

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Factors Affecting the Continuity of Volunteer Co-operation in University Sports Associations

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive- analytical (exploratory) research with factor analysis approach was to identify factors affecting volunteers' cooperation continuity from volunteer students' perspective in northern, southern and Razavi Khorasan universities sport associations. For this purpose 134 male & female students were selected as statistical sample and responded to researcher's made questionnaire in five factors naming with factor load of each one equal or more than base (0.45) and reliability rate of ($\alpha=0.91$). Data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of the study revealed that all these factors at alpha 0.05 level had significant effect on volunteers' cooperation continuity in university sport associations. In determining the priority among 5 factors affecting volunteers' cooperation continuity, recognizing and appreciation of volunteer work had first and professional growth opportunities priority. According to the result of the study universities must turn volunteer work in general and volunteerism in sport activities specifically into a value and believe, a believe in which belief to group and participative work well defined.

KEY WORDS: cooperation continuity, Volunteers, University sport Associations.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the valuable resources of any organization are workforce. In the process of forming organizations, human resources play a central role that can be considered essential to any event. Some human resources are comprised of volunteers who often operate in countries as nongovernmental organizations and can be effective in advancing the goals of society and Bureau of Statistics (2004). Five characteristics of voluntarism from this perspective include: 1) non-

organization. Volunteers make up an important part of the human resources for many sports and recreational organizations in the world. Today, sports are focused on volunteerism in the developed countries of the world being led and advanced by a great many volunteers (1). The difference in the range of services, informality and volunteer work have been indicated by the definition of voluntarism by the Australian

profitability 2) work for the benefit of the association 3) selective work 4) unpaid labor and

5) certain tasks (2). Graham Cuskelly (2006) considered the correct management and precise understanding of the tasks of volunteers in sports to be among the basic principles of supporting and fostering these valuable individuals and groups (3). Most studies have focused on the management of volunteers in sports, management, and attracting and retaining volunteers. They include the following:

Moharamzadeh et al. (2009) examined the motivation, satisfaction and decline among volunteers. The results showed that the factors of family support and appreciation are the most and the least motivating factors in attracting volunteers. Additionally, satisfaction and burnout were more common in women compared to men (1).

Andam et al. (2009) examined the barriers to volunteering at the Sports Association of universities. Based on the factor analysis of 14 variables, they were in two groups with organizational and individual barriers according to which “educational concerns” and “lack of time” were the most important cases and “physical problems and diseases” were introduced as the least important variables (4).

Andam et al. (2009) examined the motivations of volunteers in sports. They posited that based on the factor analysis model, “the experiences of voluntarism is considered to be a good professional record for me”, was the most important and “volunteering and providing services in sports associations lead to credits” was the least important variable for volunteers’ motivation is sports (5).

Zarandi et al. (2010) expressed the relationship between motivation and volunteers’ commitment to the 9th Sports Olympiad for Iranian students. They showed that volunteers’ commitment in men and women was lower than the average. Nevertheless, motivation is at a favorable level in groups of women and men and as there is more motivation for volunteerism as a personal

discussion, there is a greater commitment for volunteer work (6).

In a study entitled as “The Attraction and Maintenance of Sports Volunteers”, Montazeri et al. (2011) showed that the highest level of motivation is related to the factor of purposefulness and the lowest level of motivation is related to the material factor. Moreover, the highest and lowest levels of commitment are devoted to normative and continuous commitment (7).

The results of the research by Kelateh Saifari et al. (2013), entitled as “Impact of Motivation on Maintaining the Volunteers in Student Sports”, showed that motivation affects the willingness to continue the cooperation of volunteers. Among motivators, professional incentives have the highest impact on the intention of volunteers in continuing athletic activities (8).

In a study entitled as “Volunteer’ Satisfaction and the Intention of Continuing Volunteerism at Major Golf Professional Sport Events”, Palin (2013) examined the factors affecting the satisfaction and the intention of future participation among volunteers. The results showed that volunteers were generally satisfied with gaining the volunteering experience and they wanted to resume volunteer work but were not particularly satisfied with the lack of appropriate communicative channels between the organization and the volunteers (9).

The recognition of volunteering incentives is a tool for distinguishing between volunteers and non-volunteers. This subject also helps organizations to better understand the volunteers who continue their activities or stop their volunteer services (10).

