Abstract Reference Number: h02

Author

Aya Okada, Naoto Yamauchi

Title

Volunteering for Mega-sport Events: Towards the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

Abstract

1. Introduction

Volunteers play an important role in mega-sport events. Not only do they enable hosts to save operational costs, but they also enhance visitor satisfaction and community support with their skills and enthusiasm (Smith et al., 2014). Termed “episodic volunteering” (Macduff, 1995), such short-term event volunteering has attracted attention in the recent years as a suitable form of volunteering, particularly among people with limited free hours (Cnaan and Handy, 2005). Studies have argued that demographic, motivation, preference, levels of commitment and satisfaction among episodic volunteers may differ from regular volunteers who contribute for longer term (Allison et al., 2002). As such, organizers must consider different recruitment and management strategies for short-term event volunteers (Brudney and Meijs, 2009; Hyde et al. 2016). To expand our knowledge on volunteering at mega-sport events, this paper explores demographic, motivations, and expectations among potential volunteers for the upcoming Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, expected to mobilize at least 90,000 volunteers. We do so by examining both existing and original survey. Findings of this study will have implications to other contexts – particularly Asian societies – that plan to host mega-sport events with contributions of volunteers.

2. Literature Review

Mega-sport events has attracted attention among studies on both episodic and sport volunteering. While some document experiences of volunteers (White, 2014; Matsunaga, 2012; Moreno et al., 1999) and identify significant predictors of volunteer satisfaction (Kai et al., 2017), others analyze hosts’ management strategies (Carnicelli-Filho, 2014). Another set of studies explore legacies of volunteering (Nichols and Ralston, 2014). Sand et al. (2017) found performance feedback, training, and communication of task specification as factors that influence intention for future volunteering.
among Youth Olympic volunteers.

This paper joins research on volunteering at mega-sports events while making two contributions. First, the study explores status of potential volunteers PRIOR to the event to draw effective recruitment and management strategies. Second, the study takes the case of Japan, diversifying the context of related literature.

3. Research Design

The study proceeds in two steps. First, we examine an existing survey conducted by Sasakawa Sport Foundation (2014) to understand attributes, motivations, and expectations of people who volunteered for past sport events in Japan. Second, we design and conduct an original survey on intention and expectations to volunteer at the 2020 Games. Drawing from topics on individual, institutional, multi-level, and policy perspectives that Wicker (2017) laid out, we examine: 1) level of interest/intention to volunteer, 2) expected settings, benefits, and rewards, 3) tasks of interest (professional/non-professional, direct/indirect engagement in the games, direct contact with athletes/audience).

4. Progress to Date and Expected Outcomes

We are in the middle of first step, examining findings of Sasakawa survey. The survey revealed that 66.1% of past sport volunteers have strong/moderate intention to volunteer at the 2020 Games, while 25% of those without past volunteering experience showed similar intent. We are also in the process of designing an original survey. Through the analysis, we examine the possibility of mobilizing considerable volunteers, tasks with potential shortage of volunteers, and desirable support from public/private sectors for successful organization of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

**Keyword**

Mega-sport events, volunteering, Episodic volunteering, Recruitment Strategies, Management Strategies, Olympic and Paralympic Games