Olympic Volunteers: the case of 2018 Games

Keunsu Han,
Ph. D., Associate Professor
Department of Kinesiology, Towson University
Yong-Yeon Ji
Ph. D., Associate Professor
Department of Management, Towson University
Jin Dong Park
Ph. D., Associate Professor
Department of Accounting, Towson University

Abstract

The role of volunteers has become a core component for the overall success of major international sport events. In recent years, the Olympics, considered to be the world's biggest sporting event could not be hosted without the contribution of a large number of volunteers. From the large number of volunteers, the Olympic organizing committee could not only obtain a huge financial advantage but also create a positive energy and culture. Despite the significance of volunteers in the Olympics, research on Olympic volunteers' motivations is still limited. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the motives and future intentions of volunteers at the 2018 Olympics, and investigate the factorial structure of the Motivation Scale adapted for this study. Data were collected from a volunteer sample of 36 individuals who offered their services at the 2018 Olympic Games. The results from the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression show that only the "Volunteer Attachment" variable out of the four factors of volunteer motivation has a significantly positive relationship with volunteers' future intention. This study will provide information that could enhance effective volunteer recruitment and retention in the Olympics.

Key words Volunteers, Motivation, Olympics, Future intention, Volunteer instrument

1. Introduction

Volunteer service has become a key part for the overall success of major international sport events (Dickson, Darcy, Edwards, & Terwiel, 2015; Doherty, 2010; Han 2015; Wu, Li, & Khoo, 2015). The Olympics could not be hosted without the contribution of a large number of volunteers; the importance of Olympic volunteers has been extensively acknowledged. Olympic volunteers became more critical because their diverse service areas include health services, technology, customer service, press and communications, protocol and languages, transport, opening and closing ceremonies, and operational support for the hosting Organizing Committee, etc.

According to Chalip (2000), there were 40,917 volunteers in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and their economic value was more than $60 million. Based on this calculation the cost to pay around 70,000 volunteers in the 2016 Rio Olympics would be more than $100 million. This conservative estimate included a minimum wage for only two weeks. Usually many of the volunteers in the Olympics have been paid much more than the minimum wage, so the real cost could be doubled or tripled. In a recent survey about volunteer applicants for 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, more than 30 percent of the applicants answered that they are willing to work for 20 days or more despite the expected service of ten days by the organizing committee (Janpantimes, 2018).

In the 2018 Olympic Games there were 16,209 volunteers out of the total number of 87,000 staff More than 1,000 volunteers came from outside South Korea with at least 12 different languages being spoken. The youngest volunteers were 16 years old, while the oldest was 88, showing that age was no barrier to getting involved and having the experience of a lifetime (Olympic.org). The Tokyo 2020 programme kicked off in 2018, two years before the event. The number of applications for volunteer jobs during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics has topped the organizing committee's target of 80,000 with a total of 186,101 applications, which far exceeded the required 80,000 positions. 37 percent consisted of people from foreign nationalities, a stark contrast to previous Olympics where the majority of volunteers were locals (Kyodonews, 2018).

The continuously growing significance of Olympic volunteers has been paralleled by a substantial growth in the use of Olympics in the economic and social development strategies of hosting cities and countries (Ahn, 2018; Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007). As a result of the increasingly important role of Olympic volunteers, there has been a raised interest in the means to build and maintain an Olympic volunteer workforce (Dickson, Benson, & Terwiel, 2014; Koutrou, Pappous, & Johson, 2014; Pate, Hardin, & Hums, 2017). This is crucial; not only to obtain and retain volunteers for the Games, but also to secure experienced volunteers who expect to come back for the next Olympics. Unlike other volunteers, Olympic volunteers are required to have special skills including knowledge about sports and language-fluency in many cases. These skills will enable them to provide services and comply with the requirements of the Olympic Games (Pestereva, 2015). If the organizing committees can have experienced and returning volunteers from previous Olympics, it would be a huge advantage in facilitating a successful Olympics.

From such a large number of volunteers, especially experienced volunteers, the Olympic organizing committee could not only create a huge financial advantage but also create a positive energy and culture. Despite the significance of volunteers in the Olympics, research on Olympic volunteers' motivations and returning volunteers is still limited. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the motives and future intentions of volunteers at the 2018 Olympics.

In addition, this study discusses the factorial structure of the Motivation Scale adapted for this study based on previous literature.

