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THE EFFECT OF VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE IN SPORT ORGANISATIONS ON FUTURE ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the effect of volunteering in sport organisations on future anxiety levels of the students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences. The study group consisted of 318 sports volunteers who volunteered in Vodafone 46th Istanbul Marathon, Türkiye İş Bankası 19th Istanbul Half Marathon, Goldenhorn Rowing Cup and Tour of Istanbul organisations in Istanbul. Personal information form, volunteer motivation scale for international sport organisations and future anxiety scale in university students were used in the study data. The scale of volunteer motivations for sport organisations was developed by Bang et al. (2009) to examine the motivational factors of volunteers working in international sport organisations. The scale of future anxiety in university students developed in Geylani and Ciriş Yıldız (2022) consists of 19 items in 5-point Likert type, which are collected under two sub-dimensions: fear of the future and hopelessness from the future. The data obtained were analysed using SPSS 25.0 package programme and the significance level was determined as 0.05. According to the findings obtained as a result of the study, the love of sport and fear of future scores of male volunteer students were statistically significantly higher than female students. In addition, it was concluded that students who participated in long-term volunteering activities had better social communication skills. As another result, it was concluded that the effect of volunteer motivation on university students' future anxiety was significant and positive.

Keywords: Sport, volunteering, future, future anxiety.

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INTRODUCTION

On a global scale, the sport industry is a sector that attracts attention with its economic size and social impacts. The sports economy is not only limited to professional leagues and major organisations, but also covers many areas such as tourism, media, advertising and employment. According to Cerrahoğlu (2016), the commercialisation and professionalisation of sports have made significant contributions to the development of the sports economy. Mega sports organisations offer various economic, social and cultural opportunities for host countries and cities. Such events encourage infrastructure investments, increase tourism revenues, and revitalise local economies (Terekli & Çobanoğlu, 2018). For example, the Deaflympics organisation held in Samsun in 2017 contributed positively to the economic and spatial development of the city (Gül, 2019). The economic impacts of sports organisations are not limited to short-term revenue increases. In the long term, such events increase the international recognition of cities and contribute to sustainable development goals (Yalçinkaya, 2024). However, mega sports organisations also have risks such as high costs and budget overruns. Flyvbjerg et al. (2016) stated that large events such as the Olympic Games tend to exceed planned budgets, which poses financial risks for host cities. The experiences of individuals who volunteer in sport organisations are important for both the success of the organisations and the personal development of individuals. Volunteering can contribute to individuals to improve their social skills, gain new experiences and career planning. However, there is a limited number of studies in the literature on the effects of volunteer experiences on individuals' future anxiety. For this reason, examining the effect of volunteering in sport organisations on individuals' future anxiety levels will both contribute to the academic literature and provide guidance for practitioners. Volunteering is taking part in activities for social benefit on one's own volition, without expecting any financial reward. In this process, the individual both gains experiences that support his/her individual development and contributes to the community to which he/she belongs (Özdemir & Aşçı, 2021). Volunteering is not only a means of social service; it is also an important learning area that allows the individual to self-actualise (Aslan & Koç, 2019).

Sports organisations are one of the areas where volunteering is most commonly observed. Sports events organised at national and international level need volunteer participation in many areas from logistical support to spectator orientation, from athlete accompaniment to media relations (Yıldız & Gürbüz, 2018). Especially in large-scale organisations, volunteers play critical roles in the functioning of the organisation. This voluntary participation not only reduces the costs of organisations, but also strengthens the social acceptance of the event and the bond with the local community (Yalçın & Kaya, 2023). Taking part in sports organisations as a volunteer provides individuals with skills such as communication, problem solving and teamwork (Karagün & Sağır, 2017). These gains create important opportunities for career planning and personal development, especially for young individuals. In addition, it is frequently emphasised in the literature that individuals who participate in volunteering activities increase their sense of belonging and social responsibility awareness (Topkaya, 2020).

