E-management: Tools and Techniques of Leaders in Non-Profit Organizations for Online Volunteer Work

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Abstract

This paper analyzed the tools and techniques used by the leaders of five NGOs, used for online volunteer work. Due to the prominent role that NGOs play in the development sector we consider that it was necessary to talk about this issue that face volunteers' leaders. The descriptive research used a cross-sectional design, and the data was collected using qualitative research method. There were conducted 5 online interviews with 5 top managers in different NGOs that located in Lebanon, Spain, Qatar, Turkey. The results approved the research hypothesis of the efficacy of democratic leadership style with volunteers' teams online. Furthermore, social media impact, communication, engagement, and skills development with volunteers and lead to plenty of achievement in terms of work through efficient virtual management.

1. Introduction

The emergence of organized civil society and of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as organizational manifestations of broader social movements has altered the global political–economic landscape (Teegen et al, 2004). No one can deny that NGOs which are non-profit organizations have big impact on societies, because of different kinds of gaps that cover in communities. We live now in a world that really needs civil work and new initiatives by youth to generate creative and innovative ideas that establish new NGOs. Today we must change ourselves and our society from an interactive role to a proactive one. No doubt that every NGO or any initiative have some volunteers to deal with and manage, and these volunteers who free their times to work with you without salaries must keep them motivated, productive, and happy to work under the umbrella of your organization. According to Lassiter, et al (2015) say that we must develop a flexible optimization framework to dynamically allocate volunteers to minimize the cumulative unmet demand and maximize volunteers′ preference. The big challenge nowadays is how to manage volunteers online. The culture of working online is already existing and it was enhanced and invested by the pandemic COVID-19 by forcing the management

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systems to innovate new tools and techniques to keep their organizations alive. For this reason, it was necessary to put a spotlight on the e- management due to the lack of papers that talk about this problem of how to lead online. Everyone can be a manager but not everyone can be a leader, especially in virtual management. According to Amanchukwu (2015) says that success is certain if the application of the leadership styles, principles and methods is properly and fully applied in school management because quality educational leadership tradition offers great opportunity to further refine educational leadership and management policies and practices by accepting and utilizing the basic principles and styles of educational leadership. Considering the growing e-business in various sectors, it is necessary to find an electronic infrastructure in institutions where developed an integrated electronic management to automate the administrative workflow for the purposes of administrative processes electronically and documented in accordance with the systematic electronic applications (Alrahahle, 2014). With the acceleration of technology over the past five years, it is more possible than ever to create and manage amazing and impactful virtual volunteer programs. This paper will offer actionable tips for creating virtual programs and implementing great strategies to set your organization up for success. Moreover, it examines the effective tools that help the managers and leaders to facilitate the management process and suggests those productive techniques that could use to motivate volunteers, so they can improve and even expand the volunteering work.

2. Literature review

2.1 NGOs

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a non-profit group that functions independently of any government. NGOs, sometimes called civil societies, are organized on community, national and international levels to serve a social or political goal such as humanitarian causes or the environment (Floger, 2021). For this reason, NGOs must have volunteers to achieve their goals and messages. Bartram, et el (2017) demonstrate that the role of HRM (Human Resource Management) within the non-government organization (NGO), volunteer and not-for-profit sector and its potential to positively contribute to volunteer well-being and build healthy communities has become topical among governments, management practitioners, scholars, and communities across different national settings. However, several questions regarding volunteer management remain to be addressed. Previous studies have exclusively focused on traditional volunteers' management, but it fails to introduce a logical way of virtual volunteer management. For example, recent research suggests that the type of NGO moderates the relationship between the satisfaction of the volunteer and the intention to recommend (Lorente-Ayala, et al, 2020). However, this has been previously assessed only to a limited extent because most NGOs these days transform it works online, so it is time to find a solution for this problem of managing online effectively and efficiently.