2. Literature review

2.1. Volunteer Motivation in Olympics

Discussing the evolution of volunteers in the Olympics, Moreno, Moragas, and Paniagua. (1999) presented five types of motivations such as: the spirit of solidarity enshrined in the Olympic philosophy, commitment as citizens, members of an association and nation, individual challenge, belonging to a group, identification as a member of that group, and the various forms of individual gratification. Studying volunteers in the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics, Bang, Alexandris, and Ross (2008) revised VMSISE and presented seven factors such as: expression of values, patriotism, interpersonal contacts, career orientation, personal growth, extrinsic rewards, and love of sports. These findings are similar to the factors presented in Bang and Ross (2009), except that patriotism was used instead of community involvement. In other words, Bang et al. (2008) which studied the volunteers in the Olympics found patriotism significant, while Bang and Ross (2009) studied the volunteers in the marathon and found community involvement significant. However, community involvement corresponds to patriotism. In addition, studying volunteers in the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Winter Olympics, Pate et al. (2017) identified four motivational factors such as: expression of values, interpersonal contacts, career orientation, and personal growth. This finding is not aligned with previous research because the volunteers in the Paralympic events were driven by their experience resulting in individual growth or benefits rather than the connection with the sports, the event, or the community. The volunteers in this study desired to develop friendships and social networks.

As noted above, there is no consensus in identifying the motivating factors across sporting events. The motivating factors vary depending on the nature of the events regarding non-sporting events, single-sporting events, and mega-sporting events. At the same time, the motivating factors differ between the Olympics and the Paralympics. Moreover, concerning the comparison between the community involvement factor with the patriotism factor, it is reasonable to expect that the socio-cultural environment may influence why people want to volunteer. For example, Bang and Ross (2009) argue that the patriotism factor was associated with "regional tribalism" (Matsuoka & Chelladurai, 2001), which is a component of a fan's identification with a sports team. According to Matsuoka and Chelladurai (2001), individuals who are attached to a region tend to identify themselves with teams and events located in the community; thus, the primary motive for volunteering is to support the success of the event. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the volunteer motivation study may yield different sets of motivation depending on the socio-cultural environment of the city/nation hosting the event.

2.2. Future Volunteering Intention

Future volunteering intention refers to the actual intent to participate in volunteering activities and training in the Olympics. Although repeat volunteerism is mostly associated with stationary, single destination events that occur on a regular basis, it also occurs with non-stationary events where individuals travel to volunteer at events, such as the Olympic Games (Fairley et al., 2007). The Olympics organizing committees should aim for attracting and retaining individuals with strong future volunteering intentions

because they are willing to travel to support the Olympics. These volunteers also tend to have enhanced skills, knowledge, and experience with the Olympics, which managers can utilize to reduce the duration and cost of volunteer training (Elstad, 1996; Fairley, Gardiner, & Filo, 2016). While the extant literature explored the antecedents of intentions to volunteering, such as motivation and extrinsic rewards (Bang, Won, & Kim, 2009; Dickson et al., 2015; Lai, Ren, Wu, & Hung, 2013; Wakelin, 2013), little attention has been placed on the future volunteering intention for the Olympics.

The extant literature presents numerous factors influencing the future volunteering intentions: volunteer role identity, cost & benefit comparison, and personal development. First, it has been generally suggested that one of the key factors strengthening the likelihood of repetitive volunteering behavior is the development of a volunteer role identity (Callero, Howard, & Piliavin, 1987; Chacón, Vecina, & Dávila, 2007; Jiménez, Fuertes, & Abad, 2010; Van Dyne & Farmer, 2005). According to the role identity theory, the volunteer role that individuals undertake becomes gradually incorporated over time into the individuals' self-concept (Van Dyne & Farmer, 2005). The role identity theory also recognizes the importance of the social context in developing such a self-concept because the volunteer identity is derived from ongoing social interactions, as well as from the perceived expectations of others (Brennan, 2005). In addition, the stronger individuals identify themselves with their volunteer roles, the more likely they will become to continue to engage in the volunteering activity (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Piliavin, Grube, & Gallero; Van Dyne & Farmer, 2005). In an event-specific context, individuals who have a good experience while volunteering are more likely to volunteer for future events (e.g., Doherty, 2009; Downward & Ralston, 2006; Twynam, Farrell, & Johnston, 2002).

