Volunteer's elicited emotions and motivations in Rio 2016 Olympics: insights into mega sports events management.

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This two-step study analyzes volunteer emotions and motivations in the context of mega sports events and implications on volunteers' management. Step 1 shows that volunteers experienced 4 main motivations, bringing novel insights into the motivations identified by previously reported in Olympic Games study (Bang, Alexandris & Ross, 2009). These novel insights from our study can be used to improve existing strategies for attracting volunteers. Furthermore, during step 2, we identified negative emotions that can help event organizers draw better strategies to enhance volunteers' satisfaction with the volunteering.

1. Introduction

The hosting of mega sports events necessitates the organization and coordination of a myriad of activities, including various aspects such as competition management and athlete interactions (Farrel, Johnston, and Twynam, 1998). A fundamental component of this multifaceted process relies significantly on the contributions of volunteers (Williams, Dossa, & Tompkins, 1995; Kim, 2018). Volunteers can be defined as individuals who engage in "unpaid non-compulsory work," wherein they devote their time and efforts without monetary compensation to tasks performed either through an organization or directly for individuals or entities beyond their own household.

Services marketing theory asserts a relationship between customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction (Chung-Herrera, Goldschmidt, Hoffman, 2004; Bitner, Booms, Mohr, 1994). Consequently, effective management of volunteers, particularly for mega events like the Olympic Games and World Cups, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of such endeavors. Therefore volunteers´ studies become instrumental in the development of more efficient volunteer management strategies (Kim, Fredline, and Cuskelly, 2018, p. 1). Furthermore, Kim, Kim, Kim, and Zhang (2019) have highlighted the relevance of organizational support to future volunteer engagement.

These management strategies are more relevant to the context of Olympic sports, primarily due to the prevalence of episodic volunteers as opposed to long-term volunteers (Kim, 2017). Episodic volunteers typically possess limited or no prior knowledge of volunteer roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, despite their origin within the host country of the event, these volunteers often come from different cities, thereby encountering additional challenges associated with residing in and adapting to a new and unfamiliar location (Chen, Zheng, Dickson, 2018).

Kim's (2017) systematic review reveals that existing research has predominantly centered on quantitative, survey-based investigations. A gap exists in the literature concerning qualitative studies that delve into the fundamental factors influencing volunteer participation, retention, and the propensity to engage in subsequent volunteer endeavors.

Drawing from the preceding discussion, the objective of this study is to examine the motivations and emotions experienced by volunteers during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and analyze management issues with impact on the volunteer morale. To achieve this objective, we conducted an analysis of the comments made by volunteers within the Rio 2016 Facebook

group. The findings reveal several points of attention that could improve management of volunteers during mega events, and therefore contributing to the overall success of the event.

2. Literature review

In this section, we examine the primary motivating factors that inspire volunteers to participate in mega events. Moreover, we highlight the discussion surrounding emotions that are intricately linked to the volunteering process, as it offers insights into how the organizing committee of a specific sports event can improve the overall volunteer experience.

2.1 Volunteers and motivation

According to Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996), volunteers can be outlined in four dimensions: (1) the element of free choice; (2) absence of remuneration; (3) the structural context in which their work is carried out; and (4) the beneficiaries of their efforts. These volunteers represent an indispensable component of sport service delivery, as they offer critical support for logistical aspects of sports events. This support includes various functions (Giannoulakis, Wang, and Gray, 2007).

In a study conducted on volunteers during the Sydney 2000 Olympics, Wang (2004) identified that volunteers were motivated by a quintet of factors: (1) Altruistic Value, characterized by prosocial and altruistic values; (2) Personal Development, reflecting a desire for learning, knowledge acquisition, and experiential growth; (3) Community Concern, indicating a sense of obligation to the community; (4) Ego Enhancement, involving the enhancement of positive self-feelings; and (5) Social Adjustment, which pertains to the establishment and cultivation of relationships with others.

2.2 Volunteer management and episodic volunteers from non-host region

The management of volunteers can be comprehended through a seven-stage process, as delineated by Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, and Darcy (2006). These stages includes: (1) Planning, which involves the identification of potential volunteers and the provision of role or job descriptions; (2) Recruitment, which entails aligning the skills, experiences, and interests of individuals with specific roles; (3) Screening, where the accreditation of coaches and officials is verified; (4) Orientation, focusing on encouraging volunteers to adhere to a code of acceptable behavior; (5) Training and Support, which involves mentoring volunteers, managing their tasks, and providing necessary resources; (6) Performance Management, characterized by

the monitoring and provision of feedback to individual volunteers; and (7) Recognition, aimed at acknowledging and expressing gratitude for outstanding work or task performances.

Furthermore, Gellweiler, Fletcher, and Wise (2019) introduced the concept of "role exit," which refers to the termination of the volunteering experience. This transitional process can significantly impact volunteers, leading to feelings of sadness and loss as they move from the realm of volunteering back to their regular lives.

