Sociological Motives of Helping Behavior

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Abstract: This study investigates the motivations of volunteers in non-governmental organizations to help children with education and the unconscious sources of these motivations through a phenomenological approach. The study considers helping behavior as a phenomenon in two different categories: pure philanthropic activity for intrinsic satisfaction and contribution to the rational organization where social benefits and individual interests are identified. The Weberian tradition of institutional sociology emphasizes spiritual motivations as the legitimizing background of capitalism as the fundamental dynamics of the rationalization processes in a social economy. Social network theorists place great importance on the concept of solidarity as a moral motivation in the formation of industrial capitalism, an approach that strengthens the theoretical foundations of this study. In this context, structured interviews have been conducted with eight participants volunteering in civil society organizations in the Bandırma district of Balıkesir. The data were analyzed by categorical-systematic content analysis through MAXQDA 2020 software. Findings from the analysis indicate that a strong inclination toward pure philanthropic activity primarily characterizes participants' motivations for helping. This result reveals that although the participants thought that they rationalized their helping motivation following the activities, spiritual qualities were consistently preserved.

Keywords: Helping Behavior, Philanthropy, Civil Society Organizations, Volunteering Motivation, Phenomenological Analysis

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Öz: Bu çalışma, sivil toplum kuruluşlarında çocuklara eğitim alanında yardım eden gönüllülerin motivasyonlarını ve bu motivasyonların bilinçdışı kaynaklarını fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Çalışma, yardım davranışını iki farklı kategoride bir olgu olarak ele almaktadır: içsel tatmin amacıyla gerçekleştirilen saf filantropik etkinlik ve sosyal faydalar ile bireysel çıkarların tanımlandığı rasyonel örgüte katkı. Weberyen kurumsal sosyoloji geleneği, rasyonelleşme süreçlerinin temel dinamiği olan kapitalizmin meşrulaştırıcı arka planı olarak manevi motivasyonlara vurgu yapmaktadır. Sosyal ağ kuramcıları ise, endüstriyel kapitalizmin oluşumunda ahlaki bir motivasyon olarak dayanışma kavramına büyük önem atfeder; bu yaklaşım, çalışmanın kuramsal temellerini güçlendirmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Balıkesir'in Bandırma ilçesinde sivil toplum kuruluşlarında gönüllülük yapan sekiz katılımcı ile yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler, MAXQDA 2020 yazılımı aracılığıyla kategorik-sistematik içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Analiz bulguları, katılımcıların yardım etme motivasyonlarının esas olarak saf filantropik etkinliğe yönelik güçlü bir eğilimle karakterize edildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu sonuç, katılımcıların yardım etme motivasyonlarını etkinlikler sonrasında rasyonelleştirdiklerini düşünmelerine rağmen, manevi niteliklerin tutarlı bir şekilde korunduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Filantropi, Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları, Gönüllülük Motivasyonu, Fenomenolojik Analiz

Introduction

This study investigates the motives of the volunteers who work in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help children with their education. Helping children with education in this context is considered a phenomenological case. The reason for such a consideration is because motives that push the individual to help have various reasons of which we are unconscious most of the time[1]. The issue of helping children with education will be discussed in this study under two categories. The first category assumes that helping behavior is carried out solely because it provides people with inner satisfaction. This category is related to the concept of philanthropy[2]. People who

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1   Phenomenological research design is the general name of the studies conducted to reveal the real reasons for the behaviors, beliefs and practices that are embedded in the subconscious with cultural or traditional codes and whose reasons the individual cannot reveal but are constantly repeated at the level of habit (Moustakas, 1994).

2   According to Oxford Dictionary, the term philantropy is derived from the Greek words "philo" meaning "to love" and "anthropos" meaning "human" (Muukkonen, 2010). Although the helping phenomenon may have other foundations that need to be evaluated within the scope of many different disciplines before or after modernity, it will be handled in this paper from an economic perspective with a high sociological awareness (Hands, 1968). It shall be treated as a category with a motivation that does not contribute to rational economic organization. In this sense, the foundations of the helping phenomenon must be sought in the pre-modern medieval political economy. On the other hand, the only areas where a rational economic organization can flourish should undoubtedly be the structures where the existence of an independent social economy can be mentioned (Weber, 1993). The areas of domination of the ancient eastern and western medieval state traditions, which could not tolerate even the slightest independence reflexes of these structures, were the only social structures where the understanding of pure philanthropy flourished. One of the institutions that can be considered one of the most important determinants of social structures in medieval political economy is undoubtedly religion. In the Christian Holy Roman and Turkish-Islamic state traditions that dominated Europe and the Middle East from the early Middle Ages to the late Middle Ages, philanthropic activities carried out by the phenomenon of charity as one of the functions of controlling the social economy have always been of great importance in terms of establishing central authority (Melville, 2016). When the reasons for this are considered, apart from increasing the loyalty of the people to the state by giving back to the people, seeing the phenomenon of aid in the social economy as a philanthropic activity that only the state can organize is to prevent indi-

act by philanthropy help children with education uniquely because it makes them feel good. The concept of philanthropy, in this context, should not be understood as philanthropic activities carried out by non-governmental organizations within a social organization. This paper focuses on the pre-modern, purely spiritual essence of the concept. Philanthropy represents the spiritual roots of helping behavior. The second category represents the motive of the individual who identifies his/her own interest with the interest of the society. Considering the helping behavior in such a frame reinforces the possibility of viewing the education as an institution contributing to the efficiency of the social economy. In opposition to the first one, this second category represents the rational roots of the helping phenomenon.

