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Volunteer motivation and commitment at a sport-tourism event

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Background

- The sport-tourism sector rely heavily on volunteer resources to deal with the large number of individuals necessary for organizing and producing sport, tourism, and recreation services.
- Volunteers not only help organizations fulfill their mission, but also contribute billions of dollars worth of non-monetary service to the organizations (Tedrick & Henderson, 1989).
- Sport-tourism event managers, pay close attention to their volunteer programs from recruiting to retention (Miller, Schlei, Rider, Hall, Roche, & Worsley, 2002).
- In order to maximize volunteer involvement and commitment to sport event organizations, motivational factors should be considered.
- Understanding what motives influence on volunteers' commitment to the sport-tourism events is a cardinal task for researchers in the sport-tourism field, and the managers of sport-tourism organizations.



Purpose

- The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the aforementioned volunteer motivations as predictors of organizational commitment among volunteers in the annual special sport event - the 2005 Life Time Fitness Triathlon held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Methods

Sample

- One hundred sixty three individuals (females=70, males=93) who volunteered in the 2005 Life Time Fitness Triathlon.

Instrument

- The seven dimensions, *Career Orientation*, *Love of Sport*, *Community Involvement*, *Interpersonal Contacts*, *Extrinsic Rewards*, *Expression of Values*, and *Personal Growth* were measured using Bang and Ross's (2005) validated volunteer motivation questionnaire in a special sport event context.

Methods (cont.)

Instrument (cont.)

- Volunteer commitment to the event organization was measured using the short version of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1982).
- A seven-point Likert type scale was used (1=*Highly Disagree* to 5=*Highly Agree*).

Data Collection

- Life Time Fitness Triathlon participants completed a web based survey after the event.

Analyses

- Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis scale.
- Multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS.



Results

- The reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for each of the seven motivational factors ranged from .80 to .95, meeting the minimum level (.70) recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The commitment scale also exhibited satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha=0.97$).
- To examine the contribution of any possible motivation variable to the prediction of organizational commitment, all of the seven motivation factors were added into the multiple regression equation. The full model equation based on linear combinations of the seven volunteer motivations was significant ($F(7, 116)=16.734, p<.001, R^2=.518, Adjusted R^2=.487$).
- However, not all the variables were found to be significant. The backward elimination search procedure with the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was then employed to identify the most efficient set of motivation predictors.

Results (cont.)

- The finally selected regression model ($F(4, 126) = 24.070, p<.001$) included the four volunteer motivation predictors of *Interpersonal Contacts* ($\beta=0.430, p<0.001$), *Career Orientation* ($\beta=0.267, p<0.05$), *Love of Sport* ($\beta=0.248, p<0.05$), and *Extrinsic Rewards* ($\beta=-0.219, p<0.05$).
- These predictors accounted for approximately 44% of the unique variance in organizational commitment ($R^2=.441, Adjusted R^2 = .423$).
- The negative coefficient for the *Extrinsic Rewards* -- the participants who were more motivated to volunteer by free shirts, visors, and food tended to report lower levels of organizational commitment.
- The ranking of these subscales was Expression of Values ($M=5.54$), Community Involvement ($M=5.33$), Love of Sport ($M=5.15$), Interpersonal Contacts ($M=4.55$), Personal Growth ($M=4.47$), Career Orientation ($M=2.74$), and Extrinsic Rewards ($M=2.72$).

Discussion

- The study contributes to the identification of the predictable motivational factors, such as *Interpersonal Contacts*, *Career Orientation*, *Love of Sport*, and *Extrinsic Rewards*, of volunteer commitment to the organization. Therefore,
- Sport tourism volunteer managers must understand volunteer motivations and their relations with organizational commitment and utilize the information with effective strategies in their volunteer programs.
- Managers would try to match volunteer tasks to individuals' motivations for volunteering in order to reinforce volunteer motivations and create meaningful volunteer experiences.
- Ultimately, by increasing volunteer retention, event organizations can save the time and money from recruiting and training new volunteers, and at the same time increase the effectiveness and satisfaction of their volunteers (Clary, 2004).

