

LOYALTY IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS: AN EXPLANATORY RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Non-Profit organizations majorly play an important role in social life with their activities. These institutions perform their activities through volunteer-based membership. Therefore, loyalty is crucial not only for the companies (i.e. for profit organizations), but also for the non-profit organizations in order to maintain sustainability. Within this context, it can be said that although studies on loyalty and satisfaction about non-profit organizations can be found in literature, studies in Turkey are not satisfactorily enough. This research aims to analyse the factors affecting the loyalty that people feel towards these organizations/institutions in social voluntary project in İzmir. For the study, a questionnaire survey conducted by random sampling method and 296 people were reached. As a result of the study, “self-satisfaction from participation and satisfaction for social benefits” are the major influencers of volunteer' loyalty in non-profit organizations. Also the advantages of participating social responsibility projects both to the society and themselves are increasing the volunteers' loyalty. For future studies, a scale can be developed to measure the loyalty in non-profit organizations.

Keywords: Loyalty, Non-profit Organization, Volunteerism, Social Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays; environmental pollution, limited resources of the world, unemployment problems, increased population, natural disasters etc. have become important issues for the sustainability of the “modern society” life. Both individuals and organizations increasingly feel the responsibilities of their behaviors and the necessity of organizing and taking part in “social responsibility projects”. Within this context, various studies were made out to raise awareness of people for social issues. “Social responsibility (is the) responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behavior that is consistent with sustainable development and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; and is integrated throughout the organization... (ISO, 2007)”. With the increasing sense of social responsibility, both organizations and individuals are trying to fulfill these responsibilities by serving the gathering where they are present (Saran et al., 2011). Although, formerly social responsibility projects have largely been organized by the governments, today these projects gradually begun to be organized by non-profit (NPO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) also by the companies.

Non-profit and non-governmental organizations are known as same in many countries, however their scope is different. Both of them usually established to work for benefit of the human welfare, nevertheless there are some differences between them. Non-governmental organizations known as civil society organizations and working independently from governments. NGO's defined as “characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative, rather than commercial, objectives... that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” (Werker and Ahmed, 2008). Non-governmental organizations have a broader concept than non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations encompasses a wide variety of organizations ranging from health care, educational institutes, religious groups, and many more that differ in structures and practices and also profit is not a top-priority in their activities (Prugsamatz, 2010; Bang et al., 2012; Pressgrove and McKeever, 2016).

Volunteers and volunteer loyalty have crucial roles in non-profit organizations' sustainability and success of their organizations just like how consumers play in terms of businesses sustainability and success. Within the scope of this research, feel of loyalty in non-profit organization is analyzed. Social responsibility projects in İzmir under the "community service applications" course have been examined in this study. The research has both applied and exploratory characteristics. The aim of the study is to explore how loyalty can be created and what factors affect the volunteer loyalty among non-profit organizations. Although some non-profit organizations provide various benefits to their members, this study focused on organizations which respond to community needs.

Importance of Volunteerism for NPO and Dimensions of Volunteer Loyalty

In a societal context, non-profit organizations have taken on a critical role in the society. Non-profit organizations include response efforts to various predictable and unpredictable challenges faced by social situations, unemployment, environmental problems, health crisis and other humanitarian efforts geared toward growth, development, and conservation etc. (Prugsamatz, 2010; İlhan 2013). Weisbrod (1988) described the non-profit organizations into three related to their characteristics: These are; "(i) no individual or group is allowed to benefit from the profit (ii) non-profits are exempt on taxes from corporate income and (iii) some non-profits may enjoy tax privileges such as subsidies, or deductibility of donations to the organization" (İlhan, 2013 adapted from Weisbrod, 1988). Despite the different characteristics of non-profit organizations, volunteerism is vital for non-profit organizations and it is done for the benefit of the general public with free will. There are three types of volunteers: spot volunteers who target specific activities and conduct regular volunteer activities, second volunteer type is more formal and committed to the organization, by working for the organization they gain a sense of accomplishment, achievement and satisfaction. The last type of volunteer is under pressure and they feel obliged to do the tasks because of necessity (Power, 1998; Sunney and Brian, 2003). Carvalho and Sampaio (2016) examined the various dimensions of volunteering in non-profit organizations and identified four (4) interrelated dimensions affecting volunteer program success, namely: centrality, formalization, professional support, sustainability.