Questioning the spiritual and rational origins of the helping behavior in any field of the social sciences contributes to the research that attempts to explain the factors influencing the formation of industrial capitalism in Western Europe. Especially in the tradition of institutional sociology influenced by the Weberian school, it is emphasized that spiritual motivations as the basic dynamics of the rationalization processes of the social economy create the legitimizing background of capitalism. Many attempts have been made to argue that spiritual motivations are an important component of a mechanism that increases the efficiency of worldly activities, subject over time to a determined process of rationalization. Still in the field of sociology, the social network theorists, as the intellectual inheritors of the Durkheim-Simmel approach, underline the concept of solidarity as an example

viduals from showing civil society reflexes by developing a sympathy through the phenomenon of giving aid independent of the state. This makes it necessary to position philanthropic activities against modern rational types of organizations (Dündar, 2023). The most institutionalized manifestations of philanthropic activities, which for the purpose and scope of this study will be limited to examples in eastern state traditions, can be found in Basilleous monasticism on the Christian front, whose foundations were laid in the Byzantine era, and in waqfiyyah on the Islamic front. Basillean monasticism positioned education on a fundamentally different trajectory from its Western counterparts. First and foremost, unlike in the West, education in Basillean monasteries was not the primary function of helping the people. Therefore, in Basillean monasticism, education was not a mandatory duty of the monasteries (Murzaku, 2013). It was strictly forbidden to engage in any charitable activity in remote areas that could not be organized by the central state. In fact, the Byzantine state did not even allow the establishment of monasteries in remote areas. As the central authority in the East (Byzantine Empire) gradually consolidated, philanthropic activities were monopolized by urban monasteries. In the Ottoman Empire, the mission of the monasteries in terms of centralizing aid activities was taken over by foundations. As in the Basilian monasteries, educational aid was never the primary task of the foundations (Rollidis, 1999). The risk of classism that could arise in the popular strata through volunteering activities was extremely risky in Ottoman-type states that had to always keep their central authority strong (Sıddıqı, 1992). All these reasons give ground for positioning pure philanthropic activity versus rational organization in this study. Finally, at this point, the theoretical justifications for the search for traces of philanthropy in the social structures of the modern heirs of the Eastern state understanding, such as Türkiye, which has not realized an ideal Western-type transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism, have become more evident(Wittek, 2015).

of spiritual motivation in the formation of industrial capitalism. This emphasis provides a fundamental argument for explaining why this study categorizes the research question based on the helping phenomenon in terms of its spiritual and rational origins. After revealing the importance of the research questions of the study in the literature, the conceptual framework related to the research question is presented within a specific research design, as can be seen in Figure 1.
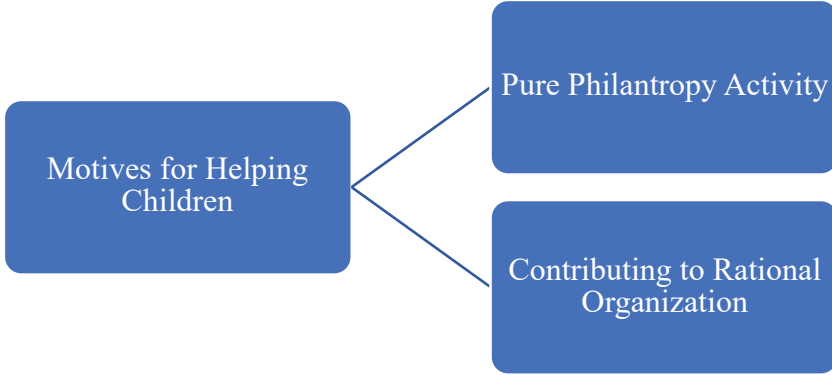

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Phenomenological Research Design

In this study, a theory or group of theories existing in the field will not be tested within the context of the problematic of the study. In this respect, the conceptual framework of the study does not hold a theory-testing structure. Since the aim is to describe the basic motives of a social phenomenon—the helping *phenomenon*—in a categorical and systematic way, the conceptual framework of this study falls into the group of descriptive theoretical frameworks[3]. The main case of the conceptual framework of the study is the phenomenon of helping children itself, which is closely related to the research question. At the last stage of the formation process of the conceptual framework; <<Pure Philanthropy Activity>>> and <<Contributing to Rational Organization>>, designated as sub-sectional cases, represent the main categories to be analyzed in the methodology phase[4].

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3   The aim of this type of research is purely to define and describe social phenomena. Although phenomena are described in detail, the aim is not to test or discover any theory (Yıldırım, 2020: 81). Qualitative research, which aims to explore some social events and phenomena by excluding theory-testing and descriptive theoretical frameworks is another major type of research. In these studies, which are also called exploratory research types, the aim is to determine generalizable processes by acting on social phenomena and in the last stage, theory can be discovered (Stebbins, 2001:3).

4   Case studies, called case and cross-sectional case concepts as well attempt to analyze current or historical social phenomena in the current theories and/or life practices context (Sığrı, 2021:161).

Literature Review

The sociological examination of helping behaviors corresponds to a complex and multifaceted field of inquiry, one that illuminates the fundamental aspects of human social organization and collective well-being. This review synthesizes key research contributions that explore the developmental processes, motivational factors, and social dimensions of helping behaviors across diverse contexts. The literature reveals not merely isolated phenomena but interconnected patterns of prosocial engagement that shape social cohesion and individual well-being in complementary ways.

Research on helping behaviors has evolved significantly over recent decades, with increasing attention to both individual-level motivations and broader societal implications. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of these behaviors, particularly during the pandemic period, which created unprecedented challenges and opportunities for prosocial engagement across various age groups. The literature demonstrates how helping behaviors manifest differently across educational settings, professional contexts, developmental stages, and organizational environments.

In the field of education, Duru (2004) established a strong relationship between empathy and helping tendency for teacher candidates. His research determined that as the level of empathic interest increased, the tendency to help increased under the influence of various psychosocial variables. The linkage between empathic capacity and prosocial behavior constitutes a critical basis for understanding the development of prosocial orientations within the context of professional training.

Extending the scope beyond educational contexts to incorporate age-related dimensions, Kahana et al. (2013) investigated altruistic tendencies among older adults and found that altruistic dispositions and engagement in volunteer activities exert a positive influence on both life satisfaction and affective well-being. These findings highlight the critical role of social participation in later life and suggest that helping behaviors yield reciprocal benefits—not only enhancing the well-being of recipients but also contributing meaningfully to the psychological health of those who aid. This pattern of mutual benefit is robustly supported across the empirical literature.