2.3 Emotions and service delivery

Emotions can wield a significant impact on the evaluations of service quality, as documented by prior research (Mattila & Enz, 2002). This influence is particularly pronounced in situations where service personnel, including volunteers, go beyond their designated roles, as observed in the study by Zhao, Yan, and Keh (2018). These emotional states can be classified into two categories: those associated with negative affect, encompassing emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and shame, and those associated with positive affect, including contentment and happiness, as expounded upon by Laros and Steenkamp (2005). Notably, the expression of positive emotions by employees possesses the capability to evoke corresponding positive emotions in customers, thereby augmenting their engagement levels during the service interaction, as highlighted in the research of Zhao, Yan, and Keh (2018).

3. Method

3.1 Data collection and Sample

This research regarded two supplementary steps to examine user-generated content within the Facebook group dedicated to the Rio 2016 Official Volunteer Program. Within this online community, participants shared their experiences as volunteers for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, conveying a wide spectrum of sentiments, including expressions of admiration and happiness, alongside the practical pursuit of information required to fulfill their volunteer roles.

In this research, we gathered a representative sample of all the posts from the Facebook group dedicated to the Rio 2016 Official Volunteer Program. For the study, it was considered 201 posts pertaining to the Summer Olympics and 226 posts concerning the Paralympic Games. To conduct this analysis, it was utilized Iramuteq, a licensed software tool designed to offer users statistical insights into text corpora and the construction of tables based on individual words.

Every post was coded with specific motivations for this purpose. These motivations included expression of values (encompassing concerns for others, the success of the event, and societal impacts), patriotism (covering feelings of pride and love for one's country, as well as allegiance to the nation), interpersonal contacts (relating to meeting people, interacting with them, and forming friendships), career orientation (centered on gaining experience and career-related contacts), personal growth (focusing on the acquisition of new perspectives, feelings of importance, and the sense of being needed), extrinsic rewards (involving the acquisition of complimentary uniforms, food, and admission), and love of sport (including engagement with sport-related activities and a deep passion for sports) (Bang, Alexandris & Ross, 2009).

In addition, emotions expressed in posts were carefully categorized, considering anger (emotions such as anger, frustration, irritation, unfulfillment, discontent, envy, and jealousy), fear (emotions such as fear, anxiety, panic, nervousness, worry, and tension), sadness (emotions like depression, sadness, misery, helplessness, nostalgia, and guilt), shame (emotions related to embarrassment, shame, and humiliation), contentment (emotions as contentment, fulfillment, and peace), happiness (emotions like optimism, encouragement, hopefulness, happiness, pleasure, joy, relief, excitement, and enthusiasm), love (consisting of emotions such as sensuality, romanticism, passion, love, sentimentality, and warm-heartedness), and pride (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005).

In the subsequent phase (step 2) of our study, we conducted a content analysis of the primary challenges encountered by volunteers throughout the course of the Games. Our objective in this phase was to unearth managerial recommendations for future Olympic organizers. To accomplish this, we methodically scrutinized all posts, spanning from the beginning to the end of the Olympic Games, categorizing the identified issues into those happening before, during, and after the event.

4. Data analysis

Regarding step 1 of this study (Lexical analysis by context of a set of text segments and Similarity analysis), the content derived from the examination of posts, consisting of 201 posts related to the Summer Olympics and 226 posts pertaining to the Paralympic Games, was subjected to a categorization process resulting in the formation of two distinct clusters. Each of these clusters is distinguished by the presence of specific motivations and emotions that exhibit statistical significance with a chi-square value exceeding 3.80 and a p-value less than 0.05:

As for cluster 1 – 72.8% of the text segments composed by 3 motivations: personal growth (Chi2 14.14, p. 0.00016), expression of values (Chi2 14.05, p. 0.00017), and patriotism (Chi2 4.5, p. 0.03381) and 1 emotion, namely contentment (Chi2 6.07, p. 0.00016).

Additionally, when it comes to cluster 1, a substantial majority, constituting 72.8% of the text segments, was characterized by the presence of three distinct motivations: personal growth (Chi-square = 14.14, p < 0.00016), expression of values (Chi-square = 14.05, p < 0.00017), and patriotism (Chi-square = 4.5, p < 0.03381). Additionally, within this cluster, one specific emotion, namely contentment (Chi-square = 6.07, p < 0.00016), was prominently observed. Cluster 1, bearing in mind the motivations and emotions it encompasses, represents how a subject may gain fresh perspectives through concerns for others, the success of the event, and the well-being of society.

In the case of cluster 2, comprising 27.2% of the text segments, it was characterized by the prevalence of a motivation, namely interpersonal contacts (Chi-square = 58.83, p < 0.0001), and an emotion, specifically pride (Chi-square = 15.55, p < 0.0001). Cluster 2 may signify the extent to which a subject experiences pride through the act of meeting and engaging with others and fostering friendships.