Activities of non-profit organizations are mostly based on volunteerism, so the loyalty and satisfaction are very important aspects for these organizations (Pressgrove and McKeever, 2016). Organizations' capacity to sustain themselves and their mission in the long run is an obvious condition for the mere existence and continuity of volunteer programmes. Bang et al. (2012), defined volunteer commitment as one's intentions toward an organization related to the disposed to spend time and energy to the organization. According to Nichols (2013), volunteers are affected by socio-cultural influences and subjective perceptions of volunteering like serious leisure, unpaid work, or activism.

Studies results show that the satisfaction of volunteers have a positive relationship with the volunteers staying longer in the same organization. Thus, possibility of donating funds to non-profit organizations and recommending voluntary experiences to others may be increased (Wisner et al., 2005). Volunteering is an important mechanism to build communities in which social interaction should be both formal and informal. Social interaction is directly or indirectly between individuals, institutional (public and private), volunteering activities must be defined as a kind of work in which sustainable organization and all the other qualities come together (Nunn, 2002; Wisner et al., 2005).

Creating committed and enthusiastic volunteers are important elements for the continuity of work sustainability of the non-profit organizations. Non-profit organization's vitality largely depends on donation. In order to increase donor loyalty, non-profit organizations should not only improve donor satisfaction but also organizational identification (Leipnitz, 2014). Trust and commitment is needed to build a long-term and satisfactory relationship with stakeholders (García, González and Acebrón, 2013) and satisfaction has enormous effects on the non-profit organization (Reheul, Van Caneghem and Verbruggen, 2013). As Burnett (1992), for beyond the commercial marketing, the non-profit organization should correlate with their donors who contain trust (Sargeant and Lee, 2004). According to Sargeant and Lee (2004), commitment has a major role of fundraising practice.

There are several researches on loyalty and its dimensions. Loyalty defined as “*a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing...*” (Oliver,1999). Loyalty is the continuation of the relationship (Cyr et al., 2006) or in other words, loyalty is the reflection of commitment (Evanschitzky et al., 2006). Loyalty creates an emotional connection with the organization and provides positive feedback to the customers in their environment as well as allowing the name of the organization to be heard and recognized (Avcikurt and Köroğlu, 2006). The way of achieving loyalty requires regularly measuring expectations and developing offerings in line with expectations. Mollen and Wilson (2010) and O’Brien and Toms (2008) define loyalty into two dimensions: emotional and cognitive. Some researchers have identified it as a multidimensional concept involving emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Douglas and Hargadon, 2000; Heath, 2007; Marci, 2006; Mathwick and Ridgion, 2004; Rappaport, 2007; Wang, 2006; Hollebeek, 2011; Patterson et al., 2006). Although there are several studies on loyalty to the companies, organizations, brands etc. The literature about loyalty related with non-profit organizations is insufficient. It is seen that the concepts of volunteerism and loyalty are examined from different perspectives excluding the non-profit organizations.

METHODOLOGY

Research objectives and constraints

Jabbour and Santos (2009) conducted interviews to identify and discuss the lack of commitment on volunteers of a Brazilian NFP organization. The main output of the study that creating loyalty in non-profit organization is a challenging process. Bang et al, (2012) conducted a questionnaire in non-profit sport organizations to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction between volunteers' motivation and commitment. They applied their study with a sample of 214 individuals who volunteered at 22 non-profit sport organizations and they supported direct impact role of job satisfaction on commitment. Wisner et al. (2005) explored the effects of service design and operational factors related to volunteer satisfaction in not-for-profit organizations with their study conducted on 288 volunteers working in 43 not-for-profit agencies. Wisner et al. also explored the factors that effect on volunteer satisfaction and loyalty.

Studies on non-profit organizations have increased recently and mostly focused on describing their activities and effects, image of organizations or describing perception of social responsibility (Uslu and Marangoz, 2008; Oyman, 2013; Üzümlü and Dölarslan, 2013; Yalçınkaya, 2013). Yapraklı and Unalan (2016) examine the effects of brand image of humanitarian aid organizations, commitment to these organizations and religious involvement on the intention to donate. They used survey method and data from 412 participants in Erzurum Province of Turkey are used to test the research hypotheses. The findings of the study show that brand image and commitment had a significant effect on charitable donations where the effect of religious involvement was non-significant. İlhan (2013), discusses market failure theory on nonprofit organizations and their providing services as a third sector in the economy. Saran et al. (2011), examined improving the consciousness of social responsibility and related practices at universities and states the barriers to apply the social responsibility projects efficiently.

Moreover, the promotion of social responsibility campaigns is also an important topic. In this context, the study makes a difference by trying to define elements that create loyalty in volunteers. The main constraint of the research is based on the subjective interpretation of the participants and the acceptance of the answers correctly. However, the need for longer loyalty-based study and lack of scale for voluntary loyalty is another problem. In addition, time and cost constitute other important constraints.

