



## THE INVESTIGATION OF SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS AND VOLUNTARY MOTIVATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED TO YOUTH CAMP LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

In today's sports organizations, volunteers work in almost all positions and make important contributions to the success of the organization. As a free workforce, volunteers are considered to be an important human resource for the organization to reach its goal. One of the prerequisites for voluntary participation is the well-being and happiness of the person. In this study, the motivations and subjective happiness of the volunteer participants who participated in the Camp Leadership training of the Ministry of Youth and Sports were investigated. The study group consisted of 396 volunteer participants who participated in Youth Camp Leadership training in 2017 in Antalya. The Sports Activities Volunteer Motivation Scale (SAVMS) developed by Farrell, Johnston and Twynam (1998) which was adapted into Turkish and validated by Yildiz, Yildirim and Kocak (2015) was used as a data collection tool in determining volunteer motivation. Another data collection tool was "Subjective Happiness Scale" developed by Lyumbomirsky and Lepper (1999) which was adapted and validated by Akin and Bayi (2011) into Turkish. As a result, there was a significant and positive relationship between voluntary motivation and subjective happiness ( $r = 0.281$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and only gender among the control variables had a significant effect ( $\beta = -0.179$ ) on happiness variable.

**Keywords:** youth camp leadership, volunteer, motivation, subjective happiness

### **1. Introduction**

Youth camps are facilities established to enable young people to fill their free time with various social, cultural and sporting activities. The camps offer new life experiences by bringing young people from different cultures together, enabling them to enrich their

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personal experience by bringing together individuals from different ideas and understandings. These camps contribute to the socialization of young people with shared time and space sharing and allow them to explore their talents (Coşkuner, 2009: 1). In these camps which are organized by Youth and Sports Ministry in Turkey (GSB), -marine camps are organized for youth aged 12 and 15 and the nature camps are organized for youth aged 16 - 22 ([link 1](#)). In addition, camp leaders take part in the camps to ensure that all activities to be carried out during the camp are carried out in accordance with a specific program. Those who receive leadership training in youth camps and who pass this training successfully also serve as youth camp leader or program officer in the next activities between the dates in which they declare to be available. Leaders organize the participants within the framework of the camp program and play an important role in the successful execution of the activities. At this point, there may be some difficulties caused by leadership.

Tutar, Yilmaz and Erdonmez (2005: 15), state that in case the participants are divided in the groups of various demographic variables, sometimes a complex and problematic communication network may occur. As a matter of fact, Çelik et al. (2017: 1465) stated that one of the basic characteristics that the leaders of sports activities should have is the ability to communicate. At this point, it was thought that the leaders` acting in a problem-solving manner to solve the problems to occur has a direct relationship with their *volunteer motivations*. Therefore, examining the subject of volunteerism in terms of sport activities will benefit in terms of the scope and purpose of this research.

Volunteerism means that the person uses his / her physical strength and knowledge with the intention of helping and providing benefit to the community (Mihajlovic et al., 2010: 6) without the thought of personal gain (Mihajlovic et al., 2010: 6) and it is necessity needed in the sports activities. As well as the paid employees who work under official and private sports organizations, volunteer individuals are also involved in sports organizations. In international sports organizations and in Olympic Games, volunteers are now employed as professional staff for important roles (Güngör, 2014). The contribution of volunteer individuals is of great importance especially in the preparation, implementation and finalization of large-scale sports organizations. Volunteers in the 2012 London Summer Olympics were defined as "Game Builders" and it was stated that volunteers provided huge support in a large part of the organization ([link 2](#)). The success of an event depends on the individuals with different profiles working with a team spirit. Researchers have also been curious about the factors that motivated the participation of volunteers, who have such an important role, in organizations.

There are many studies on the reasons for voluntary participation in sporting activities (Allen and Bartle, 2014; Pi et al., 2014; Guzel et al., 2013; Mirsafian and Mohamadinejad, 2012; Mihajlovic et al., 2010; Allen and Shaw, 2009; Sözeri, Karlı and Koçak, 2008; Esmond and Dunlop, 2004). Looking at the results of these studies; helping others, gaining new experiences, socializing (making friends) and personal satisfaction are the factors that motivate participants to come together. In addition, Degli Antoni

(2009) states that internal and external factors are important in the voluntary motivations of individuals, but exemplify the desire to help others and external personal factors as internal factors, social recognition and acquiring the environment as external factors. Binder and Freytag (2013) reported that volunteerism is positively associated with personal feeling good.

