

VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS AT SPORTS EVENTS IN QATAR

– Written by Simon Jones, Qatar

Volunteers are crucial for the delivery of sports services and programmes and are critical to their success³. Volunteering in sports has been described as the “*lifeblood*” of English sports⁴, as the “*heart of sport*” in New Zealand⁵ and as the “*backbone of Australian sporting organisations*”⁶. It is apparent that volunteers are essential in sports.

The recruitment and retention of volunteers has been identified as problematic⁷. Understanding what motivates people to volunteer is very important as this knowledge could help to determine how to encourage people to volunteer and/or continue volunteering³. It is also important to mention that the factors which motivate people to volunteer initially (as a one off experience), might be different

from the factors that motivate them to be involved for longer periods of time⁸.

There is a large amount of literature in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America devoted to volunteers, volunteers in sports and what motivates those people to volunteer, which will be explored in the literature review. There is very little work however, addressing volunteers in the Arabian Gulf and more specifically for the purposes of this study, in Qatar. The author at the time of writing could find no official research pertaining to volunteering in Qatar. As a result, there is an opportunity for fresh research in this field which would hopefully culminate in a better understanding of the motivational factors for volunteers at sports events in Qatar.

Sport England⁴ defined volunteering in sports as “*individual volunteers helping others in sport and receiving either no remuneration or only expenses*” and Volunteering Australia⁹ defined volunteering as “*time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain*”. Currently, no formal definition of sports volunteers or volunteers in general has been officially stated in Qatar. However, in recent years Qatar has hosted a wide range of major sporting events, including the Qatar Open Tennis Tournament, the Qatar Open Golf Masters, the 2006 Asian Games, the 2011 Asian Cup football tournament and the 2015 Men's World Handball Championship and is due to host many more, including the FIFA World Cup 2022¹⁰. Perhaps it is time that a definition was developed.



LITERATURE REVIEW

To compensate for a lack of event employees and to reduce the operational costs of sporting events, organisers reach out to the community asking for volunteers to assist⁸. Various studies have investigated volunteer motivations.

Shilbi et al¹¹ studied the characteristics of volunteers in UK sports clubs and reported that 63% of volunteers did so for self-interest and 44% did so to help people and programme operations.

Characterising sports volunteers with two broad definitions of either altruistic or egoistic may not be satisfactory as the majority of sports volunteers will encompass both altruistic and egoistic motivations for doing what they do¹².

Multi-pronged approaches to sports volunteer motivations have also been presented¹³, recognising three motivation categories; utilitarian (indirect benefits, not money or material), affective (the potential for interpersonal relationships) and normative (altruistic values).

Caldwell and Andereck¹⁴ also identified three types of incentives when assessing volunteer motivations in recreation-related organisations; material (tangible, with a monetary value), solidary (intangible, with emotional attachment) and purposive (with intangible rewards relating to the organisation). Results from their study showed that the most important reason for volunteering was to contribute to society. And the least important reason for volunteering was for material benefit.

Williams et al³ researched volunteer motivations at the Whistler Skiing World Cup (men's) using Caldwell and Andereck's¹⁴ three factor incentive approach and also discovered that purposive incentives were the most important and material incentives were the least important.

Farrell et al¹⁵ proposed an adapted version of a prominent Motivation to Volunteer Scale (MVS) created by Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen⁸. They studied motivations to volunteer at an elite women's curling competition based on four types of

motivational incentives; purposive, solidary, external traditions and commitments. The first two incentive categories were the same as previous studies by Caldwell and Andereck¹⁴, and Williams³ – these were again found to be the most important when it came to the decision to volunteer. External traditions relate to incentives such as family tradition or friends and family also volunteering, while commitments refer to motivations from an external influence such as being expected to volunteer or the potential volunteer's skills were needed.

Strigas and Jackson¹⁶ offered an adapted version of the research carried out by Farrel et al¹⁵. They incorporated aspects of the Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen⁸ MVS. They included incentives from the work carried out by Clary et al¹⁷, adding further additional dimensions such as the career construct. They took into consideration a study by Beard and Ragheb¹⁸ that assessed leisure interests as a motivation. In addition to the reflection on previous studies, they developed some items that were based

TABLE 1: VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS

Material factors

Volunteering experience will look good on my CV
 My employer/school expect me to provide volunteer services
 I wanted to gain some practical experience towards paid employment
 My employer/school will give me extra credit/bonus for volunteering
 I wanted to be recognised for doing volunteer work
 Complimentary items played a very important role in my decision to volunteer
 I feel that volunteering in sports events in Qatar is considered prestigious
 I wanted to experience the feeling of being absorbed by what I do
 Most people in my community volunteer
 Others to whom I am close place a high value on community service
 Sports events mirror Qatar's national heritage, image and values
 I wanted to work with people from different age groups, and/or backgrounds

