

Master's Thesis

Master's Degree Programme in Sales Management

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Leading volunteers

– competition of leisure time



Master's Thesis | Abstract

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Leading Volunteers

- competition of leisure time

The objective of the present Master's thesis is to develop the concepts of leading volunteers in a non-profit sports club. Non-profit sports clubs offer a great range of activities for people of different ages. Many of these activities are executed by volunteers. It is important to understand what motivates a person to volunteer and use this knowledge to improve volunteer leading and volunteer engagement.

The empirical part of the study was carried out by using interviews. In addition, a literature review was conducted with the focus on volunteer leading, volunteer engagement, and motivational reasons behind volunteering. The study utilized qualitative methods. The process included analyzing data regarding volunteering and the interviews of eight volunteer leaders.

Based on the study, the main development area in non-profit sports clubs is to create models for how volunteers should be led. Sports clubs should put more effort on volunteer recruitment, engagement, coherent leadership, and communications. The organization must realize the value of volunteers for their activities. The thesis met its goals, and the results are relevant.

Keywords:

Volunteer work, volunteering, Non-profit association, sports club, management

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Vapaaehtoisten johtaminen

- kilpailua vapaa-ajasta

Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli kehittää voittoa tavoittelemattoman urheiluseuran vapaaehtoisten johtamista. Urheiluseurat järjestävät toimintaa laajalle joukolle eri-ikäisiä ihmisiä. Iso osa seurojen toiminnasta on vapaaehtoisten järjestämää. On tärkeää ymmärtää, että mikä motivoi ihmistä vapaaehtoistumaan ja käyttää tätä tietoa paremman vapaaehtoisjohtamisen ja kokemuksen kehittämiseksi.

Empiirinen osa tutkimusta tehtiin haastatteluin. Lisäksi kirjallisuuskatsaus keskittyi vapaaehtoisten johtamiseen, vapaaehtoisten sitouttamiseen ja motivaatiotekijöihin vapaaehtoistumisen taustalla. Työssä käytettiin laadullisia tutkimusmenetelmiä. Prosessin aikana analysoitiin vapaaehtoistoimintaan liittyvää dataa ja haastateltiin kahdeksaa vapaaehtoisten johtajaa.

Tutkimuksen perusteella voittoa tavoittelemattomien urheiluseuran tulisi kehittää toimintatapoja vapaaehtoisten johtamiseksi. Urheiluseurojen tulisi panostaa vapaaehtoisten rekrytointiin, sitouttamiseen, yhtenäiseen johtamiseen ja vapaaehtoisviestintään. Työ saavutti tavoitteensa ja tulokset ovat käyttökelpoisia.

Asiasanat:

Vapaaehtoistyö, vapaaehtoistuminen, yhdistys, urheiluseura, johtaminen

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background information for the thesis

Helsingin Sanomat wrote some years ago (Huotari, 2014) that 135 000 registered associations in Finland had approximately 15 million members. The great asset of associations are volunteer workers who are willing to run the associations, take part in different communal events, and help others voluntarily. The value of volunteer work in Finland is estimated to be 3 billion euros (Heimolehto & Collin, 2020). Volunteer work is needed and delivered in our society.

Sports clubs offer wide range of events to their own members and to the members of other sports clubs. Competitions, trainings, social evenings, and fundraisers are part of large range of events, which need volunteer work to happen. Why is someone willing to after school or workday give spare-time to the good of someone else? Is volunteering a pure selfless act for good of community? If those who are leading volunteers at non-profit organizations would understand motives behind volunteering they could find, motivate, and engage their volunteers better.

Associations seem to sometimes rely heavily on the traditional ways of working. Experienced members of associations might fight tooth and nail to keep things how they were in the “good old days”. As generations, ways of working, ways of spending leisure time, and the world have evolved decade after decade, the associations should regenerate to be able to tempt younger people to join.

Personal interest for the topic comes from background in responsible and leading position in associations ever since being 15 years old. Involvement in more than 10 non-profit associations during the past twenty years has provided a versatile picture of different operations. The roles in non-profit associations have included being an active member, paid worker, a supporter of association by paying the membership fee, and participant at activities of association.

Leading volunteers, arranging events, searching for new members for association, and trying to find ways to better the experience of members of association.

1.2 Purpose of the thesis and empirical choices

The aim of this thesis is to find out how non-profit sports club can develop their activities when leading and managing volunteers. This requires understanding the motivational reasons behind volunteering.

The objective of the study is to answer to research questions:

- How to lead volunteers at a non-profit association?
- How to better engage volunteers in association?

These questions are complemented with a supportive question:

- How to attract younger generation to volunteer?

To understand the motives behind volunteering study of literature of history of volunteering in Finland was carried out. Recent reports and recent research of the subject supplemented the literature. Motivational reasons behind volunteering were explored from different theories. Volunteer functions of Clary and Snyder (1999) was accompanied with renovated version of the hierarchy of need (Kenrick et al. 2010). The selection of these two theories was to form a base of understanding human needs and reasons for volunteering. Ryan and Deci (2000) described in their Self-determination theory the reasons behind the motivation of a human in social contexts. Koivisto and Ranta (2019) presented SIMOL-model which highlighted leader and leading style. With Social identity theory of leadership by Hogg (2001) it was possible to review what is expected from leaders and their character. These theories created the frame of this study.

Qualitative method was selected for main method of this study. In this study the empirical part consisted of theme interviews of persons involved in leading

volunteers at sports clubs. The purpose of the interviews was to find out how the volunteers are lead in the environment where interviewees are involved in and if there are common practices and guidelines available for leading volunteers. This thesis aimed to offer measures to be used in the future at non-profit sports clubs. Interviews called for opinions on future challenges and on how to overcome those challenges. The results can be used to create updated models of leading and engaging of volunteers.

1.3 Key concepts

This chapter will introduce key concepts that are used in this thesis. Concepts are defined more comprehensively later in thi thesis.

Non-profit association is a large term and includes political parties, and associations for social, cultural, sports and leisure activities, religious associations, and associations related to national defense and international relationships. Common theme for all these associations is that they are non-profitable for the founders.

Sports clubs can be non-profit associations, or like many professional sports clubs limited companies. Non-profit sports club is like any other non-profit association.

Volunteering is giving time, skills, efforts and knowledge for someone or something without aim of financial gain. In this thesis volunteering refers to work that is done for non-profit associations.

Communal work or talkootyöt in Finnish is fundraising or doing tasks for the good of someone else. This work is voluntary and unpaid. Communal work has slightly different meaning and echo compared to volunteer work. In this thesis volunteer work is mainly used to describe volunteering.

Volunteer program is part of the non-profit associations action plan. It includes guidance and instructions for search of volunteers, instructing and training

volunteers, managing volunteers, and actions to engage volunteers while offering satisfying volunteer experience.

Volunteer coordinator runs the volunteer program in non-profit association. This person could be in volunteer relationship to non-profit association or as a paid employee.

1.4 Structure of thesis

This thesis forms from six main chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter concentrates on voluntary work, leading of volunteers, and motives behind volunteering. Motivational reasons behind volunteering are reviewed using theories explaining needs, self-determination, and grouping reasons of a person. Third chapter introduce the methodological part of the research and explains how the empirical part of study is done. In the following chapter, Experiences from volunteer leading at non-profit organizations, results of interviews are explained. This fourth chapter with its direct quotes from people working with volunteers provides true insight into how volunteer leaders feel their organizations are functioning. In the last chapter conclusions are drawn from literature and the interviews to present results of this study. Measures for better volunteer leading, volunteer experience, and volunteer engagement are presented. At the end of the chapter, a few suggestions are given for further research.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Non-profit associations in Finland

A non-profit association is a registered organization, association, club, or political party for non-profit purposes. Association must have at least three founders and can be founded by registered association, company, or foundation. (Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus 2022.)

According to Harju (2020) the civic activities in Finland dates to end of 18th century when freemasons and other secret societies were established. At the beginning of 19th century early form of associations were founded with some general interest of public to offer, and few years later the first religious associations saw the daylight. First sports club was founded in 1856. The last half of the 19th century was time when most of the common know organizations of these days were founded.

At the early 20th century, the civil war in Finland divided the country to political left and political right. It meant that the field of associations divided, and new politically driven associations were founded. Over the rest of the century associations started to unite when political integration process proceeds. (Harju, 2020.)

Harju (2020) states that during and after the interwar period new educational and youth associations were founded to take care of and take part in reconstructing the war battered society. These associations were to drive the benefits and rights of their interest group. From the 1970s began new movement in association field while political motives started to turn down and bureaucratic organizations in associations started to form. Associations received more funding from government which made it possible to hire employees. The number of employees on associations has been growing since.

Ruuskanen et al. (2013, 9) defines third sector as an operator between market sector, public sector, and households. Typical for third sector is voluntary and

non-profitability. Operators at third sector are independent and without direct guiding from public sector. Laaksonen and Helander (2020) notes that the third sector usually means associations and trusts. Third sector is sometimes seen as a support for fading public sector with its possibilities to offer jobs for unemployed people and to prevent exclusion from society. Third sector monitor and supervise people's interest towards authorities and helps educates and growths people to be part of society. In Finland the third sector is funded by government by approximately 30% which means that third sector is almost independent from government.

Currently in Finland there are more than 100 000 registered associations and religious communities. Associations are supposed to be non-profitable and could be charity organizations, cultural, social, entertainment and trade associations, political parties, and sports clubs. (Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus 2022.) According to Patentti- ja Rekisterihallitus the number of associations in Finland has been increasing over the past five years. (Table 1.)

Table 1. Number of associations and religious communities in Finland

	31.12.2017	31.12.2018	31.12.2019	31.12.2020	31.12.2021
Associations	105 005	106 051	106 318	106 879	107 898
Religious communities	440	482	486	493	500

Heikkala (2016, 24-25) notes that the more than hundred thousand non-profit associations in Finland represents the society in all the ways. Even when the associations are diverse there are constitutional essential characteristics that without it is not non-profit association. Main characteristics are that association is meaningful for people involving its activities. These activities are based on volunteering and democratic decision-making. In associations sovereignty from third parties as association is financially and ideologically independent. Non-

profitability as the meaning of association is not to profit and work is based on voluntary activities

According to the report of Hakoköngäs (2018, 11-13) in Finland it has been common to refer volunteer work as a synonym to civic activities at non-profit associations. As the society changes in a fast pace the work of third sector has been seen as a vital and important part of the affluent society. But it is important to remember that volunteer based civic activities are also everyone's right to participate the way they are with their strengths and capabilities.

Associations are mostly run by volunteers. It is almost half of the Finns who has done some volunteer work during the year. On average it is 15 hours per person in month that is done voluntarily. Volunteer work is important as it increases the welfare of people and the whole society. (Stranius 2018, 9.) Major factor why people do volunteer work is a possibility to people to find and to do something meaningful to them. The organizers of volunteer work and their management needs a joint vision of that all the people are equal, and diversity is a chance. (Hakoköngäs 2018, 13.)

Ruuskanen et al. (2013, 10-11) has noticed that the paid work at third sector has increased rapidly in twenty years from 1990. In 2011 5% out of all the person-year done in Finland were done at third sector. This trend can be seen on Figure 1 that demonstrates the progression from 1990 to 2011 in the number of associations acting as an employer. After the recession in Finland at the beginning of 1990s the number third sector employers have almost doubled in twenty years. Rise of the paid work at third sector has also increased the services that is provided.

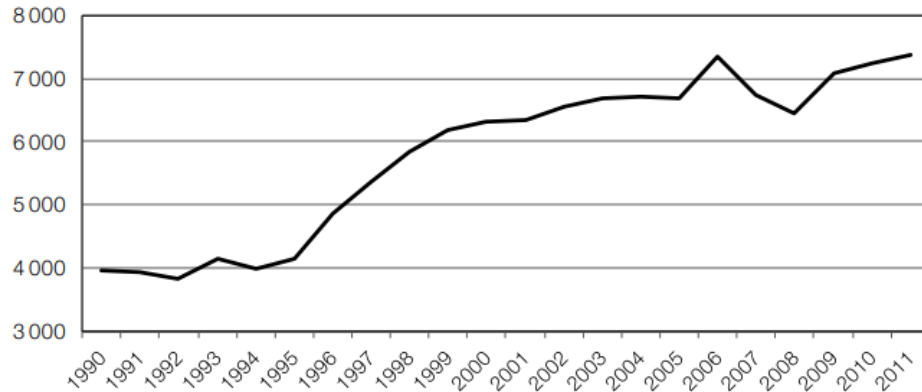


Figure 1. Non-profit associations as an employer (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 17).

As the paid work in non-profit associations has become more common it has some contradictory effects too. Level of service could be better with paid workforce, but paid workforce in non-profit volunteer work could cause some tension with those doing non-paid volunteer work as those two groups often work side-by-side. As the paid work increases in associations the motives to be involved to volunteer work gets more complicated as someone gets money for something that other does for free. (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 24.)

According to Hanifi (2019) leisure time is more important to Finns than the work. The trend in Finnish society has been that individuals choose their leisure time based on their own interest compared to traditional social hierarchy. Finnish people do less paid work compared to earlier and due that they have more leisure time. This increased leisure time has become more meaningful to people both in quality and quantity of time. The latest research from Statistic Finland in 2017 shows that the development of information technology and social media has changed how people's leisure time is used.

People participate to civil society activities as active than before according to Hanifi (2019). This can be seen from Figure 2 that shows participation percentages to non-profit association activities within last 12 months. Trend of participating to civic society activities is slightly rising when comparing 1991 and 2002 to 2017. Part of the overall rise of participation could be explained that at age group 10-14 there is great increasement of participation which could mean

that there are more hobbies available for kids. The decreasing trend in age group of 45-64 could be part of the fact that people are choosing more independent how they spent their spare time. Ruuskanen (2020) reminds that market-based operators have become common at what used to be in the field of third sector. This could be reason why in age group of 45-64 there is downward trend as people are willing, and able to pay for their leisure time services and activities.