The professional helping context offers additional insights through the work of Serpen and Hasgül (2015), who investigated the relationship between empathy and help among social workers. Their observation shows that female experts with

postgraduate education demonstrated higher empathy and helping scores, with empathy skills increasing with experience. This emphasizes important intersections between professional development, gender socialization, and helping competencies. This research connects with Duru's earlier findings while extending the analysis to practicing professionals rather than trainees.

Developmental perspectives provide crucial foundations for understanding how helping behaviors emerge across the lifespan. Sunar and Fidancı (2016) studied the development of altruism in early childhood and found that altruistic behaviors in children aged 3-5 years increased with age, with sharing behavior particularly prevalent in earlier developmental stages. These findings contribute significantly to our understanding of how prosocial orientations form during critical developmental windows, complementing the adult-focused studies and suggesting potential early intervention opportunities.

A more comprehensive theoretical framework emerges in Yavuzer's (2017) study, which provided a thorough analysis of prosocial behaviors and altruistic motivation. His findings reveal the dual nature of helping motivations—encompassing both compassion and self-interest—while confirming altruism's evolutionary significance through anthropological and experimental evidence. Particularly noteworthy was the observation that individuals with high moral character demonstrated greater attentiveness to others' needs. This suggests important connections between ethical development and prosocial engagement that bridge individual psychology and social norms.

The global pandemic catalyzed new dimensions of research into helping behaviors. Some studies by Tekin et al. (2021) and Maier et al. (2021) investigated the social effects of altruistic behaviors and volunteering activities during this unprecedented crisis. Both studies revealed that volunteering activities enhanced well-being and strengthened social bonds during periods of widespread isolation and uncertainty. These findings connect with Kahana et al.'s earlier work on elderly populations, suggesting that the benefits of helping transcend age categories and may be particularly salient during periods of collective stress.

Chang et al. (2022) contributed a distinctive perspective to volunteering research by examining volunteers' rational thinking processes. Their work highlighted the necessity of rational planning alongside emotional compassion for sustaining long-term volunteering commitments. This recognition of cognitive alongside affective dimensions of helping represents an important theoretical advancement

that complements Yavuzer's (2017) dual-motivation model while focusing specifically on the sustainability of helping behaviors over time.

Organizational contexts offer additional insights through the work of Azeem et al. (2023), who examined the effects of challenging and inhibiting stressors on employees' job performance and helping behaviors by paying particular attention to the moderating role of religiosity. Utilizing multi-source data from Pakistani organizations within the framework of resource conservation theory, they demonstrated that challenging stress positively affected job performance, with religiosity strengthening this effect. Conversely, inhibitory stress negatively impacted both performance and helping behaviors, though religiosity mitigated these adverse effects. This research extends our understanding of helping behaviors into workplace settings while introducing cultural and spiritual dimensions largely absent from earlier studies.

Further exploring organizational dynamics, Huang and Yuan (2024) analyzed the relationship between ostracism and helping behavior through social learning and social role theoretical frameworks. Their study revealed that senior managers' exclusionary behaviors fostered exclusion among colleagues, subsequently diminishing employees' helping behaviors—with male employees particularly affected. This research effectively demonstrates how organizational cultures can either nurture or undermine prosocial engagement, connecting with Azeem et al.'s (2023) focus on workplace dynamics while specifically addressing social exclusion mechanisms.

In the recent literature review, Trombini, Jiang, and Kinias (2024) examined factors motivating long-term prosocial behaviors, particularly focusing on social support's impact through attachment theory. Their research demonstrated that receiving social support strengthens trust, thereby enhancing motivation for prosocial engagement both within and beyond the immediate support context—with effects persisting over years. This work provides an important longitudinal perspective that complements Chang et al.'s (2022) focus on sustained helping while introducing attachment theory as a valuable explanatory framework for understanding the intergenerational transmission of helping behaviors.

Collectively, this literature reveals helping behaviors not as isolated acts but as expressions of complex sociological processes that connect individual development, organizational contexts, and broader social structures. The research demonstrates consistent patterns across diverse settings: the foundational role

of empathy and moral development (Duru, 2004; Yavuzer, 2017); the reciprocal benefits to both helper and recipient (Kahana et al., 2013; Tekin et al., 2021; Maier et al., 2021); the importance of supportive social contexts (Azeem et al., 2023; Huang & Yuan, 2024; Trombini et al., 2024); and the developmental trajectory of helping from childhood through late adulthood (Sunar & Fidancı, 2016; Serpen & Hasgül, 2015).

Despite these valuable contributions, significant gaps regarding the sociological motives of helping behavior remain in the literature. Current research has insufficiently addressed the tension between pure philanthropic activity and contributions to rational organization—a distinction that forms the conceptual framework of our study. The Weberian tradition of institutional sociology emphasizes spiritual motivations as legitimizing mechanisms within rational economic structures, yet how these dynamics manifest within contemporary volunteering contexts remains underexplored. Similarly, while social network theorists highlight the importance of solidarity as a moral motivation in social development, the extent to which pure philanthropic impulses persist within increasingly rationalized civil society organizations requires further investigation.

Our phenomenological study of volunteers' motivations for helping children with education in civil society organizations addresses these gaps by examining whether spiritual qualities persist despite apparent rationalization processes. We explored whether participants' helping motivations align more closely with pure philanthropic activity or with contributions to rational organization through structured interviews with volunteers in NGOs in the Bandırma district of Balıkesir. This approach enables us to contribute to broader theoretical discussions about the spiritual and rational roots of helping phenomena, particularly within social contexts like Türkiye that represent unique institutional configurations between Eastern state traditions and Western-influenced civil society structures.