Increasing volunteerism in sports organisations also contributes to the formation of a sustainable sports culture. In such activities where social participation is encouraged, volunteers help to popularise sports and develop a

positive sports climate (Demirel & Öcal, 2016). In this context, volunteering is not only an element that provides individual gains; it is also an integral part of the sports system.

Today's rapidly changing economic, social and cultural structure increases the sense of uncertainty, especially among young individuals, and this situation causes future anxiety to become widespread among university students. Future anxiety is a state of intense worry that an individual feels in the face of situations such as not being able to find a job after completing his/her education, not being able to provide economic independence, and not being able to meet social expectations (Karakaya et al., 2006). This anxiety can negatively affect students' academic performance, life satisfaction and mental health (Çivitci, 2010). University education is not only the acquisition of academic knowledge for young individuals; it is also a process of career planning, acquiring a social environment and developing identity (Seydioğlu et al., 2023). However, increasing unemployment rates, high competition and uncertain economic conditions weaken students' hopes for their lives after graduation and force them to be more planned and equipped (Aydoğan & Gençtanırım, 2015). For this reason, any experience gained during university years, especially work experience or volunteer activities, has the potential to increase both the self-confidence and employability of the individual.

Voluntary or part-time work of university students during their education not only provides financial gains, but also helps them develop skills such as taking responsibility, time management, communication, problem solving and teamwork (İşcan & Seyyar, 2020). These skills make it easier for them to stand out in their career life after graduation and are considered as a factor that reduces future anxiety (Doğan, 2017). Volunteering especially in sports organisations enables students to be a part of a social activity and allows them to experience a simulation of the dynamic environments they will encounter in business life. These experiences help students to set clearer goals for their careers, improve their self-expression skills, and thus contribute to the development of more positive expectations for their future (Yıldız & Karataş, 2021).

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of volunteering in sport organisations on the future anxiety levels of the students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences. It is known that volunteer experiences contribute to the professional and personal development of individuals, increase their self-efficacy perceptions and employability expectations. In this framework, the potential psychological and career-oriented benefits of volunteering were evaluated by comparing the future anxiety levels of students who were involved in volunteer activities with those who were not.

METHOD

In this section, information about the research model, study group, data collection tools, data analysis and research ethics will be presented.

Research Model

In this research, the relational survey model, which is among the quantitative study methods, was used. This model is a research model that aims to reveal the existence of change between two or more variables and if there is a change, to what extent (Karasar, 2017).

Research Group

In line with the aim of the research; the study group of the research consists of 318 sports volunteers who volunteered in Vodafone 46th Istanbul Marathon, Türkiye İş Bankası 19th Istanbul Half Marathon, Goldenhorn Rowing Cup and Tour of Istanbul international sports organisations in Istanbul. The participants were students studying in the Department of Sports Sciences of universities, determined by purposive sampling.

Data Collection Tools

Socio-demographic information form, Volunteer Motivations for International Sport Organisations Scale and Future Anxiety Scale in University Students were used as data collection tools. The Volunteer Motivations for Sport Organisations Scale was first developed by Bang et al. (2009) to examine the motivational factors of volunteers working in international sport organisations. The scale consists of 30 items and 7 dimensions and has a 7-point Likert type. The sub-dimensions of the scale are "expression of values", "patriotism", "interpersonal relations", "career orientation", "personal development", "extrinsic rewards" and "love of sport". In the scale whose Turkish validity and reliability was tested by Fişne and Karagöz (2016), all 4 items of the "personal development" factor and one item from the "expression of values" factor in the original scale were removed. However, the final version of the scale consists of 25 items and 6 sub-dimensions with 7-point Likert type (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). "Future Anxiety Scale in University Students" developed by Geylani and Ciriş Yıldız (2022) was used. The scale consists of 19 items in 5-point Likert type, which are grouped under two sub-dimensions as 'Fear of the Future' and 'Hopelessness about the Future'.