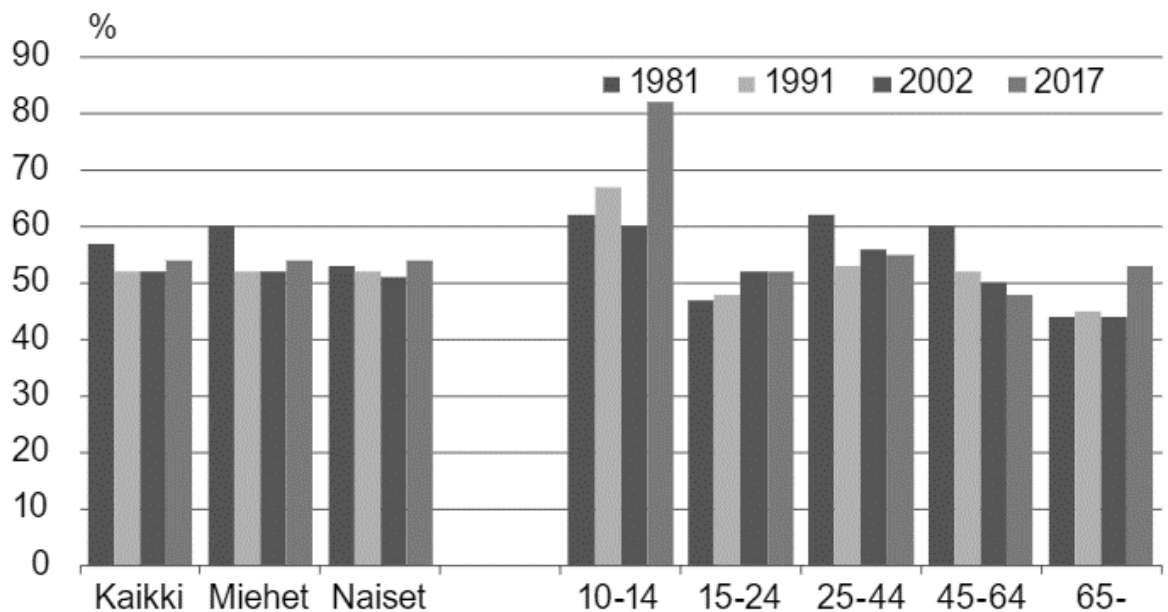


Figure 2. Participation to non-profit association activities (Hanifi 2019 based on the data of Statistic Finland).

According to findings of Rahkonen (2021) global Covid-19 pandemic that started 2019 caused a drop on many fields of non-profit volunteering when comparing 2021 to 2018 (n=1094). There were some fields like rescue services that were able to get more volunteers. When comparing 2021 to 2018 in hours how much people were doing volunteer work the field of sports and physical activities lost more than 25%. Short- and long-term volunteer projects were almost equally common. There was almost equal number of regular and irregular volunteer work done.

Toikkanen (2018, 34) describes organizations of associations in Finland bureaucratic and conscientious. Sometimes it can be seen that associations use more time to run the association instead of main activities of association, or the results achieved from those. Rare are those people how gets their joy for running the association bureaucratic only.

Toikkanen (2018, 36) sees a digital technology as a tool to improve the processes. Digitalization is a social phenomenon where technology, and information technology creates new forms of work. Associations can use digital solutions to use more time to main activities instead of running bureaucratic. Digitalization is not just information technology-based solutions but something that enhance the everyday life with some sort of automatization and better the process. When the World changes so does the solutions to different tasks. Digitalization is not a thread to non-profit organizations but releases time to main activities.

Heikkala (2018, 23) questions are the associations for to increase the civil activities, to support communality, to offer hobbies, to support public sector with services, or to act as a critical social influencer. While the Finnish society is changing, so does the associations with their activities. Change from vertical, from up to bottom lead, model to horizontal and decentralized model has changed associations already. Associations in Finland has been using the vertical model up until these days. Need for change is realized in many associations but the way of change is not outlined. These changes that in future are needed could impact the aging of population, challenges of public sector and the funding from public sector, globalization, and changes in working life. Likely in future the people involving associations are looking more self-directed and personalized services where the experiences should offer pleasure and thrill.

2.2 Voluntary work at sports clubs

Koski et al. (2018, 9) describes sports clubs as a root of a Finnish sport culture. These clubs are based on people's volunteer activity. Finnish sport culture is diverse, multidimensional, long termed, and valuable as a social activity. The oldest still functional sports club was founded in 1856, when Finland was declared independent in 1917 there was almost 700 sports clubs in country. Now the number of sports clubs is around 7500. Number of registered sports clubs in Finland during the decade starting from 1910 has been increased to more than 1000 new sports club per every decade. (Figure 3.)

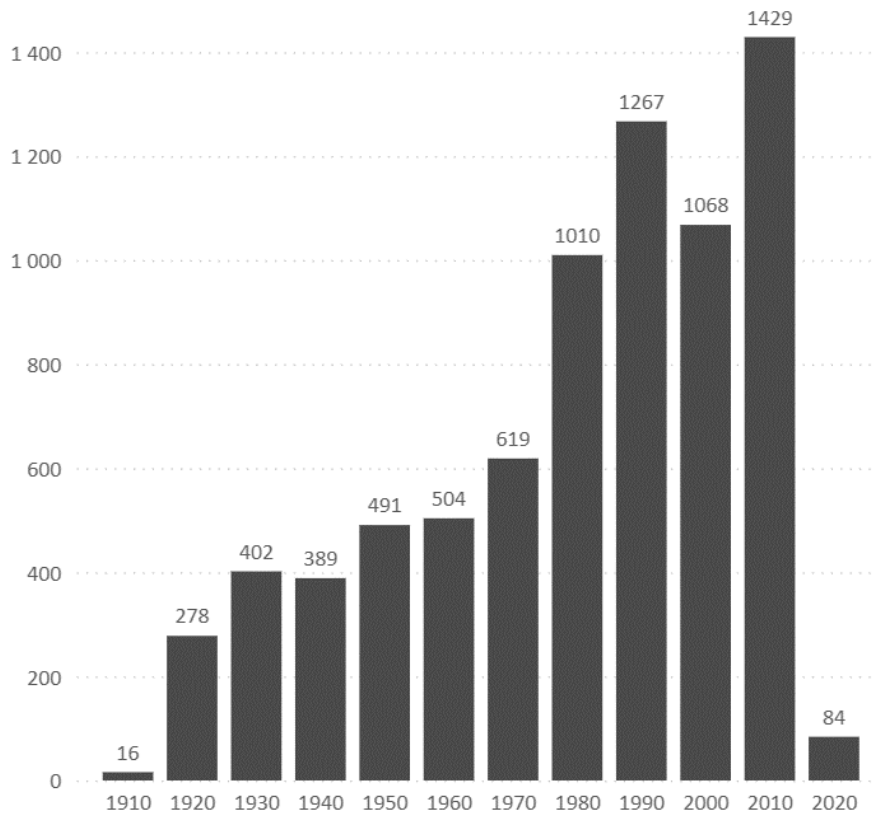


Figure 3. Number of registered sports clubs in Finland (Seuratietokanta 2022).

In Finland sports culture has been impacted by reflections of politics and ideologies. Left-wing sports association Suomen Voimistelu ja Urheiluliitto (SVUL) and working-class sports association Työväen Urheiluliitto (TUL)

separated sports clubs to two different organizations. (Rantala & Muukkonen 2015, 65.) From Figure 4 can be seen that number of members at both sports associations increased from 1951 to 1991 more than 200%. When comparing to Figure 3 number of registered sport clubs increased from 1950 to 1980 with similar ramp.

According to Rantala and Muukkonen (2015, 65) at the beginning of 1990s confrontation between TUL and SVUL ended as the latter was run-down due the lack of money. TUL lost its plausibility as political confrontation weakened. According to data of Seuratietokanta (2022) after the 1991 3731 new sports clubs were registered in Finland. This means that the number of sports clubs has almost doubled in Finland since 1991 as there were 7571 registered sports club at the end of 2021.

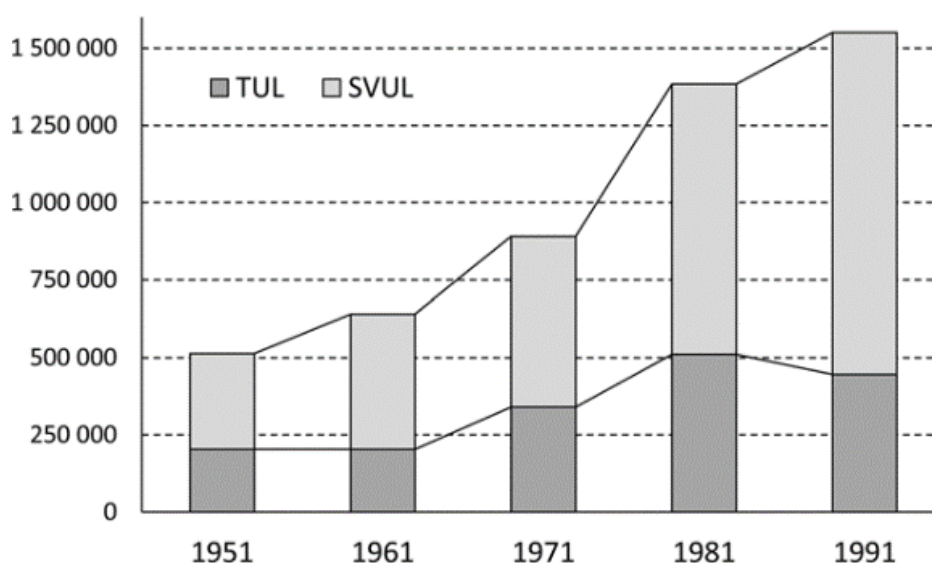


Figure 4. Members at two ideology-based central sports organizations (Rantala & Muukkonen 2015, 65).

Sports clubs are in a focal point and foundation of Finnish sport culture, and are responsible for high-performance, competitive, and recreational sports. Clubs are valuable also for their work for kids and youth as a guide to sports culture. These clubs are volunteer based non-profit associations and run different activities. There are activities available at sports clubs from different age groups

to different performance levels. with educational responsibility and civil social activities. Sports clubs are responsible for non-profit physical education and offers different civil social activities for people. (Koski et al. 2018, 11-12.)

Koski et al. (2018, 14) describes sports club as a social organization which is run by people who are members and participants of association. Clubs are organizational action units where members of association are participating for sports and together with other members. As members they are working for the purposes of the club, its sub-division or sub-group. Sports clubs have internal and external operating environment. Different sports organizations and federations creates external operating environment. Bester (2012, 11531) acknowledges that increasing number of sports organizations has emerged business-orientated structure and sports has become cultural institution that is leaning more and more to commercial environment. Findings of Bester are somewhat like Koski (2018, 14) who sees sports club to be dynamic contemporary organizations with its past, principles, present and future.

Bester (2012, 11531-11532) explains that sports organizations promote lifestyle of health and physical activity with enjoyment and social aspect for the participants. Sports holds high-performance and competitive aspects that society often sees important the physical and mental health services that sports clubs can provide will become more important in a future. As the needs of society changes sports clubs should be able to offer leisure and recreational activities to participants.

Koski et al. (2018, 15) notes that there are five main internal operational systems within sports clubs. First is the idea or ism of club that could be political or cultural. It emphasizes what is appreciated, pursued, and promoted in club internally but externally. The ideology highlights what is seen as a major purpose of club.

Second main operational system within the sports clubs is the people: members and participants. It is good to understand that there are people involving to activities without being members and members who are not involving to

activities. Members of the sports clubs could be providing services such as training, competitions or fundraising events or activities for the people who are not members of the club but participants. These participants finance the activities that non-profit clubs are providing for their members. (Koski et al. 2018, 15-16.)

Thirdly, the sports clubs are having their actions plans to proceed. Action plan reflects the culture of club and the nature of the program that club holds for members and participants. (Koski et al. 2018, 16) These programs vary between the clubs as out of the 7571 clubs at Seuratietokanta (2022) 978 are multisport clubs which leaves approximately 87% of the clubs being specialized to single sport.

Fourth main component of the sports clubs are resources that influence on the action plans that are possible to accomplish. It is not just financial resources but the people with their skills, activities, and availability to work for club. Resources include equipment's, materials and premises needed to organize activities. (Koski et al. 2018, 15.)

Regarding the economic environment Bester (2012, 11534) notes that the members of non-profit sports clubs spent good deal of money to their leisure activities at club. The spending patterns of members vary between different sport types and income groups. Most members at sports clubs are willing to support financially if they were asked to do so.

Fifth component is organizational and administrative with leadership culture of the sports club (Koski et al. 2018, 16). Based on findings of Koski et al. (2018, 57) the trend of different committees within sports clubs is decreasing. In 1986 the average was 5,3 committees and 30 years later in 2016 it was 3,4 committees per club. Organizations of sports clubs has become lighter over the years.

Figure 5 shows how volunteering in different sectors is divided in Finland. At 2015 350 000 people were taking part in volunteer work in sports. Senior-aged people as a group, and kids and youth are both involving more than 340 000

volunteers yearly. Athletics and sports are important for Finnish people, and it is what Finns are willing to volunteer for.

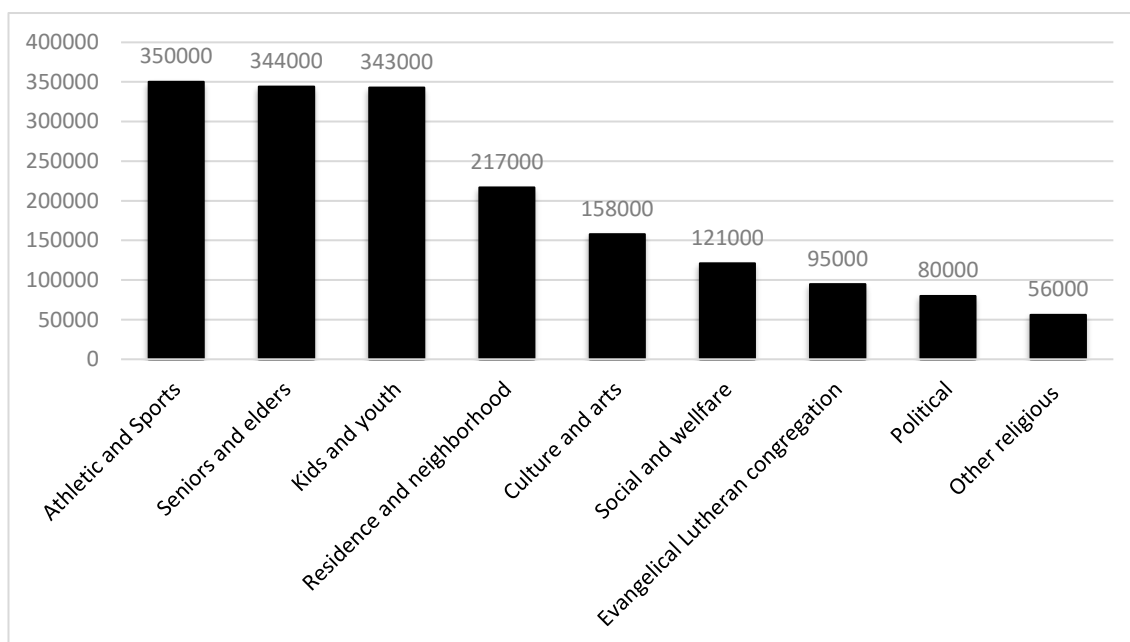


Figure 5. Volunteering in different sectors (modified Kansalaisareena 2015).