2.2 E-management

E-Management refers to electronic management. It was coined by Francis Ohanyido as part of the new evolving concepts around e-Governance. It is about the process of getting people together to accomplish desired goals. E-Management comprises planning, organizing, staffing, leading, or directing, and controlling an organization (a group of one or more people or entities) or effort for the purpose of accomplishing a goal through the deployment of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and manipulation of human resources, financial resources, and natural resource (Stokes, 2013). The literature review shows that e-management was used to manage profitable businesses, and approximately no one talked about e-management in NGOs and with volunteers. Moreover, Khader (2022) demonstrates that the repercussions of the Corona regulation and the like crises imposed on online business management for varied reasons:

1. Expecting the pandemic to continue in waves that require the imposition of quarantine and closing borders and controls on specific age groups.
2. The difficulty of movement and travel and the possibility of adopting the biometric health passport.
3. The stifling financial crisis.
4. Achieving decentralization of work.
5. Expanding and developing the World Wide Web.
6. Geographical distribution of business.

The unexpected findings of literature indicate that is a need for additional studies to understand more about online volunteer management. Some studies found that there are some tips to manage volunteers from home like: how to grow your team, how to allow for flexible hours, how to leverage your data, and how to show your appreciation. In addition, today, we have many tools and techniques that can serve these goals like websites, social media, and modern technologies. Gu & Ye (2013) show that online management responses introduce a new dynamic among customers and increase future satisfaction of the complaining customers. In terms of e-management the managers must find ways to develop the team technically and decrease the lack of user-friendly distance learning platforms. International labor office book (2021) demonstrates that the plus side of COVID-19 that the outbreak of this pandemic has accelerated the uptake of distance learning approaches in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Garfin (2020) says that online platforms are, by design, addictive, they encourage endless scrolling and do not have a clear "stop point", which is why it is so common for people to spend many hours online or engaged with social media. Therefore, the challenge of managers is how to invest these hours in the sake of volunteering work and doing something special to the world.

2.3 Leadership theories

No one can deny that being a leader is more effective than being just a manager who follows the rules of the organization regardless of people motivation. As a leader of a non-profit organization, you have a huge responsibility to plant the motivation to work in the hearts of your volunteers. The leader must have a special characteristic to lead effectively. Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal (Ward, 2020). A recent study by Lee (2021) concluded that leadership and communications are interdependent and cannot be separated, and a project manager cannot lead effectively without a good understanding of leadership theory and models. Therefore, an effective leader is a person who does the following:

1. Creates an inspiring vision of the future.
2. Motivates and inspires people to engage with that vision.
3. Manages delivery of the vision.
4. Coaches and builds a team, so that it is more effective at achieving vision.

There are key questions and notions that are still not discussed in the literature like how to apply e-leadership on volunteer's management and whether to choose democratic, autocratic, or laissez-fair style. For instance, some managers adopt a transactional style by letting subordinates or volunteers know what is expected from them while other managers practice a transformational style by mentoring and developing subordinates and motivate them to achieve organizational rather than merely personal goals. Leadership styles can also be bureaucratic, nurturing, task-oriented, authoritarian, and participative (Salo, 2009). A critical open question is whether to practice this type of leadership or the other type in online management. Leadership has distinctive styles and shapes, so the smart leader can behave with the suitable style according to every situation. According to Amanchukwu (2015) there are 5 factors that can determine leadership style:

1- Size of an institution/ organization.
2- Degree of interaction/ communication.
3- Personality of members.
4- Goal congruency.
5- Level of decision making:
    a. Level one: leader makes the decision alone & announces the decision.
    b. Level two: leader gathers input from individuals and makes the decision.
    c. Level three: leader gathers input from team and makes the decision.
    d. Level four: consensus building.

However, one of the tough challenges for all researchers in this domain is finding a proper solution for addressing leadership style in the online volunteer's management particularly in non-profit organizations or even in volunteering teams.

Based on the above literature review the hypothesis below has been developed:

H1: The democratic leadership style is an effective tool to manage volunteers online in NGOs.

H2: Communication and engagement with volunteers are the best way in the online management in NGOs.

H3: Social media is a productive technique to manage volunteers online in NGOs.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research technique

This paper is a type of a descriptive research where it describes the situation of NGOs who work online and deal with volunteers, and how the managers should interact to manage their NGOs online effectively and efficiently by using best tools and techniques. The research focuses on how to invest in the digital world, particularly those who manage volunteer teams, and it analyzes the relationships between variables like the history of NGO and its impact on society. In addition, it measures how social media and skills enhancement can lead to quantum leap in volunteer work management.