Data Analysis

SPSS 25.0 package programme was used for data analysis. Arithmetic mean, standard deviation and frequency values were presented in the statistical representations of the data. Within the framework of the central limit theorem, direct parametric test statistics were used since the sample numbers were quite reasonable. In this context, Independent Samples T Test, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), Pearson Correlation Test and Multiple Linear Regression analyses were applied.

Research Ethics

During the current research, "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" and the relevant research was conducted at Istanbul Topkapı University, Academic Research and Publication Ethics Commission, E-49976783-612.14.1-2400001224 approved by the board decision.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distributions Regarding the Demographic Information of the Participants

Variable		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	142	44.7
	Male	176	55.3
Age	17-20	116	36.5
	21-24	124	39.0
	25 and above	78	24.5
Classroom	Grade 1	87	27.4
	Class 2	66	20.8
	Grade 3	71	22.3
	Grade 4	94	29.6
Duration of Sports Volunteering	Less than 3 months	121	38.1
	4-12 months	113	35.5
	More than 1 year	84	26.4
Total		318	%100

Within the scope of the research, demographic characteristics of 318 students who volunteered in sports organisations were examined. Of the participants, 142 were female and 176 were male. When the age distribution is analysed, 116 students are between 17-20 years old, 124 students are between 21-24 years old and 78 students are 25 years old and above. According to the distribution by grade level, first grade students were the second lowest in the group with 87 students, while the highest rate was observed in the fourth grade with 94 students. There are 66 students in the second grade and 71 students in the third grade. When the distribution of students according to the duration of sports volunteering was analysed, 121 students volunteered for less than three months. 113 students have volunteered for four to twelve months, and 84 students have been volunteering for one year or more.

Table 2. t-test results according to the gender of the volunteer students participating in the study

Scale Subscales	Female (N=142)		Male (N=176)		t	P
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.		
VMFISO						
Patriotism	6.41	0.91	6.57	0.85	-1.63	,104
Expression of Values	6.68	0.71	6.45	0.92	2.25	,125
Love of Sport	5.12	0.76	6.73	0.65	-2.61	,009*
Career Guidance	5.82	1.28	6.12	1.11	-2.27	,220
Interpersonal Relationships	6.26	1.05	6.31	0.91	-0.46	,043
Extrinsic Rewards	3.31	1.43	3.54	1.51	-1.39	,166
FASUS						
Fear of the Future	2.92	0.81	3.75	0.76	-2.55	,011*
Hopelessness about the Future	3.68	0.83	3.85	0.77	-1.91	,057

In Table 2, the love of sport and fear of future scores of volunteer male students are statistically significantly higher than female students ($p < .05$). At the same time, male students reported more fear about their future. This finding suggests that despite volunteer experiences, uncertainties about the future may have more

intense psychological effects on male students. There was no statistically significant difference between genders in the level of hopelessness about the future ($p>.05$). This result shows that both gender groups experience similar levels of pessimism in their long-term expectations.

Table 3. ANOVA analysis results related to the age variable of the volunteer students participating in the study

Scale and Subscales	17-20 (N=116)		21-24 (N=124)		25 ve üstü (N=78)		F	p
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.		
VMFISO								
Patriotism	6.48	0.89	6.42	0.91	6.45	0.88	0.24	,785
Expression of Values	6.59	0.84	6.61	0.75	6.56	0.88	0.12	,889
Love of Sport	6.63	0.69	6.58	0.72	6.55	0.76	0.19	,828
Career Guidance	5.94	1.21	6.00	1.18	6.05	1.15	0.22	,802
Interpersonal Relationships	6.30	0.99	6.27	0.95	6.21	1.02	0.23	,793
Extrinsic Rewards	3.37	1.49	3.35	1.47	3.44	1.55	0.10	,903
FASUS								
Fear of the Future	2.96	0.81	3.00	0.78	3.08	0.79	0.83	,437
Hopelessness about the	3.61	0.76	3.66	0.78	4.82	0.84	6.47	,002*

According to the ANOVA analysis between age groups in Table 3, a statistically significant difference was found only in the "hopelessness about the future" sub-dimension. Students aged 25 and over scored higher in this sub-dimension compared to other age groups. This situation shows that as the age increases, negativity increases in the future expectations of individuals and uncertainty creates a psychological burden. No significant difference was found between age groups in all other sub-dimensions ($p>.05$).

