Exploring the Motives and Retention Factors of Sport-For-Development Volunteers

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Abstract
Due to the importance of volunteers within the sport industry, there have been increased efforts to determine the motivation behind these acts of volunteerism. However, most research has focused on volunteers with professional sporting events and organizations, and very few studies have investigated volunteer motivations behind sport-for-development initiatives. The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivation of volunteers who chose to take part in the World Scholar-Athlete Games, a multinational sport-for-development event, and to identify factors related to their retention. This qualitative study was guided by the functional approach to volunteer motivation. Results revealed volunteers were motivated by values, social, understanding, career and self-enhancement factors. In addition, volunteers whose initial motivations for volunteering were satisfied continued to donate time to the event year after year. Implications for theory and practice, as well as future research directions, are discussed.

Keywords
volunteerism, sport-for-development, volunteer motivation, volunteer retention

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Organizations in many fields often rely heavily on the labor of volunteers (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991), with over 62 million Americans donating their time between 2009 and 2010 (Bureau of Labor, 2011). Within the sport context, Cuskelly (1998) notes that volunteers are a vital and indispensible part of the sport industry. Research suggests that sports provide unique opportunities for volunteerism (Bang, Alexandris, & Ross, 2009; Shilbury & Moore, 2006), and volunteers provide economic efficiencies for sport organizations by minimizing staff costs and contributing innovative and new ideas (Cuskelly, Auld, Harrington, & Coleman, 2004; Shin & Kleiner, 2003).

In a review of volunteerism research, Wilson (2012) notes that future investigations “should pay more attention to organizational context” (p. 201). While volunteer motivation research in sport has often focused on large-scale events such as the Olympics (Bang et al., 2009) and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003), it is also important to examine volunteerism with nonprofit, sport-for-development (SFD) initiatives. SFD organizations use sports in an effort to create a positive impact on society by stimulating intercultural exchange, promoting conflict resolution and peace building, assisting marginalized populations (e.g., homeless or low-income families), or even impacting public health (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). One element nearly every SFD program has in common is a passionate and hard-working group of volunteers. Determining the motives of volunteers can be beneficial for SFD organizations in designing targeted messages during volunteer recruitment. In addition, research suggests that nonprofit organizations such as SFD initiatives often improve their performance if they can retain their current volunteers for future endeavors (Mesch, Tschirhart, Perry, & Lee, 1998; Skoglund, 2006; DeWitt Watts & Edwards, 1983).

Due to limited research on volunteer motives in large, multinational SFD events, this study investigates the motives of volunteers at one such event called the World Scholar-Athlete Games (WSAG) and examines factors leading to their retention. Like many nonprofits, this event functions with minimal staff and a tight budget depending on a strong volunteer base. To guide this research, two questions were developed:

**Research question 1:** What were the initial motives of individuals to volunteer at the WSAG?

**Research question 2:** What factors led to the retention of volunteers?

**Theoretical Framework**

Volunteerism is defined as “any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit individuals and groups, other than or in addition to, close relatives, or the benefit of the environment” (Davis Smith, 1998, pp. 13-14). As theoretical grounding for the present study, the functional approach to volunteer motivation was adopted (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992; Clary et al., 1998; Stukas, Worth, Clary, & Snyder, 2009), as considerable research uses this functionalist approach to evaluate initial motives to volunteer (Clary et al., 1998) and volunteer retention (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Finkelstein, 2008).
Clary and Snyder (1991) initially determined volunteer functions by investigating functional theory literature including Smith, Bruner, and White (1956), and Katz (1960). In an effort to build on the previous literature on volunteer motivation and evaluate the main factors that lead to volunteering, Clary et al. (1998) noted that volunteers take part in similar activities to gratify diverse, and often multiple, motives. Subsequently, they proposed six motivational factors of volunteerism: (a) values—volunteering based on morals or principles, (b) understanding—utilizing volunteer opportunities to gain skills or acquire knowledge (new knowledge and skills, not necessarily used in one’s career), (c) self-enhancement—volunteering to feel good about oneself and enhance psychological development or personal growth, (d) career—volunteering to acquire experience to assist in job attainment or build on existing work-related skills, (e) social—building relationships or meeting new people through volunteering, and (f) protective—using volunteerism as a way to cope with stress or attempt to diminish emotions such as guilt or conflict.

