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# Nonfinancial resource management: A qualitative study of retention and engagement in not-for-profit community fund management organisation

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## ABSTRACT

This study identifies the factors affecting volunteer retention and engagement. A dearth of research has focused on volunteering for not-for-profit organisations. These organisations are involved particularly in raising funds through public benevolence. There have been rising trends of not-for-profit organisations around the world while the number of volunteers decreases. Information on the factors influencing volunteer retention and engagement is expected to support the management of not-for-profit community services. Therefore, this study uses a case study of a not-for-profit organisation to identify the factors contributing to volunteer retention and engagement. The interview data is analysed using thematic data analysis. Benightedness, communication, management support, volunteer skills and volunteer participation in management decision making are associated with volunteer retention and engagement. These findings are expected to enhance the operation process of not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisations. Future research is suggested to enhance the management of volunteers in other types of not-for-profit organisations.

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## 1. Introduction

Not-for-profit organisations are organised institutions that offer tangible and intangible products to their target beneficiaries without the motive of earning profit. The not-for-profit organisations are institutionally distinct from the government, they are non-profit-distributing to owners or directors, they prescribe governance structure for the management, and open to voluntary participation from either the general public or specified target population (Morris, 2000; Salamon, 1987; Salamon & Anheier, 1992; Soysa et al., 2018). These organisations provide various services to the beneficiaries, work for different social and non-social causes such as animal welfare, or care for the homeless and senior citizens (Townsend et al., 2017; Weerawardena et al., 2010).

Like any other business organisation, the not-for-profit organisations require staff to develop strategies and control and monitor their operations (Schneider, 2003). However, these staff are usually

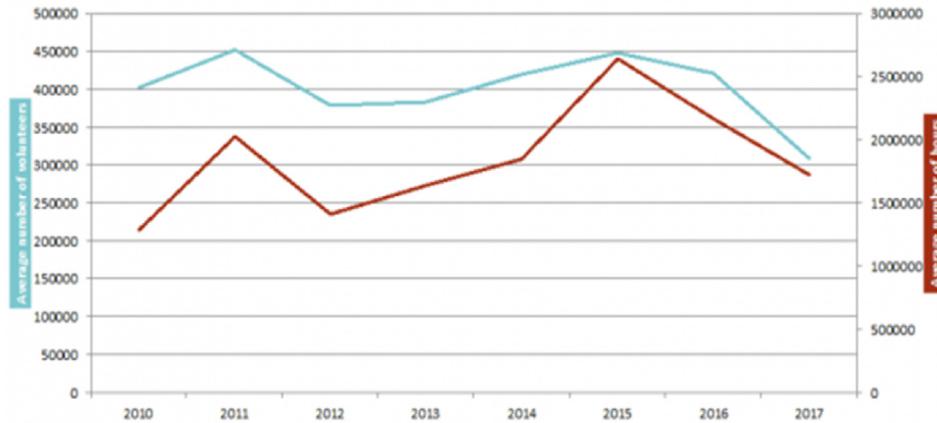
in small in numbers compared to profit organisations (Levine & D'Agostino, 2010; Schneider, 2003). Most people working with not-for-profit organisations are unpaid volunteers without financial incentives (Morris, 2000).

Volunteers act as a backbone of not-for-profit organisations and many such organisations depend on volunteers for sustainability (Alfes et al., 2016; Hager & Brudney, 2011; Netting et al., 2005). For example, the New Zealand Statistics 2016 shows 90% of not-for-profit depend on their volunteers (Statistics New Zealand, 2016b). (Volunteering New Zealand, 2016, p. 6) stated that 81% of not-for-profit organisations considered volunteers as critical in achieving the not-for-profit organisation's objectives. However, as shown in Fig. 1, the declining number of volunteers and weak engagement create some concerns about not-for-profit sustainability (New Zealand Charities Services, 2019).

In the case of New Zealand, there has been a decline in the number of volunteer hours by 33% based on the Statistics New Zealand, 2016 survey (Statistics New Zealand, 2016b). This survey shows 14.1% of volunteers complete approximately 50% of total volunteer hours due to various reasons aligned with significant disengagement with the not-for-profit. However, for a not-for-profit to achieve its social objectives, it must attract, engage, and

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**Fig. 1.** Average number of volunteers and volunteers' hours per week 2010–2017  
 Source: New Zealand charities services (2019).

retain resourceful volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2011). Therefore, volunteers play an important role in achieving not-for-profit organisations' missions and directly or indirectly contribute to a nation's economy. For example, by the end of 2013, volunteers in New Zealand contributed \$3.5 billion to the country's gross domestic product (see Table 1) (Statistics New Zealand, 2016a).

The loss of volunteers for not-for-profit organisations when social services are required often leads to significant financial deficits and social losses (Craig-Lees et al., 2008). The loci of managerial control of volunteers increase the chances of losses of volunteers. This is consistent with the Garner and Garner (2011) study on the volatility of volunteer retention. Some of the factors contributing to changes in volunteer retention and engagement include family and work commitments, education and other activities (see Table 2).

However, other factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement have not been adequately investigated from the volunteers and not-for-profit organisations relationship. From Statistics New Zealand (2016c), the factors associated with turnover and disengagement are shown in Table 2. However, these factors are understood from the volunteers' perspective, but the primary factors associated with volunteer turnover from volunteer management perspectives are not understood.

Retention and engagement of volunteers could vary across the socio-economic environment and the type of not-for-profit entity. There have been previous studies on volunteer engagement and retention in different types of not-for-profit and from different countries such as those of Baglioni et al. (2017) and Crotty and Ljubownikow (2020). However, the case of the not-for-profit that aims at raising funds to support other not-for-profit or community service organisations is likely to face similar or greater challenges in volunteer retention and engagement. This is based on the sensitivity of volunteers discussing monetary donations with donors

**Table 1**  
 Not-for-profit institutions economic contribution.

Description	2004		2013	
	\$(Billion)	Percent	\$(Billion)	Percent
Contribution to GDP	3.6	2.5	6	2.7
Volunteer labour contribution to GDP	3.3	2.4	3.5	1.7
Total Contribution to GDP	7	4.9	9.4	4.4

GDP represents New Zealand income earned from production in New Zealand Dollars.

bTotals do not sum due to rounding.