Research method, Sample and Data Collection

The research made among students between 2013-2016 semesters in Ege University who took the social service course in FEAS (Faculty of economics and Administrative Sciences). During this three years period, totally 521 students are the main body of the research. Study conducted on students, because awareness activities of non-profit organization mostly focused on younger population. Also, being a volunteer of civil society organizations is an important characteristic for the carrier of this demographic status. Survey method was preferred as data collection method and data were collected by convenience sampling. Pilot study was carried out with 20 students before the data collection process, and the

questions which were not understood were removed from the questionnaire and the form was rearranged. A web based questionnaire was prepared also e-mailed as attached document to the students after their projects completed. Two weeks after sending the e-mails, a follow-up e-mail was sent for non-responses. A total of 295 students who took the course were filled, but 21 were rejected because the questionnaire was not fully completed and 274 questionnaires were accepted. Finally 274 questionnaires were accepted and 21 of all eliminated which cannot meet the requirements. Participants of the study perform their projects 36 different organizations, like Turkish Red Crescent Society, Foundation for Children with Leukaemia, Community Volunteers Foundation, various hospitals and education institutions and etc.

The questionnaire included two parts: In the first section of the questionnaire contains questions about demographic and socio-economic variables of respondents, the second part includes 41 items for aiming to describe loyalty in non-profit organizations. This part consists likert scale questions of 5 items (1= Completely Disagree... 5= Completely Agree) prepared based on theories and past studies. Data were analyzed by using SPSS (22.0) (Statistical Package of Social Science) statistic package. Descriptive analysis, factor analysis, correlation, independent sample t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze the data at p= 0.05 significant level.

FINDINGS

For the 274 participants, the respondents profile is given in Table 1. According to table, 143 (52.2%) of the respondents are female and 131 (47.8%) male. Majority of them (21 years old) constitutes the 38.3% of the sample.

Table I. Demographics Statistics

Variables	n	Valid Percent	Variables	n	Valid Percent
Gender			Have you been involved in any foundation / association organization before?		
Male	131	47,8	Yes	130	47,4
Female	143	52,2	No	144	52,6
Total	274	100	Total	274	100
Age			What is the reason for joining a social project?		
19 and below	25	9,1	Social environment effect	33	12
20	80	29,2	I wish to help people in poor conditions	80	29,2
21	105	38,3	My social consciousness level is high.	100	36,5
22	40	14,6	Different necessities	61	22,3
23 and up	24	8,8	Total	274	100
Total	274	100	Where did you get information about the organization/ institution implementing the social project?		
What is your membership status for the organization/ institution implementing the social project?			Internet and digital channels	35	12,8
One-off project.	204	74,5	Reference group	209	76,3
I've been member for less than a year.	52	19	Advertising and announcements of the corporation	30	10,9
I've been a member over a year	18	6,6	Total	274	100
Total	274	100			

All of the participants (229) are student of Ege University in FEAS and took the social service course. As it can be seen in Table 1 the number of participants who previously stated that they are involved in a foundation / association organization is 144. Most of the participants attributed the reason for participating in a social project to a higher level of social consciousness. 74.5% of the participants perform one-off social project and only the 6.6% of the group can define as a member of any

organization. The majority of the participants (%76,3) get information about the project from their reference groups (i.e. friends and family members etc.). So, this may be interpreted as most of the participants are not interested in the news related with non-profit organizations.

In the questionnaire, to determine the respondents' loyalty for non-profit organizations, 41 items were asked. In order to assess the reliability of the scale, Cronbach-alpha coefficient score has been used. As a result of the reliability analysis, 17 items excluded from the attitude scale due to insufficient effect.

