

## An empirical model of sport volunteer experience: The case of the 2006 Asian Games

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Abstract 97**

Volunteers are a core component of sport service delivery (Daly, 1991) and an important element of sport event management, since they provide sport administrators with the ability to offer, sustain, or even expand the quantity, quality, and diversity of sport organizations' services (Strigas, 2003). A plethora of researchers have examined the phenomenon of sport volunteerism (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007-motivation; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998-motivation and satisfaction; Johnston, Twynam, & Farrell, 2000-motivation and satisfaction; Strigas & Jackson, 2003-motivation; Williams, Dosa, & Tompkins, 1995-motivation). Although the aforementioned studies sought to measure and further understand volunteer motivation, satisfaction, retention, and experience in sport settings, there is limited research on the examination of the relationship and interaction between the aforementioned variables. Farrell et al. (1998) hypothesized that "volunteer satisfaction is founded upon a link between motivations and actual experience" (p. 290). Thus, the purpose of the current study was to test the above-mentioned hypothesis. The following research questions were formulated to support the purpose: (a) what is the factorial structure of the adapted motivation scale and (b) does the hypothesized model of volunteer experience fit the data well.

The target population of this study was comprised of volunteers who participated in the 2006 Asian Games, in Doha, Qatar, during December 2006. The sample consisted of 372 volunteers. A convenience sample was selected from volunteers who offered their services in a variety of competitive and non-competitive venues. The research instrument created for the current study was comprised of two major parts: volunteer motivation scale and volunteer satisfaction scale. The volunteer motivation scale was a modified version of Giannoulakis and Wang's (2006) Olympic Volunteer Motivation Scale (OVMS). Nine items related to volunteers' satisfaction were adapted from Farrell et al's (1998) Special Events Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS). An additional item "volunteering experience in general" was generated to assess volunteers' actual experience at the event. The newly-constructed scale comprised of 23 volunteer motivation items, eight satisfaction items, and one volunteering experience item, and was named as the Sport Volunteer Scale (SVS).

Data analysis involved principal component analysis (PCA), internal consistency analysis, and path analysis (PA). PCA by three factor identification and promax rotation indicated that three factors emerged with a total of 48.76% variance explained. Based on the content of the loaded items, the emerged factor was labeled "external", "purposive", and "egoistic". The internal consistency was acceptable for all motivation factors, having Cronbach's alphas of .80 (external), .73 (purposive), and .71 (egoistic). The finalized scale was comprised of three motivation factors with a total of 18 items. With the use of Robust Maximum Likelihood (RML) estimation, the hypothesized model of volunteer experience was tested. In the PA, the ratio of chi-squared test statistic to its degrees of freedom and model indices of RMSEA, NNFI, CFI, and SRMR all indicated that the model did not fit the data well,  $\chi^2/df = 10.33$ , RMSEA = .16, NNFI = .87, CFI = .96, SRMR = .09. The modification indices suggested adding the path from external motive to overall volunteering experience. Accordingly, the path was specified and the model was retested. In the PA, the ratio of chi-squared test statistic to its degrees of freedom and the model indices indicated that the model fit the data well ( $\chi^2/df = .10$ , RMSEA = .04, NNFI = 1.00, CFI = 1.00, SRMR = .01). No post hoc model modification was performed to develop a better fitting. With regard to the parameter estimates, external motive ( $\beta = .34$ ,  $t = 4.37$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and purposive motive ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $t = 2.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were positively and significantly related to volunteer satisfaction. External motive ( $\beta = .44$ ,  $t = 5.99$ ,  $p < .05$ ) was positively and significantly related to overall volunteering experience. In addition, external, egoistic, and purposive motives accounted for 32% of the variance in volunteer satisfaction,  $R^2 = .32$ . External motive and volunteer satisfaction accounted for 26% of the variance in volunteer experience,  $R^2 = .26$ .

The results of the study suggested that the finalized SVS demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability of the scores. The usage of the instrument may benefit sport organizations by assessing the needs of their volunteers. The instrument's applicability is enhanced when taking under consideration the limited number of items within the instrument, which may increase the response rate with on-site sport volunteer studies. Outcomes of the path analysis implied that the hypothesized model of volunteer retention is trustworthy and can be employed to cope with managerial demands of volunteer recruitment, satisfaction, and retention. Such an understanding will support volunteer managers in creating and implementing campaigns that will satisfy those needs. For instance, volunteer administrators at the Asian Games should strive to meet volunteers' external motives (the highest coefficient within the model) in order to increase the level of volunteer satisfaction and overall volunteering experience.

As far as the theoretical framework of the model is concerned, the results of the study confirmed Farrell et al.'s (1998)

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hypothesis of volunteer satisfaction's link between motivation and overall experience. However, the hypothesized relationship between satisfaction and overall experience was not as strong as expected. This could be due to various reasons: (a) results may have been influenced by the specific sample of Asian Games volunteers, since approximately 75% of the participants were Asian males; (b) there is no significant relationship between satisfaction and overall experience; and (c) additional factors, such as willingness to volunteer, empowerment, and managerial treatment, may function as mediating variables between satisfaction and experience and affect the outcomes of the model. For instance, Kim, Chelladurai, and Trail (2007) proposed a model of volunteer retention in youth sport and stated that "retention of volunteers is a function of the extent to which the organization facilitates the satisfaction of volunteer needs" (p. 165). Future steps relative to the proposed model need to cross-validate the instrument in different sport settings by including additional factors.