A study by Mesch et al. (1998) about keeping the volunteers shows that volunteers will remain in the organization for longer periods when their incentives for volunteerism are met (11). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002), there was almost a 17% decline in

volunteer participation in non-administrative roles (referees, coaches, etc.) in Australia from 1997 to 2001. Perhaps this reduction in the number of volunteers means that they leave the organization to avoid more work and ambiguity regarding their duties and responsibilities (12). The sports organizations that fail to retain the volunteers would go through much more efforts and struggle to attract and train new volunteers compared to other organizational tasks (13). Han (2007) states that managers and organizations must pay particular attention to the factors of motivation and human resources management in order to create and implement a strategy for the maintenance of volunteers (14). As a source of student growth and excellence, universities should create conditions in which they can use and maintain their volunteer forces appropriately. Thus, due to the undeniable importance of volunteers in the field of sports and the role played by sports associations in universities and the paucities of studies in maintaining sports volunteers, the knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting the continuity of their maintenance are necessary. In this way, the attention of the country's sports managers can be drawn to these individuals by identifying these factors. To do this, the researcher attempts to identify the factors that maintain the students who work as volunteers in the form of sports associations at the physical education departments in universities and institutions of higher education. Identifying these factors in this research will help to retain volunteers at universities.

METHODS

The statistical population of this study consisted of all students from the sports associations in universities located in North Khorasan Province, Razavi Khorasan, and South Khorasan (e.g.

Bojnourd University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Birjand University) who studied in the academic year 2012-2013. Due to the small size of the statistical population, the sample was obtained in full measure which means that the sample was as large as the population. Accordingly, 134 female and male students were selected as the members of sports associations and 124 completed questionnaires were analyzed. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire whose face validity and content validity were confirmed by a group of professors and experts. Cronbach's alpha method ($\alpha = 0.91$) was used to calculate the reliability of the instrument and the methods of descriptive statistics (frequency, mean and standard deviations) were used to assess the demographic characteristics and the importance of variables. The distribution of research data was examined by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Since the research data were not normally distributed, Friedman's non-parametric and inferential statistical tests were used in analyzing the research data (for determining the priority among the factors affecting the continuity of cooperation). Moreover, the Mann-Whitney U test was used for comparison between indices for male and female participants while Kruskal-Wallis test was employed for comparisons between indices in the three universities. The statistical analysis was done in SPSS-15.

STATISTICAL RESULTS

Table 1 shows KMO and Bartlett test results in exploratory factor analysis.

Table 1

KMO and Bartlett test results in exploratory factor analysis

KMO sampling adequacy index		0.91
Bartlett test	X ²	2983.230
	df	496
	P Value	0.000

According to the results of this table the amount of KMO in exploratory factor analysis was 0.91 which indicate the status of the data was acceptable for factor analysis.

In order to indicate the amount of factor loads of the factors affecting the continuous

of volunteer cooperation in university sport association confirmatory factor analysis in PCA and varimax rotation method was applied. According coefficient 5 factors were affecting the continuous of volunteer cooperation in university sport association (table 2).

Table 2

KMO test results in confirmatory factor analysis of factors influencing the continuity of voluntary cooperation

Factors	df	KMO	Percentage of variance	special amount	Number of items
Provide incentives for volunteers to create and sustain motivation	9	0.48	48.22	4.20	5
Training and career development opportunities	9	0.56	46.83	2.50	4
Appreciation and recognition of volunteering	9	0.83	45.73	3.9	6
Clear and effective communication channels	9	0.39	42.25	3.01	4
Enriching jobs and creating diversity in jobs	9	0.42	39.81	3.03	6

In inferential analysis (one sample t test) the effect each one of this factor on the continuous of volunteer cooperation in

university sport association was significant (table 3).

Table 3

The results of one-sample t-test for the factors influencing the continuity of voluntary cooperation

Variables	Mean	SD	t statistics	df	P Value
Provide incentives for volunteers to create and sustain motivation	4.97	1.008	7.65	62	0.001
Training and career development opportunities	6.060	0.674	24.24	62	0.001
Appreciation and recognition of volunteering	5.158	0.457	20.11	62	0.001
Clear and effective communication channels	5.727	0.573	23.88	62	0.001
Enriching jobs and creating diversity in jobs	5.958	0.520	22.86	62	0.001

Table 4 and 5 reveals the priority among the factors affecting continuous of volunteer cooperation in university sport association.

According to the table 5 appreciation and recognition of volunteer work had the first priority and followed as it shows.