According to Tax Administration of Finland volunteers at non-profit organizations can get travel costs expenses tax free up to 3000 euros during calendar year (Verohallinto, 2022). Koski (2018, 72-73) states hiring part-time worker is juristically and administratively easier and makes it possible to hire part-time worker for small sports clubs with smaller number of members. Turunen et al. (2020) has found that at sports clubs' part-time work is most common, and the most typical part-time worker does less than 10 hours on week. Koski (2018, 74) reminds that part-time work and reward-based work at sports clubs needs more research in future as these are comparable to full-time work.

According Balduck et al. (2014) efforts of volunteers are what sport clubs rely. Koski et al. (2018, 16,67,72) has found that most of the sports clubs in Finland are purely based on voluntary activities. Based on research from 2016 it was found out that 21% of the sports clubs were having one or more full-time employee and 35% were having one or more part-time employee. These

include roles from administration to coaches, youth-counselors, marketing, press officers, back persons of athletes, property maintenance and others.

Trend seems to be that sports clubs are employing more full-time and part-time employees. (Table 2.) In 1986 there were full-time employee at only 7% of sports clubs and part-timer at 15% of clubs. The latest figures from 2016 shows that sports clubs are having significantly more employees than before.

Table 2. Workforce at sports club (Koski et al. 2018, 68,73).

	Part-time worker	Full-time worker
1986	15% of clubs	7% of clubs
2006	19% of clubs	12% of clubs
2016	35% of clubs	21% of clubs

Even when the number of part-time and full-time employees is increasing in sports clubs there is most of the clubs without any person with employment relationship. Turunen et al. (2020, 3) has found that during the six-year period from 2013 to 2018 there was at least one employee at 29% of sports clubs in Finland. Yearly average was that 20% of sports clubs was having an employee. By hiring person, the clubs are aiming to ensure that activities of club remain and develops while the amount of voluntary work is decreasing.

Kansalaisareena (2015) shows that the amount of volunteer work has decreased 10% in sports and sport clubs from 2010 to 2015. At the same time Hanifi (2015) recognize that more people are participating to activities of non-profit organizations.

Heikkala (2016, 25) describes that in most of the non-profit associations the number of members has been decreasing. People are not interested being part of the board of the association. At the same time public funding has been decreasing and become more unsecure. Associations has been forced to adapt these changes and due the adaptation this has become a new norm to associations. The most significant challenge associations are facing is relations

of members to associations. It is common that associations do not know their members and their needs, wishes or skills. But one of the greatest reasons why people are not involved in association activities is that no one has asked them to join the volunteer work.

Mäkinen et al. (2019, 31,34) found that age group 35-44 years old were most active doing volunteer work at sports clubs. Other age groups (15-24, 25-34, 45-54, 55-64 and +65) were participating with almost equally.

2.3 Volunteer work

2.3.1 Volunteering

Valtonen (2019, 15) defines volunteer work as actions and activities that are done without financial compensation. Volunteer work is something that volunteer has decided free-willing to start and has possibility to end whenever wanted. It is done outside own family and friends, and it is organized and lead at some level. Volunteer work is often done for helping others, but it can be done also for the good of individuals own skills and social status.

Ellis (2015, 21-22) describes volunteering as ever-changing process that is affected by social changes, world crises, technology, and communication changes. Volunteering is a response to societal trends. Voluntaryism is something with several definitions. Term volunteer is expanded to cover wide variety of activities from all-volunteer U.S. Army to more common and understandable ways of volunteering. Volunteering is skill and knowledge giving for the good of community.

Mäkinen et al. (2019, 28) describes volunteer work with five main characters. Volunteer work is done as a personal choice, and it is acceptable way to be part of community. Volunteer work opens possibilities to influence. It is unpaid, could include rewards and allowance but is not a thread to paid work.

There are three stages of volunteering: activists, innovators, and sustainers. Activists have seen a need of change. Innovators see the solution to work for. Those two stages of activity and volunteering need interest, talent, and time to work. A large group of volunteers are sustainers. These people are ready to build, grow and maintain activities. It is good to notice that the need of change, work set in motion and maintaining new activities is not just creating something new. Volunteers are maintaining and developing institutions that already exists. Non-profit organizations, associations, sports clubs, and volunteers goes through evolution when their operating environment changes. (Ellis, 2015 21-24.)

2.3.2 Motives

Valtonen (2015, 15) states that one the greatest challenges of non-profit organizations is to keep volunteers motivated. Clary and Snyder (1999, 157) defined the factors behind volunteering with Volunteer Functions Inventory that has six functions which Figure 6 shows.

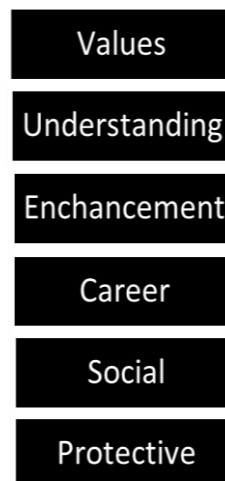


Figure 6. Functions of volunteering (modified Clary and Snyder 1999, 157).

As for values volunteers need to feel they are doing something important to help others. For understanding it is volunteers' willingness to learn new skills.

Enhancement is volunteers need to feel better about themselves by doing something for others. For career purposes it is seen that volunteers plan to achieve status by volunteering. Social aspect is for volunteers need to be part of social group sharing similar ideologies. Volunteering offers protective functions by filling volunteers need to counterbalance the other aspects of life. (Clary and Snyder 1999, 157.)

When comparing the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Figure 6.) of Clary and Snyder (1999, 157) to Hierarchy of Needs and its renovated version (Figure 7.) of Kenrick et al. (2010) there are numerous similarities as seen in. As the original version of Maslow's hierarchy of need was with five levels the renovated version is with seven levels. The original levels were from bottom to top with immediate physiological needs, safety, love (affection, belongingness), esteem (respect), and self-actualization. These basic needs of a person and motivational functions of volunteering are close to each as in both there is a need of acceptance, social esteem, protectiveness, and being part of something meaningful. This could mean that people are willing to do volunteer work as it satisfies the basic needs of a person. Clary and Snyder (1999, 157-158) reminds that as there are multiple motives for volunteer work there is argument that all the helpfulness is motivated by selfish desire of person to benefit oneself instead of selfless concerns. Both selfish and unselfish reasons are behind volunteering.

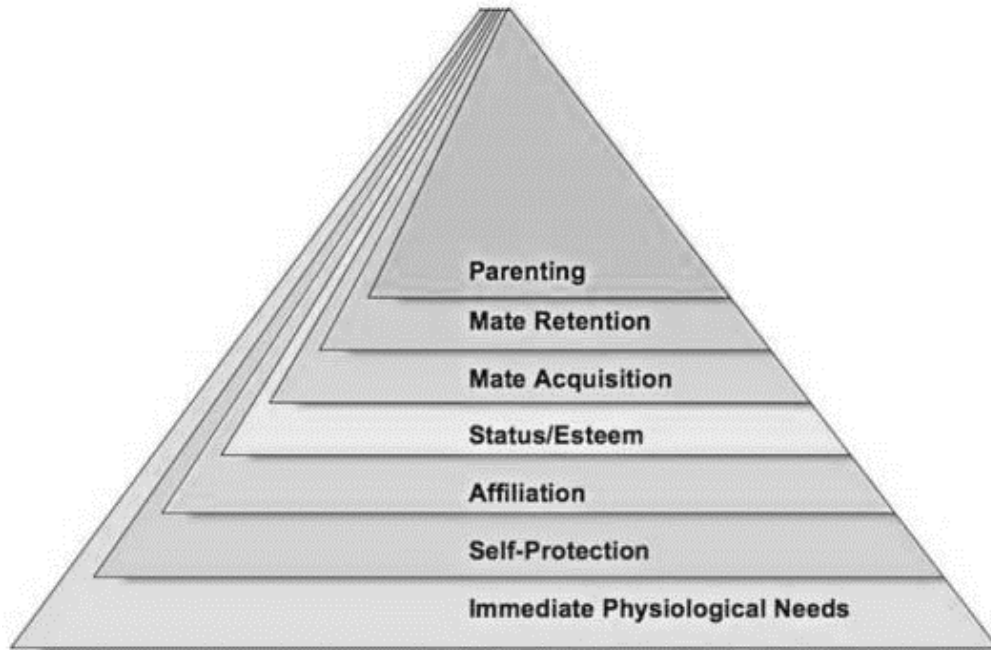


Figure 7. Hierarchy of Needs (Kenrick et al. 2010).

Valtonen (2015, 16-18) sees that through volunteering people can build their self-image. Volunteer work can offer different status and values that work-life might not offer. Reasons behind could be that when volunteer working person can have more freedom to choose what kind of activities to do and fulfill personal satisfaction. Volunteering bases on inner motivation of person. It is important to understand the underlying mechanisms of inner motivation of volunteers. This can lead to increase in involving, caring of volunteers and better communality. Last is seen as a one source of motivation for volunteers. Volunteer work is based on good team spirit which needs constant building and cherishing.

Ellis (2015, 27) writes that modern culture emphasizes new and improving surroundings that also impacts non-profit organizations. New is not necessarily better than existing especially when considering that new ideas always need long-term efforts to gain results. When starting new projects at volunteer organizations it could be good to get long-time volunteers to be involved in planning from the beginning. It is useful to get some volunteers to promote new activities to potential involvers and participants as not all the volunteers are that passionate about their organizations mission or values.

Clary and Snyder (1999 158-159) remind that motivation of volunteer goes beyond the first participation, or membership of non-profit associations work. Recruitment of new volunteer is just first part step to participation to activities. To keep this participation ongoing and sustained associations should be able to serve functionally relevant benefits to volunteers constantly. Diverse personal and social motivations is seen in volunteers. Motivations in volunteering do not depend only on the person or situation. Person-based interaction dynamics and opportunities that situations provide are considered important.

Findings of Clary and Snyder (1999, 159) are close to descriptions of Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 47-48) regarding how our social identity is developed. Social identity is actively developing process that does not end after individual feels cohesion with some of the social groups involved. When groups keep evolving it is possible that it will not satisfy needs of the individual. Desire to participate group needs a strong group status and interactions that motivates person to engage more to goals of the group. When motivated persons work for the good of their group and it gets successful the desire to participate to group gets even stronger.

Identity identifies our actions. Sometimes it is conscious but often unconscious actions and decisions. Actions with other motivated members of group with joint interest creates loyalty and helps to satisfy social needs of individual. This fulfilment of social needs is often combined with success at individuals' personal interest and goals. Source of the motivation comes from social norms and goals that personal needs and values guides. Cohesion and collaboration in organizations develops when all the members define themselves through the social identity of group. This supports individuals own personal and social identity and motivates to work for the good of the group to achieve personal goals. (Koivisto & Ranta 2019, 50.)

2.3.3 Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory is a meta-theory of human motivation that is originally presented by Ryan and Deci (2000, 68). In this theory humans are seen as a naturally active, motivated, and self-guided. It means that humans have natural tendency to set goals, perform, and strengthen self-image. The theory of Ryan and Deci sees motivation as an autonomous quality of motivation versus controlled quality of motivation. Oostlander et al. (2013) applies self-determination theory to volunteer work. On their research they found that autonomously motivated volunteers are reported higher job satisfaction and greater work effort which can be seen due that acts are based on their own interest, fun, and personal values. Controlled motivated behavior is externally pressured and acts are made to avoid feelings of guilt or punishments. Obligations to volunteer has negative impacts to volunteers.

Self-determination continuum goes from nonself-determined to self-determined. For nonself-determined behavior lack of motivation and non-regulatory style is typical and causes impersonal motivation. This causes the feelings of non-valuable, incompetence and lack of control for whatever doing. The less there is external regulation the more there is internal motivation. Personal importance, value giving, awareness, enjoyment and satisfactions are common when there is freedom to self-determine the actions made. (Ryan & Deci 2000, 72.)

Oostlander et al. (2013) aimed to research how autonomy-supportive leadership impacted on volunteer motivation within the self-determination theory of Ryan and Deci. They found that strong autonomy orientation from volunteer could serve as a partial protection from low autonomy-supportive social situation. Autonomy motivation gets positive effects from autonomy support and autonomy orientation. Findings included that autonomy-supportive leadership had a positive correlation to controlled motivation which could mean that good-spirited autonomy-supportive leadership creates a positive feeling of autonomy with some pressure and obligation involved to volunteers. Then again volunteers with medium to high levels of control orientation might feel pressure

and obligation from autonomy-supportive leadership. It can be assumed that when this kind of volunteers are autonomy supported the more, they feel pressure and obligation and the more likely they are volunteer based on controlled motivation. Autonomy-supportive leadership is positive and beneficial for volunteers.

2.4 Leading of volunteers

2.4.1 Leading with good will

Hakoköngäs (2018, 11) describes professionalism at modern non-profit work as an ability to face different kind of people and joint these people together. Society activity should be about the strengths and capacity of people. This means that leaders of volunteers should have open and diverse goals. Non-profit associations should have hospitality to new members and not just fit the member to organization but to have a space for new members. As society is getting more diverse the associations should develop also. Professionalism with leading of volunteers is learning away from old habits, resist building unnecessary organizational structures, and relying on out-of-date modes of operation.

Harju (2020) states that volunteer work is done because it offers meaningfulness and joy. This is something that should be enforced by competent leaders of volunteers. Leaders should produce experiences that are evocative and memorable. Great sensations from volunteer work volunteers can get strength and toughness to face the challenges that volunteer work sometimes offers. Like Ryan and Deci (2000, 72) described at their self-determined theory people, like volunteers, needs to have an experience of influence on what they are doing to keep their motivation. Harju (2020) reminds that encouragement and embolden is needed instead of keeping volunteers as granted for associations.

2.4.2 Social identity theory of leadership

Hogg (2001, 184-185) describes social identity theory of leadership as “leadership as a group process generated by social categorization and prototype-based depersonalization processes associated with social identity.” Leadership is relational property within groups which means that leaders are there because of followers and followers are there because of leaders. Leadership is situation based appealing individual characteristics that causes satisfaction at the group lead.

Hogg (2001, 186) defines social identity theory from research of Tajfel (1972, 292-293) as a model to theorize how people sees themselves in intergroup environments. Tajfel’s theory defines social identity as individual’s knowledge and need of belonging to groups that gives emotional and value significance to individual. Social identity is self-evaluative and gets value from inside the group from properties that can be evaluated. Social comparison between groups is to promote own group and compete against other groups. Groups and members of groups are striving to protect and improve the positive distinctiveness of their own group.

Hogg (2001, 187) bases social identity by basic human need for positive self-esteem and self-enhancement motive. It is implied that self-esteem motivates social identification and group behavior. Need for self-esteem is satisfied by social identification. Self-categorization is the cognitive element of social identity. It is categorization of self and others in terms of causes and consequences. Self-categorization is impacted by attributes, feelings and behaviors of groups that characterizes it from other groups. Through self-categorization individuals social categorizes other people as ingroup or outgroup prototypes. This process is depersonalization and people are seen as a match to ingroup or outgroup instead of unique and multifaced individuals.

