

# COMMITMENT AND VOLUNTEER JOB SATISFACTION AS DETERMINANTS FOR THE INTENTION TO REMAIN A VOLUNTEER IN SPORTS CLUBS

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## Abstract

### Introduction

Stable volunteering is no longer a matter of course for many sports clubs, although a lot of people still volunteer. There is a discrepancy between a continued high willingness to get involved on the one hand and a declining quota of central volunteers on the other. It has been suggested that members are more likely to sporadically participate in the sports club than to hold on to a voluntary position. This suggestion has been confirmed in previous research of various countries (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). A growing instability in the ongoing willingness to volunteer causes a problem for an increasing number of sports clubs. No sporting club can do without the engagement of voluntary personnel and yet there are few alternatives to voluntarism for these clubs. The central importance of volunteering for the work of associations raises the question as to what are the organisational factors that motivate engagement in voluntary work. In this context commitment to the sports club, common interest, as well as the volunteer job satisfaction, are most likely play critical roles in an enduring voluntary engagement. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the influence of these factors on the intention to continue with volunteering.

### Theoretical Background

Many reports into the field of job satisfaction suggest that the degree of job satisfaction has a negative correlation to the level of fluctuation of employees, and a positive correlation to productivity (Finkelstein, 2008, Six & Eckes, 1991). These findings could also be relevant to volunteering in sports clubs. It is assumed, that the general satisfaction with specific working contexts is composed of partial satisfactions weighted by their relative significance (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001). However, the

measurement concepts of job satisfaction that have been developed for professional work in companies cannot be easily transferred to voluntary work satisfaction in sports clubs. A commitment to volunteering at a sports club is presumed to be connected to changing expectations and evaluation of the work for the sports club. Based on the fact that work for a sports club is of a particularly distinctive nature, other dimensions of job satisfaction have at first been worked at on a conceptual level.

Sports clubs do not pursue profit; their focus as non-profit organizations rely on the interests of their members. Consequently rational choice considerations in the willingness to collaborate seem to be less important to sports clubs, rather emotional commitment and identification with the sports club and common interests may play an important role (Nagel, 2006). The members' commitment manifests itself through certain moral concepts and symbolic actions, such as any voluntary support of the work in the sports club is seen to be a matter of course, and the understanding that supporting the work of the sports club and recognizing the right to represent other members is a part of being a member of an organization of interest.

The stability of voluntary work (the intention to remain a volunteer) is modelled on the basis of individual expectations and evaluations of the volunteer of the voluntary work conditions and specific organizational commitment to the sports club. It is assumed, however, that the degree of work satisfaction and commitment are positively correlated to the intention to remain as a volunteer.

### Method

The evaluation of the developed concept of satisfaction with voluntary work conditions and the hypothesised causal relationships was part of an empirical study of 20 selected Swiss sports clubs. Within this, a sample of  $n = 189$  volunteers was generated. Firstly, the proposed measurement model of job satisfaction was validated with an explorative and confirmative factor analysis. To record the commitment with the sports club, validated measurement instruments used in earlier sports club studies were used (Nagel, 2006). The postulated relations between job satisfaction, commitment and intention to remain of voluntary work were estimated by regression analysis.

### Results

Six dimensions of volunteer job satisfaction could be identified: Leadership style, job design, self-development opportunities, recognition, material incentives, learning and training opportunities. Through regression analysis, a positive relation between the factors satisfaction with voluntary work conditions, organizational commitment and stability of voluntary work could be confirmed. Along with this, it can be shown that the effect of the employee satisfaction factor is greater than the effect of the attachment factor.

These findings suggest that in the future, sports clubs should give more attention to volunteer retention by creating voluntary work conditions according to the volunteers' needs while working towards identification management on the other hand, thus stabilizing the intention to remain in voluntary work.

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