Several studies used the functionalist approach in different settings to determine initial motives of volunteers (Stukas et al., 2009). One recent study of college student volunteers found that all six dimensions of the functional approach were important motivational factors with values and understanding having greatest significance (Gage & Thapa, 2012). Another study involved senior adults who volunteered at health care facilities and noted that all six motivational functions appeared to drive motivation to volunteer (Okun, Barr, & Herzog, 1998). Each of these six functions emerges within volunteers in varying degrees due to one’s age, location, activity, and previous life experiences (Clary et al., 1998; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1996). It is also important to note that not all volunteer experiences present opportunities to satisfy each motivational factor (Clary et al., 1996).

Beyond initial motivations to volunteer, the functionalist approach suggests that volunteer retention occurs when one or more motives are satisfied (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Considering the need to retain and not simply recruit volunteers, identifying the relationship between initial motivations and retention is vitally important (Cuskelly, 2004; Gage & Thapa, 2012). Studies show that volunteers remain involved as long as their service continues to fulfill their motives or needs (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Finkelstein, 2008). If volunteers sense a continued alignment between their goals and values and those of the organization, or if they have developed social support through friendships and networks derived through volunteering, the likelihood of remaining a volunteer increases (Locke, Ellis, & Davis-Smith, 2003). As Stukas et al. (2009) report, “the satisfaction of multiple important motivations in volunteering is linearly related to positive outcome” (p. 24). Finally, retention often occurs for reasons beyond satisfying altruistic motivations and can be driven by other benefits such as social gains or career advancement (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Ryan, Kaplan, & Grese, 2001).

**Sport Volunteer Motivation**

Volunteers play a crucial role in the success of many sport organizations and events (Cuskelly, 1998; Green & Chalip, 1998; Shilbury & Moore, 2006). Research has
examined the value of volunteers within community sport (Silverberg, Marshall, & Ellis, 2001) and within large, international events such as the Olympics or FIFA World Cup (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003; Bang et al., 2009). Regardless of venue, one factor found to be unique to sport volunteer motivation versus other volunteer opportunities is one’s “love of sport” (Bang & Ross, 2009). For example, in a study of marathon volunteers, reasons for volunteering were mainly driven by the sport itself and not just the opportunity to help others (Bang & Ross, 2009). At a professional golf event, love of golf was the primary motivator of volunteers (B. Coyne & Coyne, 2001), love of tennis attracted volunteers to a U.S. Open Series event (Pauline & Pauline, 2009), and Bang and Chelladurai (2003) observed “love of sport” motivating volunteers for the 2002 FIFA World Cup. Cuskelly (2004) also determined players and ex-players of various sports would volunteer in an attempt to stay involved with their sport. Volunteers can also have an interest in expanding educational opportunities for others, and fostering civic engagement and social interaction (Forbes & Zampelli, 2012). For instance, studies focused on youth sport volunteerism reveal that volunteers are driven by a desire to create an optimal sporting experience for children (Kim, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010).

Beyond improving an organization’s effectiveness, Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan (2009) propose that many social justice initiatives would not be able to exist without a reliable volunteer contingent. One volunteer motivation study in the SFD context involved a soccer program for the homeless and determined that volunteers are motivated by values, self-enhancement, social, and understanding factors of the functionalist approach (Welty Peachey, Cohen, Borland, & Lyras, 2013). Furthermore, these volunteers were motivated due to their love of soccer. However, studies have not examined volunteer motives and retention factors associated with large, multinational, SFD initiatives.

**Research Context**

To examine volunteer motives to become involved with a large, multinational, SFD event, the researchers selected the 2011 WSAG, held in Hartford, Connecticut. In existence since 1993, the WSAG takes place every 4 years and has hosted more than 10,000 young people from over 200 countries. During the 2011 Games, there were 525 female and male participants from 40 countries, ranging in age from 15 to 19 years, who took part in a variety of sport and fine arts activities coached or taught by volunteers. The main purpose of the event was to bring together young people in an inclusive environment that promoted understanding, peace, development, and social change.