Method

Research Design

To analyze the conceptual framework suggested by the phenomenological case design and to reach the necessary findings regarding the motivations for helping, data were first provided through structured interviews with a certain number of participants engaged in volunteering activities in non-governmental organiza-

tions[5]. Through the interview, the researchers asked 10 questions which may provide suitable conditions for content analysis of the categories [6] <<Pure Philanthropy Activity>>> and <<Contributing to Rational Organization>>[7]. The questions were asked in the following order:

1. Could you tell your volunteering story for an NGO?

2. What are your reasons for volunteering?

3. What do you think volunteering activities contribute to a volunteer?

4. What is your opinion about the time devoted to volunteering activities?

5. What do you think are the necessary characteristics for volunteers who would like to work in NGOs that help children with education?

6. What did volunteering contribute to you?

7. What are your positive experiences regarding volunteering?

8. What are your negative experiences regarding volunteering?

9. Have you experienced any change in your thoughts before volunteering and after volunteering? If yes, could you please explain?

10. How did you feel after your first volunteering experience? What do you think about it?

The first two questions aim to measure participants' perceptions of the phenomenon of helping before engaging in volunteering activities. To understand people's motivations for volunteering before participating in the activities, participants were directly asked about their reasons for volunteering as well as what their experiences were. The main purpose of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th questions is to investigate whether performing volunteer activities contributes to rational organization, especially in terms of development opportunities. The 3rd and 4th questions

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5   An interview is a data collection technique where the researcher organizes pre-designed questions in a document, asks them verbally to the participants and obtains the answers as data (Bal, 2014: 288). Interviews vary according to the degree to which the researcher intervenes in the interview. What is meant by intervention here is the degree of going beyond the predetermined question patterns with the interviewees. In the literature, there are structured interview types that do not go beyond the question patterns at all, as well as semi-structured interview types in which new questions are asked based on the course of the dialog during the interview and the knowledge and experience of the researcher in addition to the questions prepared in advance (Mason, 2002).

6   Hereafter, the category <<Pure Philanthropic Activity>> will be referred to by the abbreviation PPA and the category <<Contributing to Rational Organization>> will be referred to by the abbreviation CRO.

7   As can be seen in the appendix, the interview questions were presented to the participants on a form that included basic demographic information about the participants.

investigate what the activities generally bring to a volunteer and how the quality of the time allocated to these activities is perceived. Also, the 5th and 6th questions were asked to the participants who have engaged in volunteering activities, and they aimed to explore what kind of characteristics the volunteers should have, as well as elicit data on whether the participants themselves have gained these characteristics.

The other questions aim to determine whether there is a change in the participants' perceptions about the phenomenon of helping after volunteering activities. The reason why the questions were prepared in two dimensions before and after the activities is to provide a solid ground for the researcher to determine the participants' place in the PPA or CRO categories. Another benefit of this dual dimensionality is related to the attempt to understand whether individuals enter a rationalization process before or after performing volunteering activities.

The answers given by the participants to the questions were transcribed and reported. The necessary conditions were provided to start the analysis by means of MAXQDA (2020 version), a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis program.

Study Group and Sample

The research was carried out with 8 participants working voluntarily in non-governmental organizations in Bandırma district of Balıkesir province in Türkiye. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling method. In particular, the criterion sampling method was preferred. The main criterion was to have been actively involved in volunteer activities to help children with their education for at least one year. This criterion ensured that the participants had sufficient experience to reflect meaningfully on their motivation.

As the study group was relatively small (n=8), the generalizability of the findings to larger populations is limited. However, the aim of phenomenological research is not to generalize but to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, the number of participants is appropriate for this type of qualitative research. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the sample size is a limitation of the study.

Data Collection Process

Data were collected through structured interviews consisting of 10 questions, which were designed to elicit participants' perceptions of helping behaviors before, during, and after their volunteering experience. The structured interview format

was chosen to ensure consistency across participants and to facilitate systematic analyses aligned with our categorical framework. Before starting the main data collection, to test the clarity and effectiveness of the questions, pilot interviews were conducted with 2 volunteers who were not included in the final sample.

The interviews were conducted from January to March 2023. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the NGOs where the participants already work in a quiet and comfortable setting. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed verbatim for later analysis.

Reliability and Validity Measures

Multiple strategies were employed to enhance the reliability and validity of the research. First, member checking was conducted by sharing the findings with 3 participants who confirmed the accuracy of the interpretations. Second, 2 faculty members with expertise in qualitative research methodology reviewed the coding scheme and analytical procedures, thereby incorporating expert validation into the process. Finally, the credibility and coherence of the findings were further reinforced through regular evaluative meetings among the research team, which facilitated critical reflection and ensured analytical consistency throughout the study.

Ethical Issues

Before starting the data collection process, ethical approval was obtained from Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Approval No: 2022-9). All participants were given an information form that explained the purpose and procedures of the study. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant. They were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity and informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any sanction.

Limitations

The study has some limitations. First, while the present study is appropriate for phenomenological inquiry, the limited sample size of 8 participants constrains the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Second, the exclusive focus on volunteers from the Bandırma district may not adequately reflect regional variations in volunteering motivations across different areas of Türkiye. Third, although the use of structured interviews facilitated a systematic approach to data collection and analysis, it may have restricted participants' capacity to convey more

nuanced and idiosyncratic dimensions of their motivational experiences. Finally, the potential impact of social desirability bias must be acknowledged, as participants may have articulated their motivations in ways they perceived to be socially acceptable, thereby potentially obscuring more authentic or less socially sanctioned perspectives.

Analysis

To investigate the data in this present study, the content analysis method was employed. Content analysis is one of the most preferred data analysis techniques among the qualitative research methods adopted in social sciences (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). When the summarized and interpreted data in the descriptive studies need to be examined from relatively different dimensions from each other, content analysis consists of the stages of analyzing and presenting the findings by creating various codes, themes, and categories (Oleinik, 2022: 269-270).

Among the existing various types of content analysis, categorical-systematic content analysis was used in this present study (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The reason for choosing categorical-systematic analysis is that helping phenomena must be examined in two different categorized dimensions. These two dimensions represent the categorical part of the technique in question. At this point, it is extremely important to assign codes representing the PPA and CRO categories.