When it comes to feeling good, the concept of happiness comes to mind. Yildiz and Ekici (2017) linked the methods that will bring happiness to people to some factors. Cultural, artistic, sportive activities, which are among intentional activities among these, are social factors that make individuals happy. Although Kitayama, Markus and Matsumoto (1995) state that happiness can be defined as a 'positive emotional state', Akin and Satici (2011: 66) state that a general definition of happiness cannot be made. Because some individuals may feel happy even though they have inadequate living conditions, others are very unhappy even in very good conditions. As a result, in the researches, objective approaches are insufficient to explain happiness. The reason for this is the opinion that the structure of the society in which the person lives can make a difference in the understanding of happiness. Indeed, Uchida, Norasakkunkit, and Kitayama (2004: 224-225) state that those who grow up in an individualist society see happiness as their own success, whereas in collectivist societies happiness means achieving positive social relations and ensuring harmony within society. This can only be explained by the 'tradition of subjectivity'.

According to Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999: 139), subjective happiness is a subjective assessment of individuals being happy or unhappy. Considering this definition, the level of happiness experienced by the individual can be shaped by how he/she perceives and interprets events. In conclusion, it can be said that the factors affecting the motivation of volunteers may have a significant effect on the subjective happiness of individuals.

In the light of all this information, it is thought that it is important to investigate the volunteer motivations and subjective happiness levels of the participants in the youth camps which have an important place among the socialization opportunities of the youth. In this study, it is aimed to investigate the volunteer motivations and subjective happiness of the students participating in youth camp leadership training and to question the relationship between them.

## **2. Method**

This study was carried out by a quantitative research method and carried out by a general screening model. The survey technique was used as a data collection method and a questionnaire was applied to 650 students who participated voluntarily in the Youth Camp Leadership education organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2017 in Antalya. As a result of the feedbacks, erroneous surveys were eliminated and 396 questionnaires which were suitable for the analysis were taken into consideration. In the sample selection, convenience sampling method was preferred. This sampling method provides speed and practicality to research because in this sampling method,

the researcher chooses a situation that is close and easy to access (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016).

The Sports Activities Volunteer Motivation Scale (SAVMS) developed by Farell, Johnston and Twynam (1998) which was adapted into Turkish and validated by Yildiz, Yildirim and Kocak (2015) was used as a data collection tool in determining volunteer motivation of the participants in the sports activities. In this validity-reliability study, researchers removed the dimension of traditions from the scale due to the insufficient load of substances, and then achieved a new dimension as a result of the applied factor analysis. Because the items in this dimension contain personal motivational expressions and the accumulations related to volunteering in the literature are expressed as 'personal interest', they call the new dimension as 'personal interest' (Yildiz, Yildirim and Kocak, 2015: 112). Sports Activities Volunteer Motivation Scale (SAVMS) consists of 22 questions and has 4 dimensions; '*objective*', '*solidarity*', '*personal interest*' and '*commitment*'. The scale is a 5 point likert scale and scored between 1 (extremely not important) and 5 (extremely important). On the scale evaluated based on the average score, the high score obtained indicates that the volunteer has a high motivation for participation in the activity.

Another data collection tool was "Subjective Happiness Scale" developed by Lyumbomirsky and Lepper (1999) which was adapted and validated by Akın and Bayi (2011) into Turkish. The scale has a one-dimensional structure consisting of 4 items. The scale, of which the item 4 is reverse-coded, is 7-point Likert-type and the high score in the scale indicates that the subjective happiness of the individual is high. According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis performed for both scales used in the study, it was seen that the adaptive values of the scales were at a good level and it was found to be suitable for the study.

Descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency), correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis were used for statistical analysis of the data obtained. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated for the reliability of the scales.

### **3. Findings**

#### **3.1 Demographic Data**

The mean age of the students was 22,17 ( $\pm 2,34$ ). The number of participants is balanced in terms of gender. The percentage of those who have undergraduate education is 71,5% and the rate of those who do not work in any job is 87,4%. The income of the majority of the participants is 500 TL or less.

**Table 1: Demographic Features**

Variables	f	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	204	51.5
Male	192	48.5
<b>Graduation</b>		
High school	104	26.3
Undergraduate Level	283	71.5
Master's degree	9	2.3
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Employed	50	12,6
Unemployed	346	87.4
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
500 TL or less	307	77,5
501-1000TL	37	9,3
1001-1500TL	21	5,3
1501-2000TL	13	3,3
2001 TL and above	18	4,5

### 3.2 Reliability Analysis of the Scales

As a result of analyzes, the reliability coefficient of the volunteer motivation scale of the sporting activities was found to be 0,865. This value shows that the scale has a high degree of reliability. For the sub-dimensions of the scale, the objective dimension ( $\alpha = 0.852$ ) and solidarity dimension ( $\alpha = 0.809$ ) have a high degree of reliability while the commitment dimension ( $\alpha = 0.724$ ) and personal interest ( $\alpha = 0.658$ ) indicate that the scale is sufficiently reliable.

The reliability coefficient of the subjective happiness scale was  $\alpha = 0,603$ . This value indicates that the scale has a reliable value.

