
Behavioural characteristics of student volunteers

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ABSTRACT

Sport and sport events provide a significant source of volunteering opportunities for a wide range of individuals and especially for young people. Organisers of major sport events often target the youth market to source volunteers due to the apparent high level of interest in sport by this group. Consequently, it is suggested that sport may act as a nursery for volunteering and therefore the experiences afforded to young people in sport may be critical for their future volunteer involvement, not only in sport but the broader third sector. However, little is known about youth volunteer behaviour. This study sought to identify the characteristics and volunteer behaviour of a cohort of tertiary students, reasons for those behaviours and the implications for sport event managers. A total of 208 self-administered questionnaires were completed in an in-class convenience sample from three universities in Brisbane.

The results indicated that although many reasons that influence the decision to initially volunteer or to subsequently cease volunteering are personal in nature and cannot be directly controlled by organisations, there are a number of factors that can be influenced by management. These factors are generally concerned with the way that volunteers are trained and managed and are particularly focused on the nature of the work, quality of supervision and perceived outcomes such as gaining employment related skills. These factors should influence the way volunteer experiences are planned and delivered to the youth market.

INTRODUCTION

The substantial contribution of volunteers to sport in general and major sport events in particular is well documented (eg, Farrell, Johnston & Twynam, 1998; Johnston, Twynam & Farrell, 2000; Solberg, 2003). Despite some evidence to suggest that the specific nature of certain types of events can hold appeal for particular groups of potential volunteers (Saleh & Wood, 1998), the literature has generally focussed on sport volunteers as a single market. However, the motivations and experiences of sport volunteers may vary according to demographic and dispositional characteristics (Farrell et al, 1998) and by the nature of the volunteer opportunity, for example either through regular 'seasonal' involvement or as a one-off major sport event experience (Johnston

et al, 2000). Coleman (2002, p. 220) concluded that "policy support agencies and sports governing bodies should be cautious of treating sports volunteers as a homogenous group". Little research attention has been given to youth volunteers even though the organisers of major sport events often target their volunteer recruitment campaigns at the youth 'market' due to the apparent appeal that sport has to younger generations.

The recruitment of youth volunteers for such events may take a variety of forms including, for example, open invitations/advertisements or more formally structured recruitment programs through schools and universities. At university level some of these programs may extend to credit bearing experi-

ences such as industry placements. During 2000 such an opportunity was offered to students in the case of the pre-Olympic event and competition program conducted in Queensland. The programme organised through the then Queensland Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing, sought the involvement of the three Brisbane-based universities: Griffith University, the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology. The basis of the approach was to use university students as volunteers for the pre-Olympic training and competition schedule and to administer this process through the respective university practicum and industry training courses.

However, little is known about youth volunteer behaviour and although it was envisaged that the opportunity to be involved with the program would be popular, it was vital, for a number of reasons, that the experience was one that was rewarding and met student expectations. First of all, the number of people from the 18-24 year age group who volunteer increased significantly from 1995 to 2000 (ABS, 2002) and this group makes a substantial contribution to volunteering efforts in Australia. Secondly, sport and recreation organisations are one of the largest sources of volunteering in Australia and because sport and recreation is of great interest to youth, it may be that for many career volunteers, this is the sector in which they have their initial experiences as a volunteer. If this is the case, sport and recreation have the potential to act as a 'nursery' for future volunteer involvement in other third sector organisations and therefore are worthy of research attention. Houlihan (2001, p. 1) argued that "as a source of empowerment for citizens and as institutions of civil society in their own right sport and recreation professions have a significant contribution to make".