The codes of the PPA and CRO categories, as the main components of the conceptual framework of the study, were created based on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for volunteering, which are widely accepted in the existing studies related to the field. Intrinsic motivations are defined as the individual's enjoyment of the activity itself, independently from the social norms (Gagne & Deci, 2005:331).

Finkelstien (2009) argues that intrinsic motivations usually have a spiritual background, as they are compatible with the individual's own values and beliefs. Therefore, the codes of the CRO category were inspired by these types of motivation. There are 3 main types of intrinsic motivation that are widely accepted. These are as follows: (1) Personal Satisfaction: This refers to seeing a positive change as a result of contributing to a project or knowing the priceless value of making a difference in the lives of individuals as a volunteer (Bang and Ross, 2009, p. 65), (2) Sense of Self-Esteem: This refers to people's feeling more valuable by helping others (Stukas, Hoye et al, 2016). (3) Commitment to Spiritual Values: This regards many individuals' perceptions towards volunteering as an expression of spiritual beliefs or ethical values (Bang and Ross, 2009).

Extrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that is facilitated from the individual's environment, and it is mostly related to social evaluation or reward. Such motivation is based on the status of the individual in society or relationships with his/her environment (Finkelstien, 2009, p. 654).

Extrinsic motivation: (1) Social Acknowledgement: Since it is seen as a behavior that is appreciated by society, individuals can gain respect in their social environment in this way (Mannino, Snyder et al., 2011), (2) The Need to Belong: Humans are social beings and feel the need to belong to a community. Charitable activities enable individuals to bond with groups that share similar values and goals and give individuals a sense of identity and belonging (Ferreira, Proenca et al., 2009). (3) Development Opportunities: Charitable activities provide individuals with professional opportunities, such as acquiring new skills, developing existing abilities, and shaping their careers, as well as providing individuals with the opportunity to network and connect with potential employers (Ferreira, Proenca et al., 2009).

Since the motive to help with extrinsic motivation is the subject of the social sphere established by a civilized society through a common sentiment, it represents the codes of the category named CRO in this study. Figure 2 shows the systematic analysis results through codes and categories regarding the participants' responses.

Codes Linked to Pure Philanthropy Activity (PPA)

- Personal Satisfaction
- Sense of Self-Esteem
- Commitment to Spiritual Values

Codes Linked to Contributing to Rational Organization (CRO)

- Social Acknowledgement
- The Need to Belong
- Development Opportunities

Figure 2: Codes Linked to the PPA and CRO Categories

In the study, the "helping" phenomenological case was defined in two different categories, namely Pure Philanthropic Activity (PPA) and Contributing to Rational

Organization (CRO). In addition, as could be seen in Figure 2, the relevant categories were assigned to the computerized qualitative data analysis program with their codes. The densities of PPA and CRO categories were found by assigning one or more necessary codes to the sentences that were deemed suitable for analysis from the participant responses uploaded to the MAXQDA (2020 version) program[8]. Thus, the study aimed to investigate whether volunteers working in non-governmental organizations in the Bandırma district are motivated by pure philanthropy or rational organization through their perceptions.

Findings

Revealing how the codes related to the categories are assigned to the participant responses through a systematization is of great importance in terms of contributing to the consistent conclusions. In this sense, Figure 3 below demonstrates how participants' responses lead to a systematic flow:
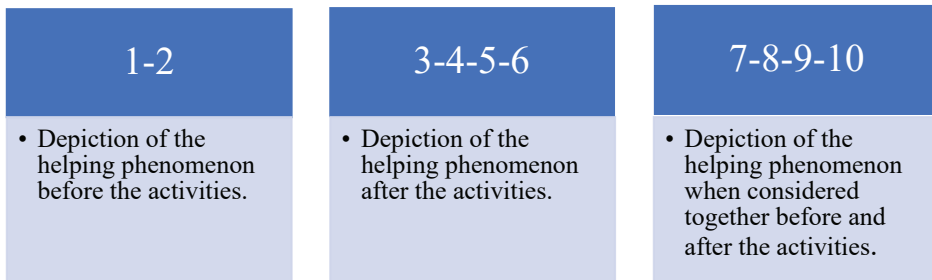
1-2	3-4-5-6	7-8-9-10
• Depiction of the helping phenomenon before the activities.	• Depiction of the helping phenomenon after the activities.	• Depiction of the helping phenomenon when considered together before and after the activities.

Figure 3: Groups of Categorical Systematization .

In the question group 1-2, it was aimed to reveal the motives for which the participants tried to make sense of the helping phenomenon before the activities. Participants were asked to narrate their adventures by storytelling, and the reasons were described at this stage of the study. The goal was to reveal the relative closeness of the helping phenomenon before the activities to either PPA or CRO categories.

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8   Among the participants' answers, the sentences which are suitable for analysis were determined by the authors of this study. This may raise some questions regarding the validity and reliability of the study. However, at this point, it should be recognized that data analysis must be articulated with the author's academic knowledge, observations and experiences rather than being based on the standard scales used in previous studies, which is one of the important features of descriptive, interpretive and interpretivist methodological approaches (Dilthey, 1996 ; Thompson, 2009 & Weber, 2011).

In the group of questions 3-4-5-6, the necessary characteristics a volunteer should have were investigated through the lens of the volunteers that engaged in these activities.