Adapted from Statistics New Zealand (2016a).

**Table 2**  
 Barriers in volunteering for an organisation.

Reasons for don't have time	Proportions (Percent)			Relative sample error (percent of estimate)		
	Male	Percent	Total	Male	female	Total
Family commitments	49.6	59.5	54.7	7.1	5.1	4.4
Work commitments	78.2	64.4	71.2	3.5	4.8	3.1
Study/school commitment	10.4	13.9	12.1	22.2	20.5	14.6
Busy with other activities	17.7	15.3	16.5	15.6	15.4	12.0

Adapted from Statistics New Zealand (2016c)

(Calabrese, 2011) as opposed to volunteers' engagement in providing time and expert resources.

Baglioni et al. (2017) and Crotty and Ljubownikow (2020) did not examine the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement from the perspective of the volunteers' experiences. The expected increase in demand for socio-economic services following the coronavirus pandemic indicate that the retention and engagement of volunteers have become increasingly important (Bai, 2020). Therefore, this study investigates the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisations.

## 2. Background of the study

A not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisation is a type of charitable trust which operates using donors' funds by investing in a perpetuity endowment portfolio. The interest received from this investment is used by the organisation to support other not-for-profit organisations that directly provide non-profitable services to the beneficiaries. Guo and Lai (2019) states that these foundations receive donations from the donors residing

in a particular geographical area and use them for the people living within the same area through donations to other not-for-profit organisations, known as place-based philanthropy.

Not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisations are managed by a group of community members and the donors are individuals, government and private organisations (Jung & Harrow, 2015). Donations from donors consist of cash, stocks, tangible assets, or investment portfolios.

The first not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisation was set up in Ohio, United States in 1914. After the success of the first foundation, 1800 other not-for-profit organisations have adopted this type of fund management for not-for-profit service (Guo & Lai, 2019). These types of not-for-profit are established across all continents of the world including New Zealand at a country level. Approximately 16 not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations are in New Zealand. This study aims to understand the cause of low volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management in New Zealand.

The mission of a not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation is to become financially sustainable independent of statutory funding from the government. To achieve this objective, the foundation raises funds by attracting donors. However, in the past few years, most not-for-profit organisations have faced challenges in raising funds in the face of budget deficits prior to the recent pandemic, while an increase in demand for not-for-profit services is expected following the job losses from a global pandemic. The need for volunteer engagement and retention has become more important than in recent years. Breitsohl and Ehrig (2017) states that a lack of engagement can lead to a shortage of volunteers and increase the workload of the paid staff, thereby decreasing the management's efficiency.

Volunteers in not-for-profit organisations handle various responsibilities such as administrative work, teaching, accounting, and managing projects or events (Saitgalina, 2018; Zievinger & Swint, 2018). However, the absence of financial incentives reduces the number of volunteers within a short period following volunteer discontentment. Thus, financial incentives such as reimbursement of travel expenses incurred to carry out the volunteering responsibilities could improve the volunteers' engagement and retention. This indicates that effective management of volunteer retention and engagement is critical for sustainability in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations. Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations in New Zealand. The research questions investigated in this study include:

What are the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations?

Findings from this study are expected to support managers' decisions in addressing volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit organisations, particularly Community Fund Management. The perspectives of volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations are expected to emerge from this in addition to the existing not-for-profit literature.

### 3. Literature review

The literature reviewed for this study includes empirical literature and archival sources (government report, Non-Governmental Organisations and other not-for-profit organisations reports). Volunteering is an activity done voluntarily to provide benefits or services to communities. It includes acts of kindness such as taking care of sick people or helping underprivileged people who are

deprived of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education, health and adequate sanitisation facilities. It also includes participating actively in environmental issues such as global warming and climate change (Warburton et al., 2017). These activities are selfless and are not motivated by monetary reward (Larkin & DiTommaso, 2010; Weerawardena et al., 2010).

However, it is legitimate to recognise volunteers' contributions by providing a stipend, honours, or create a working environment where the volunteers could experience "self-respect, social recognition, sense of accomplishment and belonging and excitement" in exchange for their time, skills, or creativity as they derive their satisfactions in the volunteering roles (Cho et al., 2020; Garner & Garner, 2011; Mitchell & Clark, 2020, p. 73; Weerawardena et al., 2010).

Gilbert et al. (2017) states that volunteering is intentionally based on an individual's desire to provide service free of financial cost to the beneficiary. Different levels of engagement are common in volunteering, from extreme engagement to passive engagement (Garner & Garner, 2011). Volunteer engagement is very important to not-for-profit from an economic perspective. An engaged volunteer enhances not-for-profit organisations' resources, while unengaged or passively engaged volunteers are a cost to the organisation (Topaloglu et al., 2018). This cost includes the cost of maintaining volunteer records and communication. Therefore, effective volunteer engagement management reduces not-for-profit organisations' cost.

#### 3.1. Volunteer engagement and retention

Engagement involves the engagement of volunteers in organisations' objectives by actively performing the tasks to achieve the objectives (Ferreira & de Oliveira, 2014; Hoon Song et al., 2012; Tian & Robertson, 2019). Engaged volunteers are more likely to stay committed to an employer longer than disengaged volunteers (Hoon Song et al., 2012; Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) study indicated that engagement in employment is a motivational concept. However, the same study noted that the level of volunteers engagement is different based on various factors such as their perception of benefits that are in the form of reward, salary, compensation, recognition, the meaningfulness of the work, security in the job, or resources available to them.

