Senior volunteers’ satisfaction and intention to reparticipate in sporting event: A serious leisure perspective

Younghan Lee, University of Massachusetts
Mi-lyang Kim, Kyungwoon University

Abstract 2012-189

Friday, May 25, 2012 10:50 AM
20-minute oral presentation (including questions) (Salon C)

Older people are the fastest growing segment in many nations (Riley, 1988), including Korea, which the portion of people over 65 years old substantially increased from 5.1% in the 90s to 7.2% in 2000. At this rate, Korea is expected to reach 20.8% by 2026 and become a high-aging society (Korea Institute of Statistics, 2010). Population aging creates both strengths and problems in terms of economic, social security, health care, and education. The strength, however, is of no concern; it is the problem such as sustaining a healthy society that requires much consideration. One issue with heightened attention is how volunteering, based on a leisure perspective, plays a role in helping seniors achieve a positive state of mental and physical well-being (Stebbins, 1996) and contributes to solving problems in a high-aging society. Volunteer work raises management issues such as allocating resources and saving cost. This is especially important in major sporting events, which require tremendous amount of volunteers. Consequently, major sporting events use volunteers in lieu of paid employees and heavily depend on their service for successful event operations (Green & Chalip, 2004; Johnston & Twynam, 1998).

It is crucial that sport organizations understand methods of volunteer recruitment and retention as well as the reliability problem of volunteers, which refers to the nonperformance and nonattendance of volunteers (Pearce, 1993; Green & Chalip, 2003). In the meantime, volunteering is frequently viewed as leisure (Stebbins, 1996). Specifically, it is perceived as serious leisure since the major part of their roles require special careers and distinctive set of rewards (Stebbins, 1996). Furthermore, Stebbins (1996) claims that the reliability problem can be resolved with the serious leisure approach. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to examine how sport event volunteering as a serious leisure pursuit influences seniors’ volunteer satisfaction and intention to re-participate in future sporting events. In addition, the research compared the senior group to the younger group in an attempt to recognize different differences pertaining to the outcome variables.

The subjects of the study were volunteers from the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federation) World Championships Daegu 2011. A total of 320 samples were collected and 268 valid samples were analyzed. Subjects over 60 years old formed as the senior group and between 20 and 30 were formed as the younger group.

Measurement items: The serious leisure scale (Kim, 2009), which consisted 29 items, was utilized in order to measure 6 dimensions (perseverance, career, personal effort, intrinsic reward, identification, unique ethos). The work by Stukas, Worth, and Clary, and Snyder (2009) provided the scale (3 items) to measure volunteer satisfaction. Lastly, 4 items were modified from the work of Park (2010) in order to measure the intention to re-participate. All items were assessed on a 7 point Likert scale.

Cronbach’s alpha and Confirmatory factor analysis were used to confirm reliability and construct validity. Hierarchical and k-Means clustering were used to classify the different levels of serious leisure involvement, followed by the independent t-test to compare the mean scores of the different groups in respect to volunteer satisfaction and intention to re-participate. Thereafter, multiple regression was utilized to discover the relationships between variables.

Cronbach’s alpha test (0.72 - 0.96) and confirmatory factor analysis of serious leisure ($\chi^2=188.6$, df=58, SRMR=0.06, RMSEA=0.072, CFI=0.96, TLI=0.95) confirmed reliability and construct validity (Brown & Cudeck, 1993). Hierarchical cluster analysis suggested two clusters to be incorporated for further k-means clustering. Naturally, two groups pertaining to the level of serious leisure were produced, high (n=82, lowest M=6.04 & highest M=6.64) and low (n=46, lowest M=3.95 & highest M=4.94). The t-test (t=-4.775, df=116, p<.001) indicated higher volunteer satisfaction for high-group (M=6.65, SD=0.82) than the low-group (M=5.70, SD=1.32). In terms of intention to re-participate, t-test (t=-5.708, df=115, p<.001) revealed that high-group (M=6.64, SD=0.74) has higher intention than the low group (M=5.56, SD=1.29). Multiple regression analysis revealed that intrinsic reward from high-group significantly influenced volunteer satisfaction ($\beta=.443$, t=6.30, p=.001) and intention to re-participate ($\beta=.505$,
t=4.64, p<.001). As for the low-group, perseverance (β=.630, t=3.436, p=.002) and identification (β=.502, t=2.317, p=.028) significantly influenced volunteer satisfaction, and perseverance (β=.557, t=3.357, p=.002), personal effort (β=.416, t=2.758, p=.010), and identification (β=.444, t=2.242, p=.033) significantly influenced intention to re-participate. Moreover, independent t-test revealed that senior volunteers were relatively more satisfied and willing to participate in future sporting events than younger volunteers. The results of the t-tests are as follow; senior group (M=6.31, SD=1.17,) and younger group (M=5.69, SD=1.08) in respect to volunteer satisfaction (t=-4.446, df=264, p<.001), and senior group (M=6.27, SD=1.15) and younger group (M=5.55, SD=1.19) in respect to intention to re-participate (t=-4.971, df=264, p<.001).

The findings indicate that volunteers, regardless of age group, perceived volunteering as serious leisure. This finding is in line with previous research results (Chambre, 1987; Stebbins, 1996). Consequently, understanding volunteer behaviors in the context of serious leisure will contribute to more efficient and effective volunteer management in sporting events. In addition, the fact only intrinsic reward from the high-group influenced the outcome variables entails that this particular group is homeostasis regarding volunteer satisfaction and intention to re-participate because of the already high involvement level in volunteering. This indicates that volunteer programs involving intrinsic rewards may booster volunteer satisfaction and intention to return for volunteer service even higher. As for the low-group, training programs should include activities that induce perseverance, empower personal effort, and enhance identification to promote higher volunteer satisfaction and intention to re-participate in future sporting events. Furthermore, the reason younger volunteers had lower levels of volunteer satisfaction and intention to re-participate than seniors was perhaps due to external motivational factors such as tangible benefits, opportunity to build their resume, and social pressure. In brief, the collective findings imply that volunteering is invariably a form of serious leisure and that it is important to apply segment specific volunteer training and programs for effective volunteer management.