The question number 5 constitutes the major axis of this group. Thanks to the answers to question 5, the proximity to the PPA or CRO categories was revealed. This was performed by examining the participants' answers to the questions: Is it sufficient for a volunteer to be involved in activities with an emotional motivation? Or should a volunteer have some professional characteristics? Supporting questions 3-4 and 6 were asked to test the reliability of the main axis. Question 3 required an explanation about the contributions of volunteering; question 4 asked how they made sense of the time allocated to the activities[9]. In question 6, it was tried to understand whether the participants themselves comply with the characteristics listed in the main axis numbered 5. In this perspective, the systematization of the findings was closely related to the existence of a correlation between the coding of the answers 3-4 and 6 and the coding of the answers 5 (Figure 4).
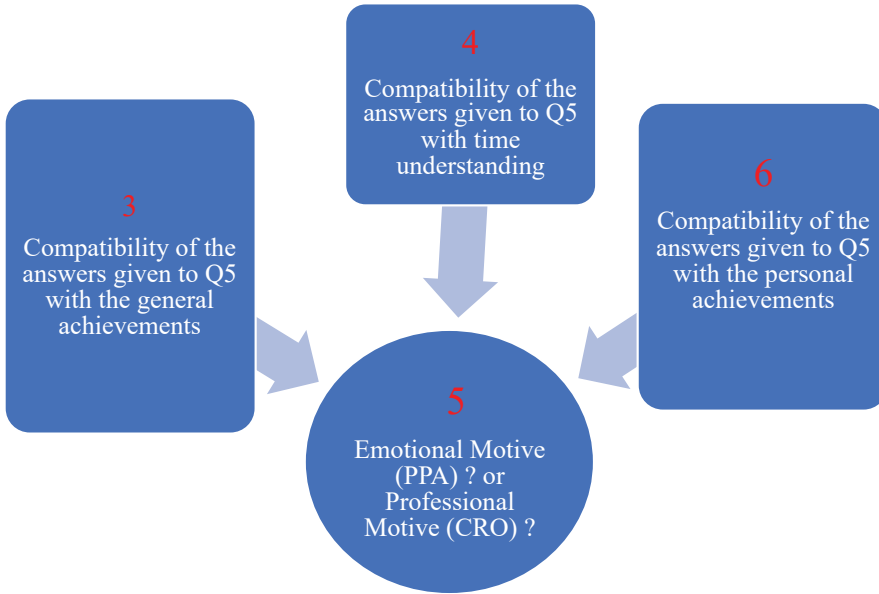
4
Compatibility of the answers given to Q5 with time understanding

3
Compatibility of the answers given to Q5 with the general achievements

6
Compatibility of the answers given to Q5 with the personal achievements

5
Emotional Motive (PPA) ? or Professional Motive (CRO) ?

Figure 4: Correlation of the Group 3-4-6 with the Question Number 5

9   For the important contributions of the rationalization of the understanding of time in the literature to the rational organization of society, see Zerubavel and Mumford.

The question number 9 constitutes the main axis of the group of questions 7-8-9-10. The main goal of this group of questions was to understand whether the participants' perceptions about the phenomenon of helping changed after participating in volunteering activities. Accordingly, the answers to question 9 were coded as representing two opposite categories representing before and after the activities or representing the same category. Thus, the direction of changes in the motive to help was tried to be understood from PPA to CRO or vice versa. Similar to the logic presented in Figure 4, the existence of a possible correlation between the codes obtained from answers 7-8 and 10 and the codes obtained from answer 9 also strengthens the systemic aspects of the finding. We can now move on to the findings after demonstrating how the method of this study—the categorical-systematic analysis—worked.

By uploading the answers given to the aforementioned question groups to the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis program MAXQDA (2020 version), the simple statistical frequencies of CRO and PPA, which are the possible origins of the helping phenomenon in this study, were established.

Discussion and Conclusion

Analysis of responses to question group 1–2, which explores participants' conceptualizations of the helping phenomenon prior to their engagement in volunteer activities, reveals a predominant representation of the PPA category upon the assignment of relevant thematic codes.

When Participant 1, a 24-year-old female student of Applied Sciences with an average experience of 3 years in volunteering activities in NGOs, was asked about the reasons for volunteering through her own experiences, it was seen that the purpose of making better use of her free time emerged very clearly. Participant 2, a 22-year-old male student of Natural Sciences, who has experiences of volunteering activities for only one year, stated that the reason for volunteering was seeking salvation from emotional problems he experienced. Participant 3, a 33-year-old male student of Applied Sciences had 6 years of volunteering experience. He stated that the motive that pushed him to participate in the activities was to help the child within himself rather than the feeling of helping other people. Participant 4, a 23-year-old male with a background in Natural Sciences, and 9 years of volunteering experience, clearly implied that since he always spent his social environment with people having volunteering experience from a young age, his desire to become like these people, whom he has always taken as role models in his life, surrounded him and created a sense of

self-worth. Participant 5, a 23-year-old female with a background in Social Sciences education and experience volunteering for 9 years, mentioned that she prioritized the conscientious responsibilities of helping others in her life. She emphasized that the driving force in her decision to participate in such activities was her commitment to spiritual values. Like Participant 4, it is clear that one of the motives that Participant 5 highlighted in her description of the phenomenon of helping before the activities was related to the satisfaction of the sense of self-worth. Participant 5, who had people in her social environment with volunteering activities from a young age, declared her desire to be like them. Participant 6 was a 25-year-old female who was a graduate of Educational Sciences and had 5 years of volunteering experience. She was frequently surrounded by people who engaged in volunteering activities from an early age. Participant 6 differed from the first 5 participants because she implied the necessity of a rational organization regarding the motive to help before starting the activities. While describing the motive that drives her to help, she frequently emphasized the compatibility between her love of helping children and her professional reflexes. This situation showed that Participant 6 rationalized her sense of personal satisfaction within the limits of professional formation. The parallelism between Participant 6's love of watching the sense of curiosity in children's eyes and the nature of her professional formation having the notion of arousing curiosity shows that she attached importance to the necessity of contributing to rational organization (CRO). Although loving the curiosity in the children's eyes independently of social organizations was intended to increase the intensity of personal satisfaction, which was the code of philanthropic activity defined in the study, the link Participant 6 established with her profession increased the intensity of development opportunities, which is the code for the motive of contributing to rational organization. Participant 7, a 23-year-old woman with an educational background in Social Sciences and 1-2 years of volunteering experience in NGOs, stated that her desire to participate in such volunteering activities was motivated by the desire to help people in need. This shows the need to assign Participant 7's answers, related to this group, to the code of commitment to spiritual values of the PPA category. Finally, Participant 8, a 31-year-old male with an educational background in Health Sciences and 9 years of volunteering experience, stated that he participated in volunteering activities to raise children's awareness about animal rights. Also, he had a similar rational process developed by Participant 6, as he had a professional motive because of his professional formation through reinforcing the sense of curiosity in children. Therefore, the intensity of the development opportunities code of the CRO category was high in Participant 8's answers to question group 1-2.