Table 4. ANOVA analysis results related to the duration of sports volunteering of the volunteer students participating in the study

Scale and Subscales	17-20 (N=116)		21-24 (N=124)		25 ve üstü (N=78)		F	p
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.		
VMFISO								
Patriotism	6.48	0.89	6.42	0.91	6.45	0.88	0.24	,785
Expression of Values	6.59	0.84	6.61	0.75	6.56	0.88	0.12	,889
Love of Sport	6.63	0.69	6.58	0.72	6.55	0.76	0.19	,828
Career Guidance	5.94	1.21	6.00	1.18	6.05	1.15	0.22	,802
Interpersonal Relationships	6.30	0.99	6.27	0.95	6.21	1.02	0.23	,793
Extrinsic Rewards	3.37	1.49	3.35	1.47	3.44	1.55	0.10	,903
FASUS								
Fear of the Future	2.96	0.81	3.00	0.78	3.08	0.79	0.83	,437
Hopelessness about the	3.61	0.76	3.66	0.78	4.82	0.84	6.47	.002*

In Table 4, according to the ANOVA analysis of the students' duration of sports volunteering, only in the dimension of interpersonal relationships, students with volunteering experience of 1 year or more received higher scores. This finding indicates that long-term volunteering activities improve individuals' social communication skills and relationships. According to another result, in the "fear of future" sub-dimension, the scores of the students who volunteered for less than 3 months were significantly higher than the other groups. This indicates that as the duration of volunteering increases, students' feelings of uncertainty and fear about the future decrease. In all other sub- dimensions, no statistically significant difference was found according to the duration of volunteering ($p>.05$).

Table 5. Pearson correlation analysis results

Variable	Volunteer Motivations Scale	Future Anxiety Scale
Volunteer Motivations Scale	1	0,772**
Future Anxiety Scale	0,714**	1

When *Table 5* is analysed, it is understood that the relationship between volunteer motivation and future anxiety is positive and strong ($r=0.772$, $p=0.000<0.05$)

Table 6. Regression analysis results to determine the effect of Volunteer Motivation on Future Anxiety

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	f	sig	R ²	Standardised B Coefficient	Beta	t	p
Volunteer Motivations	Future Anxiety	601,322	0,000	0,524	0,627	0,714	22,655	,000

When *Table 6* is analysed, it is determined that Volunteer Motivation has a significant effect on Future Anxiety ($\beta=0,672$, $p=0,000<0,05$).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, it was aimed to examine the effect of volunteering in sport organisations on the future anxiety levels of the students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences.