Second, according to the social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), individuals will continue to engage in activities where they expect benefits to outweigh costs. Thus, predicting future volunteering intentions, Doherty (2009) posits that individuals are more likely to become repeat volunteers if the benefits of volunteering (e.g., making new friends and learning new skills) outweigh the costs (e.g., time and resources spent for volunteering, opportunity costs associated with unpaid work). Finally, Downward and Ralston (2006) also found that opportunities for personal development were a key predictor of future volunteering intentions. These findings are aligned with Fairley et al. (2016) who found that volunteering at the 2000 Sydney Olympics could be the impetus to revive a volunteer career and to develop a volunteer role identity that can positively influence future volunteer behaviors.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design and sampling method

This quantitative study was designed as a non-experimental cross-sectional descriptive study and the survey method was employed because of the economy of the design and the quick turnaround in collecting the data. A cross-sectional study is defined as an examination of a phenomenon that occurs one point in time (Depoy & Gitlin, 1994). In utilizing the survey, a non-probability sampling method was adopted, and a convenience sampling technique was used to select subjects. Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling technique, which is typically conducted in a non-probability sampling method. The population of this study includes all volunteers in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games and the sample was non-randomly selected from volunteers who can speak English.

3.2. Instrumentation

The instrument of this study consists of three parts including demographic characteristics, volunteer motivation, and future volunteering intention. Demographic characteristics were made up of: (a) basic personal information, such as gender, race, age, income, and level of education; (b) information relating to past volunteering experiences, and past sport volunteering experiences; and (c) employment status, whether part-time or full-time.

For measuring of volunteer motivation, data were collected using the Olympic Volunteer Motivation Questionnaire (OVMQ). This multidimensional instrument was modified from Han's (2007) proposed model for volunteer motivation scale in order to assess the major dimensions of volunteer motivation in the 2018 Olympics. This questionnaire was created for the present study and named as the Olympic Volunteer Motivation Questionnaire. This 4-factor model, which included Organization Attachment (OA), Volunteer Attachment (VA), Internal Benefits (IB) and External Benefits (EB) contained a total of 20 items with five questions for each dimension (Table 1). In addition, the instrument added three items to measure the level of future intention (FI) to volunteer in the Olympics (Table 2).

Elements of the survey instrument for this study were modified from existing scales and a panel of experts, including sport management professors (n=3), skilled volunteer staffs in the 2018 Olympics (n=2), and researchers on sport volunteerism (n=3), examined the questionnaires for content validity. Respondents indicated level of agreement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3. Participants

In the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics, over 90,000 people applied for 14,500 volunteer positions and there were more than 1,000 volunteers who came from outside South Korea. The selected volunteers participated in a series of training sessions including an introduction to the Games and teamwork building (running from March to August 2017), leadership training (September to December 2017), role-specific training (September to March 2018) and venue training (January to February 2018). Volunteers recruited from abroad completed their online training so they could begin their service with only basic, role-specific and venue training when they arrived in South Korea. Also there were more than 5,000 group applicants, including students from the United States' George Washington University and others recruited through agreements that are already in place.

The data for this study were usually collected from English-speaking volunteers recruited from abroad and Korean volunteers who spoke English. The questionnaires were distributed to volunteers who participated in the 2018 Winter Games; the total sample size using this study was 36 participants.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (IBM SPSS STATISTICS 23) and SAS (SAS 12.1). Data received from the returned questionnaires were screened through descriptive analysis. To examine the relationship between volunteer motivation factors and volunteers' future intentions, we employed the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses by SAS (SAS 12.1). In each of the regression models, we adopted each of the 4 different dependent variables such as 3 future intention items (FI_1, FI_2 and FI_3) and the sum of the three variables (FI_Sum). The independent variables commonly used in all of the regression models consist of main test variables and

control variables. The main test variables are the aggregate variables (OA_Sum, VA_Sum, IB_Sum and EB_Sum) representing volunteer motivation factors and control variables include the variables representing respondents demographic characteristics.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the results from the ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions. Each of the four dependent variables, FI_1, FI_2, FI_3, and FI_Sum, in the regression models indicates the level of volunteers' future intentions. FI_Sum is an aggregate measure, which is computed by adding FI_1, FI_2 and FI_3. The main test predictors in the regression models are the four variables such as OA_Sum, VA_Sum, IB_Sum and EB_Sum. They are all aggregate measures and each of them assesses a different property of volunteer motivations. In addition to the above predictors, one would argue that a subject's personal characteristics such as their gender, age and past experiences would potentially affect their future intentions. To take this possibility into account, we included a total of 11 control variables representing volunteers' personal characteristics, such as Gender, Marital, Race, Income, Education, Employment, Student, Age, Volunteer Experience, Sports Volunteer Experience, and Sport Job.