The answers given to question groups 3-4-5-6 were analyzed as a separate group. The reason for this is related to trying to understand how the participants described the phenomenon of helping after they had been involved in volunteering activities. In question groups 3-4-5-6, the participants were asked about the characteristics that a volunteer should have, and it was tried to find out what kind of changes occurred in the intensity of the PPA and CRO categories compared to before the activities.

Participant 1 believed that volunteering activities contribute to teamwork. In this respect, with this emphasis on one of the most important requirements of rational organization, he increased the intensity of the development opportunities code of the CRO category. On the other hand, he also stated that volunteering activities made him feel more fulfilled. Thus, in determining the intensity of the motives of the motive to help after volunteering activities, it was deemed necessary to assign a code-named commitment to spiritual values of the PPA category, apart from the CRO category. Participant 1's tendency to merely focus on her happiness by spending time with the activities required assignment to the personal satisfaction code of the PPA category. In addition to this, one of the participants' such statements regarding the activities' biggest benefit as her own personal happiness increased the intensity of this category. The question 5—which constitutes the main axis of this question group and whose compatibility with the other questions in the group is of particular importance for this study—did not believe that a volunteer should have a specific characteristic. Therefore, this was another factor that increased the density of the PPA category. Question 6 is the final supporting question for the main axis group of question 5. Unlike question 3, this question was related to the participants' own achievements. The reason why the general contributions were also asked on an individual basis was to try to understand whether there was a consistency between the answers given to question 3 and the answers given to question 6. It was important to pay attention to this consistency in the findings to determine the extent to which the participant individually complies with the characteristics generalized in question 6. According to the answers given by Participant 1 in question 6, it is understood that the activities transformed him into a happier person. This situation increased the intensity of the PPA category by assigning the expression to the sense of self-worth code. The compatibility between the question groups 3-4-6 shown in Figure 4 and the question group 5 is seen in the increasing intensity of the PPA category in both groups.

Participant 2 ensured that the general contributions represented by question group 3 in Figure 4 are positioned in the CRO category with the aspect expressing that his good communication skills, which he believed to have provided him with important benefits in his social life, developed very clearly after volunteering activities. Likewise, in question group 4, it is seen that the participant gained a different cognition in terms of efficiency in the understanding of time after the activities. This awareness gained by Participant 2 caused him to increase the intensity in the CRO category. However, it is understood that Participant 2's view of general achievements and understanding of time in terms of development opportunities in social life does not show a compatibility with his answers to question group 5. The search for this compatibility has made an important contribution to understanding how much importance he attached to professionalism in terms of increasing general achievements and developing a rational understanding of time. Participant 2 believed that no professional qualities are compulsory in a volunteer except spiritual elements such as sincerity, desire, and willingness. For question 6, where the general contributions in question 3 were required to be answered personally, the participant indicated that he became more patient after the activities, which he reported to contribute to their social life.

The explicitly targeted phenomenon in this question group is the participants' perceptions of individual and general contributions, the level of rationality of their understanding of time after the activities, and whether all these create a professional volunteer prototype in the eyes of the participants. First, we need to mention the findings that require code assignment belonging to the PPA category in the perceptions of individual and general contributions to Participants 3-8. Participant 3, who identified taking part in the activities regularly with gaining the habit of worship, stated that even the personal characteristics that he would have previously considered bad were polished during these activities. Participant 4 believed that the people he spent time with in the activities would culturally increase his quality of life. He also stated that he got great pleasure from the new environment he acquired thanks to the activities. Participant 5, who believed that participating in activities makes the individual a role model, experienced that the individual who is a role model has a mission to spread goodness. Participant 6 believed that the activities teach people to help without expecting anything in return. Finally, Participant 8 believed that the activities would make people psychologically healthy. On the other hand, we need to mention the findings that require code assignment to the CRO category in the perceptions of individual and general contributions to Participants 3-8. The attitudes of Participant 6, who believed that professional

development opportunities are the biggest contribution to volunteers who work in the education sector, such as herself. Also, Participant 7, who believed that the activities could create very positive results in professional life by increasing empathy ability in professional life, revealed the intensity of the perceptions of the general gains of participating in the activities that can be evaluated in the CRO category.

In addition, as a result of the code assignments regarding the determination of the rationality perceptions of the time understanding of participants 3-8, the findings regarding the density of the PPA and CRO categories should be indicated. Participant 3 perceived the time devoted to activities as a commodity that is sacrificed from their own lives. This perception increased the intensity of the PPA category by making it necessary to assign a code of commitment to spiritual values. According to Participant 4, the time spent on activities is well-spent free time. Participant 4 believed that he spent his free time well in this way. This increased the intensity of the PPA category by strengthening the impression that it increased his sense of self-worth. Participant 5 has an attitude similar to Participant 3's time donation approach, emphasizing that he never complained even though he got bored during the activities he spent time on and believed that the donated time becomes more valuable thanks to the difficulties he endured. This spiritual mission undertaken by Participant 5 against time increased the intensity of the CRO category. Participant 6 had a basic awareness that the time allocated to activities should not be idealized too much, so he saw the time allocated to these activities as people's spare time. Interestingly, although Participant 6 did not act with spiritual motives here, he increased the intensity of the CRO category because he approached the time allocated to the activities with a personal satisfaction dimension. The point that should be particularly underlined here is that the personal satisfaction code does not have to be spiritual to be positioned in the CRO category. Participant 7 increased the intensity of the ROK category by emphasizing the features of the time devoted to activities that highlight the development opportunities of professional business life. Participant-8, regarding the time allocated to activities, revealed his mystical view from his words: "These are rare worldly times when a person can examine his conscience…" This has again increased the intensity of the PPA category. Finally, it is about the idealized volunteer type among the participants who form the main axis of this question group. Findings regarding the density of PPA and CRO categories of participants 3-8 will be handled.