The purpose of this research was to determine the nature of student volunteer behaviour, to investigate attitudes toward volunteering and the factors that influence student choices about volunteering. To assist in this goal, a survey of the students who formed the volunteer cohort for the pre-Olympic event and competition program was conducted prior to their involvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The leisure industry relies heavily on volunteers and this is particularly the case for sport and recreation

service delivery. In Australia in 2000, approximately 4.4 million adult volunteers (aged 18 years and over) contributed 704 million hours of volunteer labour, an increase on the 1995 total of 512 million hours contributed by 3.2 million volunteers. Furthermore, although the increase in volunteer numbers in Australia occurred in all age groups, the 18-24 age category recorded one of the largest changes (from 17% to 27%). However, while the ABS reported an overall median of 1.4 hours per week of voluntary work, the 18-24 years age group recorded one of the lowest rates (1.1 hours per week) (ABS, 2002).

Of those that volunteered in 2000, 21% did so for sport and recreation organisations (ABS, 2002). This data is consistent with that in the USA (Gerson, 1997) and the UK (Taylor, Shibli, Gratton & Nichols, 1996). Furthermore, an earlier government report estimated that in Australia in 1989, voluntary work in the delivery of sport and recreation services was worth approximately \$2 billion annually, realising an annual saving of \$330 per Australian household in additional taxes (Davies, 1998).

MOTIVES FOR VOLUNTEERING

The area of volunteer motivation is a complex and multifaceted one (Winniford, Carpenter & Grider, 1997) and despite a substantial volume of material there is still little agreement among researchers about volunteer motives (Cuskelly & Harrington, 1997). For example, Noonan (1998, p. 124) argued that "other than a unified spirit of caring, there is little that is typical about these people who give so freely of their time." Motives commonly identified have included: social contact, to help others, fill time, gain recognition, meet the expectations of others, help achieve goals of organisations, personal enrichment, develop skills, fun and enjoyment, having a sense of accomplishment, self-expression and improving self-image (Davies, 1998).

Parker (1997) argued that there were four basic reasons for volunteering: altruistic, market, cause-serving and, leisure, whereas Clary, Snyder and Stukas (1996) suggested six broad motivational functions: social, value, career, understanding, enhancement and protective. Clary and others argued that although individuals may be involved in similar voluntary activities, their goals can vary widely. While these views suggest that the area is complex, a more

thorough understanding of volunteer behaviour should be pursued "in order to respond effectively to management needs in the areas of recruitment, retention and daily operations" (Farrell et al, 1998, p. 289).

VOLUNTEER TRENDS

Some authors have argued that there has been a decline in volunteering (Lyons & Fabiansson, 1998; Nichols, Gratton, Shibli, & Taylor, 1998; Gaskin, 1998; Davies, 1998; Daly, 1991) and others that the future of volunteering is "grim" (Oppenheimer & Warburton, 2000, p. 7). Oppenheimer and Warburton also suggested that interpretation of data on volunteer trends is made difficult by variations in the way that volunteering is defined. In addition, while ABS figures indicate that overall volunteer numbers appear to have increased in Australia, in the sport and recreation sector, some evidence suggests that the hours contributed by individual volunteers has decreased by 20 per cent and that volunteers tended to stay with sport organisations for shorter periods (Cuskelly, 2001).

Nichols and others (1998) outlined a range of factors that may have affected volunteer participation rates including: people being less willing to devote as much time or commit themselves to a long term of office; having increased in family commitments; a perceived decrease in time available outside paid work; government policy that gives consumer rights precedence over the rights and responsibilities of citizens (creating a perceived need to work longer hours in order to claim those consumer rights); and, an increasing demand for 'professionalism' in volunteering (eg, accountability, computing skills, the ability to submit 'professional' grant applications and an increased need to be aware of legislative requirements). Nichols and others concluded that these trends have changed the nature of leisure service delivery organisations in the UK from operating on an informal and friendly basis to one that is highly structured and professionalised. Furthermore, as professionals gradually assume greater responsibility within these organisations, volunteers may feel that they are no longer required and that because someone is now being paid to do the job, why should they continue to contribute for nothing (Auld & Godbey, 1998; Auld, 1997; Abrams, Long, Talbot & Welch,