Previous studies showed that volunteer engagement is different from volunteers being rewarded financially (Alfes et al., 2017; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Therefore, volunteer engagement is defined as the extent of an individual's involvement in volunteering activities without contractual financial expectations or being motivated financially to provide time, expertise and other resources. It is characterised by the zealotness of constantly putting effort into work, the dedication of carrying out tasks with pride and being absorbed or engrossed in the work (Harp et al., 2017).

Huynh et al. (2012) noted that an engaged volunteer is likely to be more satisfied with the not-for-profit entity. Malinen and Harju (2017) and Vecina et al. (2012) identified a positive relationship between engagement and volunteer motivation to continue volunteering roles. Therefore, for most organisations, the workforce is the core asset. Volunteer engagement is different from just being physically participative. It involves a higher degree of psychological involvement in the overall activities of the not-for-profit (Alfes et al., 2016; Garner & Garner, 2011).

Huynh et al. (2012) note engagement of volunteers is a result of volunteer satisfaction which increases the duration of volunteering and consequently reduces the volunteer's intention to leave the organisation. Hustinx (2010) states that when management efficiently engages volunteers by matching their abilities with the task, it boosts their confidence and increases satisfaction. This

confidence helps the organisation retain volunteers.

Volunteer retention is about sustaining volunteers for longer periods by minimising the dropout from their responsibility (Garner & Garner, 2011). If not-for-profit organisations recruit sufficient volunteers to work on various social causes, the volunteers could become active or inactive following recruitment, influenced by the volunteers' other commitments, lack of interest, or management policies. Therefore, low retention is a concern for the management (Garner & Garner, 2011; Topaloglu et al., 2018), particularly in volunteer dependent not-for-profit organisations.

Curran et al. (2016) describes the retention of volunteers as an indicator of volunteers' satisfaction with the volunteering role. This indicates that when a large number of volunteers are satisfied, the volunteers tend to continue their services, resulting in the formation of a large pool of volunteers for the not-for-profit organisation. However, various factors influence volunteers' decisions to engage with a not-for-profit and retain a voluntary role. These are discussed as follows.

### 3.2. Factors contributing to volunteer engagement and retention

Volunteering involves more selflessness and mental programming of community collectivism than individualism, particularly in a feminise society (Edeigba, 2017; Hofstede, 1980). This is described as altruism in extant literature. Altruism encourages volunteers to remain committed for longer periods (Handy et al., 2006; Warburton et al., 2017). For example, Chaddha and Rai (2016) studies find that volunteers who have altruistic motives tend to show enthusiasm in their role and stay committed for a longer duration. This is because altruism is associated with the feeling of happiness from helping others which encourages an individual to continue as a volunteer.

While altruism influences volunteers, some volunteers could be influenced by egoism. Egoistic factors influence volunteers' intention to gain professional skills and increase their chances of paid employment or receive nonfinancial appreciation, self-actualisation or acts of connectedness with people who have similar interests (Butt et al., 2017; Ilyas et al., 2020). These factors influence volunteers in different ways, such as extreme engagement, passive or disengagement and the level of contribution to the not-for-profit organisation.

The networking effect is another factor that influences volunteer duration in not-for-profit. Networking effect is different from the egoistic factor. Networking effects could result in altruism or egoism. Therefore, it is not classified as altruism or egoism for the purpose of this study. Some volunteers accept volunteering roles based on their acquaintances association with the not-for-profit organisations. For example, Merino (2013) study revealed that volunteers who had a family background in volunteering actively became volunteers. These types of volunteers are more likely to be dedicated to the objectives of the not-for-profit organisation due to the perceived expectations from the chain of networks or ties.

The age of the volunteers determines the volunteers' availability to continue volunteering roles and engagement with the not-for-profit organisation. Lough and Tiessen (2018) study of the United States and the United Kingdom revealed that most of the satisfied volunteers who planned to continue their voluntary roles were older citizens who had retired or were near retirement. The study found that adults above 60 years, known as baby boomers, are more involved in volunteering than younger volunteers (Compion et al., 2021; Warburton et al., 2017). This is because the older adults perceive volunteer service as an opportunity to utilise their expertise, skills and experience in giving back to the community.

Educational background influences the extent of volunteer engagement and retention in not-for-profit. The level of education

contributes to volunteers' commitment to volunteering. Henriksen et al. (2019) study of volunteers in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden showed that education helps in building the skills required for volunteering and therefore individuals with higher education are more likely to a volunteering role and contribute to the beneficiary. Several reasons may be associated with the influence of education, such as the technical skills of the volunteers and their availability.

Effective communication between management and volunteers influences volunteers' duration in not-for-profit organisations. This influence is discussed in Alfes et al. (2017) which find that when volunteers feel connected to the organisation, they choose to stay with it for a longer time. Therefore, the duration of a volunteer in a not-for-profit organisation is extended by effective internal communication. As volunteers do not expect any monetary benefits from the organisation, internal communication is significant in increasing their engagement.

Volunteers' commitment to not-for-profit organisations determines the duration and level of engagement expected in the not-for-profit organisation and volunteer relationship. Commitment is the dedication of an individual to a cause or an activity by showing a sense of obligation to the cause (Walk et al., 2019).

Stephens et al. (2004) states that a volunteer develops commitment following their inclusiveness in the not-for-profit project, programme, or an activity. The volunteer commitment includes commitment towards the organisation's mission to serve and commitment to the beneficiary. Meyer et al. (2002) stated that an individual, whether a paid staff member or a volunteer possesses three different types of commitment which are (i) affective commitment, (ii) normative commitment, and (iii) continuance commitment.

Affective commitment in not-for-profit organisations refers to the emotional affinity of an individual or an individual connection and involvement with a task, project, or other institutional activities in organisations (Ohana & Meyer, 2016). If an individual has strong affective commitment it results in high levels of commitment. Normative commitment relates to an individual's sense of obligation towards an organisation, resulting in loyalty. Strong normative commitment is associated with the feeling that a person has an obligation to stay with a not-for-profit organisation (Meyer et al., 2002; Ohana & Meyer, 2016).

