

Comparison of Volunteer Motivation Among Four Different Sport Volunteer Groups

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**Management/leadership
Abstract 2009-025**

**May 28, 2009
1:30 PM**

**25 minute oral
(Lexington A)**

Volunteers have been a major labor source in nonprofit organizations, especially in sport settings. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), more than 26% of Americans (60.8 million people) volunteered from September 2006 to September 2007. In sports, approximately 1,700,000 people volunteered for the Olympic Games and hosting communities during the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, 2008). Also, as an example in participation sports, the American Youth Sports Organization utilizes nearly 250,000 volunteers to run their youth soccer programs (AYSO, 2002). In a result, researchers and practitioners have tried to understand why a group of people would work free for a cause, organization, or event and how volunteer motivation can be used to recruit, manage, and retain volunteers effectively. Accordingly, numerous studies have been conducted to find specific sets of volunteer motivation (e.g., Anderson, & Moore, 1978; Clary et al, 1998; Cnaan, & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Farmer, & Fedor, 2001; Knoke & Prensky, 1984; Miller, 1985). However, most of studies have simply revealed arrays of volunteer motivation in their samples of volunteers using different volunteer motivation scales. Thus, our understanding on volunteer motivation in sport settings is very limited and it is hard to provide any practical recommendations for practitioners to recruit, manage, and retain volunteers effectively. The purpose of the study is to compare the motivation of volunteers working in four different settings of youth sports: (Group I) a nationwide youth sport organization, (Group II) local city-organized youth sport leagues, (Group III) a Special Olympics State Games, and (Group IV) an international youth soccer event.

The respondents in Group I were 515 volunteers (males = 374; females =141) of a nationwide youth sport organization in US. The participants of Group II were 259 volunteer coaches (males = 211; females = 48) of local city-organized youth sport leagues in a midwestern state, US. Group III consisted of 224 volunteers (males =76; females = 148) of a Special Olympics State Games in another midwestern state, US. The participants of Group IV were 98 volunteers (males=52; females = 48; no answer =1) of an international elite-level youth soccer event in Korea. The Modified Volunteer Functions Inventory for Sports (MVFIS, Kim et al., in review) was used to measure the motivation of volunteers in these four different sport settings. The MVFIS, which is the modified version of Clary et al.'s Volunteer Functions Inventory (1998), includes 18 items in six dimensions (3 items per each): Values, Understanding, Social, Career, Enhancement, and Protective functions. A 7-point Likert scale was adopted for all items, ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (s very important). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood (ML) was conducted using the structural equation modeling technique (AMOS 16.0; Arbuckle, 2007) on the data from each group. To compare motivation functions of four groups, the ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests were conducted using SPSS 15.0.

The data of four groups were collected from different individuals in different places at different times. Thus, it is possible that significant differences were found in the ANOVA and post-hoc tests, not because volunteer motivation was actually different among the four groups but because the answers of one or two groups on all items were inflated due to uncontrollable issues. Accordingly, the rank orders of the MVFIS's six sub-dimensions among four volunteer groups were compared using Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient test. The fit indices (the normed chi-square, CFI, and RMSEA) of four different CFAs indicated acceptable fits between the measurement models and the data of all four groups. Also, factor loading values, interfactor correlations, AVE values, and internal consistency values of all four groups indicated good validity and reliability.

The results of the ANOVA tests indicated that significant differences existed in all six dimensions at .001 level. Follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that Group III and Group IV reported significantly higher motivation in all six dimensions than Group I and Group II. Group II showed significantly higher motivations in the sub-dimensions of Social and Career than Group I but Group I showed significantly higher motivation in the values dimension than Group II. Group IV were significantly higher than Group III in the Career, Protective, and Enhancement functions of volunteer motivation. Unlike significant differences in the ANOVA and follow-up Bonferroni post-hoc tests, the rank orders of the VFI sub-dimensions in all four groups were very similar.

The results of Spearman's Rho correlation test identified that the rank order of Group I was significantly identical to those of Group II (.943, $p < .01$) and Group III (.943, $p < .01$); the rank order of Group II was significantly identical to that of Group III (.886, $p < .05$); and the rank order of Group III was significantly identical to the rank order of Group IV (.829, $p < .05$). In all four groups, the Values dimension was the most highly ranked motivation and the Understanding dimension was the second

2009 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2009)

highest. Then, the Career and Protective dimensions were fifth or sixth important dimensions except the case that the Career dimension was the third highest ranked dimension in Group IV.

The results of the current study showed that the rank orders of the six motivation functions in all four groups were very similar. Volunteer coaches and administrators in youth sports showed very similar volunteer motivation although two volunteer groups (Group I and Group II) worked in different kinds of youth sport settings. Also, the volunteers of two sport events (Group III and Group IV) showed similar volunteer motivation. However, the volunteers in a Special Olympic Games (Group III) ranked the six motivation functions similarly to the volunteers in youth sports (Group I and Group II). Similar to previous volunteer motivation studies, the values function was the highest ranked motivation and the understanding function was the second highest ranked motivation in all four groups. A distinctive result found was that the career function was ranked distinctively higher among volunteers of an international event (Group IV) than other three groups.

However, the ages of the volunteers in an international event (Group IV) were younger than other volunteer groups and the data of Group IV were collected in a different country. Thus, it is hard to conclude whether this difference was due to the characteristics of the volunteers working for a mega sporting event or due to the demographics. Although the results to distinguish the different motivation among the youth sport volunteer groups of different settings were somewhat inconclusive, the current study would be good foundation for future research in this area of study. Sport organizations and events should consider that motivation of volunteer varies in different organizations or events. However, regardless of the type of organization/event, altruistic motives (i.e., the values function of the MVFIS) drove volunteers more strongly than egoistic motives.