Purposive factors

I wanted to help make the event a success
 Volunteering for sporting events will enable the organising committee to provide more services for less money
 I wanted to put something back into the community
 It's fun to volunteer at sporting events
 Volunteering at sporting events is worthy of my efforts and attention
 Volunteering creates a better society
 Volunteer activities energise me
 I wanted to interact with others

Leisure factors

I wanted to get away from the responsibilities of everyday life
 I wanted to slow down the pace of life
 Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles
 I wanted to relieve the stress and tension of everyday life
 I wanted to provide myself the excitement I crave
 I was asked by others to volunteer at sports events
 Volunteering makes me feel better about myself
 By volunteering I feel less lonely

Egoistic factors

I wanted to improve my skills and abilities
 I have more free time than I used to
 I wanted to develop relationships with others
 I wanted to challenge my abilities
 I wanted to discover new interests
 I wanted to make new contacts that might help my business or career

External factors

My friends/family/significant others were also volunteering
 I was genuinely concerned about the sports event I volunteered at
 I wanted to be appreciated by my significant others/family/community members
 I wanted to continue a family tradition of volunteering at sports events
 I wanted to gain a feeling of belonging
 I adhere to the organisational committee's specific goals

on sports events literature⁹. They created a five factor model which included the following incentives factors: material, purposive, leisure, egoistic and external. Purposive factors once again emerged as the main incentives for volunteering, further validating the previous studies.

METHOD

Instrumentation

The Strigas and Jackson¹⁶ motivation scale was deemed the most suitable scale to be used. This appeared to be the most relevant based on the literature review; it has an all-inclusive approach and is considered a strong assessment tool²⁰. The expected sample size was also estimated to be similar to Strigas and Jackson (relative to other studies) who received 60 responses, as the author expected a response rate of around 10% from an estimated audience of 1200 people. Archer²¹ reported a 48.3% response rate to online surveys and Sexton et al²² reported a response rate of 53%. However Petchenik and Watermolen²³ warned of only a 2% response rate. The author concluded a target response rate of 10% was both reasonable and cautious.

Volunteers were asked the extent to which certain factors contributed towards their decision to volunteer. A five-point Likert scale was used ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (5) 'strongly agree' (Table 1).

To get an idea of who was responding, seven demographic questions were also asked in the survey including age group, gender, marital status, employment status, nationality, level of education and number of times the participant had volunteered before.

Participants and procedure

The exact sample figure is unknown as the author relied on various sports volunteering group co-ordinators to forward the survey to their database of volunteers from sports events in 2015 and due to confidentiality requirements exact figures could not be revealed. It is estimated that it would be in the region of around 1200 recipients, from volunteers at various sports events in Qatar (Table 2).

Two online surveys were developed using SurveyMonkey[®] with unlimited responses, one in English and one in Arabic (identical

questions). The survey was opened on 28th January 2016 and remained open until 15th February 2016 to allow for just over 2 weeks of collection. The opening page of the survey noted that the survey was confidential and participation voluntary.

Limitations

Certain limitations were acknowledged at the time of creating the survey. Previously-mentioned studies focus on one typology of sports volunteering e.g. Shilbi¹¹; volunteers in UK sports clubs, Williams et al³; volunteers at a skiing event, Strigas and Jackson¹⁶; volunteers at a marathon. The author was concerned about potential low response rates and wanted to have a valid data set so included as many sports volunteer participants as possible.

A comparatively short collection time for responses was noted by the author however the majority of responses were gained in the first few days of the survey being opened.

A follow-up request to participants would have been ideal but the author did not have direct access to the participants and was apprehensive to request this from the collaborators.

RESULTS

From the volunteers that completed the survey, 58% were male and 42% were female. The highest proportion of volunteers that completed the survey were in the age range of 26 to 35 (27%), with 24% in the 36 to 45 age range and 21% in the 19 to 25 range.

Forty-eight percent of respondents were single and 52% were married. Fifty-eight percent of respondents were in full-time employment and 28% were students. Fifty-one percent of respondents were educated to at least the level of a Bachelor's degree. Forty-five percent of respondents had volunteered four times or more.

Indians made up the highest proportion of volunteers with 23% of respondents; this is reflective of the proportion of the population of Qatar²⁴. Respondents from the Philippines made up the next highest proportion of volunteers with 11%, slightly higher than their percentage of Qatar's population (8.5%)²⁴. Qataris made up 10% of the volunteers, slightly lower than their percentage of the population (12%)²⁴.