Approximately 150 volunteers assisted in leading activities along with fulfilling general duties such as event operations. Considering the WSAG targeted elite and gifted young people from around the world, this created a need for talented volunteers. The principal means for recruiting volunteers were mass mailings of applications to every high school in the United States and to select private secondary schools in other countries with which the WSAG had a relationship. Personal invitations were also
extended by WSAG staff to previous volunteers. All volunteers had to complete an application form, which was then reviewed by WSAG staff. Approximately 50% of volunteers who applied were accepted as volunteers. Very few individuals declined to participate if they were accepted.

Along with teaching and leading their respective activities, volunteers engaged in discussions with a diverse group of international students. After each keynote address, volunteers led small discussion groups of WSAG participants in conversation about the topic for the day. Moreover, unlike most global sporting events, the WSAG does not separate teams into nations. Part of the mission entails diversifying teams and activity groups based on countries and cultures, strategically placing on the same team or activity group young people from parts of the world that are in the midst of conflict. Thus, a unique environment is created for volunteers to expand their role beyond sport and art.

**Method**

Data collection methods included focus groups, personal interviews, and direct observations made by four of the authors attending the event. While many volunteer motivation studies use quantitative methodology, scholars suggest that there are benefits of adopting qualitative methods to provide a deeper and more in-depth understanding of volunteer motives (MacLean & Hamm, 2007). In particular, as the present study is exploratory in nature, qualitative methods are well suited to provide a rich picture of volunteer motives and retention factors in the relatively unexplored area of SFD volunteers (Creswell, 1998). Direct observations were coupled with focus groups and interviews to corroborate or disconfirm the data, which served as a means for triangulation to improve dependability and credibility (Creswell, 1998).

**Participants and Procedures**

The researchers conducted focus groups and personal interviews with 21 WSAG volunteers. A total of 11 men and 10 women, 22 to 55 years old, were purposively sampled. Volunteers with a wide range of experience with the WSAG (0-14 years) were selected, some who were first-time volunteers and others who had volunteered multiple times, to gather data on initial motivates as well as retention. The researchers also spoke with volunteers from various countries and activities that represented the diversity of the event (see Table 1). Almost all study participants were college graduates or had obtained a graduate degree, and the majority was employed as teachers, administrators, or in some professional occupation. The two focus groups consisted of six participants each, a number recommended by Krueger and Casey (2009), and nine personal interviews were conducted to allow for more in-depth probing (Creswell, 1998). The interview guides were semistructured, and focus groups and interviews were conducted until common themes emerged from multiple data collection methods, leading to data saturation (Creswell, 1998). The semistructured design allowed for free-flowing conversation and the ability to ask follow-up questions as needed.
The second data collection method entailed direct observations. Throughout the 10-day event, each author observed different sport or fine arts programs along with attending workshops, keynote speakers, and extracurricular events (e.g., talent nights)

**Table 1. Demographic Information of Study Participants.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Volunteer role</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Events volunteered</th>
<th>Previous WSAG participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Filipino/Asian</td>
<td>Volleyball coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2001 and 2011 games</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Swimming coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Track and Field coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Native America</td>
<td>Music instructor, speaker</td>
<td>Performance artist</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>Since 2006</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candice</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Lacrosse coach, session leader, keynote speaker</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Dance instructor</td>
<td>Dance instructor Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>Since 2003</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>General volunteer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>Visual Arts instructor, general volunteer</td>
<td>Nonprofit admin. Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Since 2001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>General volunteer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>General volunteer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Theater instructor</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Some College degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Tennis coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Since 1997</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Workshop speaker</td>
<td>Financial planner Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Field hockey coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Lacrosse coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>High School graduate</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Track and Field coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Soccer coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Since 2001</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Visual arts instructor</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Aboriginal/Estonian/Irish</td>
<td>General volunteer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Since 2006</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabatha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Visual arts instructor</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Soccer coach</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>Since 1997</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and the opening and closing ceremonies). Efforts were also made to observe “down time” such as lunches, dinners, breaks, and nightly free time. Twenty-five sport events, ranging from fencing to swimming, as well as 10 fine art activities including dance and choir were observed. Finally, volunteers who led discussion groups were observed to gauge their efforts and leadership in a group setting.