3.2 Research design

Cross-sectional data was collected as research design which it studies data from different top NGOs managers at a single point in time. The paper analyzes variables like location of organization, number of volunteers in the organization, date of foundation, skill types and leadership styles and the correlation of online management with volunteers in NGOs.

3.3 Research method and data collection

This research was carried out according to the qualitative method by conducting 5 online interviews with top managers who manage volunteers online and every meeting lasts for one hour. This kind of method enables us to gather in-depth insights into the situation and it gives management solutions and patterns that can other managers learn from. The questions are structured the managers of NGOs were in Turkey, Spain, Qatar, Lebanon.

3.4 Sampling

The simple random sampling probability was used in this research, which each member of managers has an exactly equal chance of being selected, the sample size was 5 managers of NGOs in four different countries.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all the phases of a qualitative project, and this process transforms raw data into new knowledge to generate findings (Throne, 2000). The data was collected through online interviews and analyzed into tables and charts by using content analyses technique.

4. Findings and results

There were 5 online meetings conducted with 5 managers of the best non-profit organizations.

4.1. The first and second questions (Table 4.1) were about demographic information and demographic information, which was about the date of the NGO foundation and the location, volunteers' number, and summary about the NGO field.

Table 4.1 NGOs studied

NGO	summary	Date of foundation	Location	Volunteers number
Women international coalition for Al-Quds and Palestine (1)	A group of women which empower the woman to be a leader for the sake of Palestine it existed in more than 50 countries	2014	Turkey	20
Tamkeen initiative (2)	Women initiative that supports and empower creative women in all sectors in all countries and especially in Palestine by training and development.	2018	Spain	14
Aghareed association (3)	An independent association that aims to qualify women and children by psychological and social support programs	2017	Lebanon	20
Basmah initiative (4)	Youth initiative that qualifies women leadership skills and Palestinian knowledge to serve Palestine by their skills	2011	Qatar	15
Scout federal (5)	Youth initiative that educates youth in an informal way according to Paden Powel	2002	Lebanon	2200

Source: personal collection

Most of the organizations are about women empowerment, the oldest was founded in 2011 and the last one founded in 2017, they are in Turkey, Spain, Qatar, and two of them in Lebanon. In addition, most of them have volunteers between 14 and 20, except one of them which has 2200 volunteers.

4.2. The third question was about whether they have ever managed online, and how the response of transformation was to online. The answers differ from one to another and it is illustrated in table 4.2:

Table 4.2 Feedback on managing online

NGO	Did you manage online?	Management response
1	yes	- Work expanded by 50% around the world - Thousands of online meetings and conferences - Online management was easier than before
2	Yes	Originally the initiative is virtual, and the purpose is to activate in the virtual world to serve women and communicate with them
3	Yes	- By social media platforms - Team training
4	Yes	Was applied successfully because of the division of coordinators and participants in the training program
5	yes	Achievement of the team is great because of advanced responsibility training. The management creates an inner motivation and plant paradigm in the hearts of volunteers

Source: personal collection

The table shows that all the organizations have worked online, and the responses of transformation to virtual work were great due to the gradual online empowerment and manage conferences online. In addition, the work was expanded well, and we can see from their feedback that these organizations have a good response and successful experiment in managing online.

4.3. The fourth question addressed the best techniques and tools that every NGO uses to manage online while the fifth question focuses on the social media impact on managing online. The findings are in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Tools and techniques in managing online and social media impact

NGO	Tools	Techniques	Social media impact
1	ZOOM app.	Automatically scheduled meetings Record the call as video Screen sharing	NGOs see the importance of using social media to connect with volunteers to support a cause. Real time feedback allows us to share ideas and opinions
2	Slack (collaborative software). E-mail. Telegram (team group). Trello (project management).	Organizes conversations on different channels to help keep discussions on track	NGO have realized that can use social media to generate insights and stimulate volunteer's activity.

