

# SENSE OF COMMUNITY AS SUSTAINABLE APPROACH FOR SPORT'S EVENT

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**ABSTRACT**— *This paper attempts to bring forward the idea of conceptualizing factors that lead to a sense of community among volunteers. These factors are seen as prominent in highlighting the role of the volunteer as it benefits youth as a volunteer. Several measurements are identified to measure these dimensions and important as factors that lead to volunteer commitment. Multiple linear regression was used in analyzing the data with 109 volunteers involved during Raja Nazrin Shah Marathon in 2019. Most of the volunteers were from Kuala Kangsar, Perak. This study resulted in that sense of community and individual benefit contribute to volunteer commitment, while community and social costs are not the contributors for the volunteer involvement during the event. This study has been only limited to a case study during Raja Nazrin Shah Event, yet more studies can be replicated to further understand the role of volunteer commitment in the event's industry.*

**Keywords**— Authentic, volunteer, event management, experience, management, motivation, community

## I. INTRODUCTION

Volunteer management in event management study has emerged as an important area of discussion among scholars. For the past few years, there have been tremendous discussions on elaborating the role of the volunteer in any event in the industry [1]. This is because some of the volunteers are rewarded with payment and some of them are not rewarded on anything. The increase in demand for event volunteers is in line with the growth of the event management industry. The event sector is seen as an important sub-sector in the tourism industry that provides an economic impact on a country.

The economic impact assessment generated from several events is mostly based on spending expenditure for event's tourist on food and beverage, hotel, accommodation, entertainment, merchandise expenditure, and transportation. Le Tour de Langkawi was organized for 8 days and it has been estimated that more than RM 24 million was generated from this event (NST, 2019). Besides, there have been many events organized throughout the years, yet, the impact as a result of organizing these events to volunteer is relatively lacking. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore the impact among event volunteers that contribute to their satisfaction and commitment to be involved as event volunteers.

Several areas have been discussed among scholars about understand volunteer management. The discussion of volunteer management is much related to experience, motivation, satisfaction, and commitment.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several factors contribute to volunteer involvement to take part as event's volunteer. In 2016, Ironman Langkawi 2016 there are more than one thousand volunteers involved during this event, and based on Ironman Langkawi 2016 report, there are several factors that contribute to their involvement. The involvement of volunteers was seen as an important arm to IRONMAN 2016. Most of the volunteers were locals or from Langkawi Island itself. Their involvement was not only during the event but also before and after the event. According to the volunteers, the factors that motivated them to be involved were that they could build a new relationship with other volunteers and

because of the event, most volunteers in Langkawi felt the sense of community to be involved and that drove them to learn English, as most of the event's participants were international participants (IRONMAN Malaysia 2014 - 2016 Report, MyCeb, 2016).

Some of the volunteers hungered for the experience. Experience is a psychological cognitive state and each evaluation object varies according to its meaning. It relates to stored mental representation or also known as a stimulant, and individual experience is used to stimulate and interpret the meaning [2]. The debates on experience have been much related to the discussion by [3] who operationalized experience as the feeling of using genuine items of a product or a service and this concept is mostly discussed in the service industry related to marketing, information system, and management.

Gilmore and Pine's theory is the most well-known as it discusses an individual experience that emphasizes the concept of whether the product or experience is true and whether the experience is what they claim about the other [3]. This theory was used in the study of [4]. The authors elaborated the concept of authenticity involved with individual perception on their expectation, skepticism, customer, firm, products or materials, satisfaction, and hypocrisy. Authentic experience is measured based on seven scales of authenticity. It is developed based on Gilmore and Pine's theory that emphasizes expectation, skepticism, customer, firm, products or materials, satisfaction, and hypocrisy as dimensions for authentic experience [4].

Apart from the discussion on volunteer experience, some studies focus on volunteer motivation. Hallmann and Harsm (2012) [5] found that volunteer motivation is much related to earning for an expression of value and personal growth, hence, the containment of factors is different according to its type of event. The debates on value dimensions are also reflected by spirituality such as altruism, social value, play, efficiency, and effort spent which is highly related to emotional experience. However, although much has been discussed on these dimensions, there is a need to examine the differences between volunteer motivation for the involvement as a volunteer [6]. This issue attracts Giannoulakis et al. (2015) [7] in

understanding the different types of motivation towards satisfaction and commitment that leads to intention to volunteer. It is revealed that there are differences in motivation that lead to satisfaction and commitment to volunteer [7, 8]. It seems that between satisfaction and volunteer commitment, the discussion on volunteer satisfaction is highly discussed by scholars. It is found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is highly related to volunteer satisfaction [9]. One of the measurements for motivation is Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI). The aim of the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) is to assess the motivations driving volunteers. VFI is defined as a statistically validated and widely used instrument that is designed for better understanding of the motivations for general volunteering behavior [10]. The functional approach to motivation proposes that individuals' personal and social goals can be understood by emphasizing underlying psychological functions that stem from his attitudes and perceptions [11].