Data Analysis

To analyze the transcripts and recorded memos, open, axial, and selective coding was used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Guided by the functionalist approach (Clary et al., 1992; Clary et al., 1998), the open coding procedure was performed by the first and second authors who identified prominent motives and retention factors. These codes were condensed into common themes (axial coding) which illuminated the prominent factors. For example, the open codes “meet people from around the globe” and “make new friends” were grouped in the axial code “building new relationships” (social). The open codes “desire to uphold WSAG mission” and “desire to help participants” were collapsed into the axial code “helping others/helping WSAG” (values). The open codes “self-rewarding” and “feel-good event” were collapsed into the axial code “enjoyable experience/event” (self-enhancement). The factors of understanding and career emerged concurrently. As Glesne (2011) states, coding data simultaneously to two codes is appropriate as data can have multiple meanings dictating they be coded in more than one theme. Thus, “learn about culture,” “gain new cultural skills,” and “network with people around the globe” fell into the axial category of “bring knowledge and awareness of culture back to place of employment” (understanding and career). The protective factor did not emerge from the data.

Two authors individually coded the data and then met twice to evaluate codes, themes, and significant findings in an effort to strengthen the dependability of the findings. When disagreements arose as to how segments of data should be coded, conversation ensued until consensus was reached on the coding for each data segment. The last step entailed selective coding, where quotations from the data were selected that represented the themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Dependability and Credibility

Having several researchers collect data, make observations, and write memos during the event aided in removing researcher bias, increased trustworthiness of the study, and provided a means for triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To further enhance dependability and credibility, discussions continuously took place between the authors throughout the event. Member checks with participants were conducted to assist in the credibility of the results (Creswell, 1998), where participants reviewed their transcripts and study interpretations. None of the participants responded with concerns about their transcripts or interpretations of the findings. To protect confidentiality, all study participants were assigned a pseudonym.
The present study has several limitations. Data were collected from a single event which limits generalizability. Social desirability bias could have influenced the responses given by volunteers, while researcher bias could also have occurred. Bias was mitigated by having multiple researchers code and discuss the data, along with conducting member checks with study participants. Finally, we did not interview previous WSAG volunteers who may have had a negative experience and did not return to the 2011 WSAG; they may have provided further insight into retention factors.

Findings

This study aimed to determine the motives and retention factors of WSAG volunteers. Findings revealed volunteers were motivated by five of the six factors of the functionalist approach: values, social, understanding, career, and self-enhancement.

Values Alignment

One motivational factor was alignment with the mission of the WSAG and a desire to give back to the organization. The WSAG provided a platform that de-emphasized winning and championships and endorsed peace, inclusivity, and fairness in all aspects of the event. For many volunteers, these ideals resonated with their personal values, which prompted them to donate time and energy to help make the event a success. For example, Michael strongly endorsed the mission of the initiative:

I love the concept of being a complete person, mind, body, and spirit. I’ve always prided myself [as] a student athlete . . . not just a jock . . . you’re not only a student, you’re a scholar and trying to use your mind and athletic abilities . . . so that you could maybe have an impact in your school and your community and the world.

Wendy was a long-time soccer volunteer who remarked that the objective of the WSAG aligned with her values, drawing her to volunteer: “I like the premise originally of getting the kids together on a sports field. They’re not going to care who they are because every kid wants to win a game. That I liked.” Wendy was observed spending much time agonizing over team formations and structures. Her main goal was to create cultural and national diversity among the teams to capitalize on the mission of the WSAG. Indeed, the continued alignment of the WSAG mission with her personal values was a prominent factor for Wendy in returning for each event.