Lastly, continuance commitment is characterised by two external factors. These are losses suffered after leaving an organisation, and the availability of alternative opportunities (Meyer et al., 2002). High continuance commitment does simultaneously indicate a positive commitment because a volunteer is committed to avoiding the impact of external factors and likely to leave when an alternative opportunity is available.

Most extant studies examined not-for-profit organisations whose primary activities include the provision of service to those who need them rather than not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations. However, the characteristics of the not-for-profit sector are similar, but the operational approach and the role of volunteers vary according to the required tasks, type of not-for-profit, skills and experience. Therefore, the factors discussed in this study are general factors that enhance or inhibit volunteers in not-for-profit sectors.

The heterogeneity of factors influencing volunteers in a not-for-profit Community Fund Management can enhance our understanding of the factors associated with managing volunteers in not-for-profit organisations from the perspective of volunteer engagement and retention in a Community Fund Management. The volunteers of not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisations are involved primarily in the activity of raising funds from the donors compared to the volunteers in other types of not-for-profit organisations such as Red Cross, Hospice, Salvation Army

and Ambulance Services that provide direct services to the end beneficiary through direct donations or reliance on government.

#### 4. Research methodology

This study uses a case study design to collect and analyse data from an interview. We describe the rationale and processes involved in the data collection, sampling and data analysis.

A case study is a type of qualitative research method that aims at an in-depth analysis of qualitative data (Hoque, 2018). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) described qualitative research as the use of natural settings to study and interpret phenomena. We adopted a qualitative research design to provide an in-depth contextual understanding of volunteering in the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation. This qualitative case method provides an insight into current events in the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations in New Zealand.

The qualitative research design adopted for this study provides an opportunity for this not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation to gain an in-depth understanding of the ontological experience in contrast to the quantitative study that examines a set of hypotheses. Previous studies on volunteers' engagement and retention have adopted qualitative research design for data collection and analysis to identified different factors associated with volunteers' engagement and retention (Ilyas et al., 2020; Kappelides et al., 2019; Warburton et al., 2017). For example, Ilyas et al. (2020) adopted a qualitative research design to examine volunteers' motives to accept volunteering positions and engage with not-for-profit organisations. The choice of this method is consistent with the recommended approach of Hoque (2018) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011) in understanding the human relationship with organisations.

The objective of this study is to examine the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit organisations. Therefore, we interviewed volunteers of a not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation. The volunteers shared their experiences, perceptions and reasoning about their volunteering roles. These provide insights into the volunteers' experiences and manifest the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation.

The interview consists of open-ended questions such as "what challenges do you come across in your volunteering?". These questions explore the participant's experience based on past and present experiences in volunteering for the Community Fund Management organisation whose primary activity is endowment generated funds to support other types of not-for-profit organisations. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined a case study as an analysis of a specific segment during a length of time. It provides the investigation with a holistic view of real-life events.

The characteristic of a case study research is that the study focuses on a single subject and is bound to time, place, activity and context of the subject Denzin and Lincoln (2011). This study is bound to a specific not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation in New Zealand with a focus on managing volunteer resources from the perspective of retention and engagement. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation of the perceptions and experiences of the participants involved in this study of a Community Fund Management organisation provides an opportunity for serendipitous findings that could support management decisions.

Zikmund et al. (2013) states that a case study approach is used to investigate the current challenges or opportunities faced by the management of organisations. The benefit of adopting a case study method in this study of a not-for-profit Community Fund

Management organisation is that it enables the participants to describe their perspectives towards the real situation by sharing experiences and contextual information during the data collection.

We adopted a case study to explore, describe, or explain the phenomena of retaining and engaging volunteers in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations. Yin (2018) suggested the use of this research approach when a researcher attempts to answer questions based on presumed causal relationships and explores the case when there is no possible single outcome in a contextual setting.

##### 4.1. Data collection and analysis

This study uses an interview consisting of a series of open-ended questions included in the interview guide. The interview guide questions were developed based on the literature to elicit the participants' experience (Yin, 2018). The purpose was to develop an understanding of why the participants became volunteers, their perspective towards volunteering, and the extent of their involvement with the organisation's activities and their intention to continue in volunteering roles. The participants were required to respond to the interview questions in person. These include current and past volunteers.

The participants were recruited using a convenience sampling technique. Saunders (2012) recommends convenience sampling when a researcher has access to the existing contacts in the organisation and requires an in-depth analysis of events, case, or contextual exploratory study. Therefore, we adopted the convenience of approaching the participants through a collaborative approach from the management of a not-for-profit organisation.

We follow the sampling method of Patton (2014) and Saunders (2012) to determine the sample size. Patton (2014) states that when performing a case study, the sample size depends on the research objectives and questions. However, understanding and insights obtained from the data are more important than the sample size. The important criteria in determining sample size are the sufficiency of interviews to gather the required information for analysis.

The not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation<sup>1</sup> selected for this study has 22 volunteers of which nine volunteers participated. These volunteers agreed to participate by reading the research information sheet and signing the consent form based on the Human Ethics Committee approved terms and conditions. The volunteers that participated in our interview provided sufficient information required to achieve the objective of this study. This was encouraging given that nine volunteers participated which is greater than most earlier studies noted in Dai et al. (2019). The number of participants in our research is greater than the minimum number of participants specified by Yin (2018) and (Patton, 2014); Saunders (2012). For example, Saunders (2012) states that 5–25 participants are recommended sample size for interview data.

The director of the Community Fund Management organisation helped in sending an invitation email to the present and past volunteers of the organisation. The research information sheets and consent form were attached to the invitation email with the instruction that the participant should reply directly to the researchers. We were copied in the director's email that was sent to the research participants. The participants interested in the

<sup>1</sup> The selected organisation specialises in fundraising for other not-for-profit organisations constrained with operational finances. It collects donations from philanthropists and manages its revenue as an endowment fund. Volunteers are recruited to participate in the management of the organisation and support fundraising activities. The organisation is registered under the New Zealand Charities Services.

research signed the consent form and emailed it to the prescribed email address indicated in the research information sheet before the interview was conducted.