VFI is measured from six motivation dimensions namely (1) values which are referred to the expression of values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns; (2) understanding that motivates the orientation to acquire and/or improve knowledge, skills, experiences, just to name a few; (3) social is the motivation related to what is called social adjustment and adaptation functions by Smith, Bruner, and White in the year 1956; (4) career is the motivation to enhance knowledge in a specific area related to professional and academic development; (5) protective is the motivation oriented to protect the ego or escape from problems; and lastly, (6) enhancement which is the motivation centered on self-knowledge, self-development and, in general, feeling better about oneself [10]. This argument is supported by Martens [12] who also highlighted similar dimensions, yet [12] also emphasized that apart from values and understanding that drive a volunteer to do volunteering service, the researcher also highlighted career, social benefits as well as ego enhancement and protection for determination for volunteering.

It is suggested that more research is needed that makes use of the VFI framework alongside techniques such as quintile regression analysis to establish whether these particular findings also hold in other online volunteering and citizen science contexts [13]. One of the examples of the VFI approach is used in a psychometric property. Psychometric property is a term used to describe an assessment and measurement. The study of Wu and Lo [14] describes the psychometric properties from the context of volunteer inventory function. These functions involve expressing an assessment of experience in terms of career experience (values), learning through hands-on experience (understanding), promoting better feelings towards oneself (enhancement), gaining career-related experience (career), strengthening one's social relationships (social), and reducing one's negative feelings (protective). Based on the above, it observes that psychometric properties relied on individual attitude or personality. Psychometric test is also related to personality and is known as psychometric personality models [15]. There are two main approaches to modeling personality namely temperaments which inherited consistencies expected to be stable and traits that are more on the stability of personality. The example of psychometric that

falls under temperament is the Myers-Briggs psychological types and Big Five-Factor Model as seen as one of the psychometric traits.

Psychometrics is used to measure human behavior by using an instrument [16]. One of the examples is used in Big Five-Factor Model. The assessment is based on extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness [15] compared in the study of [17]. The author applied three assessments of psychometric tests in evaluating workaholism. The assessment is Workaholism Battery (WorkBAT), the Work Addiction Risk Test (WART), and the Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS). This shows that there are several psychometric assessments namely WorkBat, WART, DUWAS, and workaholism test. Yet, between both psychometric assessments, it seems that the discussion on Big Five-Factor Model is still relatively lacking.

It is also observed that the role of intercultural competencies also influences volunteer satisfaction. Intercultural competencies are based on intergroup development theory. This theory elaborates that intercultural differences consist of (1) equal status between the groups in the situation; (2) groups sharing common goals; (3) no competition between the groups; and (4) authority support for the contact. This theory is divided according to openness and ethnocentric which consist of intercultural approach tendency and ethnocentric tendency, international awareness that includes an interest in foreign affairs and orientation towards international volunteer activities; communication skills that relate to interpersonal affective communication skills, and lastly, self-efficacy. It has been found that there is an influence of openness and ethnocentric tendency in influencing volunteer satisfaction during non-profit service, while interpersonal communication skills and self-efficacy result in a stronger sense of contribution towards volunteer projects [18]. This is also supported by Polus and Bidder (2016) who emphasize cultural differences as the determinants of volunteer satisfaction. The authors also elaborated on the role of the project task, efficiency of volunteer, authentic experience, career enhancement, and personal achievements. Hence, among these factors, it has been observed that authentic experience and project tasks play a higher role in influencing volunteer satisfaction. Both factors are seen as important determinants for understanding the role of individual experience in ensuring volunteer satisfaction. This is highly referenced by Giannoulakis et al. [7] that experience is positively related to volunteer satisfaction. In explaining volunteer satisfaction, several assessments have been used for evaluating volunteer satisfaction such as Volunteer Satisfaction Index (VSI) instrument [8]. Barron and Rihova [20] highlight that the intention to volunteer is to gain valuable experience that can be used later as a career enhancement. While on the other discussion by Hallmann and Wicker [21], a volunteer's intention is the expression of value and personal growth.

However, it seems that there are arguments on these relationships as there is a demand by the authors to enhance this study by investigating the expectations and satisfaction with the volunteer experience. It has been found that older-aged volunteer is more satisfied with an intention to volunteer in the future compared to the young volunteer [27]. One of the reasons that have been

highlighted by Bang is a younger volunteer is more attracted to gain knowledge rather than to stay as they are looking for potential paid job opportunities, while older volunteers might have high socio-economic status and they may care less about finding paid job opportunities. On the contrary, it has been found that satisfaction with the volunteer experience could positively or negatively affect volunteer commitment (Hwang 2010, cited in Giannoulakis *et al.* p. 187). Volunteers possess revolutionary nature as with prior experience as a volunteer, they are motivated to repeat the tasks [22]. This reflects that the importance of volunteer experience is determined by the intention to remain as a volunteer.