As a result of the findings obtained, it is shown that the love of sport and fear of future levels of volunteer male students are higher than female students. This result suggests that especially male students' motivation towards sportive activities is more dominant. Similarly, Snyder and Omoto (2008) stated that gender differences in volunteer activities emerge through certain sub-motivations and that men volunteer with more extrinsic and goal-oriented motivations. In addition, the finding that men have higher levels of fear of the future is in line with the findings in the literature that young men are exposed to more intense expectations about career and social roles (Lee & Kim, 2020). In addition, Nurmi (1991) stated that future expectations and anxiety levels can show significance with the gender variable. Finally, Saks and Ashforth (1999) argue that male students' high expectations for career development and social success create a psychological structure that is more sensitive to uncertainty in these individuals. In the analyses, a significant difference was observed only in the "hopelessness about the future" sub-dimension according to the volunteer students and it was found that this score was higher in participants aged 25 and over. This finding is in line with the findings in the literature that future anxiety may increase with increasing age. For example, Arnett (2000) stated that during young adulthood, individuals' economic and career-related expectations become clearer and this may increase future anxiety. Similarly, Atkinson (2008) stated that individuals in the later stages of higher education experience more anxiety due to uncertainty after graduation. Kumar and Bhukar (2013), in their study conducted among university students, showed that the perception of uncertainty increases with increasing age and this may affect the level of hopelessness. In a large- scale study conducted by Beutel et al. (2010), it was reported that future anxiety and depressive symptoms increased in individuals over the age of 25. In the analyses according to the duration of volunteering, it was found that the interpersonal relations scores of the students with more than one year of volunteering were significantly higher. This finding supports the effect of volunteering activities on increasing

social skills. Wilson and Musick (1999) stated that volunteering is a means of developing social capital and long-term voluntary participation has a positive effect on interpersonal relationships. Clary and Snyder (1999) argue that volunteering experiences are important for social integration and that such experiences strengthen interpersonal ties. In addition, Musick and Wilson (2003) reported a positive relationship between the duration of volunteering and social competence and sense of belonging. On the other hand, it was found that the "fear of future" scores of the students who volunteered for less than 3 months were significantly higher than the other groups. This coincides with the study of Thoits and Hewitt (2001), which shows that as the duration of volunteering increases, individuals' life satisfaction and perceptions of control also increase.

When the results of the multiple linear regression analysis were analysed, the effect of volunteer motivation on university students' future anxiety was found to be significant and positive. This finding shows that volunteering activities can affect individuals' perceptions about the future and their anxiety levels. In a study conducted by Koçeroğlu et al. (2024) with students of the faculty of sport sciences, the effect of students' academic achievement on hopelessness level and future anxiety was examined. The results revealed that students' motivation levels were related to future anxiety. This suggests that volunteering motivation may similarly affect future anxiety. In Aşantugrul's (2024) qualitative study, university students' future anxiety was associated with factors such as finding a job, concerns about the profession and economic problems. Arslan and Akça (2022) also stated that volunteers who took part in sports organisations had an increase in their subjective well-being levels in the post-event period, and that this increase led to optimism, especially in future-oriented thoughts. This state of optimism may contribute to students' developing more positive expectations about their careers and decreasing their anxiety levels. Finally, in a study conducted by Çetin and Akyüz (2021) with university students, it was concluded that the levels of "future anxiety" were significantly lower in individuals with long-term volunteer experience; especially those who took active part in sports activities had more positive future expectations. In this context, the fact that volunteering activities expand individuals' social circles and contribute to their personal development can play an important role in reducing future anxiety.

This study examined the relationship between volunteering motivation and future anxiety of sport sciences faculty students. The findings show that volunteering motivation has a significant and positive effect on future anxiety. This situation reveals that volunteering activities can affect individuals' perceptions about the future and their anxiety levels. In this direction, encouraging volunteering activities in universities can be effective in reducing future anxiety by contributing to students' personal development. Moreover, integrating volunteering programmes into students' career planning can help them develop their professional skills and be better prepared for the labour market.

SUGGESTIONS

When the process and results of this study are analyzed, the following suggestions can be made;

- Universities should establish programmes that encourage students to participate in voluntary sports organisations, ensuring that volunteering is promoted with equal opportunities for both male and female students.
- Faculties of sports sciences and related departments should facilitate the transfer of volunteer experience into professional development by organising career-focused seminars, workshops and networking events for volunteer students.
- Students' experiences gained through voluntary activities should be documented with transcripts or certificates, and these documents should be recognised in job applications after graduation.
- In order to sustain volunteering, incentive mechanisms such as scholarships, loan discounts or internship support should be established.

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