1996). Furthermore, some potential volunteers may feel they do not have the skills required to be effective in this new professionalised and more accountable environment particularly when there are perceptions that society is becoming more litigious (Auld & Cuskelly, 2001). These perceptions may be felt more keenly by younger volunteers.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

An apparent decline in volunteering by younger people (Gaskin, 1998) was of considerable interest to the present study. The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering (Davies, 1998) in the UK revealed that volunteering by those in the 16-24 age category dropped from 55% to 43% between 1991 and 1997. Similarly in the USA, Robinson and Godbey (1997) reported decreased participation by 'Generation Xers' (18-24 years age group) in a range of voluntary activities. Although these trends appear to be the opposite of those reported by the ABS (2002), a study of volunteers at the 1999 Queensland Surf Life Saving State Championships indicated that less than 24% of event volunteers were under 40. Despite an age range from 14-75 years, the average age of volunteers was 48.7 years and more than one third of the sample was aged over 55 (Cuskelly, Auld & Harrington, 1999).

The reasons for a possible decline in younger volunteers may include: young people are under increasing pressure to study and find paid employment (Davies, 1998); the demands for a professional approach in sport and recreation organisations deters would be volunteers from becoming involved in work for which they are not trained, especially for those in younger age groups (Davies, 1998); and, members of contemporary society do not seem willing to commit to the long term and additional requirements associated with membership of traditional voluntary organisations (Fost, 1996). Modern volunteers seem more likely to prefer a short one-off involvement, possibly on a regular basis and for such occasional volunteers, a feeling of personal control is a prime motive for action. Perceived ineffectiveness can be a strong disincentive to re-engage and therefore, it is important to facilitate an internal locus of control in volunteers (Gerson, 1997).

As argued by Gaskin (1998, p. 33), instead of "attempting to make young people fit into existing

volunteering, we should reshape volunteering to accommodate them” and similarly, other authors have argued that fewer young people now volunteer because traditional voluntary organisations have an image problem and need to reposition themselves in order to be attractive to the youth market (Fost, 1996; Stengel, 1996; Joseph, 1995). Consistent with this view, Green and Chalip (1998) argued that volunteer retention is essentially a marketing problem. While these views suggest that many service organisations may not be in touch with the values and attitudes of contemporary volunteers, it seems that some organisations in the USA, such as Public Allies, Do Something and City Cares America, are still able to attract younger people (Auld & Cuskelly, 2001). Such organisations are likely to be less burdened by traditional approaches and subsequently can provide more flexible arrangements for volunteer participation. Therefore, the volunteer opportunities provided by these service organisations, due to the potential for immediate rewards and controllable time commitments, may be more appealing to contemporary society (Coolsen & Wintz, 1998; Fost, 1996; Stengel, 1996; Joseph 1995).

The trends related to younger volunteers were especially relevant to the pre-Olympic training and competition program organised in Queensland prior to the 2000 Olympic Games. The program aimed to rely heavily on younger (university age) volunteers and because of the dearth of information about the volunteer behaviour of this age group, data on potential volunteers were collected to assist with planning and marketing the volunteer program.

The main goals of the research project were to:

- establish a demographic profile of potential student volunteers;
- analyse the nature of current and previous volunteer involvement; and,
- determine the major factors influencing volunteer behaviour of students.

METHODS

Data were collected from an in-class convenience sample utilising a nine page self-administered questionnaire based on an instrument originally developed by Auld and Cuskelly (1999; 2001). The sample comprised first, second and third year

students in degree programs in Leisure Studies, Human Movement Studies and Movement Science at the Brisbane-based campuses of Griffith University, University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology respectively. These students formed the cohort from which the volunteers were derived.

The survey respondents were initially asked to respond to a number of demographic questions and then to indicate their current volunteer status in relation to community-based organisations by categorising themselves as either:

- never having volunteered for a community-based organisation;
- had volunteered for a community-based organisation but stopped; or,
- currently volunteering for a community-based organisation.