The overall results in Table 1 demonstrate that, in the four variables representing volunteer motivations, only the variable of VA_Sum has a significantly positive relationship with volunteers' future intentions after controlling for subject personal characteristics. To be specific, the estimated coefficient of VA_Sum in the regression model with FI_Sum as a dependent variable is 0.628 and significant at the 1% level (t-value: 3.95). This finding suggests that volunteers' personal attachment such as their prestigious recognition of their service could be an important driving force to make them continue their voluntary service in future sporting events. However, the results reveal that, inconsistent with our expectation, the other variables representing volunteer motivations, such OA_Sum representing their organization attachment, IB_Sum representing their internal benefits and EB_Sum representing their external benefits, do not significantly affect volunteers' future intentions.

In the regression model with an individual future intention variable (FI_1, FI_2 or FI_3) as a dependent variable, the results are not qualitatively changed compared to those with FI_Sum. For example, the estimated coefficient of VA_Sum in the model of FI_2 (FI_3) is 0.227 (0.262) and statistically significant at the 1% level, confirming the positive relationship between volunteers' personal attachment and their future intentions.

However, it is quite interesting that the relationship between VA_Sum and FI_1 is at the 10% level, which is weak compared to those with FI_2 and FI_3. The weak relationship between VA_Sum and FI_1 implies that volunteers are not very willing to recommend voluntary service to their close relatives or family members although they strongly view their voluntary service very valuable and prestigious and boosts their own self esteem.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables: Future Intention						
	FI_1		FI_2		FI_3		FI_Sum	
Intercept	2.342		0.020		-0.518		1.844	
Demographic Characteristics:								
Gender	0.221		-0.251		-0.063		-0.094	
Marital	0.165		0.562	**	0.396	*	1.124	*
Race	0.032		0.149		0.104		0.284	
Income	0.253		0.259		0.276		0.789	
Education	0.189		0.176		0.162		0.527	
Employment	0.083		-0.137		-0.141		-0.196	
Student	-0.478		-0.779	*	-0.764	*	-2.022	*
Age	-0.037		0.015		0.010		-0.012	
Vol_Exp	0.013		-0.007		-0.001		0.005	
Sport_Vol_Exp	0.042		0.028		0.011		0.080	
Sport_Job	-0.388		-0.290		-0.079		-0.757	
Voluntary Motivations:								
OA_Sum	-0.004		-0.028		-0.031		-0.063	
VA_Sum	**0.139**	*	**0.227**	***	**0.262**	***	**0.628**	***
IB_Sum	-0.044		-0.048		-0.041		-0.133	
EB_Sum	0.033		0.052		0.028		0.114	
N	36		36		36		36	
Adj. R2	0.148		0.323		0.444		0.363	
F-value	1.41		2.11	*	2.86	**	2.33	**

***, **, and * indicate significance at less than the 1%, 5% and 10% using a two-tailed test.

The variable definitions are same as those in Table 1.

Table 1. OLS Regression Results

5. Discussion

Volunteerism has been important concerns to the Olympic Movement as Richard Pound (1999), IOC first vice president, has mentioned, "the Olympic Movement is a social phenomenon based, fundamentally, on the activities of volunteers" (p. 1). In addition, the success of non-profit organizations such as the Olympic Organizing Committee relies greatly on volunteer service during the Olympic Games. Since the 1980s, Olympic volunteers have become increasingly valuable resources for organizing Olympic Games and carrying out their day-to-day functions (Karlis, 2008), there are no clear guidelines and/or strategies as to how to retain volunteers in the future Games by measuring their motivation appropriately and effectively. Given the importance of retaining volunteers, this research focused on understanding volunteers' intentions to continue volunteering in future Olympic Games.

This current research revealed empirical evidence linking motivation and future intention for volunteering in the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Games. This relationship is crucial to understanding

volunteer characteristics of Olympic volunteers with a recent vested interest around the $100 million value.