The data were analysed using NVivo software. We thematically analysed the nodes from NVivo and interpreted the responses several times based on previous studies before reaching a conclusion on the findings. Notes were taken during the analysis and each interview transcript was moved across each theme to identify patterns. Taking notes was tedious especially due to the length of the interview and the number of participants. However, the adoption of NVivo made the analysis less fatiguing through the creation of notes and memos during the analysis. The notes and memos were useful in the interpretation and discussion of the findings. The objective of the rigorous analysis was to understand the meaning and symbolic contents of the responses from the participants.

Yin (2018) presented five techniques of qualitative data analysis in a case study design. These included thematic analysis, time-series analysis, logic models, linking data to propositions and explanation building. For the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation case study, thematic analysis was adopted to interpret the data based on Yin (2018) recommendations. This data analysis technique provides an opportunity for this study to identify patterns or themes relating to factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement.

We developed codes based on the themes and interpreted the themes from the information contents supported by relevant literature. The themes were first classified using codes and then reclassified based on positive and negative experiences in the volunteering roles. We further classified the themes in a recurrence order by assigning labels within and across the participants' responses.

The factors discussed in the literature review served as a guide to identifying patterns from the participants' responses. Intuitive attention was given to the participant's responses and opinions towards an object or event rather than drawing conclusions not supported by the data. Therefore, the answers which do not fit with preexisting theories are discussed as new findings. This approach is consistent with Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis. The findings from all participants are aggregated and discussed.

## 5. Findings

The objective of this study is to explore the factors that impact volunteer engagement and retention. The themes and codes obtained from the thematic analysis are presented in the diagrammatic framework from which the findings of this study are discussed (see Fig. 2). We identified knowledge of the organisation's mission and vision as a factor influencing the volunteer engagement and increases or decreases the level of retention.

When volunteers have prior adequate knowledge of the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation missions, vision and strategic objectives they are more likely to engage with the Community Fund Management organisation fundraising activities and other volunteering tasks. Presti (2013) states when volunteers possess a clear understanding of the organisation's mission and its operation process, they develop a high level of commitment to continue volunteering for a longer duration.

Maran and Soro (2010) suggested that volunteers are satisfied with their job when they have in-depth knowledge about the organisation's mission and vision. However, the data gathered for this not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation showed that most of the volunteers lack an understanding of the Community Fund Management organisation's strategic mission which

primarily focuses on fundraising and investing the fund as perpetuity endowment to support other not-for-profit organisations, before joining the not-for-profit organisation.

Seven out of the nine volunteers stated that they were approached by the management to become volunteers. However, the volunteers were motivated to serve their community, particularly involvement in providing community services. Therefore, the invitation from the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation to the volunteers is consistent with the volunteers' intention to accept volunteering roles. However, the Community Fund Management organisation as a type of not-for-profit is not consistent with the volunteers' expected community services to contribute time and expertise resources. These volunteers accepted the invitation without a clear understanding of the principles and functions of the Community Fund Management type of not-for-profit. Less than half (four participants) of the nine respondents have a clear understanding of the Community Fund Management mission, vision and strategic objectives (see Table 3).

A participant responded that the concept of the foundation was not fully understood when accepting a volunteering role. While describing the challenge in a volunteering job, a participant who joined 18 months prior to this study wrote, "There is always a need to learn more about the organisation and community foundations in general. To learn more about how to talk about the benefits of the organisation and to make strong connections".

As these volunteers did not have complete knowledge about the function of the not-for-profit entity, they also showed ambiguity toward their job descriptions. For example, a participant volunteering for two years stated that helping people to understand the concept of not-for-profit Community Fund Management is difficult in a volunteering role. This difficulty is associated with the volunteers' level of awareness about the concept of not-for-profit Community Fund Management. Therefore, it is difficult for volunteers to communicate with prospective donors.

Most of the volunteers are working professionals and have other personal commitments. Therefore, they have limited time to learn about the organisation and develop in-depth knowledge of the organisation mission and strategic objectives. Therefore, inadequate knowledge about the organisation and ambiguity in volunteers' responsibilities reduce the volunteers' morale. This is expected to disengage the volunteers who have inadequate knowledge about the entity and they therefore withdraw or become inactive in the volunteering role.

Communication between the management and volunteers, and among the volunteers was identified as a factor influencing the volunteers' retention and engagement. Most of the participants believed the communication between management and volunteers is ineffective or insufficient and the volunteers rarely communicate with colleagues. The influence of communication is classified as (i) communication among the volunteers, and (ii) communication between management and volunteers.

### 5.1. Communication among volunteers

It is noted that volunteers had a team spirit prior to accepting a volunteering role. This indicates a positive mental attitude to work with other volunteers. However, there was a feeling of individualism and segregation among the volunteers. For example, a participant who has been working with the organisation for 12 years stated, "I have lost the track with newer volunteers. Ambassadors need opportunities to meet new trustees and learn about their contribution, priorities and successes". This is consistent with another participant who stated that "regular communication, collaborative activities are required otherwise volunteers get bored and go dormant".

