

A Study on Volunteer Motivation and Satisfaction in Malaysia's Sports Events

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Abstract: Despite the critical role of volunteers in the success of sports events, there is limited research in Malaysia on how volunteer motivations and experiences impact their satisfaction. This research examines volunteers' vital role in ensuring successful sports events, emphasizing volunteer motivation, experience and satisfaction among undergraduates and postgraduate students at a local Malaysian university. The study utilizes quantitative analysis where significant correlations between these variables were discovered revealing that volunteer motivation and positive event experiences are important to enhancing volunteer satisfaction. Data from eighty students (80) showed that event-related factors such as the opportunity to be part of a prestige event and witness behind-the-scenes activities are significant motivators and key drivers of voluntary participation. The findings indicate a significant beta coefficient supporting event-related motivation and volunteer experience towards volunteer satisfaction while purposive volunteer motivation did not gain significance. Overall, the research underscores the necessity for event planners to prioritize volunteer satisfaction by understanding and addressing their motivations and experiences, ultimately contributing to more meaningful and successful events.

Keywords: *Event Volunteer, Sport Event, Event Experience, Volunteer Satisfaction*

1. Introduction and Background

Volunteers play a critical role in sports events' success and contribute significantly towards community development as well as the operations of community-based organizations. Volunteers' role is important in organizing and running sports events thus contributing to cost savings and efficiency (Kim, 2017). Sports events such as Kuala Lumpur SEA Games and local marathons in Malaysia largely rely on volunteer participation implying that it is important to know what drives volunteers and how their experiences affect volunteer satisfaction. Recent studies highlighted motives behind individual's decision to participate as volunteers at sports events. Some of the motivations include altruistic desires, career prospects, socializing or personal satisfaction (Atanasova & Draganov, 2022). For instance, at the 2019 Osprey Valley Open it was found that commitment together with motivation directly affects satisfaction among other things like community feeling which indirectly influences volunteer experience (Bang, Smith, Park, & Lee, 2022). The importance of understanding this drive lies in the fact that it can facilitate Malaysian event organizers to devise better volunteer programs that can promote and increase volunteer satisfaction. Despite the pivotal role played by volunteers in sports events, little is known about volunteer motivations and experiences in Malaysia which may influence their satisfaction (Latif, Nawli, Zid, Bakar, & Rajli, 2022). This gap must be filled to plan for strategies aimed at improving volunteer satisfaction and retention leading to more successful and well-organized sports events.

This research area could also provide valuable insights into an investigation into how effective ways to manage volunteers and successful events (Kim, 2017; Atanasova & Draganov, 2022). In Malaysia, various factors influence volunteers' experiences including support provided to them during their volunteering job; and roles given alongside overall event administration. Good communication skills should be exercised while providing necessary training together with acknowledging achievements which will all serve as motivations towards future participation among volunteers (Atanasova & Draganov, 2022). Event managers therefore need to look at these issues keenly so that they can adequately manage volunteers during different functions held thereby ensuring that every person who comes out as a volunteer feels appreciated and satisfied. This study aims to investigate how volunteer motivation and experience relate to satisfaction from volunteering. Despite previous findings indicating a positive relationship between volunteerism, success of events and community development; this investigation seeks to further understand factors that specifically influence satisfaction

levels among individuals involved in sports industry management through volunteering.

2. Literature Review

Malaysia's sports industry is of great significance to the economy of this country, it is forecast to generate substantial revenues. Malaysian interest in sports has been growing which has led to an increase in demand for sports events as various entities, corporations and individuals use them for diverse reasons such as marketing purposes and social responsibility. Nevertheless, the successful organization of these events depends largely on the contribution of volunteers. It is important to investigate what motivates these volunteers and how satisfied they are to make sure that all participants have a good time. (Barron & Rihova, 2011; Teixeira, Banza, Almeida, & Sesinando, 2023). The study of volunteer motivation and satisfaction in sports events has gained significant attention in recent years (De Clerck, Aelterman, Haerens, & Willem, 2021; Chen, Wang, & Tang, 2022). For instance, Alfes, Antunes and Shantz (2017) discuss how volunteer satisfaction and continuance intention are critical to sustaining volunteerism, emphasizing the need to understand volunteer experiences and motivations to improve satisfaction and retention. Additionally, Lee, Kim, Koo, and Won (2019) highlighted the importance of volunteer satisfaction in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of volunteers in sports events.