NGO	Tools	Techniques	Social media impact
3	Blogs Podcasts	Online Training	Social media has contributed to the increase in long-distance online learning
4	ZOOM app	Video call Screen sharing	To participate, feeling involved and increased interaction get a sense of fulfillment for volunteers
5	E-mail-ZOOM- Skype- Cisco-WebEx. Communications	Creating connections with small groups	The implementation of social networks has strengthened the exchange of knowledge

Source: personal collection

Table 4.3. Indicates that NGOs use different tools to communicate with volunteers. Two of them use Zoom app, which has many useful properties to manage online. The use of techniques by all five NGOs analyzed are the best in enhancing the communication channels and making small groups meetings to facilitate the way of doing work online. On the other side, social media impacts these organizations positively by investing it to do plenty of activities and social campaigns.

4.4. The sixth and seventh questions on table 4 are about:
- Skills which managers enhance on volunteers to improve the work and increase the productivity,
- The best leadership style to manage volunteers online in the organization

Table 4.4 Type of skills and leadership style to manage online

NGO	Type of skills	Leadership style
1	- Effective Communication and Interaction through social media or phone calls - Teaching new skills to their employees (technical training) - Creativity and innovation in online conferences	**Democratic leadership**
2	- Communication skills (hearing the viewpoints of others) - Involving team members in the day-to-day decision-making processes - Emotional intelligence (emphatic and social engagement with volunteers)	**Servant leadership**
3	Communication skills - looking for fresh and innovative ideas - input and suggestions from volunteers	**Participative leadership**
4	Motivation – including a person's confidence about a goal or task	**Situational leadership**

NGO	Type of skills	Leadership style
5	De Bono's 'Six Hats' used for decision making from different perspectives Benefits: - improved creativity - critical thinking - interpersonal skills	**Democratic leadership**

Source: personal collection

It is critical that the leader who is interacting with volunteers be "on the same page" when it comes to volunteer engagement standards. For this, whether you are the leader of an NGO, a department, or a team, having the skills to motivate, inspire and move people to action is essential. Table 4.4 offers us an interesting result. Even though the NGOs use diverse types of leadership style we can observe that the leaders use similar skills such as: effective communication, empathy, involvement of the volunteers in decision making. All NGOs understood that to keep volunteering, leaders must motivate and engage volunteers to make them feel valued.

5. Discussions

From the brief review above, there is a positive relationship between social media impact, communication channels enhancement, and democratic leadership style on online environment. It showed that being a leader of technological apps will make your organization alive and from the tools used, ZOOM app wins to be the best for online management. The results also provide evidence that a flexible leader can manage volunteers effectively which gets tasks done according to volunteer's time. In this condition democratic leadership style gives very good results from volunteers. The other important findings confirmed that skills development of volunteers helps to have a professional team to manage, and there is a strong connection between educated teams and easier management. Moreover, skills development will motivate volunteers when they find that skill useful to their personnel life. Another promising finding was that digital skills are the skills that leaders must train their volunteers on, to save the work. Lastly, the findings approved that social media had impact on the management. According with Global Social Media Statistics, the analysis shows that there are 4.55 billion social media users around the world in October 2021, equating to 57.6 percent of the total global population so, we can say that the manager invests in these platforms to manage their teams successfully.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study show that as a leader you must be creative and innovative in online management, and always come up with innovative ideas to motivate the volunteers. Broadly translated our findings indicate that the democratic leadership is the best style of management which it includes the team to take a more participative role in the decision-making process, additionally, this kind of style leads to higher productivity and better contribution from group members, and increased group morale. Also, results suggest that effective communication with volunteers and strong engagement programs benefit the organization and make it powerful. On the top of that, findings provide the evidence about that social media is a great fortune that managers must focus on to use it during the management process with volunteers by making peer network or online team community and share tasks together to increase the motivation. Furthermore, skills development of the team helps the managers in enhancing the online management process by focusing on new TVET training programs to keep up with the times and be a modern management which it like an interesting journey to both manager and his/her team.

Limitation and future research

Future research on online volunteers' management might extend the explanations of technical skills and the specified courses that managers and volunteers must learn, to be practical in the field of work. Moreover, most of the sample that was used in this paper are women organizations, so future studies could fruitfully explore this issue further by including more organizations whom managers from males and females, the results will be more precious. Lastly, future researchers can include more NGOs from more countries in the sample to more generalize the results.

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