### 3.3 Correlation Analysis

**Table 2: Correlation Findings between Variables**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	1									
2. Gender	,137**	1								
3. Graduation	,310**	-,010	1							
4. Employment Status	-,397**	,034	-,175**	1						
5. Monthly Income	,436**	,159**	,190**	-,653**	1					
6. Objective	-,034	,070	,027	-,007	-,079	1				
7. Solidarity	-,134**	,054	-,064	,075	-,089	,588**	1			
8. Commitments	,021	,006	,064	-,033	-,009	,313**	,276**	1		
9. Personal Interest	-,068	,126*	-,002	,029	-,076	,574**	,614**	,480**	1	
10. Volunteer Motivation	-,052	,075	,022	,009	-,071	,746**	,718**	,769**	,841**	1
11. Happiness	,042	-,158**	,096	-,027	-,053	,202**	,279**	,195**	,221**	,281**

According to the correlation test results; volunteer motivation has a significant and positive relationship with happiness ( $r = 0.281$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, the sub-dimensions

of voluntary motivation which are objective ( $r = 0,202$ ), solidarity ( $r = 0,279$ ), commitment ( $r = 0,195$ ) and personal interest ( $r = 0,221$ ), are significantly and positively associated with happiness ( $p < 0.01$ ).

### 3.4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis findings showed that volunteer motivation had a significant effect on happiness variable ( $\beta = 0,293$ ) ( $p < 0,01$ ). In addition, it has been shown that only gender has a significant effect on happiness variable ( $\beta = -0,179$ ) from control variables ( $p < 0.01$ ). In this context, it can be said that women's happiness levels are higher than men (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Hierarchical Regression Analysis Findings for Variables

	Happiness	
	Step 1	Step 2
1. Age	,060	,079
2. Gender	-,147*	-,179*
3. Graduation	,087	,072
4. Employment Status	-,054	-,025
5. Monthly Income	-,108	-,069
6. Motivational Motivation	-	<b>,293*</b>
F	3,370	9,282
R <sup>2</sup>	,041	,125
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	,029	,112

\* $p < 0,01$

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the literature; in the studies on motivation of volunteer working, it is seen that the scales are composed of various dimensions such as external effects and free time, interaction and success, change motivation and interest towards others (Suruja, 2010); personal development, personal satisfaction, gaining experience, building social relationships, helping others, opportunity and entertainment (Sözeri, Karlı and Koçak, 2008: 42); common goal, goal-oriented, external factors and responsibility (Berber, 2015: 36). In addition, Farrell et al. (1998: 294) have a study on the four sub-dimensions, including objective, solidarity, traditions and commitment. The scale used in this study was a version adapted and validated by Yildiz, Yildirim and Kocak (2015) of the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS) of Farrell et al (1998).

As a result of analyzes, it has been found that there is a significant and positive relationship between voluntary motivation and subjective happiness ( $r = 0.281$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, the sub-dimensions of voluntary motivation which are objective ( $r = 0,202$ ), solidarity ( $r = 0,279$ ), commitment ( $r = 0,195$ ) and personal interest ( $r = 0,221$ ), are significantly and positively associated with happiness ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Hierarchical regression analysis results show that volunteer motivation has a significant effect on happiness variable. Ogut, Yenel and Kocamaz (2013: 72) in their

study during which the attendance reasons of the volunteers who participated in the activities of sports federations in Turkey were investigated stated that the purpose to make use of the leisure time was among the 5 different participation reasons. Considering that the happiness of the individual is the basis of the leisure activities, the positive relationship between voluntary motivation and subjective happiness can be interpreted as expected.

Gender among the control variables has been found to have a significant effect on happiness variable. In this context, it was seen that the happiness of women was higher than that of men. According to the data of TUIK in 2016, the rate of happiness of men is 58.1% and the rate of happiness of women is 64.5% ([link 3](#)). The results of the regression analysis and the TUIK data coincide with in this context.

In the study conducted by Dulin et al. (2012) in New Zealand, it was concluded that volunteering significantly increased the level of happiness. This result coincides with the findings of our study.

Binder and Freytag (2013) concluded that there was a positive relationship between volunteerism and subjective well-being. In addition, it was observed that individuals engaged in volunteer participation regularly directed the level of unhappiness and were in a relationship with happiness. The results are in parallel with the findings of this study.

As a result, the findings obtained from this study have revealed that there is a positive relationship between the volunteer motivation of the students in the youth camps and subjective happiness and they are important for the authorities to give an opinion on increasing the participation in such camps in the future. That the societies consisting of individuals that are happier and more voluntary are going to be intertwined with sport may be put forward as a necessity for the formation of healthier and happy generations.

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### Internet Resources

- Link 1: <http://genclikkamplari.gsb.gov.tr/Modul/GenclikKamplari.aspx>. Erişim tarihi: 27.06.2018.
- Link 2: <https://www.olympic.org/news/volunteers-helping-to-make-the-games-happen>. Erişim tarihi: 27.06.2018.
- Link 3: <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=24641> Erişim tarihi: 07.08.2018.

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