Connor, a drumming instructor and motivational speaker, was enthusiastic about his values-driven desire to be part of the initiative:

This is the greatest thing I have ever seen planet Earth. . . . Bringing together young, bright, up-and-coming teenagers from all over the world to let them play together, share time together, participate in sports, arts, listen to incredibly intellectually stimulating speakers and presenters. There is not an emphasis on who wins and loses. It’s about having a good time and the whole theme is cooperation.
Several volunteers were former WSAG participants who felt the need to give back to the organization. Alex stressed that he wished to create an experience for the current WSAG participants that was similar to his own experience as a participant:

I am here in the service of the students. . . . I want to give them the same kind experience I had. Same kind of memories . . . and hopefully they can leave with the same kind of feelings. . . . I want them to have that same impact . . . that’s what I hope to provide as an educator . . . because it’s a debt of gratitude to the Games.

Alex was as a leader with high energy and motivation. Whether it was coaching or leading discussion groups, he had a strong desire for participants to receive a similar experience to his own. Mitchell also stated that his motivation to volunteer as a speaker was due to his previous positive experience at the WSAG as a participant: “I will do pretty much anything they ever ask me to do . . . if they want me to contribute whatever way . . . I would continue to do so.” Finally, Celina discussed how the event gave her a rare opportunity to showcase her talents and meet people such as President Clinton and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. She mentioned how these expanding opportunities led to her desire to give back to the organization as a volunteer: “I could never not give back to the WSAG . . . and I trust that my passion for the Games will help to see [it] grow.”

Whether it was a desire to give back to the organization, create a positive experience for the participants, or endorse an initiative that embraced peace and diversity through sports and the arts, individuals were initially motivated to volunteer and continued to return when they experienced values alignment with the WSAG.

Social

Another volunteer motive was social, generated through the positive and friendly environment created by the WSAG mission of inclusivity, allowing volunteers to meet new people and learn about different cultures. The WSAG brought together like-minded individuals from around the world who embraced peace building and social change. Nelson wanted to volunteer because he hoped to meet people and was subsequently satisfied that he had done so: “I’ve met a lot of people here. I’ve met people from Australia, Bolivia, Argentina, Ireland, Chile, Peru. They are so nice and wonderful people.” Nelson was one of the most popular volunteers. Whether it was performing on his guitar or educating people about his life in Nicaragua, he was often observed surrounded by participants.

Celina appreciated the opportunity to connect and build relationships with the participants, and this is what continued to bring her back:

So I leave here yet again, fulfilled, pleased that I was able to give back but more importantly knowing that I would have revealed myself and exposed myself to a different batch of students with different issues . . . different cultures, and different stories to tell.
Celina was observed to have strong bonds with the dancers in her group. After the closing ceremony performance of her dancers, for example, there was excitement and appreciation between her and the dance participants as they hugged and celebrated the performance.

Michael was also motivated to become involved because of the opportunity to meet and work with youth from around the world: “I’ve always loved meeting people from other cultures and countries and so I kind of looked for ways to interact with international athletes and have a chance to meet kids and coaches from other countries.” This social factor was one reason the WSAG was able to retain volunteers such as Michael, who said, after volunteering for three WSAG events, “I still enjoy . . . meeting people from other cultures and the kids, building friendships with people from all over the world. That’s the reason I started 15 years ago and [it’s] the same today.” Michael’s desire to meet participants was also frequently observed. For example, he often sat with scholar-athletes from other countries in the cafeteria in an attempt to learn about their interests, backgrounds, and struggles. Wendy likewise enjoyed associating with other volunteers, and this was a primary reason she returned year after year: “Quite honestly, part of the reason I came back was to see the folks. There’s a group of folks I see every two or three or four years because I know they’re going to be here coaching.”

Candice was also driven by the young athletes and artists she got to meet at the event: “It was fun. The girls were wonderful. They love to play and we had a lot of fun running around together. I really enjoyed playing with them.” Candice related well to the participants, and in one instance, she was observed spending a significant amount of time after her workshop discussing the nonprofit sports world with participants.

Thus, the social climate of the WSAG motivated many individuals to attend the event in an effort to meet new people, network with their existing cohort, and bond with participants through sports and the arts. Furthermore, the social aspect prompted volunteers to return year after year. The networks and connections they developed were valuable, enjoyable, and satisfying, which led to their continued interest in volunteering.

