

Sport Event Volunteer Motivation and Commitment

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Volunteering is an important part of societies, creating significant economic and social impacts (Smith, 1999; United Nations, 2003). Volunteers play a key role in many areas, such as education, religion, and as the focus of this presentation, sport. A 2003 United Nations report analyzed the potential contribution sport can make toward achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and suggested a reciprocal relationship between sport and volunteerism. Sport organizations and events provide key sites for volunteer involvement, and at the same time, depend on volunteers for success. From local community-based events to international mega events, sport organizations rely heavily on volunteers to carry out the necessary day-to-day activities of hosting sport events. Understanding volunteer motivation and commitment enables managers to develop better recruitment, selection, training, organizing, reward, and retention strategies, and ultimately increase the benefits to the organizations, volunteers, and service recipients. The purposes of this study are to understand (a) sport event volunteers' demographic characteristics, (b) factors of sport event volunteer motivation, (c) whether sport event volunteers with different demographics have different motivation and commitment, and (d) effective demographic and motivational predictors of sport event volunteer commitment.

A total of 241 volunteers in 2008 Ryder Cup completed the web-based survey administered prior to the event. Volunteers were mainly male (73.9%), 45 to 54 years old (41.1%), white (98.3%), held a Bachelor's degree (39.8%), had an annual household income higher than \$150,000 (24.1%), had no child in household (85.1%), were employed fulltime (53.1%), played golf 51 times or more in the past 12 months (25.7%), and volunteered 20 to 71 hours in the past 12 months (32.4%). Thirty items selected from literature (Farrell et al., 1998; Kemp, 2002; Moreno et al., 1999; Strigas & Jackson, 2003) were used to measure volunteer motivation, and nine items modified from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) were used to measure volunteer commitment on a 7-point Likert scale. The highest rated motivation items were "I am involved in golf (participating/ watching)" ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 1.21$), "I know the sport" ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 1.20$), "I want to help make the event a success" ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 1.22$), and "I want an opportunity to meet the players and see the event" ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.43$).

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS 16.0 in an exploratory fashion (Bryne, 2001; Joreskog, 1993) to explore the factorial structure of sport event volunteer motivation. A factorial structure with 18 items loaded on five factors (i.e., purposive, leisure, enhancement, identity, external influence) was identified moderately fitting the present data ($X(126, N = 241) = 212.118$, $p < .001$, $GFI = .912$, $CFI = .923$, $RMSEA = .053$), and used to calculate factor scores for consequent analyses. MANOVA and Bonferroni-corrected follow-up t-test and ANOVA were used to examine motivational differences among demographic groups.

The results indicated that (a) female volunteers rated external influence higher than male ($p < .001$), (b) volunteers between 18 to 34 years old rated leisure higher than other age groups ($p < .001$), (c) volunteers aged 65 and older rated purposive higher than volunteer between 35 to 44 years old ($p = .004$), (d) volunteers who worked part-time rated purposive higher than other groups ($p < .001$), (e) volunteers who did not play golf in the past 12 months rated identity lower than other groups ($p = .001$), (f) people who volunteered 20 to 187 hours in the past 12 months rated purposive higher than those who did not volunteer in the past 12 months ($p = .004$), (g) people who did not volunteer or volunteered less than 72 hours in the past 12 months rated leisure higher than those who volunteered 188 or more hours in the past 12 months ($p = .003$), and (h) people who volunteered 188 or more hours in the past 12 months rated identity lower than other groups ($p = .003$). Confirmatory factor analysis ($X(25, N = 241) = 97.05$, $p < .001$, $GFI = .914$, $CFI = .910$) and internal consistency reliability statistic ($\alpha = .831$) both indicated the nine volunteer commitment items loaded on one factor. The nine items were then averaged as one score representing volunteer commitment ($M = 5.90$, $SD = .87$).

Because t-tests and ANOVA indicated volunteers in different demographic groups had similar commitment, a multiple regression with backward entering method was used to examine whether motivation factors effectively predicted volunteer commitment. The results indicated that purposive ($\beta = .466$, $t = 8.672$, $p < .001$), leisure ($\beta = .174$, $t = 2.340$, $p = .020$), and identity ($\beta = .130$, $t = 1.740$, $p = .083$) were the effective predictors of volunteer commitment, and explained 35.8 % of variance in volunteer commitment ($F = 45.630$, $p < .001$, $R = .366$, adjusted $R = .358$). The most important predictor of volunteer commitment of sport event volunteers was purposive, followed by leisure and identity. Managers could see sport participants and spectators as a potential volunteer pool for recruitment, and use purposive motivation to predict volunteer commitment

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levels. Providing opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the event, get involved with the event, identify with the event, and enjoy the event could meet their motivations and promote the reciprocal relationship between sport and volunteerism.