Depersonalization does not have negative meaning. It is part of social attraction process where ingroup members are easier to detach than outgroup. This is because ingroup members are seen as prototypical extensions to self and to

promote self-esteem. Social identity is not only motivated by self-enhancement but also by motives of trying to reduce subjective uncertainty. Groups with clear and consensual prototypes are most effective at reducing individuals' subjective uncertainty. (Hogg 2001, 187-188.)

Hogg (2001, 188-190) describes leadership as power and influence of some individuals or cliques. These leaders are ready to set agenda, define identity and mobilize people to reach group goals. Leadership is group process where leaders have influence on impact attitudes, behaviors, and destiny of group members. Core processes of social identity leadership are prototypicality, social attraction, and attribution and information processing. Prototypicality is aim of behavior where leaders of the group try to create a more salient and stronger unit from the members of the group. Social attraction is influencing through being prototypical member of group. Leader acting like every other member of the group has strong ingroup favoritism. Combining prototypicality and social attraction together with attribution and information processing lead towards active leadership. People who are subjectively important, like highly prototypical and socially attractive members of the group, are seen influential and have their behavior dispositional attributed. Information processing as part of social identity leadership is making sense of behavior of the group and members of it for the good of the group.

Hogg (2000, 191,193,195) reminds that social contextual changes impacts prototypicality of groups. Established leaders with power based on prototypicality is not seen any longer as prototypical member of group. This leads to redistribution of influence within the group. The more members of the group feel uncertain about things that matter the more they are inclined to identify with group. It has been seen that social attraction and prototypical attribution can impact to leader-follower relationships with undesirable ways. Leaders might get distanced from group; has too strong intragroup bonds and this way end up defense leader status with out of prototypicality ways.

2.4.3 Management of cooperation

People join different associations and groups because they are, consciously or sub-consciously, looking for other people who are sharing the same ideology, passion, or interest. According to Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 42-43) people have two different identities: social identity and personal identity. Actions and behavior of people are directed by our identities and identity answers to who or what person is. Personal identity defines each person's own unique personality. It is the individual differences between people.

Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 44-45) describes social identity as a roles, groups and things person relates. Something that is meaningful for person. Adopted social roles and groups where participated defines persons social identity. Some of the groups where people belong is given at birth like culture. People form groups with other people sharing same social identities. This way they feel cohesion and share the same identities with other people in their group. People joins to groups that are important for them and responds to values and needs of a person.

Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 42-43) presents SIMOL-model (Social Identity Model of Organizational Leadership) which sees leadership as a leading of co-operation. SIMOL is based on idea of leadership being group-phenomenon and product of group processes. Findings of Koivisto and Ranta seems to rely heavily on social identity theory of leadership by Hogg (2000, 184). Social identity model of organizational leadership is based on concept of human being social creature. Identity of person leads the choices and values made. Leading with co-operation is leading of identity.

Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 57-59) summarizes leading with SIMOL-model around five main principles. Co-operation needs joint goals. Leader should be able to build social identity that is suitable for group and that everyone can share and identify. Group with strong joint identity can be led successfully by a leader who share the joint group identity. Leader should be seen also as a member of group who works for the good of the group and not just for own

interests. Joint goals and values are reason why group exists, and leader should be able to feed these to be able to lead co-operation. As the identity of members of group evolves so should leader actively regenerate and reconstruct current identity and vision of group.

According to Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 62-65) defining identity should begin with questions who we are, what is important to us, and how do we differ from other groups. Creating feeling of “us” in a group is one of the most important actions of leaders: to create a joint identity for a strong resource for leading. Bigger groups often form from smaller sub-groups and sub-identities. Identity of big main group is not all cohesive and on sub-groups identities of members could be defined and formed on a value’s where it is not possible for leader to influence. Core of social identity is what makes a unique group that it important for the members of it. Even when sex, nationality, and education could be seen important for identity of person these might not define the identity of person. Hogg (2000, 189) reminds that when group prototypicality becomes more important self-categorization become less important. This is due to a fact that group membership is becoming psychologically more salient to individual.

Second principle of leading co-operation is defined by Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 101,108-109) as a leader’s ability and will of being like everyone else on group: “one of us”. At SIMOL-model leading is seen as a group-phenomenon where power and authority of comes from the leader’s ability to be seen as one member of group. Leader of group is often prototypic member of group that suits to identity of group. Power and authority of leader comes from the prototypicality to make the group leaders represents to work as a collective unit and co-operate. These actions define social reality and operating environment of the group which again impacts to the group identity. Leader should recognize problematic if highlighting some part of identity if trying to be seen as a prototypic member of group. This identity work could lead to situation where main group divides to two or more sub-groups where one group with its members detaches more to leader and other(s) distance. These are unwanted intergroup identity events. Hogg (2000, 189) notes that in social attraction

process a leader who is acting like a prototypical member of group strong ingroup appreciation is provided with legitimacy.

Working for the good of the group is the third principle of leading co-operation with SIMOL-model according to Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 124-126). The first two principles are building joint identity and representing that. Leader working actively for their group by promoting and defending the values and environment of group is seen as an asset. It is situation based what is seen as working for the group. One of the key elements when working for the group is that leader is interested about the future of group. It indicates that leader is committed to the group and makes it easier to get the group involved in more challenging co-operation. Occasionally leaders interest working for the group is challenged. These could be situations where group resists changes, and vision of leader is questioned. Hogg (2000, 190) sees attribution and information processing as part of active leadership. When group is salient, members of it are sensitive to prototypicality and keen to see differences to members who are not that much prototypical. Leader, as a prototypical member of group, should put attention to dispel power imbalance inside the group.

Successfully working and led groups need a joint identity. Leader should create value for group with internal and external actions and activities. To lead co-operation is to lead shared interests of group. It requires good knowledge of members of the group to be able to create meaning for the group which Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 141-142) sees as a fourth principle of co-operation. This meaning is generated by creating joint experiences, building team spirit, and with communications. Hoggs' (2000, 187-188) social identity theory sees intragroup processes and structures as "intergroup social comparisons, positive distinctiveness, stereotypes, discrimination and intergroup relations." These processes described by Hogg are to reduce uncertainty, to depersonalize members of the group, and to create context of group cohesion and social attraction.

Hogg (2000, 190) uses terms emergence and endurance of leaders as leaders' ability to maintain leadership position. Leaders with vision are often seen

charismatic leadership personalities that have abilities to considerable changes in the group. Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 155-160, 165) defines the fifth principle of leading with SIMOL-model as leaders' ability to create vision to group. As other principles concentrate on the present the vision is goals and identity of the future. As SIMOL- model is based on group processes vision should become from the group process lead by their leader. Creating vision is a process with dialogue where leader influence on opinions and ideas becoming from a group. Vision should be joint vision of members of group and their leader. Work for identity and vision of future is not easy and simple. Identity work includes risk of leader being substituted if group is not backing up new values and models of working.

Leading co-operation is continuous group-phenomenon that could work in one situation but not on other. It as an active process where success of the group is not only because of the leader. With social identity model of organizational leadership aim is to solve difficult situation and problems together and learn from those as a group (Koivisto & Ranta 2019, 172,175). Hogg (2000, 196) reminds that social identity theory of leadership has many complexities. These include different ways of abuse of power by leader, group that is led, or some of sub-group. Theory of Hogg highlights social categorization, depersonalization, and behavior of followers.

2.4.4 Engaging volunteers

Rehnborg (2015, 34,36) states that poor volunteer engagement is because of poor management. Leaders might see volunteers as a free labor that does not need financial or strategic investment. This could lead to situation where unqualified volunteers are engaged and volunteer effort, expectations, and accountability are not fulfilled. From the data collected Rehnborg (2015, 36) has found that amongst leader's volunteers are seen as free workforce which is difficult to invest and are there to do whatever asked.

Rehnborg (2015, 37) rationalize why volunteers are not free workforce and should be seen as an invest by stating that term volunteer has negative associations. Voluntarism is associated with unskilled, menial, and amateur qualification levels which creates image of not need to see volunteers as asset for association or company they are working for. At study from 2004 was found that organizations that invested to volunteer management are likely to gain bigger benefits from volunteers. Clary and Snyder (1999, 157) remind that volunteers are satisfying their personal values, understanding and enhancement which creates internal structure of motivations to volunteers. Volunteers who received function-specific benefits from their voluntarism reported satisfying and rewarding experiences. Rehnborg (2015, 40,43) describes that volunteers' want to know that their actions done are valuable. Thoughtful, meaningful, and effective ways of engaging of volunteers are seen beneficial.

Salminen (2015, 33-35) recognize that because technology develop faster than before it is not unusual that the differences between generations has grown. Psychological and social base of human has not changed even during the technological leap. People are accumulated to rapid changes and need of adopt new things quickly. To get younger generations involved in non-profit associations it requires understanding of digital communications and the dismantle of organizational structures based on one-way communications.

2.4.5 New generations of volunteers

Finger (2015, 58-60) states that organizations should be targeting youth volunteers. Next generation of volunteers can use right communication channels and ways to reach their coevals. Research from DoSomething.org from 2013 where has found that younger millennials volunteering at same places where their friends are volunteering. Salminen (2015, 36) reminds that with younger generation comes new ways of thinking. Instead of trying to figure out what are associations needs the question might become what needs the

members of association have. This is part of reshaping process that associations will face sooner or later.

Younger generations are looking for specific instructions and expectations from their leaders with responsibilities. To encourage younger volunteer, it is important to listen what they must share, and to notice and recognize their effort. It is to remember that younger generations have communication platforms, digital ways of working, and skills that could make a great impact on working culture of association. (Finger 2015, 61,64-66.)

Kostiainen (2019) reminds that with young person's volunteering it is important to remember that this person is likely being unexperienced. Time to good introduction and learning is needed. As with young persons who might need support, encouragement, and guidance the first contact is important, and the young volunteer should feel welcomed. Many of younger volunteers could possess skills that non-profit organization can gain value. Overall, the younger person should be seen as asset as older volunteers and same principles leading humans should be applied from the organizational perspective.

Kostiainen (2019) notice that for many younger persons volunteering offers a beneficial way to gain working experience. Volunteer work can help building identity and self-image while offering possibility to do interesting tasks. For some studies it is possible to get course credits in collaboration with volunteer work and organization.

When searching for younger volunteers and trying to engage them with volunteer organization it is useful to pay attention to volunteer experience of person. From organizational view the younger persons could offer new insights how to develop organization and actions. Younger volunteers could offer fresh ideas which could help bringing more younger persons to volunteer work. (Kostiainen, 2019.)

Bull (2010, 104-107) recognize the younger generation as someone looking to improve a quality of their lives. This could mean quick changes on their lives. Employers could find this frustrating and consider younger generation as

inattentive and unfocused. Organizations should consider having modern ways of working and tools to work with to tempt, engage, and create joint value together with younger generations. Organization and leaders should listen the needs and goals of younger people to make the most of co-operation. Bull (2019, 106-109) reminds that as a child the generation Y'ers were encouraged to question the authorities and express their own opinions. As younger people are looking that their input is valued, they call trust between them and their employer. Organizations should encourage the younger people to innovate and provide opportunities within the organization. Younger generations should be led with cooperation instead of hierarchy. This could help the young person to express their creativity and create opportunities for employer and employees.

2.4.6 Microvolunteering

Heley et al. (2019, 1-2) notice that routinely characterized actions that requires little effort for participants to repeat are new ways of volunteering. Virtual technologies open possibilities to expand the volunteer base with people who are unable to be volunteering at specific place or time. Microvolunteering is actions and activities done without location-based, and often time-based, demands.

Heley et al. (2019, 3) defines micro-volunteering as actions that are limited in duration, done on-demand, require little or no commitment actions while being quick and convenient to proceed. Forms of microvolunteering varies and it should be noticed that microvolunteering is more than just actions in social networks or with computer. It is diverse array of activities online and offline including fundraising, writing blog post, baking cake for sale, or contributing content to social networks.

Microvolunteering has potential to grow as busyness and contemporary lifestyles increases. Mobile communications are providing new opportunities to people to take part in volunteer activities. At the same time, it is to understand that microvolunteering might take some off from traditional volunteers. Voluntary

organizations should define microvolunteering possibilities and how to integrate these into their actions. Microvolunteering might lack the opportunities to meet other people and build social networks. (Heley et al. 2019, 6-8.) Clary and Snyder (1999, 157) notice social relationships as one of the key functions at their Volunteer Functions Inventory theory why people are taking part to volunteer actions. When comparing microvolunteering to theory of Clary and Snyder it could give person value, experience, enhancement, career opportunities and protection which Clary and Snyder (1999, 157) sees important functions behind volunteering. Heley et al. (2019, 11) concludes that microvolunteering is much more than virtual volunteering, has it pitfalls with lower levels of stability than traditional volunteering, but providing new opportunities for voluntary organizations.

2.5 Leading sports clubs

Aarresola (2020, 8,13) notes that people participating to activities of sport club are the greatest asset of the club. Good financial situation, facilities and established core processes is not working without members and participants of the club. Research of Aarresola (2020, 8,13) presented slight differences on motives between leading volunteers at sport club and leading volunteers at other non-profit associations. Those volunteering at sport club are expecting support, fellowship, and competence for their activity. Also, food and material reward are expected from sport club volunteers. Balduck et al. (2014) reminds that volunteer efforts that sport clubs are relying on are leisure activity to volunteers. Satisfaction of volunteers comes from emotional and practical components of their efforts.

Organizational identity and actions behind it are important for sport clubs. When volunteers feel fellowship with the organization, they are involved they often engage for long-term. This is threat if sport organization focus on too much to growth and streamlining operations. (Aarresola 2020, 15.) Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 48) sees this as part of active process of forming social identity. Fellowship with organization (Aarresola 2020, 15) is like creating joint identity

with other peoples interested by same things described by Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 52-53). Joint identity creates interest to work together with pride and make the people work for the best of the group. According to Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 155) operating environment, people, and wishes and demands of customers of organizations change. This requires the organization to change and built new identity and vision. Like Aarresola (2020, 15) mention at sport club organizations this can be seen as an effort to demolish the organizational identity of club.

Aarresola (2020, 16) notes that at sport clubs' volunteers who have sports background needed to adjust their sports identity to voluntarism identity. Sport clubs creates their own meaning of existence through history and fame of club. Volunteers are seen as important for sport clubs and clubs should ensure that volunteers feels that they are respected. Sport clubs that carry well planned model of leading volunteer work are seen interesting from volunteers. Those clubs get volunteers more easily when needed.