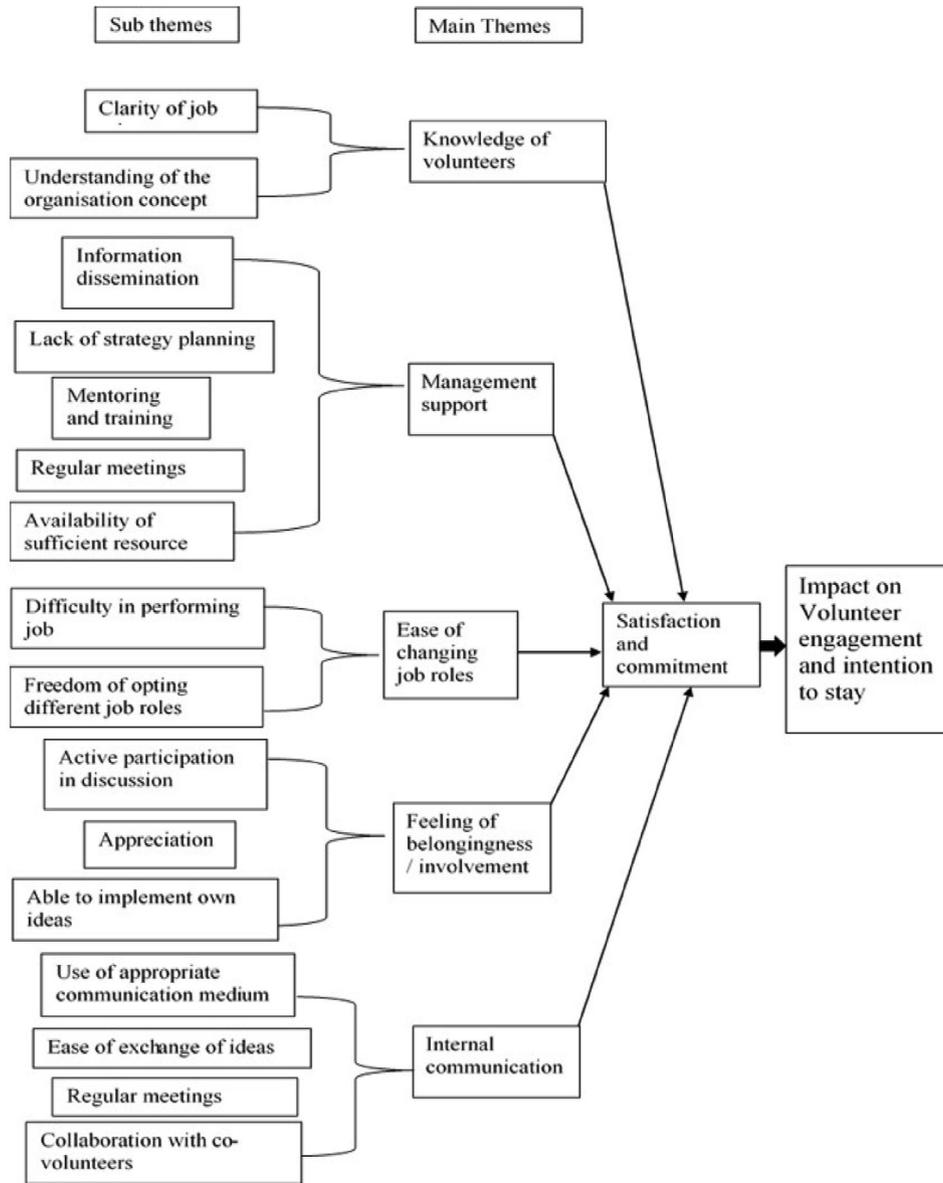


Fig. 2. Sub-themes mapping.

**Table 3**  
Volunteers Knowledge of the not-for-profit Community Fund Management System.

Description	Participants	%
Invited by Management	7	78
Not Invited	2	22
Knowledgeable about Community Fund Management mission and vision	4	44

\*The numbers and percentages in Table 3 indicate the respondents invited by management and knowledgeable about the type of not-for-profit before accepting a volunteering role.

The volunteers' experiential narratives suggest a feeling of boredom and disconnectedness which has affected the volunteers' overall performance and disengagement with the fundraising activities. Nencini et al. (2016) explained that positive relationships and interactions among volunteers could enhance volunteer engagement and increase the duration of tenure in volunteering roles. However, there is no evidence to identify how well the interactions among volunteers increase retention and engagement. Therefore, a Community Fund Management organisation could

encourage the volunteers to meet regularly and observe evidence of social interactions of the volunteers and measure retention and engagement levels.

### 5.2. Communication between the management and the volunteers

When the participants were asked about the support provided by the management three participants mentioned that there is minimum interaction between the management and the

volunteers. This response by the participants about the support provided by the organisation exhibited the existence of inadequate information exchange between the management and volunteers. We note that the communication between management and volunteers was strictly on fundraising activities. Evidence of communication on volunteers' wellbeing or appreciation was not identified, while some of the volunteers may have accepted the volunteering based on egoistic factors. Therefore, there is a porosity for volunteers' turnover and disengagement.

A volunteer who has volunteered for 12 years stated that the management provides periodic information in the form of guidance that focuses on how to approach donors. However, this participant experience is inconsistent with that of a volunteer who has volunteered for six years. The latter stated, "Most of the support is related to the governance matter or being reminded to do something". This indicates the presence of irregular communication between the management and the volunteers. Therefore, this irregular communication is considered inadequate based on the timeliness of the communication.

Alfes et al. (2017) states that regular communication is an important part of personnel management in organisations. However, based on the participants' responses, the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation requires more frequent communication with the volunteers. Irregular communication is expected to influence the volunteers' engagement and increases the level of dormancy which are consequences of disconnectedness and feelings of weak belongingness.

For example, seven volunteers stated that they did not understand the concept thoroughly even after joining the organisation. There was no evidence in their responses that the management attempted to assess if the volunteers have the requisite skills and abilities or understood their roles following recruitment. The data in Table 5 show the number of responses of the participants regarding management's contribution.

Technical fundraising skills and experience are important characteristics of a Community Fund Management organisation. However, we identified that some of the participants were not confident their colleagues have the requisite skills to engage in fundraising activities. For example, a volunteer stated that "We do not have a very good understanding of our volunteering at all". This indicates a disparity between the skills required to perform the required tasks and the volunteers' transferrable skills for not-for-profit Community Fund Management.

The disparity of skills is further complicated by weak supervisory and inadequate provision of operational resources for the volunteers expected to perform the assigned tasks. We find that the volunteers were not satisfied with the supervisory and operational resources required for the volunteering role. For example, four of the nine volunteers expressed dissatisfaction with the supervisory support they received following the acceptance of a volunteering role.

