Social Interaction (SI)</i>				
(SI1)	.745	–	–	*
(SI2)	.610	.053	16.865	*
(SI3)	.731	.050	19.221	*
(SI4)	.651	.049	17.805	*
<i>Self-esteem (SE)</i>				
(SE1)	.364	–	–	*
(SE2)	.652	.210	10.768	*
(SE3)	.707	.239	10.358	*
(SE4)	.757	.252	10.498	*
(SE5)	.753	.244	10.488	*
<i>Social (SO)</i>				
(S1)	.505	.041	13.385	*
(S2)	.587	.050	15.662	*
(S3)	.602	.053	15.657	*
(S4)	.655	.057	17.087	*
(S5)	.674	–	–	*
<i>Understanding (UN)</i>				
(U1)	.682	.035	23.724	*
(U2)	.701	.035	24.564	*
(U3)	.726	.036	25.705	*
(U4)	.608	.036	20.674	*
(U5)	.799	–	–	*
<i>Reciprocity (RP)</i>				
(RP1)	.815	.114	8.985	*
(RP2)	.827	–	–	*
<i>Protective (PR)</i>				
(P1)	.730	.081	16.377	*
(P2)	.727	.081	16.344	*
(P3)	.612	.073	14.740	*
(P4)	.535	.081	13.415	*

Table 5 continued

Items	Standardized coefficients (n)	Standard error	Critical ratio	P
(P5)	.580	–	–	*
<i>Reactivity (RE)</i>				
(RE1)	.616	.046	19.585	*
(RE2)	.645	.045	20.534	*
(RE3)	.780	.043	25.015	*
(RE4)	.724	–	–	*
<i>Career Development (CD)</i>				
(CR1)	.791	–	–	*
(CR2)	.719	.040	19.776	*
(CR3)	.695	.042	17.710	*
(CR4)	.734	.041	20.006	*

**p* < 0.001

Appendix 2

See Table 6.

Table 6 Constructs reliability, AVE and composite reliability values

Constructs	Items	Cronbach’s α	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability
VA	5	.785	.45	.79
RC	5	.722	.31	.67
SI	4	.776	.47	.78
RP	2	.806	.67	.80
RE	4	.785	.48	.78
SE	5	.790	.43	.78
SO	5	.734	.36	.74
CD	4	.805	.54	.82
UN	5	.839	.49	.83
PR	5	.768	.41	.77

VA = values; RC = recognition; SI = social interaction; RP = reciprocity; RE = reactivity; SE = self-esteem; SO = social; CD = career development; UN = understanding; PR = protective

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