Understanding and Career

Due to the majority of volunteers having jobs within education or coaching, the understanding and career factors were motives for those who hoped to gain skills they could bring back to their jobs and lives. These motives were intermeshed, as volunteers wished to gain knowledge of other diverse people and cultures (understanding), but then also hoped to transfer this knowledge to enhance their professional development (career). The skills and acquired knowledge motivated some veterans to continue volunteering at the WSAG to keep acquiring these benefits. Randy noted that the cultural diversity provided him with a learning opportunity he could bring back to the classroom, and that this was a reason he became and stayed involved:

As a high school coach in New Jersey dealing with different cultures, people who don’t quite know the English language, it’s made me more patient and it’s made me more understanding . . . it’s helped me in a positive manner.
Celina was observed gaining knowledge and skills from a participant during her dance workshops which could potentially serve her in future instruction and lessons. One of the participants in her session was from New Zealand and had Maori roots, and throughout the WSAG, Celina learned about Maori dance style so it could be choreographed into the performance.

Nelson stressed that everything he learned he planned to take back to his school in Nicaragua:

I’m going to share everything! With my classmates, my students, every person in Nicaragua who I can find to share this I’m going to. . . . I would like that in the future if I come here, I would like if I came here not just me but with other people from Nicaragua. This way we could reproduce these topics and expand.

Candice, who knew Nelson from a previous volunteer position in Nicaragua, commented on how he embraced the event and absorbed as much knowledge as he could:

So the hope in bringing him . . . was to realize that it would be a huge professional and personal development process for him. . . . [Connor] was the guy who did all the clapping routines in the beginning. One day I’m participating and smiling and laughing and loving it and I look over at [Nelson] and he has this very serious face and he’s not doing anything. I said “[Nelson], what are you doing?” and he says “I’m watching him, I’m learning from him.” It just never crossed my mind that . . . he’s never received professional development at home.

Nelson’s desire to gain knowledge was often observed, as he sat in the front row taking notes during workshop sessions and had numerous conversations with other volunteers about his experiences.

The first time Alex volunteered at the WSAG, one of his motives was to build confidence and skills in coaching volleyball. His experiences assisted his efforts in coaching and teaching:

In 2001, when I coached for the first time, I was a sophomore in college and I wanted to . . . see if I could do it. I’d never done it before, I’d never done it as a job . . . I knew I was competent enough in the sport to be able to organize the practice and organize the team and compete. . . . The impact the students have. They validated me.

In addition, Wendy talked about how the network of volunteers could provide assistance for her job as an educator:

Just knowing, meeting coaches . . . I had no idea how to run a clinic so I emailed one of the coaches who had been here who I know does this and I said “Hey, I want to run a 90-minute clinic for little kids. Can you email me what you do?” “Here you go.” Done.

Thus, the WSAG provided a learning environment for many volunteers that in turn generated skills, awareness, and knowledge that could be used within a teaching setting. The opportunity to work and learn from others in a multinational setting was an
important motive to initially become involved with the WSAG and to remain involved over subsequent events.

**Self-Enhancement**

The final motivating factor was self-enhancement, or a sense of enjoyment gained through donating time. Connor was a passionate presence throughout the WSAG. He was proud of the participants in his drumming workshop during the closing ceremony, and he led drum circles late into the night because sharing his music made him happy. He commented on the warm reception he received from participants:

> I have people coming up and smiling, shaking my hand and you never know where they’re from or what language they actually speak but the smile says it all. . . . [if I got paid] for every time somebody has either thanked me or told me they appreciated it I would have made a lot of money here.

He led one of the highest attended workshops and told stories to participants long after his workshop concluded. When asked why he decided to volunteer again in 2011 after performing at the 2006 Games, he stated, “[While] my corporate client list is extensive . . . this is the greatest thing I’ve ever seen.”

Randy also derived enjoyment from meeting and coaching students from around the world, and the enjoyment and satisfaction he experienced kept him coming back:

> My team had girls from all over Europe, South America, and it was really neat combining them to form one unit. It was a big thrill . . . if I didn’t enjoy it I wouldn’t be back. So it’s definitely enjoyable getting to work with different cultures, with the kids.

Celina relished the opportunity to educate participants in her dance class on the culture of her country, and this enjoyment was a key motive for her. She incorporated her island’s style of dance into a routine that was performed at the closing ceremony:

> My whole thing is leaving the Games not just better as a sports personality or better in your field of culture, but as a person being able to have dialogue with others, being able to express yourself, being able to encourage others.