Bull (2010, 53-57) acknowledge that leadership is not same than management. Management is about tasks while leadership goes beyond the tactical aspects of organization. Leadership is guiding the team to right direction and managing people, not only tasks. Leadership is seen as a substance and character of leader which helps to motivate the others. Servant leaders are leading from behind and supporting their team in a way that team is moving forward. Bull (2010, 108) notifies that involving employees to learning new things as a part of a team is motivational to members of a team.

Aarresola (2020, 18-21) has found that for sport clubs it is easier to recruit volunteers if for members of the club has been given possibility to participate to decision making and when members and committees have chance to impact on decisions. Material rewards and benefits are seen important while following recruiting strategy and policies. Use of social channels are seen important for communications. Recruiting volunteers is complex and no single manner to find volunteers can be highlighted. One major problem when recruiting volunteers is that recruitment is made when in need not pro-active. On recruiting process the

problem within sport clubs that those responsible of human resources and recruiting at clubs are not responsible for decision making. And decision making in sport clubs is not done only by official boards or committees but at smaller unofficial networks. Recruiting solutions at sport clubs are often not well organized and developed.

Sport leadership difference from sport management/governance by that leadership is motivating, endorsing, and supporting. Sport leadership is social construction where different levels of social environment define leading. (Aarresola 2020, 35) Koivisto and Ranta (2015, 42) notes that social constructions are important when leading with social identity. Koivisto and Ranta highlight social identity leading as a multilayer, dynamic and everchanging process that creates identity for person(s).

Aarresola (2020, 44-45) describes that human resources are one major capacity that sport club possess. This capacity builds around enthusiasm, skills, knowledge and experience of people, joint focus, permanence of volunteers by respecting, educating, and supporting them. Balduck et al. (2014) defines organizational capacity as the ability of organization to use resources needed to complete mission of organization. Capacity is link between resources and mission. Koivisto and Ranta (2015, 59) underlines that when leading co-operation on organization it is important to create members of it feeling that leader is there for the group, working for the good of the group, and creating vision of future for them.

According to Balduck et al. (2014) organizational capacity is important for sports clubs, but even more important is organizational ambitions. These are intentions based on mission of the sports club. Organizational ambition joints the mission and organizational capacity to actions. Sports clubs might have opportunities and abilities to create action and growth but without organizational ambition it might not be possible to act. Sport clubs with entrepreneurial orientation might be innovative, ready to risk, and proactive with their actions and resource finding. This unconservative approach is seen as ambitions of the sport club.

2.6 Challenges when leading volunteers

Fox and Sheehan (2009, 18) recognize that there are great resources available how to recruit, train, and manage volunteers, but not that much for volunteers' exit from organization. Koivisto and Ranta (2015, 48) reminds that sometimes people attend to leave groups they are involved as their social identity differ from identity of group. According to Fox and Sheehan (2009, 18) the reason for volunteers to exit from organization could be because of the need of organization to fire the volunteer. Rauha (2021, 38) notes that unsatisfied volunteers quit volunteering and leave organization. Lack of meaning causes frustration. Heikkala (2016, 24-25) reminds that volunteer work is based on free will to do something. Fox and Sheehan (2009, 18) highlight that volunteer can leave, or to be forced to leave, organization because of poor performing, lack of trust, or misconducting against organization policy. Harju (2020) sees that sometimes organizations develops in direction that causes dissatisfaction for some of the members. If member of organization wants to quit volunteering it should be accepted without hard feelings.

Rauha (2021, 31) summarizes five recent trends that causes challenges on volunteer work at sports clubs: lack of volunteer work, feelings of volunteer work being too regulated, cost of volunteers to organization, increased pressure of leaders of volunteers, and increased demand of professionalism from volunteers. Govekar (2004, 24-25) points that organization should look from inside to out when considering volunteer efforts. Volunteer program with qualifications needed specified should be understandable for members of the organization. Current volunteers should be good marketers of organization for new volunteers. Govekar and Hakoköngäs (2018, 13) both agree that new volunteers should be welcomed by current staff to create them feeling that their present is appreciated.

Number of sports clubs is increasing in Finland (Seuratietokanta 2022) and at the same time there are less volunteer work hours done at non-profit sector (Kansalaisareena 2015). Koski and Meena (2018, 102) sees current trends at

sports clubs are specialization, diversification, professionalization, and increase in costs. According to Rauha (2021, 32) people are expecting more from sport clubs than before and at the same time clubs have become more complex when there are more disciplines available, the clubs have become bigger, and demands for administration have increased. For volunteers this means that stress from volunteer work might be big with expectations from participants and the need of multiple professional-like skills demanded to handle tasks. If sports clubs are tried to manage like company at business this could lead to more efficient environment at club but distance leaders and managers from volunteers. Koski and Mäenpää (2018, 107) agrees with Rauha (2021, 32) that big professional sports clubs have high ambitions. Big sports clubs are always within danger to build heavy and professional organization with guidelines and code of conducts but at the same time these clubs might be losing contact with their members as interaction within club could be reducing.

Koski and Mäenpää (2018, 103,106) reminds that education of people has increased, and sports clubs have become more professional with increased number of part- and full-time workers. Knowledge and competence could be the greatest factor behind the development of amongst clubs. As the commercial options for traditional sports clubs have increased non-profit work and volunteering is decreasing as participants are willing to pay for their participation at organized activity instead of being also producing activities to others. Sports clubs are under pressure to turn activities demanded based due the commercial options available.

Fox and Sheehan (2009, 18) recognize that if volunteer is performing poorly, it should be considered to reassign volunteer to more suitable role. Volunteers are looking satisfying job with orientation and training. People should be met, their concerns heard, and feedback and acknowledgements given by organization. Harju (2020) reminds that volunteer work should feel rewarding and produce significant memories and experiences. Balduck (2014) summarizes that volunteering is leisure activity. Organizational capacity includes human resource capacity which at sports clubs is majorly volunteer

efforts. Sports clubs with ambition to improve their resources combined with strong organizational capacity has abilities to growth and is interesting from different stakeholders' point of view.

Kaukinen (2015, 47-48) reminds that at non-profit sector volunteers are key resource. Experts tend to reference good interaction with volunteers. Sending, receiving, and interpreting of messages between staff of organizations and volunteers, between volunteers and those participating activities, and between volunteers. Kaukinen (2015, 51) notes that interaction between persons increase human resources. With interaction acceptance and feeling of belonging on something strengthen. At volunteer organization supportive assistance for volunteer could help increase the autonomy and ability to emerge tasks. Increased autonomy within organization increases the contribution of volunteer.

Nyman (2015, 14-18) sees that volunteers attach to organization through their base activities. In non-profit organizations there are unwritten rules and wide variety of mode of operations that together with written policies and conducts should be communicated to volunteers. At introduction to organization the future of organization is built. Personnel management at volunteer sector is leading of human resources. In well organized and lead organization members are encountered as individuals and offered job options that bind them as appreciated part of organization despite the role. According to Ranta (2021, 39) unorganized volunteer organizations causes dissatisfaction within volunteers which could eventually lead to volunteer quitting the organization. Volunteers feels that it is organizations responsibility to offer them education, communications, and support to help volunteers to succeed at their tasks.

2.7 Volunteer leader

Nyman (2015, 18-19) acknowledges that different ways of working are equally valuable. At non-profit organization coordinator, supervisor, manager, or director is supposed to detach differently orientated approaches to group

processes. This leading person at organization is activating members of organization and creates feeling of meaningful and relevance to members. Govekar (2004) notes that organizations should have dedicated volunteer coordinator concentrating solely on volunteer program of organization. Volunteer coordinator should be aware of volunteer program, recruiting process, and being a support to new volunteers.

Bennett (2015, 283-284) describes volunteer coordinator as leader of volunteer engagement. This role should include guiding the engagement of individual volunteers who are within organization. Revising organization best practices of volunteer engagement and having vision of volunteers at organization is needed to make a difference. Harju (2020) wonders if volunteer coordinators are used within non-profit organizations in Finland, even though all the organizations are based on volunteering. Organizations should have volunteer program where is defined how volunteers are recruited, educated, rewarded, and leaded. Having planned setup gives a good impression of organization.

Volunteer coordinator is not a new concept in non-profit organizations. Bentson (1983, 2) introduced demands of volunteer coordinator almost 40 years ago. These included planning, recruiting, training, placement and volunteer recognition and support. Ranta (2021, 41) highlights problems occurring with volunteer work and states that lack of planning on volunteer work combined with lack of leadership suitable for volunteer organization causes frustration. When organizations have troubles finding new volunteers but lack recruiting strategies current volunteers get frustrated with tasks they are given. This could eventually lead to decrease in quality of volunteer work.

Volunteer coordinator as a job is described as a person responsible for overseeing volunteer activities within an organization. Tasks includes recruiting volunteers, interviewing, and instructing volunteers to different roles that organization needs them for. Managing volunteer program includes tracking volunteer hours and handling rewarding's of volunteers. Skills that volunteer coordinator should possess to successfully create value to organization are

leadership, management, decision, computer, organization, and networking skills. (Indeed, 2022.)

3 Empirical research methods

3.1 Choosing methods

The thesis is qualitative research using interviews as the qualitative data gathering method. Volunteers and people leading volunteers at non-profit associations were interviewed. Some of the interviewees represented same organization(s). Qualitative research method was chosen for the purpose of comprehensively understanding the experiences of respondents. With open-ended questions it was possible to gather unexpected answers and experiences from respondents. Direct quotes from interviews were used to deepen the insights interviewees had on their special field and to emphasize their voices in the results of this study. Puusa et al. (2020, 56) notes that qualitative research is based around subjective experiences of people. Those experiences and views are crucial to reviewing and analyzing leading of volunteers and volunteer experiences.

Puusa et al. (2020, 73) describes that it is good to remember that quantitative and qualitative research methods are both needed to solve the specific problem. This research utilizes the results from previous studies. Those results are reflected to answers of interviewees of this research. Puusa et al. (2020, 73) reminds that while quantitative and qualitative research methods are often compared to each other both methods complement each other.

According Krishnaswami et al. (2010, 2-3) research is based on systematic and logical study with scientific method, where answers to issue, problem, or phenomenon is tried to explain. Research is trying to discover new facts, verify something already discovered, or test old facts. Scientific undertaking aims to analyze relationships, causes and effects, and sequences of material of interest. New concepts and theories could be validated through these explanations. This thesis aims to discover what are the reasons behind volunteering and how to use these motivational reasons to engage volunteers better.

Different characteristics of research can be defined with research being systematic and critical investigation with aim to describe, interpret and explain a phenomenon. With scientific method it should be objective and logical when being based on empirical evidence and observable experience. Research should stand test of criticism when trying to find answers and solutions to problems. (Krishnaswami et al. 2010, 3.) Interviews of this thesis aimed to create the overall picture of challenges of leading volunteers at sports clubs.

Qualitative research is based on subjective evaluation of opinions, behaviors, and impressions of respondent where research technique could vary from group interviews to projective techniques and to one-on-one interviews. Applied research is trying to find solution to real-life problem and is problem-oriented and action-directed. With aim to find immediate and practical results applied research could also contribute to the development of theoretical awareness. (Krishnaswami et al. 2010, 7,11.) In this thesis the answers of interviewees were used with observations made during the interviews. Answers from interviews and the observations were analyzed and compared to theoretical framework of this thesis.

According to Hirsijärvi et al. (2009, 164) qualitative research has typical features. Qualitative research is comprehensive acquisition of information where materials are explored with complex and detailed approach. Materials are gathered in real-life situations, where interviewees insight compromise with observations of researcher. In qualitative research interviewees are appropriately chosen instead of being randomly chosen to research. Research plan should be adaptive when doing qualitative research as unexpected manners could be found out. In this thesis both the research of theoretical framework and interviews gave reason to adjust the initial research plan. From interviews it was possible to understand common themes that interviewees saw important in their environment.

3.2 Research problem and design

Krishnaswami et al. (2010, 29-32) reminds that the studied question may not always be clear. Research problem should be formulated with reading of selected literatures and reflect those to chosen problem or question. Research needs an originated question that indicates what the problem is. By rationalizing this question, it states how the possible findings will contribute to practice and/or theory. Originated question should be expanded to several specific, investigative, questions. Finding answers to the research questions requires collecting relevant data and analysis of data. With clear definition of research problem, conceptual model, and objectives of study it is possible to determine data needs of the study. It was important to look at the research problem from different angles and evaluate the current situation before the data collection and analysis of the interviews. This helped to formulate relevant research questions. How to lead volunteers at a non-profit association and how to engage volunteers better in association are the main research focus and, how to engage younger generation became the supportive research question in this thesis.

According to Martínez-Mesa et al. (2016) selection of interviewees is based on ethical issues, budgetary limitations, logistics, and time restriction. Interviewees of this study was selected from the frame that included people with experience from volunteer work and people with experience from volunteer work and leading volunteers. Those leading volunteers could be leading volunteers as a volunteer themselves or as an employee of non-profit organization. As the aim was to find out how to develop leading of volunteers and volunteer experience it was important to find participants with wide age range to get insights and perspective from different generations. All the participants of study were selected from non-profit sports club organizations.

Research design directs research study. With logical and systematic plan, it specifies objectives, methodology and techniques needed for research. Research design is a complex concept which have different perspectives. The

degree of formulation of problem, depth of the study, research environment, time dimension, mode of data collection, test of variables under study, and nature of relationships between variables. Defining methods and tools of collecting data are specified at research design (Krishnaswami et al. 2010, 40,46.)

3.3 Data collection

Data for this research was gathered with personal interviews which were done online to suit the busy and demanding schedules of interviewees. Ruusuvaori et al. (2010) notice that use of interviews with conversation is increasing as a research method to research organizational situations. Material from interviews has a great role at research and with analysis of interviews it is possible to use non-verbal communications as a part of the research material.

One of the interviewees worked full-time at non-profit organization but for the other seven interviewees it was challenging to find a time for interview. Interviews were done on Microsoft Teams where it was possible to record the interview. Interviewees were in different situations of their day as one was driving long-haul business trip by car, one was preparing to start his volunteer tasks, and few interviews were done at coffee or lunch breaks of the interviewee. Two of the interviews were done at nighttime as interviewees were free from their work, hobbies, and family responsibilities.

Busy schedules and small-time spaces gave great insights how people are doing their volunteer, and micro-volunteer, work as it was common to do small tasks during the office hours. According to Krishnaswami et al. (2010, 99-101) interviewing could be described as a two-way systematic conversation with interviewer and interviewee. With interview it is possible to interpret interviewee's gestures, expressions and pauses depending on if done face-to-face or over telephone. As a qualitative method of gathering data interview could give intimate information of interviewee's attitudes, values, beliefs, experiences, and future intentions

Besides the planned interview questions (appendix 2. Interview questions) some clarifying questions were used as it was possible in some cases to hear that interviewee had something more to say but hesitated. All the interviews stayed within original subject which gave the impression that interviewees were motivated to answer questions. Interviewees seemed to concentrate to interviews which was observed from pauses taken after hearing questions and their willingness to complement their answers. On some cases the interviewees seemed to realize themselves some ongoing challenges with their non-profit organizations.