The volunteers perceived improvement opportunities for the management to develop the not-for-profit with respect to volunteer management. A volunteer stated that "the management needs

**Table 5**  
Supervisory and operational support.

Description	Participants	%
Management support was sufficient	2	22
Periodic update of the volunteers' skills	3	33
Mentoring and training obtained	4	44
Allocation of tasks suitable to volunteer's skills and interest	2	22
Supporting volunteers in providing resources	4	44

to have clear directives for all ambassadors, trustees, staff, absolute strategy focus is required". However, two volunteers described the supervisory and operational resources support as sufficient; this is deduced from the participant response that "the management has good resources for the volunteers to refer to. However, these materials need to be distributed widely".

Interpretatively, the recruitment, training and development of the volunteers are inadequate to increase retention and engagement. However, the level of supervision and operational resources required is determined by the volunteers' skills prior to the recruitment Alfes et al. (2017). The disparity of skills could result in underperformance and dissatisfaction in the volunteering role. This is evidenced by a volunteer statement that "not enough time. I think that most of my time is spent on administration, which is important, but eats into my available time to help the foundation secure funds".

We identified egoistic influence in the volunteers decisions to accept a volunteering role. A participant stated that "I wanted to help an organisation that gave back to the local community. My business is also heavily aligned to the rural community and I felt my involvement could benefit that rural community and also use my rural contacts to support the foundation". This indicates that the volunteers receive indirect benefits from the community which influenced the volunteering decision. The volunteers connection to the community and expectations from the community could be interpreted from both egoism and network effects.

The volunteers dependence on the community for economic sustainability influencing their decisions to accept voluntary roles is egoistic influence on retention and engagement (Chaddha & Rai, 2016), while the volunteers' intention to utilise their connection with the community is a network effect (Lough & Tiessen, 2018; Merino, 2013). Egoism influences the level of commitment among the volunteers. However, the influence of economic expectations from the supported community suggests the volunteers have continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Ohana & Meyer, 2016).

We identified weak volunteer involvement in management decision making, such as planning of fundraising activities, changes in governance and timeliness in decision making. Some of the volunteers stated volunteers' efforts are affected by bureaucracy and significant administrative tasks which increase the time it takes to get approval for the volunteers to implement ideas about fundraising. This implies that the volunteers are less motivated when decisions take longer than they expect. However, we

**Table 4**  
Communication in not-for-profit Community Fund Management Organisations.

Description	Participants	%
Existence of Effective Internal Communication between Management and Volunteers	1	11
Existence of Effective Internal Communication among Volunteers	1	11
Effective Exchange of Ideas	1	11
Friendly Conversation	0	0
Use of Appropriate Communication Medium by Management	0	0

\*The numbers and percentages in Table 4 indicate the respondents who agree communication was effective.

identified inconsistency in the volunteers' interests as part of the decision. This is not surprising because egoistic volunteers have less interest in decision making than altruistic volunteers (Ohana & Meyer, 2016).

Lastly, we identified that most volunteers in not-for-profit organisations in New Zealand accept volunteering roles as a result of altruistic and social networking factors. This means the volunteers were optimistic about working along with other volunteers and demonstrated selfless interests in supporting the community. This is not surprising based on the social values and collectivism associated with the New Zealand population (Roccas & Sagiv, 2017). Some of the volunteers described a feeling of altruism and social networking as reasons for continuing in volunteer roles and acceptance of tasks required by the not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation.

## 6. Discussion

We identified different factors that influenced volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations. These factors have negative and positive impacts. Therefore, we summarised these findings in Table 6 as facilitating and impeding factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement.

Most volunteers perceived that accepting a volunteering role is a way of giving back to the community, building a happier society and broadening a social network. For example, five out of nine of the participants mentioned social networking as a factor that influenced their decisions to continue volunteering for approximately 12 years. This indicates continued commitment motivated by social networking and compassionate interests in meeting the societal needs of the community through humanitarian supports. This finding is consistent with Handy et al. (2006) research of altruism as a driver of volunteer engagement and retention. Therefore, management's understanding of altruism will enhance the organisation's resource acquisition and utilisation as described in Topaloglu et al. (2018, p. 237).

Also, networking as a motivating factor for volunteer engagement and retention shows that social networking is important in the case of New Zealand volunteerism. This finding is similar to Bellamy and Leonard (2015, pp. 121–143) studies of Australian volunteers' motivations to accept volunteering positions to acquire social capital through networking. Therefore, management of not-for-profit organisations could develop a regular networking programme, survey the organisation impacts on the society and report the results of the survey to the volunteers as a motivating strategy with transparency and accountability of the organisation success in achieving the organisation objectives (Mitchell & Clark, 2020). This is expected to provide job satisfaction and enhance volunteer retention and engagement to increase the equity of the organisation through fundraising activities (Topaloglu et al., 2018).

Fundraising and investment activities are important primary activities of not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations. However, administrative tasks disengage the volunteers

from the primary activities of the not-for-profit organisation. This implies that managers of not-for-profit could design the volunteer management policies with a succinct description of the purpose, expectation, and performance measurement indicators expected in the volunteer role. The success of not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisation depends on the contributions from donors which is a result of promotional activities completed by the volunteers. Therefore, volunteer resources can be allocated to support the organisation according to the volunteers existing expertise and skills (Topaloglu et al., 2018).

Earlier studies identified volunteers' motivations to engage in the collections of donations and administrative tasks in not-for-profit religious organisations (Hustinx, 2010). This is different from our findings in the case of volunteers in community fund management not-for-profit organisations. The volunteers recruited for fundraising activities in community fund management are less interested in administrative tasks. Our finding is consistent with Bellamy and Leonard (2015, pp. 121–143), Ilyas et al. (2020) and Mitchell and Clark (2020).