The respondents were also asked a number of questions concerning the nature of their volunteer participation were asked and to indicate the relative importance of a number of possible reasons why they had either: never volunteered, stopped volunteering, or were continuing to volunteer. The latter questions were measured using a five point Likert-type scale (ie, 1 – ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 – ‘strongly agree’).

A total of 208 surveys were completed. These comprised 106 (51%) from Griffith University, 52 (25%) from the University of Queensland and 50 (24%) from Queensland University of Technology. The average age of respondents was 21.9 years although more than half (51.9%) of the sample was 20 years or younger. Well over half of the sample was female (54.3%) (see Table 1).

Almost 90% of respondents were born in Australia and only 1.5% indicated that they had a chronic or permanent disability. As expected in a sample of this nature, about three-quarters (74.5%) indicated high school as their highest level of education completed although 12.7% had already completed a degree and a further 10.3% had a diploma or TAFE qualification. More than three-quarters (77.4%) were employed on a part-time basis. Most students who were employed worked in the clerical/sales/service category (62.2%), followed by professional/para-professional (15.9%) and then labouring with 11.6% (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic summary of respondents

ItemSurvey respondents*	
Gender	
Male	45.7%
Female	54.3%
Birthplace	
Australian born	89.4%
Born overseas (English speaking)	6.8%
Born overseas (Non-English speaking)	3.9%
Highest Education Level	
High School	74.5%
TAFE/Assoc Dip	10.3%
Degree	12.7%
Age group (years)	
18-20	51.9%
21-23	34.1%
23+	14%
Labour force	
Employed full-time	2.9%
Employed part-time	77.4%
Not in labour force	18.7%
Occupational group	
Manager / administrator	3.7%
Professional / para-professional	15.9%
Trade / related worker	5.5%
Clerical / sales / service worker	62.2%
Production / transport / labourer	12.8%

* Some totals may not equal 100% as some categories have been omitted to facilitate comparison

BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTINUING AND CEASING VOLUNTEERS

Of the 208 responses, 24% had never volunteered, 39.9% had stopped volunteering (a total of 63.9% current non-volunteers), and 36.1% were currently volunteering. The data indicated that those respondents who had stopped volunteering, had contributed a median of 4.0 hours per week into the organisation(s) for which they volunteered. This was the same as the hours contributed per week for current volunteers. The number of hours contributed per week ranged from zero to 50 hours although the distribution was somewhat skewed and most volunteers (past or current) put in very few hours per week. Almost 60% of ceasing volunteers had

contributed four hours or less per week compared to 67% of continuing volunteers. However these figures are somewhat higher than those reported by the ABS (2002). The ABS report indicated that in 2000, the overall median hours of voluntary work per week was 1.4 and 1.1 hours per week for the 18-24 years age group.

Three-quarters (74.7%) of those who had stopped volunteering had contributed two years or less to the organisation for which they once volunteered. Continuing volunteers were likely to sustain their volunteer work over a longer period of time as 29.3% of this group had a history of three to five years of volunteer service and 12.0% had contributed more than 6 years (see Table 2). This result was somewhat surprising given the average age of the sample.

Table 2: Years active as a volunteer

Years volunteering	Frequency (%)	
	Discontinued Volunteering (n=83)	Continuing to Volunteer (n=75)
Less than 1 year	37.3	25.3
1-2 years	37.3	29.3
3-5 years	18.1	29.3
6-10 years	3.6	12.0
More than 10 years	3.6	4.0

Table 3: Main community organisation in which volunteering took place

Main organisation	Frequency (%)	
	Discontinued Volunteering (n=83)	Continuing to Volunteer (n=75)
Sport and recreation	78.3	74.3
Cultural (eg, festivals, theatre groups)	2.4	4.1
Community development (eg. Lions, Neighbourhood watch, Kindergartens, P & C associations)	10.8	10.8
Other	8.4	10.8

The majority of volunteer involvement occurred in sport and recreation organisations. For this age group and specific sample, cultural and community development organisations were either less appealing and/or may simply have provided fewer opportunities to volunteer than did sport and recreation organisations (see Table 3). Despite these qualifiers, this finding does lend some support for the view that sport and recreation organisations may be a significant source of early volunteer experiences.

REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING OR NOT VOLUNTEERING

The respondents were asked to respond to a number of statements about possible reasons why they had either: never volunteered, stopped volunteering, or were continuing to volunteer. The relative impor-

tance of the reasons was measured using a five point Likert-type scale.

DECIDING TO NEVER VOLUNTEER

Personal constraints were the most important reasons provided by the 'never volunteered' group for their non-involvement as volunteers (see Table 4). These included such factors as other commitments, work and lack of time. It should be noted that in general, these reasons are not under the control of voluntary organisations. However, also amongst the most important reasons for not volunteering were issues related to the expectation of having to do boring and mundane tasks and feeling obligated to contribute an unreasonable number of hours. Also rating highly was that people did not know how to get involved and the perception that volunteers had

Table 4: Reasons for never volunteering for community based organisations (ranked from most to least influential)

I have never volunteered because . . .	Mean*
I have too many other commitments	4.1
I don't have enough time	3.8
I have too many work responsibilities	3.4
I'm not organised enough	2.9
I would have to do boring and mundane tasks	2.8
I might feel obligated to put in an unreasonable number of hours	2.8
I don't know how to get involved	2.7
volunteers have poorer working conditions than paid staff	2.6
I have too many family responsibilities	2.6
I might be taken advantage of by the organisation	2.4
I don't want to be bossed about	2.4
family members were not involved with the organisation	2.4
my friends don't want to volunteer	2.3
I can't afford it	2.3
volunteers get too stressed	2.3
I don't like the ways most voluntary community organisations are run	2.3
I have difficulties with transportation	2.3
I would be seen by others as not being competent at my tasks	2.3
volunteers work too hard	2.2
I wouldn't have fun	2.2
I would not enjoy working with paid staff	2.2
I don't have the skills required	2.1
I would get in the way of efficient management	2.1
I don't have enough confidence	2.0
I don't think my work would be recognised or rewarded	1.9
I don't think volunteering is very important	1.9
there is a lack of childcare	1.8
I would not enjoy working with other volunteers	1.7
I have an illness or disability that prevents me	1.5

* Scored on a five point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (n=50)

poorer working conditions than paid staff; areas that can be addressed through improved marketing and changes in organisational practice. Despite having never volunteered, this group did not report strong negative perceptions about volunteering and did not view voluntary work as unimportant. In addition, a lack of enjoyment, confidence, skills, rewards or recognition for volunteers did not seem to play a significant role in the decision not to volunteer.

DECIDING TO STOP VOLUNTEERING

Similar to the reasons for never volunteering, the students who had stopped volunteering did so mainly due to personal factors. Having too many other commitments and no longer having enough time were the most important reasons for discontinuing volunteering. Commitments such as work and family responsibilities ranked highly and, significantly for

Table 5 Reasons for stopping volunteer work for community based organisations (ranked from most to least influential)