Unlike previous research to measure volunteer motivation in Olympics by multi-dimensional scales, this study used the four-factor model by modifying the proposed Olympic Volunteer Motivation Questionnaire (OVMQ) for the first time. In comparison with the previous motivation scale, the OVMQ integrated all conceptually similar factors by securitizing previous studies concerning volunteer motivation in a sporting event setting, as well as general management. In order to simplify redundant factors, the OVMQ conceptualized two basic major motives for volunteering, such as, altruism and egoism.

The four-factor model in this current study conceptualizes two subcategories per each major motive mentioned above (altruistic and egoistic motives) to volunteer in the Olympics. Altruistic concepts can be divided into organization attachment (OA) and volunteer attachment (VA). The purposive factor, which was the only altruistic factor that included both scales by Farrell et al. (1998) and Strigas (2001), is conceptually separated into two subcategories in the OVMQ. Volunteer attachment involves incentives relating to the concern for others and for society. Organization attachment indicates pride in and love of the organization, allegiance to the organization, and the success of the event. Specifically, "patriotism" (Bang et al., 2009) could be well fitted in this category as a motive to volunteer in the Olympics. According to Nakajima (1999) most Olympic volunteers come from the host nation and one important attribute of these volunteers is patriotism, that is, helping to promote the host city and country (Ronningen, 1999). Olympic volunteers must have a sense of national pride, must value cooperation, and must promote the Olympic spirit (Kikou, 2001). For example, the item, "I want to help make the event a success" by Farrell et al. and the item, "I am genuinely concerned about the particular club (city, country, and community) I am serving" by Strigas might be categorized as organization attachment, while the item "volunteering creates a better society" by Farrell et al. can be included in the factor of volunteer attachment in Olympic Games.

While altruistic motives include OA and VA, egoistic concept can be divided into internal benefits (IB) and external benefits (EB). As mentioned above, five factors of Bang et al.'s seven-factor model, three factors of Farrell et al.'s four-factor model (1998) and four factors of Strigas' five-factor model (2001) are connected to egoistic motives for volunteers. The OVMQ combines these factors with one major factor (egoism) and two subcategories. Internal benefits are related to personal growth, including gaining new experiences and career contacts, feeling important and needed, and career development. Internal benefits can be supported in the items such as "I want to gain some practical experience" by Farrell et al. (1998), and "I wanted to improve my skills and abilities through my volunteer assignments" by Strigas (2001). External benefits indicate tangible benefits such as getting free uniforms, food, and free admission. Given the conceptualization of egoism, the concept of "Love of Sport" by Bang and Ross (2009) also could be categorized as internal benefits. Both constructs of internal and external benefits might be appropriate motives to explain younger or student volunteers in Olympics. In summary, the four-factor model includes as shown Table 5: (1) Altruism-Organizational attachment (OA), (2) Altruism-Volunteer attachment (VO), (3) Egoism-Internal benefit (IB), and (4) Egoism-External benefit (EB).

We also found that volunteer attachment (VA) only positively predicted future volunteering intentions. This finding is not consistent with the study by Johnson et al. (2017) and the study by Wu et al. (2015). According to Johnson et al. career and social motives were the significant predictors for the

future intention. It might be said that it was caused because the sample in the study was limited to sport management student volunteers. Career and social motivational factor can be categorized as IE or EB in the OVMQ. As mentioned above, both constructs of internal and external benefits might be appropriate motives to explain student volunteers in Olympics. The study by Wu et al. (2015) used the single-factor model to measure intrinsic motivation to volunteer (e.g., "Because I enjoy volunteering very much"). Therefore, it is hard to compare it with four-factor model in this study.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Motivational Factors to Volunteer		Explanation of Factors
Altruism (Helping Others)	Organization Attachment (OA)	pride in and love of the organization / allegiance to the organization/ the success of Olympics/ patriotism
	Volunteer Attachment (VA)	concern for others and society
Egoism (Personal Benefits)	Internal Benefits (IB) (Personal Growths)	gaining new experience and career contacts & skill/ feeling important and needed, career development/ love of sports
	External Benefits (EB) (Tangible Benefits)	Getting free uniforms, food, and admission/ meeting and interacting with others/ forming friendships

Table 2. Four Factor Models to Measure Volunteer Motivation

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