

# **Volunteering at the Youth Olympic Games: More Than a Distant Memory?**

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## **Aim**

The aim of the study is to further explore how the measurement of memory can be a tool to investigate the social impact of sport mega-events. Using the Youth Olympic Games as the object of examination, the following research question has been posed: what is the relationship between memory experiences of Youth Olympic Games volunteers from Singapore 2010 and Nanjing 2014 and their subsequent volunteer behaviour? Based on the literature, it is assumed that this relationship is influenced by mediating variables of role identity as a volunteer and durable perceived benefits from the volunteer experience.

## **Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

Autobiographical memory refers to events that are personally relevant and includes both episodic and semantic information about the self (Luchetti & Sutin, 2015). Memory is an important construct as remembering the past plays a role in framing and reconstructing identities and it can potentially guide future volunteer behaviour (Fairley, Green, O'Brien, & Chalip, 2014). Research has confirmed that both role identity and perceived benefits may develop following event experiences and that these concepts can be the impetus for a volunteer career (Doherty, 2009; Fairley et al., 2014). Memories arising from experiences have been examined in the case of World Expositions to understand the long-term impact of visitors' experience in an informal leisure context and to understand what factors influence the memory vividness (Anderson & Shimizu, 2007). With regard to sport volunteering, little is known about the impact of sport-mega events on volunteers' future behaviours.

Undertaking an activity like volunteering may impel individuals to internalize the activity into their self-concept and thus form a role identity. By including memory as a construct to examine volunteer behaviour in the post-event period, the study expands on the work of Fairley, Gardiner and Filo (2016) who have used qualitative data to understand how memory can be considered an Olympic legacy by potentially impacting identity, durable perceived benefits and continued volunteer behaviour. This study will adopt a quantitative approach to further examine this relationship.

## **Methodology and Data Analysis**

The participants in this study are volunteers who have been involved with the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore in 2010 or in Nanjing in 2014. Quantitative data are being collected via an online survey which is available in Chinese and English from May until July 2018. The survey was piloted prior to the data collection. Key informants with regard to the organization of the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore and Nanjing have been identified and contacted to invite volunteers in their network to complete the online survey. The technique of snowball sampling is used to achieve a sample size of 330 participants to ensure the validity of the findings. The survey includes the short form of the Memory Experiences Questionnaire (Luchetti & Sutin, 2015) that assesses 10 memory characteristics, including vividness, coherence, accessibility, time perspective, sensory details, visual perspective, emotional intensity, sharing, distancing, and valence. We selected items from existing scales to measure role identity as a volunteer (Callero, 1985), durable perceived benefits from the volunteer

experience (Doherty, 2009) and behavioural change. Internal consistency measures (Cronbach's alpha) based on the correlations between different items will verify the scale reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis will be used to explore the quality of volunteers' memory within the 10 dimensions of the Memory Experiences Questionnaire. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance will be adopted to compare the mean differences between the two cities and different post-event periods (four or eight years after the event). All 10 dimensions will be entered into a simultaneous regression to understand the relationships between memory and volunteer behaviour.

### **Results and Conclusions**

The study is funded by the 2018 IOC PhD Research Programme and data collection will be completed from May until July 2018. Since the development of the survey, 180 responses have been collected. The data collection is ongoing. Although preliminary findings, discussion and implications are not yet available, the authors guarantee that they will be available by the time of the conference. The findings of this study will have important implications for future practice in facilitating and maintaining young individuals' memory experience of volunteering at the Youth Olympic Games, which can build support for potential volunteering participation in the post-event period.

### **References**

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