Speaking of step 1, a supplementary similarity analysis was conducted to identify word co-occurrences, indicating the interconnectedness of information within the text. This analysis helps to understand the structural composition of textual content, discerning shared components, and specific attributes (Marchand and Ratinaud, 2012). The results show word connections that signify motivations, such as the expression of values, patriotism, interpersonal contacts, and personal growth. For instance, within the motivation "expression of value", the words "volunteer" and "Paralympic" exhibit a higher degree of co-occurrence, highlighting the context in which the "expression of value" is most prominent, underlining in this case the concerns for others, the success of the event, and society. Another result shows word co-occurrences related to emotions. Specifically, emotions such as "contentment" and "pride" are most significant. For example, instances of "contentment" are reflected in the words "park," "good," and "person," showcasing situations where volunteers express this emotion. The emotion "pride" relates to the word "team" in turn, showing the importance of being part of a team.

As far as step 2 of this study is concerned, after conducting a content analysis of the primary challenges and problems encountered by volunteers throughout the course of the Games, the following findings associated with negative emotions indicate management opportunities in mega sports events.

- Inadequate Training: Concerns about insufficient training, particularly those assigned to the operations of support teams (e.g., "I was assigned as an operations support team member, but I have no idea what you do in practice. Can anyone help me?").

- Equipment Distribution: Problems with the distribution of work attire and equipment. Some volunteers received incomplete uniforms, leading to dissatisfaction (e.g., "...I could only get my uniform at the facility, but they only gave me a t-shirt. I didn't even get the blouse.").

- System Malfunctions: Discrepancies between invitation letters and portal status led to confusion and disappointment (e.g., "I received an invitation letter, but on the portal, my situation remains under review. The committee said that this letter is not worth it and that I should wait for another. I'm sad.").

- Lack of Empathy: volunteers reported experiencing a lack of empathy during training sessions (e.g., "...and they still look at people with indifference in training.").

- Transportation Challenges: There were difficulties related to mobility and transportation, with reports of lengthy delays.

- Volunteer Dietary Concerns: Concerns regarding the quality of food provided to volunteers, as some people reported sour and spoiled meals at the cafeteria of Marina da Glória – one site of the Games (e.g., "I couldn't work today. Feeling sick.").

- Lack of volunteer Support and frustration: Certain volunteers faced difficulties in obtaining necessary support for uniform-related issues (e.g., "I have my two pants torn and they didn't forward me to make the exchange. I'll keep them torn to the end.").

- Certificate Delivery Issues and frustration: Some volunteers reported difficulties with the delivery of their certificates, including instances of incorrect or missing certificates (e.g., "my certificate went wrong and I don't know where else to complain. I feel like a ping pong ball.").

- Post-Games Emptiness: Volunteers experienced a sense of emptiness and uncertainty about their future activities after the conclusion of the Games (e.g., "what now? What am I going to do tomorrow without the Games?").

- Unfulfilled Organizational Promises: There were grievances against event's organizational commitments. Volunteers expressed disappointment over unfulfilled promises, including the lack of promised volunteer fraternization opportunities (e.g., "promises and more promises... where is the fraternization of the volunteers that was promised?").

- Communication Challenges: Communication challenges persisted, with volunteers encountering difficulties in reaching out to the organizing committee, both during and after the

Games. The frustration escalated post-Games, with some volunteers unable to obtain their certificates due to communication breakdowns (e.g., "it was already difficult to talk to the committee during the Games. Now that they're done, it's impossible. I didn't get the certificate").

These pre-Games, during-Games and post-Games challenges had an impact on the overall volunteer experience, especially eliciting negative emotions, and were indicative of areas where improvements were needed to enhance the overall volunteer experience and promote a better management result.

5. Conclusions

The objective of this study was to examine the motivations and emotions experienced by volunteers during the Rio 2016 Olympics and analyze management issues with impact on the volunteer morale. To accomplish this, it was gathered user-generated data from the official Facebook group dedicated to Rio 2016 Volunteers. Primary findings highlighted a predominantly Brazilian cohort of volunteers who came from various cities.

Step 1 of the study reveals word connections with motivations like patriotism, interpersonal contacts, and personal growth, and connections with emotions such as contentment" and "pride. Regarding communications strategies and events operations, these motivations and emotions may be used as valuable insights for future organizers seeking to attract volunteers.

As regards step 2, the predominant challenges that volunteers encountered during their participation were examined. It was found that pre-Games, during-Games and post-Games challenges had an impact on the overall volunteer experiences by eliciting negative emotions and reinforcing the importance of the seven-stage process of the volunteers' management, as pointed out by Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, and Darcy (2006). This exploration of the negative emotions experienced by volunteers holds the potential to generate a range of managerial recommendations aimed at enhancing the morale of the volunteer group. As an example, should one only consider post-Games opportunities, engaging with volunteers throughout their departure process could foster more positive emotions and enhance the likelihood of their future involvement in volunteering endeavors (Gellweiler, Fletcher, & Wise, 2019).

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