Volunteer Motivation: Volunteer motivation is a term used to describe the reasons why people volunteer (Kamarudin, Jun, Rashid, Devaraj, & Shamsuddin, 2020; Ye, Cheng, Chen, & Li, 2022). It is the combination of factors that drives them to do something for free for an organization or cause. In sports events, it can be divided into three primary categories: external motivation, purposive motivation and event-related motivation (Angosto, Bang, Bravo, Díaz-Suárez, & López-Gullón, 2021; Dickson et al., 2022). External motivation refers to things like social benefits, career opportunities and personal enjoyment that volunteers receive from taking part in such activities (Smith, 2020). Furthermore, these external motivations in volunteering may include recognition or rewards from others, skill acquisition or experience gaining or even duty fulfillment as explained by Alam, Sun and Campbell (2021). Additionally, among other things that motivate individuals to take part in voluntary events are interacting with like-minded individuals gaining new skills and adding value to their CVs highlighting the existence of external motivations (Angosto et al., 2021). All these abilities assist individuals who want to invest their time into volunteerism. For example, a study conducted during the Volunteer Motivation for the Military World Games in October 2019 found participants were motivated by interactions with volunteers whose interests matched those of the military as well as games (Ye et al., 2022).

On the other hand, purposive motivation is influenced by a will to contribute towards making a difference or having a positive influence on society (Olberding & Olberding, 2024). Volunteering in events is driven by purposive motivation which means that volunteers have their objectives or aims when they take part in these activities. Purposive motivation as one of the factors determining volunteer involvement was also underscored in research conducted by Rozmiarek et al., (2021). On his part, Sharififar, Jamalain, Nikbakhsh, and Ramezani (2011) acknowledge that some components of purposiveness predict sports volunteers' commitment thereby showing that individuals are career-orientated and aim at personal growth while participating in sports events. Moreover, the research established that volunteers are motivated to self-improve through the desire to learn from event organizers and improve their skills by getting involved hands-on (Venske 2019). Consequently, these findings together emphasize the importance of understanding and utilizing purposeful motivation for engaging volunteers efficiently within various event contexts.

Conversely, event-related motivation is concerned with the aspects of volunteering activities themselves such as enjoying nature and the thrill of the occasion, unique ambiance, and the entire event experience (Angosto et al., 2021). Recent studies have also revealed that being part of a prestige event and having access to backstage operations and logistics are factors that motivate volunteers and participants the most (He & Chen, 2022). Additionally, live performances or competitions based on this context can make people feel thrilled and in a festival mood (Giannoulakis, Wang, & Felver, 2015; Vinnicombe & Wu, 2020). The immersive and dynamic nature of the event can create a memorable and enjoyable experience that reinforces volunteer commitment (Nichols & Ralston, 2015). To sum up, different factors contribute to volunteer motivation. The importance of each factor varies depending on the person as well as the specific event they are volunteering for (Schlesinger & Gubler, 2016; Kamarudin et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2022).

H1: There is a positive effect of volunteer motivation (purposive) towards volunteer satisfaction.

H2: There is a positive effect of volunteer motivation (event-related) on volunteer satisfaction.

Volunteer Experience: Volunteer satisfaction is key to future involvement and the overall success of an event. According to various studies, positive volunteer experiences are determined by many different things, including having meaningful duties to perform that offer room for personal growth and receiving enough support throughout (Ranjan, 2016; Bang et al., 2022). Moreover, when given deserved recognition or being trained, and well supported with adequate assistance provided, volunteers feel valued and this leads to higher satisfaction levels (Teixeira et.al, 2023). The study conducted by Atanasova and Draganov (2022) showed that good communication skills along with proper organization management could greatly improve the volunteer experience. Additionally, it is said that when volunteers understand their responsibilities and feel supported, their satisfaction increases, as demonstrated in a study on event volunteering by Olberding & Olberding (2024). In addition, clear role definitions and regular feedback help volunteers feel more competent and appreciated.

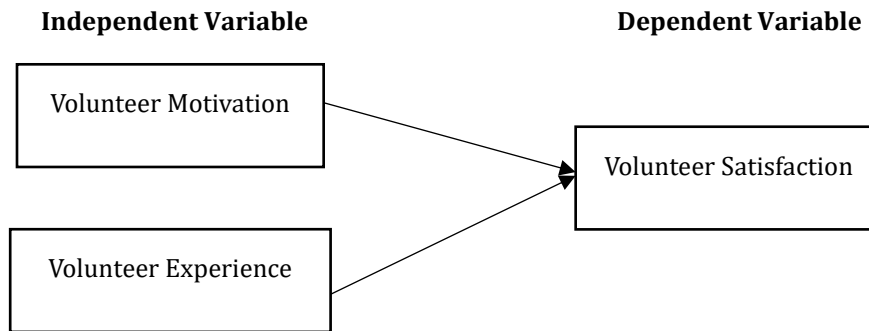
Equally, it is important to appreciate the work of volunteers and improve their overall experience. One way to do this is by occasionally showing gratitude for the volunteers' efforts through recognition or public appreciation which can lead to greater satisfaction for the volunteers and encourage them to stay (Cobos & Templeton, 2022). This means that assigning tasks that correspond with their interests and abilities offers a chance for them to appreciate their significance (Kim, 2017). In addition, offering opportunities for personal growth as well as professional development like training sessions, networking events or workshops designed to develop skills based on individual volunteer's interests and goals improves volunteer satisfaction even more. Hence, the event organizer must create an environment where they would feel supported and included, valued, and motivated to continue participating actively (Power & Nedvetskaya, 2022). Therefore, events should offer meaningful tasks, sufficient support systems, personal growth opportunities, and social connections among others to ensure a high retention rate thus boosting a high volunteer satisfaction level.