Answers had lot of similarities and similar answers confirmed the assumed problems with volunteer leading at non-profit organizations. Interview as a qualitative method gives depth and detailed information of interviewees as interviewer can gather additional information besides the questions. These observations could also characterize attitudes, economic level, or living conditions of interviewee. Making observations requires highly skilled interviewer. As an interactional process interviewee also reacts to the interviewer's behavior. Interviewer should maintain impartial and objective attitude despite the answers and expressions of interviewee (Krishnaswami et al. 2010, 102-104.)

3.4 Analysis of data

All the interviews were recorded, and notes were completed immediately after the interview during listening of the recording. This helped to make observations from non-verbal signals of interviewee. Recordings were listened again when confirming the format of direct quotes.

All the interviews were completed in Finnish as it is native language of interviewees. Quotes of interviewees are translated from Finnish to English to be as precise as possible. There was no terminology used that would have been difficult or impossible to translate.

As mentioned by Puusa et al. (2020, 154-158) the first phase of analysis is writing down the interview to transcription and reading phases of it that are meaningful for research problem. As the first phase of analysis is to look for statements that have relationship with theoretical thinking and research question the second phase of analysis is to find key notes to categorize the raw text. At the third phase of analysis those categories to be changed to themes that are relevant to theory of research. In this thesis responds of interviews were divided to different themes to help analyzing it. Relationships between answers were looked for. Common themes from interviews were communication within organization, planning of actions within association, and concerns for decreasing number of volunteers.

Communications was mentioned often in interviews either direct or in-direct. Direct mentions were for the need of better communication or noticing the lack of communication. Observations from interviews gave in-directly a picture that communication skills, communications, and channels for communication was unclear or in need of development at interviewees organizations.

Planning of volunteer actions and the position of volunteer work seemed to be unclear in all the interviews. It was possible to understand that volunteer work is needed at all the organizations that interviewees were representing. Concepts of volunteer program and volunteer coordinator seemed unfamiliar for many volunteer leaders.

In interviews it was easy to observe that interviewees were worried about the future of their organizations volunteer actions. Volunteer work was seen as unattractive to younger generations and engagement of volunteers was questioned by interviewees.

Krishnaswami et al. (2010, 85) divides data related to persons to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of individuals and behavioral variables. Data can be gathered from primary sources like interviews and secondary sources like reports and statistical statements. Krishnaswami et al. (2010, 160) reminds

that critical examination of data and analysis of it is the most skilled task during the research process.

Ruusuvuori et al. (2010) acknowledge that sampling data, analyzing it, and interpreting it are all attached to each other at part of research. For qualitative analysis it is common that data gathered, and research problem are close to each. Interviews might not always give answers that researcher is expecting or waiting. From data analysis it is possible to form new point of views to the support of research. Qualitative research methods should bring something new and meaningful to help understand the reality where the answers come from.

Aim of analysis of data was to find similarities and differences between the interviewees. This analysis process began with relistening the interviews and transcribe the interviews to text. Observations from interviews were added to compliment the answers. From the answers and observations, it was possible to start to reflect and test the data of this thesis to the theoretical background of this thesis. Analyzing process included writing and re-writing analysis from the materials available from interviews. Conclusions from the results of this study were compared to research problem of this study.

Age of interviewees was between 21 and 61. Three of interviewees were at the age group of 19-34 year and five interviewees at the age group of 35-64 year. Koski and Mäenpää (2018, 51) uses these wide age groups when defining age groups taking part to non-profit sports club activities. Decline of almost ten percentage point on participation to non-profit sports club activities at age group of 35-64 years old persons between 2006 and 2016. At the same time there was no significant change on participation to non-profit sports club activities within the age group of 19-34 years old.

Background information of interviewees and given codes (R1, R2...R8) is presented at Table 3. Interviewees were given codes to help reader to understand quotes from interviews. Sorting of interviewees were done by the ages of interviewees and smallest code was given to youngest interviewee.

Responders R1, R2, R3 and R5 are currently working at the same volunteer organizations.

Table 3. Background information of interviewees

Interviewee	Age (years)	Current average weekly hours of volunteering	Years leading volunteers	Leading volunteers currently	Organizations where in position of leading volunteers	Paid for leading volunteers
R1	21	0-15	2	YES	1	YES
R2	22	0-10	2	YES	1	YES
R3	25	2	2	YES	2	YES
R4	37	5	10	YES	4	YES
R5	37	1-4	3	YES	3	NO
R6	39	5	20	YES	10	YES
R7	44	2	5	NO	1	NO
R8	61	0	+30	NO	1	NO

Puusa et al. (2020, 163) explains that after finding different themes that answers to research questions it is time for substantive chapters.

4 Experiences from volunteer leading at non-profit organizations

4.1 Background of interviewees

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews and introduces the findings. Answers to interviews regarding volunteer leading at non-profit organizations will be used and complimented with theoretical findings. Most of the participants spoke about the same challenges and problems regarding volunteer leading even though the words were different. Answers matched to the theoretical background surprisingly well. Certain themes were found.

At the beginning of the interview the interviewee's background was inquired with a few questions. These questions were in relation to the role of the person at non-profit organization. Aim was to find out how involved the interviewee was at non-profit organization(s') and in what sort of role the interviewee acted. Interviewees were asked to answer if they were leading volunteers at non-profit organizations and if they were volunteers or employees of organization in their role of leading volunteers. To gain a better understanding of interviewees' experience in leading volunteers the number of organizations they had been leading volunteers was asked.

Rahkonen (2021, 6) narrows age groups more when considering volunteer work at non-profit organizations. These groups are 15-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-49 years old, 50-64 years old and 65-79 years old. Findings from Rahkonen is that from 2015 to 2018 there was an overall increasement of volunteer work at sports club activities which dropped heavily even under the level of 2015 when research was done again in 2021. It is important to notice that the Covid-19 epidemic started 2019 which could have had a negative impact to the volunteer work.

Interviewees were asked how much volunteer work they do weekly. Answers are subjective estimations as none of the interviewees monitored their working time. Five participants said that their weekly volunteer work varies from zero to two hours per week most of the year, but that during some bigger projects (like events, races, seasonal things...), the weekly hours could vary from ten to thirty. Two of the interviewees said that they were doing volunteer work weekly approximately five hours.

Rahkonen (2021, 5) states that over a four-week period the amount of volunteer work done in 2021 was 7,71 hours within the interviewees (n=25). (Table 4.) Time spent on volunteer work weekly is compared from years 2015, 2018, and 2021. From 2015 to 2018 the increase of weekly volunteering hours is significant, but unexplained by Rahkonen. Weekly hours have decreased from 2018 to 2021. This could be because of Covid-19 pandemic that caused reduction for many of daily activities. When comparing the findings of Rahkonen (2021, 5) and findings of this study both studies seem to be within the same range when comparing the weekly volunteer hours at non-profit sports club organizations.

Table 4. Time spent on volunteer work (Modified Rahkonen 2021, 5).

	2015	2018	2021
Hours at four-week period	9,62h	12,97h	7,71h
Weekly hours (calculated)	2,4h	3,2h	1,9h

Two of the interviewees who were doing five weekly hours of volunteer work described themselves both as an odd-job man of sports clubs, federations, or other sports related organizations. One of them stated being a part-time worker at sports clubs and other being a full-time worker. Interviewee noted:

“I am still doing lot for free even when being paid. One just can-not follow the hours spent as this (working part-time at sports club) is like a lifestyle choice.” (R6)

To get understanding of interviewees' role at their volunteer organizations they were asked had they been in a position where they have been leading volunteers. If they had been in a position leading volunteer's, the follow-up question was how many years they had held such a position. All the interviewees said they had been leading volunteers, and two told that they are not currently in a position where leading of volunteers is needed or expected.

Interviewees' experience of leading volunteers and current status of leading volunteers is presented at Table 5. Two of the oldest interviewees are not currently leading volunteers.

Table 5. Volunteer experience of interviewees

Interviewee	Age (years)	Years leading volunteers	Leading volunteers currently
R1	21	2	YES
R2	22	2	YES
R3	25	2	YES
R4	37	10	YES
R5	37	3	YES
R6	39	20	YES
R7	44	5	NO
R8	61	+30	NO

Based on years of leading volunteers and age of interviewees it is possible to calculate that at least seven participants have been leading volunteers between ages of 15-24 years and 25-34 years. This finding is interesting as six of interviewees said that it is difficult to get younger persons involved in volunteer actions.

According to Kostianen (2019) younger persons are looking for volunteer tasks that are meaningful and what they see important for themselves also. Volunteer work could help younger persons to fill their curriculum vitae. Clary and Snyder

(1999, 157) defined the Volunteer Functions Inventory (See Figure 7.) where gaining experience for career was one of the functions. This could be reason behind why so many of interviewees have started leading volunteers at younger ages. One of the interviewees who has started volunteering at younger ages explained:

“I have been doing lot of volunteer work for last 5-6 years to get into current position. I was always thinking that I must do some name and it will pay me back.” (R4)

From the interview of the interviewee quoted above it was possible to understand that interviewee was interested to work at sports club environment. Interviewee was satisfied in that volunteer work gave experiences and skills that could be used later. As stated by Kostianen (2019) volunteer work is a possibility to gain job experience and to help understanding own interests while building identity.

Five interviewees said that they get paid for their volunteer leading actions. This includes interviewee working part-time and interviewee working full-time in a position where leading volunteers is required. One of the interviewees described current situation within volunteer work:

“Doing free communal work has changed to some sort of search of monetary compensation.” (R6)

As this research did not focus on compensations and reasoning why people do volunteer work it is impossible to say what are the reasons behind being involved in volunteer actions. Most of the interviewees told that they get paid for leading volunteers. (Table 6.) Trend seems to be that younger volunteer leaders have been compensated at same level which could be the reason why they are involved and engaged in these positions.

Table 6. Gets paid for leading volunteers

Interviewee	Age (years)	Paid for leading volunteers?
R1	21	YES
R2	22	YES
R3	25	YES
R4	37	YES
R5	37	NO
R6	39	YES
R7	44	NO
R8	61	NO

One of the interviewees said:

“I’ve been in a leading position both volunteer and paid employee. Within last ten years it has been more common that compensations are paid for responsible leaders” (R6)

Five of the interviewees said that they have been leading volunteers on one organization. Interviewees working part-time and full-time in a position where leading volunteers is required said that they have been leading volunteers at multiple organizations. One interviewee was in a leading position more than thirty years at same organization.

4.2 Volunteer leading experiences

On questions regarding volunteer leading at non-profit organizations interviewees were asked to consider all the organizations they are involved in. It was not asked if their experiences come from being volunteer at organization or from being in a leading position. For the purposes of this study the mix of experiences from different organizations and positions was seen important.

Six interviewees highlighted that they are involved in project leading situations and quote from one interviewee regarding how these projects built up was:

“Action started when there was a need to do something.” (R8)

Three interviewees noted that on one-off events volunteers are well instructed and two that volunteers could be instructed better than what is being done currently. Only one interviewee said that volunteers are led well but noted also that things could be done always better, but (volunteer) resources are limited. One interviewee said that leadership is often missing in these one-off events.

There was a sense with seven of interviewees that they understood that things with volunteers could have been done better way, but the demands and other tasks of project leader took too much of time and therefore leading volunteers was done sometimes left-handed. One interviewee described a common problem:

“Many of the volunteers have been with this current organization for long time, some even decades. They usually know what to do without need of leading. This causes that new volunteers can be lost occasionally because experienced volunteers do things the same way they did last time” (R3)

According to Rahkonen (2021, 14) people attend equally to short- and long-termed volunteer work. Regular and occasional volunteer work was equally common also. 33% interviewees (n=578) felt that they could be attending more short-termed and one-off voluntary actions. 13% of interviewees felt that it would be easier to attend voluntary actions if they would feel more welcomed starting their volunteer work. These findings from Rahkonen (2021, 14) are interesting and are somewhat opposite what interviewees of this study noted on their volunteer environment.

All the interviewees felt that for new volunteers it is easy join to current organizations. One of the interviewees said that it probably is easy to come in as a new volunteer but could be also easier. This compliments the answer of

another interviewee who hoped that it is easy to join but said it should be easier. One interviewee pondered:

“It is hard to say if it (to come in as a new volunteer) is easy or not as I have been long in current organization. Information how to join is available on website, members are asked regularly to become volunteer events.” (R2)

Interviewees' opinions regarding volunteering in their organizations is compiled to Table 7 and divided to three categories. Answer was set to category based on observations made during the interview. Some of the answers are in two columns as it was not possible to make an observation if answer had a negative or positive background.

Answers presented in Table 7 have some dispersion even though the interviewees stated that they think it is easy to join as a volunteer to the organizations they are currently involved. This could be because some of the interviewees evidently started to think of reasons why it could be difficult to join. This demonstrates leadership skills of volunteer leader rather than being inconsistent with answer. Hakoköngas (2018, 11) described that professionalism of volunteer leading is learning away from old habits. An interviewee who started to immediately consider what are the weak points of their current models and processes showed professional leadership skills by considering how to develop their organization.

Table 7. Interviewees' opinions of volunteering in their organization

Positive	Negative	Neutral
Many different tasks available from pre-event things to shorter and longer event hours. (R4)	Sometimes hard to get people to volunteer at events. (R6)	In smaller organizations people attend more. Easier to join when you know the people you are working with. (R6)
Easy to find information how to join volunteer team. (R2)	Sometimes it feels difficult at some organizations to enroll as a volunteer. (R7)	Responsible persons should be active to find volunteers from the members (of a club). (R8)
Most of the times easy to join. (R3)	Should be easier to join. (R5)	Passive search has been on at webpage. (R1)
Good common spirit and good benefits available for volunteers. (R8)	People are asked to do same things on their spare-time what they do on their daily jobs. (R6)	Some of the organizations are easier to join than others. (R7)
Low qualifications needed for most of the tasks. (R1)	Low qualifications needed for most of the tasks. (R1)	We ask often but maybe we don't open things clearly enough which could be a barrier to join for someone. (R4)
Simple tasks available. (R5)	Simple tasks available. (R5)	
Volunteers has a strong community, and the spirit seems good. (R3)	It is difficult to get new volunteers as the community of older volunteers is so strong which makes it difficult to new people to join. (R3)	

Rahkonen (2021, 19) has found that 61% of younger people (aged 15-24) are willing to participate volunteer actions if they would be asked. Four interviewees of this study mentioned their organizations doing search of volunteers. Different methods were sending an online membership newsletter, posting social media advertisement, asking volunteers of last year to join again, and having a webpage with open search for volunteers.