I stopped volunteering because . . .	Mean*
I have too many other commitments	4.0
I no longer had enough time	3.9
I have too many work responsibilities	3.6
I have too many family responsibilities	2.7
of poor training support offered by the organisation	2.5
I had to do boring and mundane tasks	2.4
the time commitment was not clearly defined	2.3
my friends were no longer volunteers	2.3
all the work was left to just a few people	2.3
the commitment was greater than I originally thought	2.2
my responsibilities were not clearly defined	2.2
I wasn't organised enough	2.2
I didn't have fun	2.2
family members were no longer involved with the organisation	2.2
I felt obligated to put in an unreasonable number of hours	2.2
I have difficulties with transportation	2.2
the organisation lacked direction	2.1
of the poor attitude of other volunteers	2.1
I didn't like being bossed about	2.1
volunteers had poorer working conditions than paid staff	2.1
I felt the organisation had taken advantage of me	2.1
my work was not recognised or rewarded	2.1
of the bureaucratic rules and regulations of the organisation	2.0
of the heavy volunteer workloads	2.0
I didn't like the way the organisation was run	2.0
I couldn't afford it	2.0
I was seen by others as not being competent at my tasks	1.9
I became too stressed about my volunteer work	1.9
I felt I got in the way of efficient management	1.8
I didn't have the skills required	1.8
I did not enjoy working with other volunteers	1.7
I did not enjoy working with paid staff	1.7
I developed an illness or disability that prevented me	1.6
of a lack of childcare	1.5

* Scored on a five point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (n=83)

Table 6 Reasons that influenced the decision of individuals to continue volunteering for community based organisations (ranked from most to least important)

I decided to volunteer because . . .	Mean*
I wanted to gain experience that might help with future paid employment	4.4
I wanted to learn and develop new skills	4.3
I wanted to help others	3.
I thought that volunteer work would be enjoyable	3.8
I felt I had the competence to help solve problems	3.6
I wanted to have fun	3.6
I wanted to be active and involved in the community	3.5
I wanted to put something back into the community	3.4
I wanted to interact and work with people who were like me	3.4
I wanted to feel good about using my free time in a constructive way	3.3
I wanted to feel valued, needed and respected	3.
I wanted to meet new people and make new friends	3.2
I had time available	3.1
I felt obligated to help	2.3
friends encouraged me to get involved	2.2
family members encouraged me to get involved	2.0

* Scored on a five point scale (1 = not at all important to 5 = extremely important) (n=75)

this age group, poor training support was also a relatively important consideration (see Table 5).

Although the most important reasons for deciding to stop being a volunteer tend to be beyond the control of voluntary organisations, a range of factors can be managed. A number of the more important reasons for deciding to stop volunteering were related to the nature of the organisation and the actual volunteer experience. These included having to do boring tasks, having heavy workloads and a sense of being over-committed, a lack of organisational direction and poor management. Importantly, 'not having fun' was also listed in the upper half.

DECIDING TO CONTINUE VOLUNTEERING

Those who were currently volunteering also did so primarily because of personal factors. The top ranked reasons for continuing to volunteer were related to personal motivations and dispositions (see Table 6). These included: wanting to gain experience that might help with future paid employment; wanting to learn new skills; wanting to help others; thinking that volunteer work may be enjoyable; feelings of competence; a desire to have fun; and, wanting to be involved in and put something back

into the community. External influences such as the encouragement of friends and family members and feeling obligated to help were not important reasons for continuing to volunteer.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The relatively high rate of voluntary work amongst the respondents (36.1%) suggests a propensity for students to volunteer (particularly for sport and recreation organisations). The 1995 ABS study of voluntary work in Australia indicated a 21% volunteer rate for the Brisbane population aged over 15 years and this had increased to 30.2% by 2000 (ABS, 2002). The level of voluntary involvement reported in the study is also surprising given that according to the ABS, the rate of volunteering tends to be lower for younger age groups (less than 24 years). It may be that the personal interests and activities (ie, leisure and sport) of this sample may provide them with a wide range of opportunities to volunteer and that they also see such involvement as valuable for future career opportunities. This view is further supported by data from the present study which indicated that approximately three-quarters of those who currently or previously were volunteers, did so with sport and

recreation organisations, although this of course may be a function of the nature of the sample. This finding again reinforces the potential role of the sport and recreation sector as a nursery of future volunteer involvement and if so, then it is crucial that the initial volunteer experience be a positive one.