Table 4

The results of my Friedman test to determine the priority of the factors affecting the continuity of voluntary cooperation

row	The statistics	amount
1	Friedman	128.081
2	df	6
3	P Value	0.001

Table 5

Prioritizing the factors influencing the continuity of volunteers' participation in sport

row	Variables	Responsive number	Average rating	Priority	K Square Friedman	P Value
1	Provide incentives for volunteers to create and sustain motivation	123	2.99	4	12.23	0.016
2	Training and career development opportunities	123	2.59	5		
3	Appreciation and recognition of volunteering	123	3.20	1		
4	Clear and effective communication channels	123	3.10	3		
5	Enriching jobs and creating diversity in jobs	123	3.13	2		

DISCUSSION

Volunteerism and serving the society are the phenomena of the contemporary era which are rooted in the social traditions of people all over the world (15). Studies have shown that the use of volunteers as one of the main components of the provision of services in sports organizations plays an important role in the success of many major sports events and matches (16). The development of volunteer workforce in various fields has attracted the attention of those who are engaged in research and work in this area and have led

them to repeatedly evaluate and investigate the various processes and dimensions of volunteer activities. Attracting, training and maintaining the volunteer workforce are among the major challenges of human resource management. Thus, knowing the important factors in the continuity of volunteer cooperation can contribute greatly to the sports voluntarism and organizations (16).

The purpose of the present study was to identify the factors affecting the continuity of volunteer cooperation and determine the priority of these factors from the standpoint of the students from

the sports association of universities in the provinces of North Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan (e.g. Bojnourd University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Birjand University). To do this important task, confirmatory factor analysis, one-sample t-test, and the Chi-square and Friedman test were used.

Based on the findings of the research, “the appreciation and recognition of volunteer work” was one of the factors that contributed to the sustained engagement of volunteers and had the highest priority among them. The formalization of the work of individuals gives them the feeling that they are part of an important activity and are taken seriously. Considering the hierarchy of cooperation and giving further responsibility and promotion is indeed a kind of appreciation and recognition of volunteer work. In his research, Turner (2008) reports that the absence of a systematic program for appreciating and supporting the volunteers is a problem encountered by Australian volunteers (17). In their studies of 1382 volunteers in the UK, Machin et al. (2008) found that among other things, the lack of proper and inadequate gratitude for volunteers is one reason behind their lack of sustained cooperation. The process of gratitude for volunteers is one of the most important factors in maintaining them and is directly associated with the motivation of individuals in providing voluntary services (17).

“Professional enrichment and job diversification” have been effective in the continuation of volunteer work and cooperation and have the second priority among these factors. The purpose of professional enrichment is to maximize the occupational interest and challenges (18). In this way, the volunteer feels that the job involves a series of tasks and activities that ultimately lead to a tangible or understandable product in the organization. Research findings suggest that enriching the jobs leads to more job satisfaction and employee motivation thus reducing employee absenteeism (19).

From the point of view of volunteers, providing an incentive to create and maintain the motivation level and continue the voluntary cooperation has been crucial and has been the third priority among these factors. The behavior of humans suggests that individuals are motivated by different needs in their private and professional lives. Recognizing these needs and providing them as a leading factor helps the manager to tap into the abilities of employees in an optimal manner (20).

The existence of clear and effective communicative channels has been helpful in the continuation of voluntary cooperation as the fourth priority among these factors. The prerequisite for the synchronization between the material and human elements employed in each set is the establishment of transparent communication and the clarity of communications in all parts of the organization. If this kind of communication is distorted, vague and ineffective, the organization will fail to realize its goals and its activity will be stopped (21).

Education and professional growth opportunities have been effective in sustaining voluntary cooperation as the fifth priority among these factors. Learning is an incentive and a crucial factor for the continuation of volunteer activities. Through training, one can increase the knowledge, skills and scope of volunteers’ relationships and this in turn increases the value and confidence of the volunteers.

With respect to the results of this study, recognizing and appreciating the proper and sustained participation of volunteers are of great importance in the continuation of their participation. Therefore, it is recommended that managers value volunteer work by assigning the day, week or year of volunteerism and appreciate volunteers continuously in various material and spiritual forms (by offering a discount card, birthday greetings, etc.) with respect to their motivation to provide voluntary services and

maintain and promote the spirit of cooperation among these valuable forces.

It is also suggested that universities generally turn volunteering activities and volunteer work into sports activities and a particular value and belief

in which the belief in collaborative and group work and well-defined management tasks has been well-defined.

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