Two answers were placed in both positive and negative column. If volunteer work is described as “low qualifications needed” and “simple tasks” it states that probably no great responsibilities or independence is needed. Both sentences have a discouraging echo and could give the impression that work is not appreciated which might not be the intention of the volunteer leader.

Good spirit within volunteer workers, good benefits, and strong volunteer community came up from two of the interviewees as a reason why it is easy to join volunteers at their organizations. Good benefits are a motivational reason. With these benefits the overall spirit with volunteers is boosted which makes the organization tempting to join. It is good to notice that these reasons do not describe if joining as a new volunteer is easy or not.

Two interviewees said that some organizations are difficult to get in as a volunteer. They complemented their answers by adding that open information is lacking or not even available for how to volunteer. One reason for this was that some people had been doing same things for so long that around them has grown an entirely own in-group doing their own thing. This kind of in-group formation was seen difficult to join. In-grouping could be unintentional and in bigger organizations it could create a feeling of safety and security. From the perspective of volunteer, it is easier to understand reasons why they join every time to work with same other volunteers on same tasks. One interviewee with experience from multiple organizations noted that volunteering rate is higher in smaller sports clubs. Reasoning was that it is easier to come to work with people you already know.

Hakoköngas (2018, 13) reminds that if organization needs new volunteers, they should be ready to modify their community to new members with ability to facilitate co-operation of people. No one should be left aside and at renewable society non-profit organizations and people finding interesting activities should find each other.

4.3 Volunteer programs

Answers from all the interviewees indicate that volunteers are lead with common practices that has evolved over the years. This is somewhat interesting, but not surprising, finding. Common thinking in the interviews was that the number of volunteers has decreased over the years, and it is difficult to find volunteers these days. As three interviewees were aged between 21-25 years and had been acting in volunteer leading position for only two years, their answers must be taken with some reservations. All three young interviewees mentioned that it is more difficult to find volunteers than before. It must be considered that these interviewees might be repeating what they have heard or read regarding volunteer participation instead of this being their own experience or observation.

“There is not anything concrete, some material I think but more is needed” (R3)

“Something small like written instructions for project volunteers. But haven’t seen it” (R2)

“No” (R4)

“I think the main club has some instructions (R5)

“No real guidance. Blueprint was done some years back” (R8)

“I don’t think so” (R1)

“No” (R7)

“Only common practices but definitely nothing on how to work with volunteers or solve a conflict or something like that” (R6)

According to Rehnborg (2015, 34,36) weak commitment of volunteers comes from weak management. Volunteers should be seen as a strategic investment where management should bring out the best possible volunteer effort with the best possible volunteers. One interviewee noted:

“Everyone should feel that they are doing important work, they should be thanked and rewarded...so it (lack of volunteers) does not come only from outer sources. Internally (within sports club) should be strived to build vital volunteer community” (R5)

Three interviewees said that they know a volunteer program with a guide or instructions should be built. They noted in other parts of the interviews that in their current organizations they are lacking both resources and volunteers. One continued that more should be done, but there is not just enough time to do it.

As stated by Rehnborg (2015 34) volunteers are often overlooked in organizational processes and this could cause program to suffer. With poor information sharing and leaving outside organizational processes it is difficult to fulfill expectations set by management. It could cause cycle of dysfunction as poor management overlooks unexpected volunteer work results.

One of the interviewees noted that there were some instructions and guidance for volunteers available but had not seen it. Interviewee noted that these were done by co-leader of event. This could be seen as poor communication and lack of knowledge of responsibilities between event leaders. One of the interviewees described that process of leading volunteers should involve consistent and well planned leading. It should serve all the volunteers and try to eradicate misunderstandings with good communication.

From the answers of interviewees, it was possible to see that besides leading volunteers, they were leading the project, event, or some other major thing at the same time. When demands of project are high for, managers, working often as a volunteer themselves, it was possible to see that they did not have the time to lead volunteers properly. Few of the interviewees noted that themselves and were aware of the situation.

Experienced volunteer leader said at interview:

“There is no well led human resources at any of the organizations I have been involved. Those who have been doing volunteer work at

same organizations knows each other and how things are done.”
(R6)

From quote above it is possible to lead that counting on to volunteers that have been doing same things often enough are self- or group-governing. Interviewee seemed to be pleased for this. Same interviewee noted that it is difficult to participate in volunteer actions when being new member at established volunteer organization. This seems like a problematic approach where interviewee was happy with situation that with small effort it was possible to get volunteer who were able to perform without much of instructing or communicating.

4.4 Volunteer coordinator

Volunteer coordinator should be responsible for planning the volunteer program, recruiting volunteers, training them to the tasks, place them to right spots, and give support and appreciation to volunteers (Bentson 1983, 2).

One interviewee knew that there was a volunteer coordinator within organizations interviewee is involved in. Interviewee was able to name volunteer recruitment as a task that volunteer coordinator is responsible for. One interviewee was able to name the same task that volunteer coordinator is responsible. Same interviewee continued that there probably was one at organization interviewee was involved but ended with that did not know who this person was. This is an interesting answer as the latter interviewee said in the interview to be in a position where leading volunteer was required and done. If the volunteer leader is not aware of volunteer coordinator even by name, the organization seems distant on management level. If management is not communicating and do not know the persons, they are working with, it could be difficult to lead and manage volunteers.

Three interviewees described uniformly that in their organizations there were no named volunteer coordinator for club level activities but for projects (events and races) there is always person who is responsible for recruiting volunteers. One

of these interviewees noted that project leader should act as a volunteer coordinator too. This seems to be reality as one of the interviewees acting as a project manager noted that probably everyone is waiting that it is project manager who oversees this too. It was a positive finding that three interviewees acknowledged the role of project coordinator in organization. Hesitation was present in the answers of these three interviewees when they were speaking about volunteer coordinator.

Three of the interviewees were unaware of volunteer coordinators in their organizations. It was a surprise that one of these three interviewees did not know volunteer coordinators in interviewee's organizations as this interviewee was named as a volunteer coordinator by another interviewee. As noted above, there seems to be inner communicational problems within some of the organizations interviewees are involved in. One of these three interviewees was able to name tasks of the volunteer coordinator which were recruiting and controlling and informing the volunteers, to better the volunteer experience and develop it.

It was possible to observe that recruiting volunteers was seen as an underrated and obligatory thing to do within organizations. One interviewee noted:

“Communal work as we understand it impinge on baby boomers who were actives at clubs and created events as part of core activity of club. Now the problem is how to communicate the importance of volunteer work to millennials as the free work input has changed to some sort of search of own benefits” (R6)

It must be noted that volunteer coordinator or volunteer leader might not be common as a title or known by that specific name. Tasks of volunteer coordinator when recognized by interviewees was spread to many people. Project leaders seemed to be mainly responsible for volunteer coordinators' tasks when leading project at the same time. This was possible to conduct from answers stating that interviewees were leading volunteers but at the same time they didn't know or recognized at all the role of volunteer coordinator.

Comparing answers from interviews was important as in earlier parts of research it was possible to observe lack of communications within management in different organizations. Table 8. Volunteer program and coordinator at interviewees organization compiles answers of interviewees regarding volunteer program at organizations they are currently involved and states if there is a volunteer coordinator position in their current organizations.

In Table 8 it is possible to see that those who have been leading volunteers for two years and are aged between 15-24 or 25-34 are unaware of existence of volunteer coordinator in their current organizations. Two out of three of these interviewees said that there probably is some volunteer program at current organizations, but they could not specify it or were unaware of it even when they acknowledged existence of the program.

Table 8. Volunteer program and coordinator at interviewees' organization

Interviewee	Age (years)	Years leading volunteers	Volunteer program in current organizations?	Volunteer coordinator in current organizations?
R1	21	2	NO	UNAWARE
R2	22	2	SOMETHING BUT COULD NOT SPECIFY	UNAWARE
R3	25	2	SOMETHING BUT COULD NOT SPECIFY	UNAWARE
R4	37	10	NO	NO
R5	37	3	NO	NO
R6	39	20	NO	YES
R7	44	5	YES	YES
R8	61	+30	SOMETHING BUT COULD NO SPECIFY	NO

Finger (2015, 66) reminds that to attract younger generations to take part in volunteer activities communications should be carried out by using technologies that millennials currently use. Salminen (2015, 31) describes that common problem arising when speaking with persons involved in non-profit organizations is how to get younger persons involved in activities. Non-profit organizations have evolved to suit baby boomer age classes with their established ways of operations and actions.

Table 8 indicates organizational unawareness of three young interviewees. This could be derived from the fact that silent knowledge is passed on in smaller pieces from more experienced people of organization. Written instructions or guides are not available because people who have been involved in actions for long time know these things and could have been themselves in a situation where they have been receiving information in small parts. This phenomenon could be recognized from some answers in interviews:

“Those who have been doing volunteer work at same organizations knows each other and how things are done.” (R4)

“There are some materials available (for leading volunteers) after the previous event managers. Notes and information’s and common guidelines.” (R3)

“It is difficult to join our volunteer community as established volunteers do their work so well.” (R4)

“It is easy to work with those who have been long time within organization.” (R2)

Salminen (2015, 35) highlights that open two-way interaction with communication is one of the keys how to get younger persons involved in volunteer work. In interviews of this study, it was possible to understand that none of the younger and unexperienced volunteer leaders were unhappy of their current situation. Interviewees did not seem to be worried or offended by any mean for the fact that they did not know their organization, or the

organization was not working with them when they were managing their projects.

Is it the status quo of the non-profit organizations that older generations passes the knowledge to younger generations? Could this intentional or unintentional way of things be the reason why it is difficult to attract younger persons to volunteer work? In non-profit organizations where people are getting older it could be a real problem if information, common practices, and knowledge is not written down.

4.5 Volunteer leader at organization

Interviewees were asked to consider who should be leading volunteers at non-profit sports club organization. Five of interviewees thought that volunteer coordinator should be responsible for volunteer leading. Two of interviewees has opinion that event / project coordinators should lead volunteers. One interviewee noted that this is dependent on the size of organization:

“The more you are willing to pay to more professionalism you get. When you want more, it is time to invest professional coordinating too. Professionalism brings continuity.” (R7)

Interviewees complemented their answers, and it was possible to find some stereotypic characteristics needed, wished, or wanted from volunteer coordinator. One interviewee who knew that there was no volunteer coordinator in the organization interviewee is involved in, started to think that their organization could need a position like this. Interviewee continued that this contact person could be somewhere between members, project managers, operative staff, and volunteers. Interviewee saw that chairman of the board or current hired workforce would not be the right choice to do project coordinating as it would be easily seen as an unwanted chore.

One interviewee pondered that despite the title the person leading volunteers should possess high skills in communications and socially. Interviewee noted

that in that kind of position one is in touch with many different people, which requires a right way to face these people. One interesting skill that interviewee mentioned was an ability to create community spirit through communications. Salminen (2015, 34-35) notes that younger generations can adopt technical applications that allows to work as a group from the beginning of the process. Organizations with one-way interaction should be diminished and two-way interaction built within organization. Digitalization allows more people to attend in volunteer work while offering better output experience.

One interviewee who noted that volunteer coordinator is needed in interviewee's organization described this position suitable for someone who has experience from volunteer work. Interviewee continued that volunteer coordinator should be aware of what the organization is doing (needs of organization), but it is not necessary to be involved in detail level. Interviewee reminded that for details there are project managers, and they need volunteers to run their events. Same interviewee described earlier in interview that the biggest challenge for leading and managing projects is the lack of human resources. This could have impacted to interviewee's ideology that demands of project manager are too high and supportive staff is needed. Interviewee also mentioned that there probably is some volunteer program guidance available at interviewee's organization but was unaware of it. It was possible to observe that this interviewee was in a leading position with too much asked and demanded and with too little help available.

One interviewee explained to be a part of a sports club that held multiple events during year. These events usually had different project managers. If tasks of volunteer coordinator are put on the project manager, it could cause problems when all the projects are individual and run by different managers. Interviewee came out with an idea where sports club could have a volunteer coordinator who runs the volunteer program, and this way provide best support for project managers' work. In interviewees answer this person could be someone already working at club but not directly involved in events or projects.

It was surprising that only one interviewee mentioned the size of organization when talking about volunteer coordinator. From all the answers it was possible to understand that most of the volunteers come from the members of the sports club. One interviewee mentioned that sports clubs are doing fundraising by being volunteers at other sports clubs' events. This probably means that the organizing sports club of event is not having enough members to run an event of chosen scale. All the interviewees who saw volunteer coordinator as a possible leader of volunteers and a runner of volunteer program seemed to bypass the fact that most of the volunteers are members of non-profit sports club organization too. It could be important to consider that volunteer coordinator is a membership coordinator who lowers the threshold to join the sports club. This could grow the pool of members from where potential volunteers are searched for.

4.6 Challenges of leading volunteers at sports club

Interviewees were asked to evaluate what are the biggest challenges on leading volunteers at sports club organization. Six interviewees noted that the biggest threat on future is how to get younger generations involved in volunteer work. Mäkinen et al. (2019, 31) has noted that age groups 15-24, 25-34, 45-54, were all doing equal amount of volunteer work at sports clubs (12,1-14,3% of total population of age group were involved in volunteer work at sports club.) Age group 35-44 was highlighted as the most involved group in volunteer work at sports club (16,1% of total population of age group were involved in volunteer work at sports club). In bigger age groups of 55-64 and over 65 these percentages started to decrease being 10,5% and 8,4% of total population of age group being involved in volunteer work at sports club.

Findings of Mäkinen et al. (2019, 31) are conflicting with findings of this study. One interviewee noted that free volunteer work is felt to be a thing of a baby boomer age groups. Interviewee continued that it should be communicated to the younger generations that volunteer work is important. From the interviewees' answers it was possible to understand that older generations were

willing to do free volunteer work as younger generations expected some compensations for their volunteer work. There was one other interviewee stating that nowadays compensation is expected from volunteer work.

One interviewee said that it is difficult to get volunteers. Interviewee pondered that motivational skills are needed to get necessary number of people to attend volunteer tasks:

“Good ideas are needed (to leading volunteers) to make it work in a future.” (R4)

Four of the interviewees had similar answers stating that new generations should be activated to participate in volunteer work. Interviewees noted that in their own organizations people are getting older and it is difficult to find new volunteers. Three out of four interviewees stated earlier on interview that in their organization it is sometimes easy to work as there are older volunteers to work with. This seems problematic situation in organizations as there are established volunteers doing what they have done for long periods which could cause that younger people find it difficult to fit in. From same four interviewees two were calling for more exchange within volunteers. Same two interviewees noticed that volunteers should be engaged in a way that they participate more than once. This study had three interviewees aged 21-25 in a position where they were leading volunteers and running project or event at sports club. This highlights that younger generations are willing to do volunteer work.