Finally, Mitchell was a former WSAG participant who was motivated to return and volunteer due to his previous experiences and the enjoyment he found in passing that experience on to current participants: “It was the single most impactful moment in my life. I do have fond memories of it . . . I want to help these kids experience the same thing that I did.”

Thus, the WSAG provided a platform for volunteers to have an enjoyable and meaningful experience that created positive feelings and an opportunity for personal development and growth. These positive feelings were important in motivating volunteers to return and volunteer again.
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the motivation of volunteers who chose to take part in a large, multinational SFD event, and to identify factors related to retention. Although previous volunteer motivation research has been conducted with a multitude of sports events and initiatives (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003; Bang & Ross, 2009; MacLean & Hamm, 2007; Welty Peachey et al., 2013), this research makes a unique contribution as one of the first to investigate volunteerism with a multinational SFD event. Findings revealed that volunteers were motivated by values, social, understanding, career, and self-enhancement (Clary & Snyder, 1991), and when volunteers were satisfied that their initial motives were fulfilled, they continued to donate their time to the event.

Locke et al. (2003) state, “different factors are involved in effectively managing (and therefore keeping) different types of volunteers” (p. 87). As suggested in the literature using a functionalist approach to motivation, it is important to note that volunteers will have different and multiple motives driving involvement, and that not all motivational functions may be present for a given event (Clary et al., 1998; Clary et al., 1996). While five functionalist factors emerged in this study, the protective motive was not salient. Perhaps this was because WSAG volunteers were mostly successful, highly educated individuals (see Table 1), and they likely did not have negative feelings and guilt (protective) that they were trying to assuage through volunteering.

The opportunity to serve in an altruistic sense (values) is often a motive of volunteers at nonprofit organizations (Frey & Eitzen, 1991; Locke et al., 2003) and within an SFD context (Welty Peachey et al., 2013), and it was not surprising to see its relevance here. Many volunteers expressed how their alignment with the WSAG mission stimulated a desire to take part. Their experiences with the participants and other volunteers, along with the desire to continue building on the goals of the event, led toward repeated involvement. This supports findings from Garner and Garner (2011) who recognize the need for volunteers to see impact and have a voice to remain engaged and invested in the mission. If volunteers were satisfied that the mission of the WSAG aligned with their personal values, they continued to remain involved. These findings support previous research which identified motive fulfillment as a crucial aspect to retaining existing volunteers (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Finkelstein, 2008). However, it must be noted that while volunteer research often suggests individuals volunteer for altruistic reasons, it could be volunteers are presenting their motives as values based because this is a socially accepted reason for engaging in volunteer work, when in reality their motives are not as altruistic (Francies, 1983; Mesch et al., 1998). Thus, there may be some degree of social desirability bias in the present study, as well as in other volunteer motivation studies. Future research should attempt to move beyond the commonly articulated values motive and probe deeper for underlying motives.

Whether it was to meet likeminded and passionate individuals or to coach and teach young people from around the world, the social factor was a significant initial motive, and when satisfied, fostered retention. Benefits of volunteerism such as increased self-esteem and social integration assist in retaining volunteers (Wilson, 2012). The
findings of the present study are similar to other volunteer motivation studies in the sports field. Burnett (2006) noted that sport can promote connections or create bonds within various groups and networks, while sport volunteers are also motivated by camaraderie and friendship (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007).

The two functionalist factors of understanding and career emerged in tandem. The WSAG created an environment where talented educators from around the world taught and coached within their discipline. This created a network of volunteers who could share ideas, lessons, techniques, and skills with one another. The diverse culture of the event and the interpersonal communication opportunities facilitated an atmosphere of learning that proved beneficial for a volunteer’s career. Whether it was the Irish contingency educating Americans on the game of hurling, or girls from Botswana talking about their home country to volunteers, the setting enabled a culture of understanding which subsequently benefited many volunteers in their work. In turn, this opportunity to gain and build skills (Wilson, 2012), along with learning about people from around the world (McBride, Lough, & Sherraden, 2012), fostered an environment volunteers desired to revisit, and sparked their wish to remain involved.

