
MANAGING VOLUNTEERS IN SPORTS MEGA EVENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

AIM OF ABSTRACT/PAPER – RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The cost of staging mega sports events is enormous and organizers look for ways of reducing the financial implication through cost reduction in certain areas. One area they concentrate on is work force reduction through the use of volunteers. Volunteers are those individuals who contribute their services, talent, time, skill, knowledge, ability, experience and exposure willingly and voluntarily to a cause they believe in or love without necessary recourse for money or undue advantage. The economic cost as well as significance is enormous (Andreff, 2009; Cuskelly and Auld, 2012).

This paper/workshop examines some critical issues in volunteering in sports;

- i. Reduction of personnel cost: It is really true in a developing economy?
 - ii. Without recourse to financial benefits: Is it possible in a developing economy?
 - iii. Status of volunteers: Employed or unemployed?
 - iv. Economic reality in African context to accommodate people working free of charge.
 - v. The quality and quantity of service delivery by volunteers
 - vi. Employment generation
 - vii. Friction between actual workforce and volunteers
 - viii. Unquantifiable and immeasurable input and output of volunteers
- Against this background, this paper will be guided by the following questions;

1. What are the objectives for volunteering in sports in a developing country?
2. What are the tasks involve in volunteering in sports
3. What are the real, imagined, observed and expected problems from a diversified class and motives for volunteering?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A shift of emphasis from amateur to professional sports has raised the stake in sports events' organization with much capital outlay. Some countries before bidding for the organization of sporting events will carry out cost benefit analysis. This may often lead to areas to cut cost. One readily available are is reduction in personnel cost through the use of volunteers. The issue of economic cost and significance of volunteers has been a subject of importance in many literatures (Andreff, 2009, Andreff and Nys, 1984, Cuskelly et al. 1999, Ibesen, 1992, Andreff et al. 1994, Archambault et al. 1996). That volunteers contribute freely without recourse for money have also been widely expressed. (Volunteering Australia, 1996 and 2000, Cnaan et al. 1996, Fasan, 2005, Handy and Woodsworth, 1996). The economic value of volunteers calculated on the basis of estimated comparable worth and can be estimated in terms of the approximate cost of replacing the volunteer labour with paid labour (Kidane, 2001, MacAlloone 1999 and Chalip 1999).

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The survey research method was adopted in conducting the study, to this end, a total of 200 volunteers (Males=120; Females=80) that participated in the 2012 National Sports Festivals tagged "Eko 2012" were used. They were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The "Volunteer Perception Questionnaire (VPQ)" was designed by the researchers and validated by three experts in event management was used for data collection. The Cronbach's alpha was used to establish the reliability level of VPQ, with r-value of 0.77 obtained following the administration of sampled validated VPQ on ten respondents not included in the main study. In all, 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered on selected respondents over a period of one week. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation, while the inferential statistics of chi-square was used in drawing the inferences and suggested solutions presented below.

Objectives of volunteers:-

1. Develop a new workforce in sports to augment existing personnel
2. Re-orientate the new workforce in sports to imbibe a new culture of volunteerism.
3. Promote the spirit of nationalism and patriotism
4. Develop a programme to redistribute the skills of professional and non-professional volunteers.
5. Train the volunteer workers in a sports setting-general and specific training
6. Develop a programme for carry over value. i.e. Volunteers in sports developing to national volunteer services scheme.

Tasks:-

1. Recruit enough volunteers from wide range of discipline as the need may arise.
2. Identify the work areas vis-à-vis quality and quantity

3. Develop a volunteer guidelines, form and criteria for eligibility.
4. Launch the programme
5. Recruit volunteers on national, geopolitical, state and religion basis
6. Test run some volunteer activities
7. Shortlist volunteers
8. Train the volunteers - general and specific
9. Select volunteers and allocate to areas of work
10. Equip and kit them
11. Develop a system of monitoring and reporting
12. Close out report

Problems:-

- a. Misconception about volunteers work
- b. Work, culture and ethics
- c. Caliber of volunteers- majority are unemployed, retirees and low income workers
- d. Involvement of security forces
- e. Unwholesome attitude of some volunteers
- f. Lack of community support
- g. Psychological problem
- h. Fear of failure
- i. Timing of training

Solutions:-

1. Good publicity and orientation
2. Adapting the programme to national culture
3. Start with considerable small number for the purpose of control
4. Sectionalization and timing of training programme
5. Map out strategy for monitoring and control
6. Built in contingency plan to cater for shortfall or disappointment.
7. Develop feedback mechanism.

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