H3: There is a positive effect of volunteer experience on volunteer satisfaction

Volunteer Satisfaction: Various factors such as motivations, sense of community and management practices influence sports volunteer satisfaction. Research has indicated that volunteers are predominantly driven by an interplay of self-development and altruism factors as they desire to help others, develop their communities and acquire new knowledge (Olberding & Olberding, 2024). In addition, satisfaction is particularly high among repeated volunteers since it tends to foster belongingness and community amongst them. This implies through their roles in events such as volunteering and derive significant personal fulfillment which boosts their overall happiness and well-being (Atanasova and Draganov 2022). Furthermore, adequate training as well as good working conditions are essential elements of effective volunteer management strategies that in the long run improve the social capital of these individuals thereby positively impacting their satisfaction levels at work (Zhigang et. al, 2022). Similarly concerning large-scale sports festivals like Olympic Games volunteers' satisfaction is linked with how they perceive the event's legacy may be shaped besides determining personal growth opportunities for them (Gang, Yoon, Park, Yoo, & Pedersen, 2022; Teixeira et.al, 2023).

Additionally, the volunteer experience is a complex process involving direct or indirect relationships between motivation-satisfaction-commitment-community thus requiring a multi-faceted approach to volunteer management (Lachance, Bakhsh, Thompson, & Parent, 2021). Nevertheless, some organizational weaknesses exist such as early planning organization and distribution of volunteers whose high overall satisfaction suggests great significance or value attached by volunteers in being part of it (Atanasova & Draganov, 2022). In summary therefore this comprehensive understanding of volunteer satisfaction shows the importance of tailored strategies to offer good volunteer experience to ensure lasting commitments together with positive results from the volunteering events.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



3. Research Methodology

In this research, quantitative research has been conducted to investigate the effects of volunteer motivation and experience on volunteer satisfaction among undergraduate and postgraduate students in a local university. 80 of the event volunteers who participated in this study were 44 males (55%) and 36 were female (45%). Most of the students were aged between 18 to 23 years old (67.50 %), 5 of them were aged more than 25 years old (6.3%) and 21 of them were aged between 31 to 41 years old (26.3%). In addition, 45 of the volunteers were married (56.3%) and 35 of them were single (43.8%). Most of the respondents, with a total of 53 were full-time students (66.3 %) and 27 of them were employed (33.8%). After data collection, the data was analyzed using Pearson Correlation and Regression Analysis. Before the analysis, a preliminary analysis was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the items.

4. Findings

Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis refers to how well the scale's numbers measure the same variables and Cronbach's alpha is the most common way to measure how reliable the items using SPSS. The values of Cronbach Alpha indicate how closely all the items have high internal consistency on variables. As shown in Table 1, the volunteer motivation (purposive) had 5 items and the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.964 which was interpreted as high internal consistency. Next is volunteer motivation (event-related) had 6 items and the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.980 which was also interpreted as high internal consistency. The result is similar to volunteer experience ($\alpha = 0.864$) and volunteer satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.949$) in that both variables indicate the Cronbach alpha was greater than 0.07 and all variables tested were high internal consistency and applicable to use in this study.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach Alpha Values (>0.07)
Volunteer Motivation_ Purposive	5	0.964
Volunteer Motivation_ Event-related	6	0.980
Volunteer Experience	4	0.864
Volunteer Satisfaction	4	0.949

Normality Analysis

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis consisting of mean, standard deviation and normality test with skewness and kurtosis. Of the mean values of all variables volunteer motivation (event-related) was the highest mean value with 4.471, volunteer motivation (Purposive) (Mean = 4.395), and volunteer satisfaction had a mean of 4.387 and finally was followed by volunteer experience (Mean = 4.21). The result indicates that most of the respondents agreed with the current practices of managing volunteers. In addition, the skewness refers to the degree of symmetry, or more precisely, the degree of lack of symmetry. Distributions, or data sets, are said to be symmetric if they appear the same on both sides of a central point. Kurtosis refers to the proportion of data

that is heavy-tailed or light-tailed in comparison with a normal distribution. As shown the skewness of all variables has negative skewness and the kurtosis values also had positive kurtosis. To conclude, the data of this study has a normal distribution.