Finally, self-enhancement was noticeable among the volunteers. Several noted their appreciation and enjoyment in seeing the participants excel. Self-enhancement was a similar finding identified by Welty Peachey et al. (2013) in an investigation of a sport-for-homeless initiative. They found that volunteers often took part in the initiative in an effort to feel good about their actions or develop as human beings. While Welty Peachey et al. focused on motives that led to initial volunteerism, the findings of the present study suggest that self-enhancement can create positive feelings that also lead to retention (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Finkelstein, 2008).

Volunteer retention was driven by satisfaction of an individual’s initial motives. In addition, research suggests that factors such as stability or continuity in personal life are drivers of retention (Gaston & Alexander, 2001; Locke, 2003). Alexander (2000) found individuals who are “settled” in their lives have a higher likelihood of giving a longer length of service. The majority of volunteers at the WSAG had established careers; thus, this life stability may have led to longer retention as volunteers. Interestingly, volunteers at the 2011 WSAG expressed a strong interest in returning as volunteers for subsequent events, despite staffing and location changes, budget cuts, and lower participant attendance than expected. These negative factors caused frustration among many volunteers but, despite these negative experiences, volunteers still wished to optimize the experience for the participants, provide constructive feedback, and return as volunteers. Importantly, the motives of individuals to support the mission of the WSAG, mentor young people, and connect with likeminded volunteers transcended the pessimistic feelings that emerged during the event due to poor planning and disorganization of event staff.

**Implications and Future Directions**

An important contribution of this study to the theoretical understanding of volunteer motivation for SFD events is that individuals will have multiple motives for
volunteering with such programs, more than just values alignment, as is commonly found in volunteer research (Cuskelly, 2004; Eley & Kirk, 2002; Welty Peachey et al., 2013). The multiple motives identified in this study can serve as valuable assets to recruit and retain volunteers. Since there is an increasingly competitive market for volunteers, nonprofit SFD programs must identify factors that make the volunteer experience attractive (Costa, Chalip, Green, & Simes, 2006), what motivates volunteers to donate time, and what contributes to future engagement or retention of volunteers (Clary et al., 1992; Cuskelly, 2004). Thus, multiple motivations should be incorporated into theorizing about volunteer motives for taking part in SFD initiatives, instead of just focusing on values alignment and altruistic motives as most salient.

Practically, these results can be useful for SFD programs seeking to recruit new volunteers and retain existing volunteers. While initiatives such as the Olympics may motivate volunteers due to “love of sport” and desire to watch elite athletes compete (Bang et al., 2009), this will likely not be the case for SFD programs. Moreover, just emphasizing the mission and social justice objectives of SFD initiatives when recruiting volunteers, assuming they will volunteer due to a match of values or for altruistic reasons, may not be as effective as targeting recruitment strategies to a breadth of motivations. When designing volunteer recruitment strategies, SFD organizations may wish to emphasize the social and fun aspects of the volunteer experience, the opportunity to learn new skills and understandings that could benefit one in life and in one’s career, and the satisfaction that one may experience as a result of volunteering. By emphasizing how the volunteer experience will satisfy these multiple motives, more than simply focusing on the values and mission of the organization, SFD organizations may gain more and better quality volunteers who can be retained as these motives are satisfied.

There are several future research directions that would be helpful to advance an understanding of volunteer motivation and retention with nonprofit, SFD initiatives. First, longitudinal studies would be fruitful to further evaluate the effectiveness of the WSAG and other SFD initiatives in attracting and retaining volunteers, and the potential outcomes of volunteer retention or withdrawal (such as increased or decreased organizational performance). Furthermore, volunteer motivation studies could be conducted with SFD initiatives with different missions than the WSAG to see how motivation and retention factors may vary. In addition, future research should probe behind the often-stated values motive to uncover other salient and hidden motives, such as ego or personal pride (Bang & Ross, 2009). Finally, investigating SFD initiatives outside of the United States would be valuable in determining if the event setting can affect motives due to shifts in culture and context. Any and all efforts by scholars in this line of research are welcome.

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