For example, Mitchell and Clark (2020) noted that most volunteers have egoistic motives and acquire skill sets that support their specific career development. Therefore, it is likely that the volunteers recruited for fundraising have less interest in administrative tasks and highly motivated by the social networking that fundraising activities provide. However, previous volunteer work experience is an important indicator of whether a volunteer is likely to engage in non-administrative activities and also perform administrative tasks. (Bellamy & Leonard, 2015, pp. 121–143).

It is possible some volunteers possess exceptional skills in administrative responsibilities, while others possess promotional and fundraising skills. The effectiveness and satisfaction of the volunteers depend on the recruitment and job allocation strategy the organisation adopts (Farmer & Fedor, 2001). A retrospective examination of successful volunteers in the Community Fund Management organisation enhances the organisation recruitment, selection and training of new volunteers. Therefore, including the volunteers in management decision making will address some of the issues in volunteer retention and selection (Pittz & Adler, 2016).

Volunteers' inclusiveness in the not-for-profit organisation strategic plan and implementation process is expected to provide the volunteers with recognition and shared responsibility which will increase engagement and retention. Such inclusiveness provides opportunities for stronger volunteer and management relationships (Pittz & Adler, 2016).

To address the factors contributing to volunteers' disengagement and turnover, a management periodic survey of the volunteers could enhance the relationship between not-for-profit management and volunteers. However, the issues associated with volunteer retention and engagement can be effectively managed in the recruitment, selection and training phases. This finding is consistent with Topaloglu et al. (2018) discussion of the theoretical foundation of competition in not-for-profit organisations. However, our findings are more specific to community fund management non-for-profit organisations than the entire non-for-profit

**Table 6**  
Factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement.

Facilitating Factors	Impeding Factors
Altruism – Feeling of happiness in helping others	Perception of not-for-profit Organisation Objectives – Volunteers' knowledge of the not-for-profit organisation operation process and the functions in the society
Social network – Interest in working with peers and humanitarian supports in the community	Egoism – Expectations from the society and availability of alternative opportunity
Type of not-for-profit organisation – Consistency between the volunteers interests and the not-for-profit organisations mission, vision, and strategic objectives	Volunteers' skills and management support –Volunteers' possession of requisite skills, availability of supervisory support and operational resources

organisation sector.

We did not find any influence of previous family volunteering experience on the volunteers' engagement and retention which was reported in Merino (2013). This indicates that recruitment via close ties or family members of a volunteer may not increase volunteers' engagement or retention in community fund management organisations.

Volunteer engagement and retention management in not-for-profit community fund management organisations should include investment in volunteers training, direct supervision from the management or volunteers with relevant expertise to optimise the volunteers' engagement and retention rate (Garner & Garner, 2011). This is important for not-for-profit competitiveness and sustainability as noted in Topaloglu et al. (2018).

While this study examined volunteer retention and engagement in New Zealand Community Fund Management organisations, the findings are likely to influence volunteers recruitment, selection and training strategies for Community Fund Management organisations in New Zealand and countries with a similar not-for-profit sector.

### 6.1. Limitations and future research opportunities

Volunteers' engagement and retention could vary according to socio-economic characteristics such as gender, educational attainment, income, and age. The influences of these characteristics on volunteers' engagement and retention were not examined in our study. Therefore, future research may examine how different types of volunteers are engaged or retained in community fund management organisations.

It is important to note that the impact of social networking as a motivating factor for volunteers' engagement and retention could also vary. However, our findings provide early evidence in the case of New Zealand. The specific dynamics of social networking in volunteers' engagement and retention noted in Compion et al. (2021) is beyond the scope of our study. Thus, future research could examine different types of volunteers and the impacts of social networking on volunteers' engagement and retention.

The data used in this study are collected from a single organisation. Future studies could expand the data collection from multiple community fund management organisations and adopt other research methods such as a survey design to provide a broader perspective of volunteers' engagement and retention.

## 7. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in Not for Profit (not-for-profit) Community Fund Management organisations. Demand for not-for-profit organisations services or products have continued to increase despite the decreases in the number of volunteers. A strategic volunteer management approach is important in addressing the disparity between the needs for non-for-profit organisations and volunteer resources. Importantly, different types of not-for-profit organisations require volunteer resources that are compatible with the not-for-profit organisations mission, vision and strategic objectives. Volunteers have different reasons to accept volunteering roles. These reasons have significant impacts on volunteer retention and engagement. Altruism, egoism, skills, volunteers inclusiveness in management decision making and knowledge of the volunteers about the not-for-profit organisations objectives were some of the factors associated with volunteer retention and engagement in not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations. We recommend management adopt participatory decision making, develop recruitment policies retrospective of

successful volunteers from the organisation and provide supervisory and operational resources for the volunteers to be successful in the volunteering role. For example, management could include a consultation programme in their decision-making to ensure that awareness is created among the volunteers about management policies or objectives and the volunteers' interests are included in the organisation's strategic plan. Also, periodic reviews or evaluations of volunteers' performance and interests are important in increasing volunteers' engagement and retention as noted in Topaloglu et al. (2018). Incentives such as reimbursement of volunteers' operational expenses such as travel costs to a place of assignment could improve volunteers' engagement and retention. This is particularly important when the volunteers' motives are egoistic than Altruism. Given that some volunteers may not earn income during their volunteering time, reimbursement of certain expenses could increase the volunteered hours and retention rate. These practical examples of motivating measures are expected to enhance the retention and engagement of the volunteers. Findings from this study apply to not-for-profit Community Fund Management organisations whose primary activity is fundraising and perpetuity endowment investment. Therefore, caution should be taken in the interpretation of the findings, particularly for not-for-profit organisations with different social, political, financial and fiduciary objectives. Future studies could examine the factors identified in this study in other types of not-for-profit organisations to provide a broader perspective on the volunteers' engagement and retention in the not-for-profit sector. Socio-economic characteristics of the volunteers could be investigated in future research to examine the variability of volunteer retention and engagement based on the demographic attributes of the volunteers.

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