Table 2: Normality Analysis

Variables	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Volunteer Motivation_ Purposive	4.395	0.909	-1.670	2.536
Volunteer Motivation_ Event-related	4.471	0.743	-1.800	4.742
Volunteer Experience	4.421	0.831	-1.658	2.960
Volunteer Satisfaction	4.387	0.877	-1.420	1.795

Pearson Correlation

The Pearson Correlation assesses the bivariate analysis to investigate the linear relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. As shown in table 3, the result indicates there was a linear relationship which continued for regression analysis. All the coefficient values were greater than 0.8 and the significant values were less than 0.05 and the result all items were positive and highly correlated with others.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
Volunteer Motivation_ Purposive				
Volunteer Motivation_ Event-related	0.826**			
Volunteer Experience	0.840**	0.833**		
Volunteer Satisfaction	0.693**	0.850**	0.861__	

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis aims to investigate the influence of volunteer motivation of purposive and event-related, experience towards volunteer satisfaction. From the regression analysis, the R square value was 0.787 indicating 78.7 percent of volunteer satisfaction explained by volunteer motivation purposive, event-related, and volunteer experience. There 21.3 percent was explained by other variables. The next table is the ANOVA table, which reports how well the regression equation fits the data and the result found that the statistical significance of the regression model has significance values less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, the regression model statistically significantly predicts volunteer satisfaction. In addition, the coefficient table shows the beta values (β) as volunteer motivation (purposive) was -0.318, followed by volunteer motivation (event-related) was 0.448 and volunteer experience was 0.552 indicating there was a weak relationship towards volunteer satisfaction. Furthermore, the significance values as shown by volunteer motivation (event-related) and volunteer experience were less than 0.05 indicating that those variables were statistically significant with volunteer satisfaction. However, the finding for volunteer motivation (purposive) identified has not significant towards volunteer satisfaction.

Table 4: Regression Coefficient Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Result
	B	Std. error	Beta			
Constant	.104	.293		.355	.724	
Purposive	-.307	.112	-.318	-2.727	.008	H1 not supported
Event-related	.530	.172	.448	3.085	.003	H2 Supported
Experience	.583	.160	.552	3.642	.000	H3 supported

Discussion

This research aims to examine the factors that motivate volunteers and particularly look into the link between volunteer experiences and satisfaction. In this study, a survey was conducted among 80 students in Malaysia who had taken part in such events as volunteers. Results show that among the many types of motivation for volunteering, event-related motivation was significantly linked to volunteer satisfaction. However, there was no significant relationship between the purposive aspect of volunteer motivations. According to this research, most students volunteered because of event-related reasons for example chances to experience the ambiance and thrill of an event, a unique atmosphere and enjoy the overall experience of the event. Vinnicombe and Wu (2020) also supported this finding by indicating that many individuals participate in such activities to be able to have fun at live performances or events including behind-the-scenes situations. However, there were some limitations for instance time limitations and financial constraints which acted as major obstacles to student participation in voluntary work as revealed by the study. Even though people may wish they could be volunteers, practical constraints make it impossible for them to achieve their desires (Alias, Ariffin, & Noor, 2021). Consequently, if organizations want more volunteers, then they will have to deal with these issues apart from just focusing on the benefits related to volunteering alone.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The research underscores the pivotal contribution of volunteers to the success of sporting events and the broader sports event industry. Understanding the factors that impact volunteer satisfaction is crucial. Based on the findings, there is a need for further exploration into specific dimensions of volunteer motivation at sporting events. Additionally, it is recommended to conduct studies that delve deeper into the intricate relationship between volunteer motivation, volunteer experience and satisfaction. These insights can inform managerial strategies aimed at optimizing volunteer management to ensure that every person who comes out as a volunteer feels appreciated and satisfied.

Conclusion

This paper explains how volunteer motivation and experience can influence the satisfaction of the event volunteers. The study found that event-related motivation such as chances to experience the ambiance and thrill of an event, and the unique atmosphere behind the scenes situation are a significant factor that drives volunteer's motivation. Other than that, intrinsic motivations, such as personal growth and skill enhancement, had stronger effects on increased happiness than extrinsic rewards or recognition. Again, volunteers' satisfaction was heightened by positive and engaging experiences which included skill development opportunities, meaningful interactions, and support provided to them. This means that event organizers should focus on helping their volunteer's internal drive to enhance their personal development and skills acquisition. Moreover, creating a supportive environment, and embedding activities that develop skills in this area have an impact on an exciting event characterized by meaningful interactions thereby enhancing the spirit of volunteers hence increasing retention and engagement levels. Therefore, to have more significant events with lower attrition rates and motivated workers understanding the complex interrelationships between experience, motivation(s) and satisfaction is key for any event planner.

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