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## **A person-oriented approach for developing motive-based types of sport event volunteers**

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All authors:

Torsten Schlesinger (corresp), Rainer Gubler

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Synopsis:

Abstract:

Aim of the study

Due to the valuable contribution made by volunteers to sporting events, a better understanding of volunteers' motivation is imperative for event managers in order to develop effective volunteer re-cruitment and retention strategies. The adoption of working conditions and task domains to the motives and needs of volunteers is one of the key challenges in volunteer management. Conversely, an ignorance of the motives and needs of volunteers could negatively affect their performance and attitude, which will have negative consequences for the execution of events (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). In general, the motives of volunteers are located on a continuum between selflessness (e.g. helping others), and self-interest (e.g. pursuing one's own interests). Furthermore, it should take into account that volunteers may be motivated by more than one need or goal, and therefore, configure different bundles of motives, resulting in heterogeneous types of motives for voluntary engagement (Dolnicar & Randle, 2007). Despite the extensive number of studies on the motives of sport event volunteers, only few studies focus on the analysis of individual motive profiles concerning volunteering. Accordingly, we will take a closer look at the following questions: To what extent do volunteers at sporting events differ in the motives of their engagement, and how can the volunteers be adequately classified?

Theoretical Background

According to the functional approach, relevant subjective motives are related to the outcomes and consequences that volunteering is supposed to lead to and to produce. This means, individuals' motives determine which incentives are anticipated in return for volunteering (e.g. increase in social contacts), and are

important for engaging in volunteering, e.g. the choice between different opportunities for voluntary activity, or different tasks (Stukas et al., 2009). Additionally, inter-individual differences of motive structures as well as matching motives in the reflections of voluntary activities will be considered by using a person-oriented approach. In the person-oriented approach, it is not the specific variables that are made the entities of investigation, but rather persons with a certain combination of characteristic features (Bergmann et al., 2003). Person-orientation in the field of sports event volunteers, it is therefore essential to implement an orientation towards people as a unit of analysis. Accordingly, individual motive profiles become the object of investigation. The individual motive profiles permit a glimpse of intra-individual differences in the evaluation of different motive areas, and thus represent the real subjective perspective. Hence, a person will compare the importance of individual motives for his behaviour primarily in relation to other motives (e.g. social contacts are more important to me than material incentives), and make fewer comparisons with the assessments of other people.

#### Methodology, research design and data analysis

The motives of sports event volunteers were analysed in the context of the European Athletics Championships 2014 in Zürich. After data cleaning, the study sample contained a total of 1,169 volunteers, surveyed by an online questionnaire. The VMS-ISA scale developed by Bang and Chelladurai (2009) was used and replicated successfully by a confirmatory factor analysis. Accordingly, all seven factors of the scale were included in the subsequent cluster analysis to determine typical motive profiles of volunteers. Before proceeding with the cluster analysis, an intra-individual standardization procedure (according to Spiel, 1998) was applied to take advantage of the intra-individual relationships between the motives of the volunteers. Intra-individual standardization means that every value of each motive dimension was related to the average individual level of expectations. In the final step, motive profiles were determined using a hierarchic cluster analysis based on Ward's method with squared Euclidean distances.

#### Results, discussion and implications

The results reveal that motivational processes differ among sports event volunteers, and that volunteers sometimes combine contradictory bundles of motives. In our study, four different volunteer motive profiles were identified and described by their positive levels on the individual motive dimension: the community supporters, the material incentive seekers, the social networkers, and the career and personal growth pursuers. To describe the four identified motive profiles in more detail and to externally validate them, the clusters were analysed in relation to socio-economic, sport-related, and voluntary work characteristics.

This motive-based typology of sports event volunteers can provide valuable guidance for event managers in order to create distinctive and designable working conditions and tasks at sporting events that should, in relation to a person-oriented approach, be tailored to a wide range of individual prerequisites. Furthermore, specific recruitment procedures and appropriate communication measures can be defined in order to approach certain groups of potential volunteers more effectively.

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