According to the responses the most important motive with a mean of 4.52, was, "it's fun to volunteer at sporting events". The second most highly rated item with a mean

TABLE 2

<i>Sports event name</i>	<i>Type of sport</i>
Color run	Non-traditional running event
CHI AL SHAQAB	Equine event
Longines Global Champions Tour	Equine event
Doha College 10K race	Running event
Ooredoo Marathon	Running event
Qatar Chain Reaction	Local cycling group
Tri Club Doha	Local triathlon club
Doha Bay Running Club	Local running club
Qatar Foundation Qatar National Sports Day	National sports holiday
Champion of Champions	Modern pentathlon event

Table 2: Sports events in Qatar.

TABLE 3

<i>Highest ranking motives</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>It's fun to volunteer at sporting events</i>	4.52	183	0.80
<i>I wanted to help make the event a success</i>	4.50	183	0.78
<i>Volunteering creates a better society</i>	4.44	183	0.80
<i>I wanted to interact with others</i>	4.34	183	0.89
<i>Volunteer activities energise me</i>	4.33	183	0.85
<i>Lowest ranking motives</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>My employer/school will give me extra credit/bonus for volunteering</i>	2.28	190	1.19
<i>I wanted to get away from the responsibilities of everyday life</i>	2.60	178	1.20
<i>My employer/school expect me to provide volunteer services</i>	2.70	190	1.33
<i>I wanted to slow down the pace of life</i>	2.74	178	1.26
<i>Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles</i>	2.77	178	1.31

Table 3: Highest and lowest volunteer motivations. M=mean Likert score, N=sample size, SD=standard deviation.

of 4.50, was “I wanted to help make the event a success”. The least important motive with a mean of 2.28, was, “my employer/school will give me extra credit/bonus for volunteering”. The second least important motive with a mean of 2.60, was, “I wanted to get away from the responsibilities of everyday life”. Table 3 displays the list of the five highest ranking motives, the 5 lowest ranking motives, their means (M) and standard deviations (SD).

Reliability

The Chronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated using IBM SPSS statistical analysis software in order to test the reliability of the survey. The overall reliability of the survey was 0.953. To test further reliability of the survey the reliability coefficient of each factor was also calculated and revealed a range from 0.783 to 0.901. (Table 4). According to the literature, coefficient values of 0.7 or higher indicate a good level of internal consistency (DeVillis²⁵, Kline²⁶. This survey therefore shows good levels of internal consistency.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

There were more male than female volunteers but the difference was small and

there were more married volunteers than non-married, but once again the difference was small.

The most common age group was that of the 26 to 35 year olds but the spread of volunteers was closely represented by the 36 to 45 and 19 to 25 year olds.

There was a diverse range of nationalities volunteering and their representation seems to be closely matched to each nationality's proportion of the total population of Qatar.

All the motives that belong to the purposive factors showed a high mean value and the five highest ranking motivations for volunteering at Qatar's sports events were all purposive factors. Material and leisure factors showed the lowest mean values for volunteer motives in Qatar's sports events. This is consistent with previous studies (Caldwell and Aldereck²⁴; Williams et al³; Farrell¹⁵; Strigas and Jackson¹⁶).

Understanding what motivates people to volunteer is very important as this knowledge could help determine how to encourage people to volunteer and/or continue volunteering

TABLE 4

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>Alpha coefficient</i>
<i>Material</i>	12	0.901
<i>Purposive</i>	8	0.892
<i>Leisure</i>	8	0.862
<i>Egoistic</i>	6	0.868
<i>External</i>	6	0.783
<i>Whole Survey</i>	40	0.953

Table 4: Reliability of survey and each factor.



The reliability of the instrument was indicated as high when calculated using Alpha coefficients.

Volunteers are motivated by a variety of reasons and it is important to identify and understand which of these needs are the most important (Clary, Snyder and Ridge¹⁷).

This study has helped identify those different needs and should be further analysed for the demographic trends in order to help target certain demographics.

The results will be shared with the collaborators from the various sports events mentioned in Table 2 and discussions will take place on how they can use the data obtained for their benefit in attracting and retaining volunteers.

Hopefully this will serve as a basis for further studies in the area of sports volunteers in Qatar.

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References
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*Simon Jones PG.Dip.
Recreation Supervisor
Facilities and Community Services
Qatar Foundation
Doha, Qatar
Contact: sjones@qf.org.qa*