On future challenges for leading volunteers at sports club organization two interviewees noted that more contribution is needed from organizations. One interviewee saw that sports clubs are being too passive in their efforts to find new volunteers although this is required to maintain vitality of sports club. Other interviewee highlighted that volunteers are a changing resource. Organization of sports club should be established and consider the continuity of operations. Interviewee saw that volunteer engagement is better when sports club organizations is working well.

4.7 Volunteer engagement

It is easy to relate interviewee's view that with bad communication, too few people and them being left on their own, volunteers are easily driven away.

"In worst case scenario there are volunteers who do not know what they should be doing, overall resource is too low, and no one remembers to feed and service the volunteers." (R6)

Two interviewees saw volunteer engagement as a future challenge for sports club organization. Volunteer engagement is related to the volunteer experience that volunteer worker gains. It was easy to find common themes from the answers to what would constitute a better volunteer experience.

Five interviewees noted that with good communications and informing, the base is created for positive volunteer experience. Two interviewees noted that this is a process starting from recruiting process, carried on through event or action where volunteer is needed, and continuing after the event. These findings are something that sports club should add on their volunteer program too. Interviewees were clearly after an approach before event or action, required clear instructions how to deal with the commitment, and were looking for the follow-up. By improving the communication process the sports club could engage the volunteers better.

All eight interviewees described in a similar way that feeling togetherness when working as volunteer is important to a good volunteer experience. Five interviewees saw that it is important to make volunteers feel that they are doing something important and meaningful that is respected by management. Five interviewees thought that thanking and rewarding with some way is important. One interviewee said:

"It should be considered that volunteer also gets something for one's output. It might not be money but something else. This creates satisfaction and that is needed so people are using their free time for volunteering." (R7)

Three other interviewees noticed that it is important to find suitable tasks for volunteers so that volunteer experience gets better. Interviewees thought that tasks should be suitable with their demands and not too heavy as it is volunteer work. This helps committing to tasks according one interviewee.

Volunteer engagement is related to volunteer experience. Both comes from thoughtful leading like noticed by one interviewee:

“We should concentrate really on experience. People should feel they are doing something important. We should strive to make experience from volunteer work meaningful and rewarding. These are challenges related to leading as well.” (R6)

5 Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to find out how non-profit sports club can develop their activities. Understanding the motives why people volunteer was important. By comparing responses from the interviews and the literature, the goal was to create a comprehensive idea of what is done currently at interviewees' organizations and how it compares to the literature. Thought was that if the non-profit sports clubs are lead with motivational and cohesion enhancing ways, the clubs are seen as an attractive choice to spend leisure time as a volunteer.

Research question was how to lead volunteers at non-profit associations and how to engage volunteer better to organization. Supportive question was how to attract more younger people to volunteer.

Roots of volunteer work are planted deep in our sports clubs. Even when the number of paid workers has increased in non-profit associations, and sports clubs, there are many tasks that are done voluntarily and as communal work. These volunteer hours run the activities and should be understood as an integral part of action plan of association.

Motivational reasons for volunteering well from the basic needs of human. Definition from Clary and Snyder (1999, 157) has six functions for reasons to volunteer. Volunteer work should target to something that satisfies the values and understanding of volunteer worker. While volunteer work might fulfill career targets of volunteer, also increase in personal value and development is looked for. It is not to forget that volunteer work has a strong social meaning for people, and it offers protective feelings. In this research some of the volunteer leaders noticed the same functions. If non-profit associations and their volunteer leaders can understand the motivational reasons of volunteering, they can use these as a tool for recruiting, training, and leading of volunteers.

Leading volunteers does not correspond to leading subordinates at working environment. Volunteer workers offer their leisure time for the good of non-profit association. Schedule of people's leisure time is often full and competed.

Working outside the office hours is more common (Osborne 2021) than before. People are more aware of themselves and investing more to their own good in their leisure time. Hogg (2001, 188-190) describes that social identity is built with dimension of need of belonging to groups. From responses of interviews, it was possible to make similar observation as few of the interviewees noted that in their organizations there were strong and established volunteer groups (which sometimes were hard to enter for new volunteers). When people feel that they are doing something meaningful it is easier to engage them as a permanent volunteer for organizations. Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 42-43) reminds that people who join in different groups consciously or sub-consciously look for others who share the same ideology, passion, or interest in something. This is something that could be used by volunteer leaders when rewarding volunteers, but also when recruiting them.

Results of this thesis are in line with earlier research and literature. This thesis gave new insight and deepened the knowledge of importance of volunteer leading in non-profit associations.

Literature described leadership as a power and influence on individuals and groups. Leaders are seen as a powerful person that are ready to characterize, program, and organize people to work for the good of a group. Fundamental parts of social identity are individuals' need to see leader as a prototypical member of a group. This type of leader attracts socially and can create salient and strong unit from the members of the group. (Hogg 2001, 188-190.) As a first key finding it was a surprise to realize that in the interviews none of the interviewees noted the meaning and value of leader, leadership, or management to volunteer leading, volunteer engagement of for better volunteer experience. All but one interview left an assumption that leaders were cautious of bringing out their leadership skills or ways of leading their volunteers. Volunteer leaders and their organizations should consider that they could get more volunteers with better engagement if they search leaders who are prototypical members of organization, possess good communication skills, and encourage the volunteers with their own example. This might create some

controversies at non-profit associations but with right leader, suitable skills, and vision of association this could generate personality and character to community which includes all the stakeholders of association.

As the second key finding to be presented is the lack of both volunteer program and volunteer coordinator in organizations of interviewees. Volunteer coordinator seemed something that few of interviewees had not ever heard of. Same observation was possible to do regarding volunteer program. Koivisto and Ranta (2019, 57-59) presented Social Identity Model of Organizational Leadership (SIMOL) with five principles stating that leader should create vision to group giving meaning to the group. Leading co-operation needs joint goals while leader should be approachable and relatable. Based on this theoretical model of Koivisto and Ranta and the results of interviews it is possible to suggest that non-profit organizations should consider that the person who is responsible for volunteers matches as much as possible the principles of SIMOL-model. This forces the non-profit association to consider their goals and vision that the volunteer leader tries to establish to the volunteers. Operational methods should be aligned and instructed to volunteer leader to make it possible to bring those forth to volunteers.

Volunteer program should be included as a part of action plan for association if volunteer work is needed and wanted part of activities. Organizations should consider the reasons why people might volunteer for different tasks available. This could help the process of recruiting, training, and leading the volunteers. Blueprint of volunteer program should be communicated to all the persons of organization who are responsible for leading volunteers. From interviews it was possible to observe that the lack of younger generations of volunteers was mentioned by many interviewees and seen as a problem for organizations. To ease the recruitment of younger volunteers they should be offered assignments that could interest them. These activities could be microvolunteering tasks that need advanced digital skills, or a responsible position from where the young volunteer could benefit by gaining valuable work experience. Salminen (2015, 36) notice that younger generations have new ways of thinking and skills to

offer for associations. Ideas from younger volunteers could help reshape and develop association.

Practical implications

As a result of this study based on literature and responses of those leading volunteers currently, following actions could be considered in organizations to better the volunteer search, experience, and engagement.

- 1) The priority of volunteer work for the activities of association. By evaluating the needs of volunteer work for the successful operations it is possible to understand how important it is for association.
- 2) There should be a responsible person for leading volunteers in organization. This could be an appointed volunteer coordinator. If the responsible person for leading volunteers has other tasks in association, the time available for different tasks should be calculated and allocated to different tasks.
- 3) Active recruitment of volunteers. Recruitment process is a first possibility to welcome new volunteer worker to organization. Use of different digital on non-digital channels should be evaluated. Enough information about association, its volunteer organization, the way volunteers are seen at organization, and the type of activities and schedule should be provided.
- 4) Good practices of leading of volunteers. It should be remembered always that volunteers are there for free on their leisure time and looking for something meaningful for them while being useful to other person, group, or association. Leading with good will, cooperation, and human-centric ways should be prioritized and followed in associations.
- 5) Volunteer experience. Volunteer workers should feel welcomed, appreciated, and needed in their work. Associations should understand

that even if some volunteer activity seems small to association it could be an effort and give meaning to volunteer. Volunteer experience forms from the whole process from recruitment to volunteer activity, and aftercare of volunteer. Good experience creates better engagement.

- 6) Potential value of younger volunteers. Association that tries to transform and evolve to match the needs and demands for the future should see the potential that younger generations could bring in. When recruiting younger volunteers' organization should be ready to review new ways of working and accept the changes to old practices. By modernization of association, new volunteers, new ideas, and new possibilities could be achieved.
- 7) Communications. With open well in advance done communications through selected and consistent channels it is possible to easily affect volunteer experience. Communication plan should be integral part of volunteer program. Before events and actions, it is possible to strengthen the meaning of volunteer and volunteer group with simple information provided often enough.

Figure 8 summarizes these findings and can be used to develop better practices in daily non-profit association working environment.

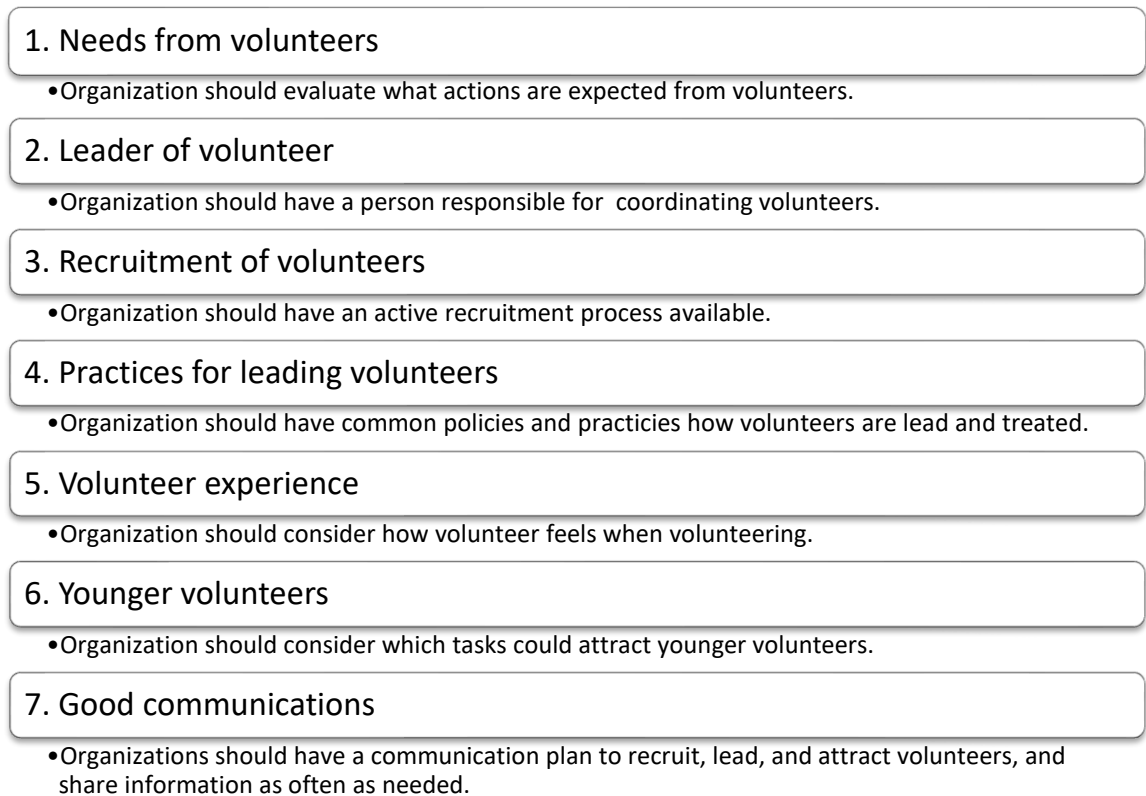


Figure 8. Practical implications

Recommendations

This thesis gave number of different options to consider the current ways of leading and managing volunteers in non-profit associations. Qualitative research method offered possibility to hear what those, who are currently leading volunteers had to say. It could have been possible to do research with more consideration on volunteer experience. This would have required bigger sample with people from different positions in volunteer organization. With the chosen method it was possible to get insights from volunteer leaders and the results of this study can be used for developing the ways of working in organizations.

Further research could be considered for how organizations are able to engage younger volunteers in responsible positions. It would be interesting to know how

the young volunteer leaders are able to utilize the experiences that they get from non-profit associations. Do those who are leading others at young age at non-profit associations end up in leading positions also in working life? On a bigger scale it would be needed to research more how the volunteer work at non-profit associations in Finland has changed over the last couple of decades. Has the new ways of working that business life has adopted moved on to the volunteer work field too. Or is the world of non-profit associations slow to transform and evolve.

Volunteer leaders at non-profit associations should be there to serve volunteers and ensure that volunteers feel that they are part of a team. Leading volunteers is a transformative process where anticipation of future is in a great role. Leisure time of people is highly contested. Non-profit associations and the volunteer leaders should understand the reason why people want to be part of a group that they can identify with and the motivational reasons of why someone wants to volunteer. In the future, the non-profit organizations must find ways to compete for the leisure time of people. By offering volunteer experience that satisfies the motivational factors of a person it is possible to engage the person to organization stronger. Organizations should evaluate their own ways of working and start developing these modes of operation on a journey towards the future. Volunteering and volunteer work is not to be losing. The forms of volunteering and volunteer work will transform at the same time as the society transforms. With a good plan of how to lead volunteers it is possible to compete for people's leisure time also in the future.

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Number of registered sports clubs in Finland

Rekisteröimisvuosi	Urheiluseurojen määrä
1991	80
1992	103
1993	110
1994	122
1995	137
1996	144
1997	189
1998	169
1999	96
2000	103
2001	110
2002	121
2003	114
2004	102
2005	93
2006	88
2007	109
2008	102
2009	126
2010	132
2011	163
2012	117
2013	177
2014	170
2015	138
2016	146
2017	142
2018	139
2019	105
2020	82
2021	2

Interview questions

1) Background information

- Age?
- How much volunteer work do you do weekly?
- How many years have you been leading volunteers?
- Have you been leading volunteers as a volunteer or as an employee of an organization?
- In how many organizations have you been leading volunteers?

2) Current situation

- How are volunteers led at the organization(s) you are currently involved in?
- Is there currently a volunteer program at the organization(s) you are involved?
- What kind of a volunteer program it is?
- Is there currently a volunteer coordinator at the organization(s) you are involved in?
- What kind of activities is the volunteer coordinator responsible for?
- Do you think it is easy for a new volunteer to come to the organization(s) you are involved in?
- Why do you think this is the case?

3) Future

- Who should be leading volunteers at a sports club organization?
- What are the biggest future challenges for leading volunteers at a sports club organization?
- What would make a better volunteer experience?