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix^a Scores of Items

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I. SATISFACTION FOR SOCIAL BENEFITS				
It gives an opportunity to meet the needs of society.	.822			
It gives a chance to help solve social problems.	.799			
It allows looking at social issues with a different point of view.	.798			
It provides a reason that work for a good idea.	.784			
Joining social responsibility projects makes me feel better.	.765			
It gives the opportunity to work for people who need social assistance.	.744			
It enables opportunity to defend (work for) groups and individuals' rights.	.667			
I take part in the social responsibility projects since I believe that people also deserve equal conditions.	.577			
II. SATISFACTION FROM ORGANIZATIONS' PRACTICES				
The services that the organization gives me satisfaction.		.824		
The organization gives us the importance and cares us.		.813		
I would recommend other people the organization whose social responsibility projects I attend.		.747		
I can say positive things to my friends and relatives about the organization whose social responsibility projects I participate.		.742		
Employees of the organization are also well equipped to answer questions.		.737		
The organization is trustable that it will fulfil its commitment to social service.		.727		
When somebody has problems, employees of the organization are very interested in solving these problems.		.709		
III. SELF SATISFACTION FROM PARTICIPATION				
It offers an opportunity to escape from my troubles.			.775	
It makes me feel less lonely.			.756	
It gives the opportunity to reduce the sense of guilt that people who are luckier than others (wealth, etc.) can hear.			.716	
Satisfying the need to be useful for others.			.710	
I can cope with my troubles easier.			.710	
It is an opportunity for others to see my work for a good job.			.691	
IV. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT				
I continue to work there, even if the image of the organization I have participated in social responsibility projects is harmed.				.850
I will continue to operate in the same institution, even if other social responsibility organizations create better opportunities for action.				.849
The institution I participate in social responsibility projects is always my first choice				.642
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a				
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.				

The Cronbach's alpha was 95.3%, which can be assessed to be an acceptable level and factor analysis was conducted for 24 items. For each item communalities minimum value is above 0,6 and the eigenvalue is at least 1. Within the 95% significant level, The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measuring sampling adequacy result is 94,5 %, and the Significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity is 0.00. In the analysis, the

items with factor score under 50% were eliminated and finally explained variance of the model was 74,075 %. As it seen Table 2, there are four factors explored from the analysis. The factors and their factors loading for parameters are Satisfaction For Social Benefits (24,12%; Cr. alpha: .949 ; 8), Satisfaction From Organizations’ Practices (23,47%; Cr. alpha: .945 ; 7), Self-Satisfaction From Participation (17,35%; Cr. alpha: .898 ; 6) and Organizational Commitment (9,16%; Cr. alpha: .776 ; 3). Two of the factors are respondents’ benefit getting from the activities of non-profit organizations, and the other two factors represent the loyalty dimensions of non-profit organizations.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test Scores among Gender Related to Factors

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std. Err. Dif.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Low	Upp.
Satisfaction For Social Benefits (SSB)	Equal variances assumed		7,2	,00	2,80	272	,005	,280	,100	,083	,47
	Equal variances not assumed				2,76	235,30	,006	,280	,101	,08	,48
Satisfaction From Organizations' Practices (SOB)	Equal variances assumed		,969	,32	1,07	27	,28	,11	,105	-,09	,32
	Equal variances not assumed				1,06	261,9	,286	,113	,106	-,09	,32
Self Satisfaction From Participation (SBS)	Equal variances assumed		1,5	,21	3,0	272	,003	,331	,108	,117	,545
	Equal variances not assumed				3,0	265,31	,003	,331	,109	,117	,546
Organizational Commitment (OC)	Equal variances assumed		,03	,84	,59	272	,552	,068	,114	-,15	,292
	Equal variances not assumed				,59	269,63	,552	,068	,114	-,15	,293

According to independent sample t-test, differences were found in gender on SSB (t=2,762, df=235, sig=0,006), and SBS (t=3,052, df=272, sig=0,003). From the analysis, it can be seen that the female participants (4,42) are giving more important to “satisfaction” concept than male participants (4,14). It is also the same for SBS factor. The mean of female participants’ answer to SBS is 3,89 and the male participants’ 3,55. So we can say female participants care to non-profit organization benefits both for society and themselves more than male participants.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test Scores among Membership Status Related to Factors

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std. Err. Dif.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Low	Upp.
Satisfaction For Social Benefits (SSB)	Equal variances assumed	3,45	,06	-1,5	272	,134	-,174	,116	-,40	,053
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,7	175,0	,074	-,174	,097	-,36	,016
Satisfaction from Organizations' Practices (SOB)	Equal variances assumed	5,14	,02	-2,0	272	,045	-,242	,120	-,47	-,005
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,3	161,1	,021	-,242	,104	-,44	-,036
Self Satisfaction From Participation (SBS)	Equal variances assumed	,674	,41	-1,7	272	,089	-,214	,125	-,46	,033
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,8	133,2	,073	-,214	,119	-,45	,020
Organizational Commitment (OC)	Equal variances assumed	,754	,38	-1,7	272	,077	-,231	,130	-,48	,025
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,8	128,6	,067	-,231	,125	-,47	,016

Independent sample t-test conducted and differences were found among membership status according to Satisfaction From Organizations' Practices (t=-2,329, df=161, sig=0,021). From the analysis, it can be seen that satisfaction level is higher in long-term volunteers (4,25) than one-off project members (4,01) to the non-profit organization. It can be say that volunteering period is also important to understand activity and improve loyalty to organizations.