The coding process aimed at identifying participant perceptions concerning both individual and collective contributions revealed a predominant representa-

tion of codes associated with the PPA category in comparison to those linked to the CRO category. Furthermore, when codes reflecting participants' temporal awareness and perceptions of rationality are incorporated into the analysis, the salience of the PPA category becomes even more pronounced.

When the code assignments related to the participants' sense of time and rationality perceptions are included in the analysis, the prominence of the PPA category becomes more apparent. This increase shows that some characteristics that can be interpreted as being close to the CRO category are less important in the participants' individual and overall perceptions of the contributions. The relative closeness of the participant answers to question group 5, which represents the main axis for this group of questions regarding the determination of the weight of motivations to help after the activities that can be positioned in the PPA or CRO category, establishes the internal consistency of this question group, as shown in Figure 4. It is noteworthy that all participants, except Participant 2, are compatible between the categories that were determined to be close to them in question groups 3-4-6 and the categories in which they were positioned after their answers to question group 5. It is noteworthy that in question group 5, where the professional qualities of motivation to help are investigated, the weight of the participants in the PPA category is maintained.

It is necessary to reveal the findings of groups 7-8-9-10, which is the last link of the categorical systematization grouped in Figure 3 within the systemic flow put forward for question groups 3-4-5-6 in Figure 4. Regarding this group, which represents the depiction of the phenomenon of helping when considered before and after the activities, an attempt was made to find out whether there was a harmonious relationship between question group 9, which was designated as the main axis, and question groups 7-8-10, as in the previous group. In addition, it should be aimed to reveal whether such a relationship occurs by increasing the intensity of which of the PPA and CRO categories. In the question group number 9, which represents the main axis here, the participants were asked whether there was a change in their motives for helping after participating in the activities. All the participant answers indicate that there has been a change in them to some extent. Participants, who stated that their motives for helping gained more rational characteristics, increased the intensity of the CRO category. On the other hand, participants who thought that their motivation to help increased their spiritual qualities increased the intensity of the PPA category. The question group 7-8-10, which aims to measure the positive and negative perceptions of the participants after the ac-

tivities, serves to ensure the consistency of the main axis no. 9 specific to the PPA or CRO category.

Participants 2, 3, 6, and 8 gave answers that there were rational changes in their motives for helping. This has caused a trend to increase the density of the CRO category. The other four participants responded that their spiritual qualities increased due to their motivation to help. When the code assignments to groups 7-8-10 were added, the distribution of the CRO and PPA categories, which were initially expected to be balanced in this question group, shifted in favor of PPA once again, showing a notable prominence.

As can be clearly seen in Figure 3, considering the classification of the helping motives analyzed through three main question groups into the categories named PPA and CRO and a total of 149 codes assigned to these classes[10], it seems that the PPA category, representing the motive of pure philanthropy activities, is predominantly represented.

This result shows that, contrary to the helping motives that the participants thought they had rationalized even after the activities, spiritual qualities continued to be consistently preserved. Undoubtedly, one of the most fundamental conclusions to draw from this study is related to the fulfillment of the main purposes of phenomenology. The main mission of this study, with a phenomenological awareness, is to reveal the real reasons for behavior or belief practices that the individual cannot explain but which are repeated habitually.

The findings of this study have important implications for NGO managers and policymakers operating within the volunteer sector. The observed predominance of spiritual over rational-organizational motivations indicates that strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention should prioritize intrinsic rewards and value-driven engagement rather than focusing solely on opportunities for professional development. It is essential for organizations to cultivate environments that affirm volunteers' sense of self-worth and personal fulfillment while also respecting and integrating their spiritual orientations. For policymakers designing frameworks to enhance volunteer engagement, it is crucial to safeguard these intrinsic motivational drivers, even as rational-organizational elements are gradually introduced in ways that complement—rather than supplant—the spiritual foundations of volunteerism.

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10   All mentioned code assignments and analysis processes are displayed in detail in the appendices.

Future research should explore the extent to which these motivational patterns differ across diverse cultural contexts, particularly in relation to varying degrees of modernization and secularization. Comparative analyses between such societies could yield critical insights into culturally contingent dimensions of volunteer motivation. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in the relative salience of purely philanthropic versus rational-organizational motives over prolonged periods of volunteer engagement would also contribute significantly to understanding the dynamics of motivational development. Furthermore, future investigations should consider how volunteer organizations can strategically integrate both spiritual and rational appeals within their management practices. Developing frameworks that facilitate the coexistence of these motivational orientations—while maintaining the centrality of spiritual drivers in volunteers' decision-making processes—would enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of volunteer engagement.

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Appendix-1

Code System	Helping Phenomenon	SUM
Question 3		0
Question Group 3-4-6		0
Question Group 1-2		0
PPA		0
Sense of Self-Esteem	■	17
Question 9	·	2
Question Group 7-8-10	■	7
Question 5	·	1
Question Group 3-4-6	■	6
Question Group 1-2	·	2
Commitment to Spiritual Values	■	18
Question 9		0
Question Group 7-8-10	■	4
Question 5	■	3
Question Group 3-4-6	■	8
Question Group 1-2	·	2
Personal Satisfaction	■	16
Question 9	·	2
Question Group 7-8-10	■	4
Question 5	·	2
Question Group 3-4-6	■	4
Question Group 1-2	■	4
Σ SUM	149	149

Appendix-2

Code Matrix Browser

Code System	Helping Phenomenon	SUM
∨ CRO		0
∨ Development Opportunities	■	23
Question 9	▪	4
Question Group 7-8-10	▪	9
Question 5	·	2
Question Group 3-4-6	▪	7
Question Group 1-2	·	2
∨ The Need to Belong		0
Question 9		0
Question Group 7-8-10		0
Question 5		0
Question Group 3-4-6		0
Question Group 1-2		0
∨ Social Acknowledgement		0
Question 9		0
Question Group 7-8-10		0
Question 5		0
Question Group 3-4-6		0
Question Group 1-2		0