Some respondents were able to negotiate the factors that could constrain involvement in volunteering activities. This study revealed that these factors revolved around personal and time commitment issues that are largely beyond the control of volunteer organisations. While the study did not address why this may occur, it could be the case that people who continue to volunteer do so because they are satisfied with their volunteer experience and subsequently allocate a higher priority to volunteering. Furthermore, those survey respondents who were currently volunteering indicated that gaining work-related experiences and learning new skills were important factors in deciding to volunteer and also felt that they had the competence to solve problems encountered as volunteers. It is critical therefore that the volunteer experience facilitates opportunities for individuals to demonstrate competence and feel a sense of control and responsibility (Gerson, 1997). However, a word of caution as it should be noted that almost 40% of respondents had made the decision to cease their involvement as a volunteer. As indicated by Auld and Cuskelly (2001) in a study of volunteers in Brisbane, volunteer retention is a major problem for community-based organisations.

Those students who had never volunteered similarly tended to indicate the main reasons as ones that cannot be controlled by voluntary organisations and sport event organisers. There were other relatively important de-motivators that should be considered by those providing volunteer opportunities for younger age groups. For example, some respondents felt that they would have to do boring work and they may have to contribute an unreasonable number of hours. Such views are not inconsistent with reasons suggested as to why young people are becoming less interested in volunteering (Davies, 1998; Fost, 1996).

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

While the rate of volunteer involvement augurs well for sport event organisers who wish to recruit youth

volunteers, there are a number of factors that must be taken into consideration when planning to do so. Specifically this is in relation to the way the volunteer opportunity is structured and presented to potential candidates. Organisers should consider incorporating findings from this study into their volunteer recruitment and management processes if they are to ensure that students have a rewarding experience and appropriate outcomes are realised – for the students, the event participants and the organisations involved. For example, in addition to high volunteer rates, respondents also reported a high level of part-time employment. While this is common in Australian students, it is a complicating factor in facilitating student involvement in volunteer opportunities either in their own time or via formal university practicum learning experiences. Students must be given sufficient time to plan and incorporate the volunteer experience into their schedules.

Organisers must also ensure that gaining work and career related outcomes are realised and importantly, provide a means by which the experiences and specific skills gained by the volunteers can be communicated to prospective employers. Such goals should also therefore form part of the marketing of the program to prospective youth volunteers (Green & Chalip, 1998). Furthermore, the experience should be enjoyable and fun.

Given that some concerns (eg, perceptions of the likelihood of boring volunteer work and long hours) of respondents who had never volunteered can be influenced or controlled by managers, these issues must be addressed by organisers. The real nature of the work and the expectations of the required hours, should be communicated realistically to prospective volunteers. The nature of such work should also be clearly linked to outcomes valued by the students such as those related to career development (Elstad, 1996) and they should not be recruited without an accurate understanding of the experience in which they are about to engage. If poor recruitment practices do occur then there may be problems of low commitment and dependability as well as high turnover which could have been prevented (or at least reduced) through realistic recruitment. Students also expressed the view that volunteers had poorer working conditions than did paid staff. If their contribution is essential to the success of the project, then they must be treated as

such and receive both 'material' support and recognition (Harrington, Cuskelly & Auld, 2000).

The way the volunteers are actually managed on-site will also be a critical factor in the success of the event. The nature and quality of supervision is important to volunteer satisfaction. They want to be managed by people that have a clear understanding of the goals of the organisation, who can communicate their expectations of the volunteer's responsibilities clearly, who manage people in a democratic fashion and provide opportunities for volunteers to show initiative and leadership. This suggests that not only is volunteer training essential, but training for the people who will manage the volunteers is also important. Preferably, training programs should facilitate opportunities for both groups to work together.

In summary, despite a high likelihood of volunteering, the study revealed a number of issues that should be considered in the planning and administration of sport events that rely on youth volunteers. The results indicated that although many reasons that influence the decision to volunteer are personal in nature and not directly influenced by organisations, there are a number of factors that are relevant to management decision making. These factors should influence the way volunteer experiences are planned, advertised and administered to the youth market.

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