Table 5. Correlation Statistics Between The Factors

		Satisfaction Organizations' Practices	From (SOB)	Organizational Commitment (OC)
Satisfaction For Social Benefits (SSB)	Pearson Correlation		,750**	,228**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000
	N		274	274
Self-Satisfaction Participation (SBS)	From	Pearson Correlation	,600**	,412**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
		N	274	274

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis was run to find out whether there is a relationship between the factors (SSB and SOB, SBS and OC) with a 95 % confidence level. In Table 5, it is shown that benefits create volunteers loyalty and commitment in non-profit organizations. Both social and self-satisfaction have a positive relationship with organization's activities and commitment. Creation of societal benefit by non-profit organization increase corporate loyalty on volunteers. The results show that the positive effects of non-profit organizations on individuals and society create a sense of loyalty on members or volunteers towards the organization.

Also the differences among "membership status" and "the reason for joining a social project" related to defined factors analysed and no statistical differences have found. Although majority of the participants declared that they satisfied joining non-profit organization activities or gained benefits, only the 25% of the participants are being member of any organization.

Table 6. Independent Samples Test Scores Among Membership Status Related to Continuity to Organization’ Activities & Organizational Image

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mea n Dif.	Std. Err.Dif	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Low	Upp.	
I will continue more activities in this organization.	Equal variances assumed	,654	,419	-3,351	272	,001	-,447	,13341	-,709	-,184
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,743	149,120	,000	-,447	,11945	-,683	-,211
I joined the activities because organization image.	Equal variances assumed	,120	,729	-1,221	272	,223	-,224	,18358	-,585	,137
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,232	121,702	,220	-,224	,18188	-,584	,135

Although the participants declared that their social consciousness level is high and cared social responsibility projects, Table 6 shows that long term period organization’ members are more willingness to continue activities of non-profit organizations. On the contrary to loyalty studies, organization image for non-profit organizations do not important for being a member of any organizations for the statistics at the 95% level (t=-1,22 df=272, sig=0,223).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

Non-profit organizations with their various activities and projects (education, health, elderly care, disaster response, the environment, women's and children's rights, religion, etc..) support the governments and the society. Therefore, it can easily be said that the non-profit organizations will play an important and increasing role for the societies in near future. Thus, organizations have to follow these developments in order to maintain sustainability, improve themselves and adapt to changes. Loyal volunteers are extremely important for the success of the non-profit organizations. Therefore, non-profit organizations have to give more importance to their relationships with their volunteers to become a centre of attraction for new volunteers.

In this study, research results indicate that “Self-Satisfaction From Participation and Satisfaction For Social Benefits “influence loyalty in non-profit organizations for social responsibility projects. Despite the fact, even participants sensitive to the social responsibility concept and try to join social responsibility projects, it is conjectured that only 25% of the participants are a member of any non-profit organization.

As expected, respondents' cares providing benefit to both themselves and community so this feeling creates loyalty to the non-profit organization. So, organizations should focus more on these benefits in order to gain more volunteer and loyalty in their promotional activities. Another critic factor that enhances the loyalty of the participants is empowering volunteers. Also, during the activities,

“recognition of volunteers” is very important for volunteers in the organization as mentioned in the literature (Shin and Kleiner, 2003; Bang et al., 2012). Volunteers can achieve a commitment to the organization when management gives them a chance to present their opinions.

Another interesting finding is that the corporate image has no effect on loyalty or satisfaction from organization activities. Also membership period increase the loyalty of volunteers and reference group is an important actor for attraction of new volunteers. In this context, it can be said that the method of word of mouth marketing in particular is crucial for attracting volunteers to non-profit organizations. It is possible to say that the loyalty activities to be organized for volunteer candidates will be more successful in this process. It is noteworthy that the orientation programs that some organizations performed before the activities during the questionnaire survey with the participants also created a sense of commitment towards the organization.

Loyalty in non-profit organization has various aspects. Managers of non-profit organizations have to care all dimensions such as missions of organization, needs of volunteers, resources and etc. Despite these facts, sustainability of these organizations depends on their volunteers’ willingness. Thereby, managers of non-profit organizations have to answer how to empower and motivate their volunteers effectively and develop politics for their future of organizations.

Non-profit organization is still widespread concept as a third sector of economy. However there is no scale for measuring loyalty in non-profit organization. For future studies, a scale can be developed to measure loyalty in non-profit organizations.

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