Based on the discussion above, it reveals that there are three important aspects of volunteer management discussed by scholars. The discussion on volunteer experience reveals that there is an interlink between experience, motivation, satisfaction, and commitment. Experience is also seen as one of the important factors that determine volunteer behavior, as illustrated by Gilmore and Pine's theory. Individual perception is related to their expectation, skepticism, customer, firm, products or materials, satisfaction, and hypocrisy. Hence, it illustrates that individual expectation is related to individual satisfaction, thus, individual satisfaction is also observed as an important factor for volunteer commitment. This is supported by Bang (2015) who mentioned that individual satisfaction is differentiated by age leads to individual commitment to volunteer. Furthermore, Barron and Rihova, [20], believed that experience also plays an important role for individual intention to commit in volunteering activity. However, volunteer satisfaction is also seen as one of the two factors that contribute to volunteer commitment (Hwang 2010, cited in Giannoulakis *et al.* p. 187). It is concluded that volunteer satisfaction, experience, commitment, experience, and intention to volunteer play an important role in understanding volunteerism behavior. Meanwhile, how far these factors contribute to a sense of community is still unknown [23].

Sense of community (SOC) describes an individual opinion and experience within the community. The opinion or perception of feeling is related to the complexity between individual and group. The feeling is more on the sense of togetherness that associates an individual with one another [24]. Sense of community positively affects individual commitment and indirectly influences job satisfaction [25]. It relates with job satisfaction through commitment [8]. For this reason, the main purpose of this study is to understand the role of each factor in creating a relationship with one another. Based on the discussion above, several hypotheses were developed:

H1: There is a relationship between senses of the community towards commitment.

H2: There is a relationship between community benefit towards commitment.

H3: There is a relationship between individual benefit towards commitment.

H4: There is a relationship between social cost towards commitment.

### III. METHODOLOGY

There are several measures involved in assessing motivation, commitment, satisfaction, and sense of community. The measurement for a sense of community was adapted from Winkle and Woosnam [24] and all the dimensions used in measuring the sense of community involvement in this study, namely individual, community benefit, and social cost. There were 109 volunteers involved in the survey during Hari Keputeraan Sultan Nazrin Shah 2019 run that was organized yearly in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. The event was organized around the main town of Kuala Kangsar. During the event, there were many food outlets and traditional performances from the local community. Most of the volunteers involved were from the local community of Kuala Kangsar, Perak. The sample questionnaire was validated by experts who have been involved in the event industry for the past 10 years. A pilot study was conducted before the event, with 30 respondents during one of the sport's events, similar in the context of Hari Keputeraan Sultan Nazrin Shah run event. Cronbach's alpha result was more than 0.7 value, which is sufficient for validating the reliability of the instrument. All questionnaires were distributed during the event and permission was given by the event's organizer before the event. Thus, ethical approval for conducting the survey is important to ensure the survey is according to ethical approval. SPSS software was used, and multiple linear regression was chosen as the method to comprehend the data.

### IV. RESULTS

#### Demographic characteristics

A total of 109 respondents participated in this study and valid for data analysis. Nearly 61% of the respondents were female (n=66) and 39% were male (n=43). Almost 50% of the respondents were single (47.7, n=52) and 37% (n=40) were married. Majority of respondents were Muslim (94.5%, n=104) and Malay (94.5%, n=103). Forty-three percent of respondents were between the age of 23 and 27 years old (n=47), 28% of respondents were from the age range of 18 to 22 years (n=31) and less than 30% of respondents were above 28 years old (n=31). Sixty-two percent of respondents were employed (n=68), 30% were students (n=33) and only 7% were unemployed (n=8). Details on the demographics profiles of consumers are described in Table 2.

TABLE I. FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Variable		n*	%**
Gender	Male	66	60.6
	Female	43	39.4
Age range	18 – 22	31	28.4
	23 – 27	47	43.1
	28 - 32	20	18.3
	Above 32	11	10.1
Marital status	Single	52	47.7
	Married	40	36.7

	Others	17	15.6
Religion	Islam	104	94.5
	Christian	3	2.8
	Buddha	1	0.9
	Others	1	0.9
Race	Malay	103	94.5
	Chinese	3	2.8
	Indian	3	2.8
Occupation	Employed	68	62.4
	Unemployed	8	7.3
	Student	33	30.3

\*n=frequency; \*\*%=percentage

**A. Reliability analysis**

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was performed to measure the internal consistency of survey items. As shown in Table 3, the highest Cronbach’s Alpha is .905 for social cost and the lowest is .714 for community benefit. According to Salkind (2014) a Cronbach’s alpha that is greater than .6 is questionable, .7 is acceptable, .8 is good, and .9 is excellent. Therefore, all constructs are accepted as being reliable for this research. The normality of data was also tested. The value of Skewness and Kurtosis statistics that lies with the range of ±4 is considered acceptable [28]. Referring to the findings displayed in Table 4, it showed that all data met the acceptable range indicating the normal distribution of data. All factors have a mean value between 2.495 and 4.185 on a scale of 5.

TABLE II. RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Construct	M (SD)	Total items	$\alpha^*$	Kurtosis value	Skewness value
Sense of community	3.999 (0.486)	8	0.86	0.013	-0.575
Community benefit	4.154 (0.362)	8	0.714	-0.218	-0.259
Individual benefit	4.185 (0.369)	8	0.727	-0.695	0.231
Social cost	2.495 (0.827)	9	0.905	-0.123	0.724
Commitment	4.138 (0.550)	6	0.718	0.598	0.298

\*Cronbach’s Alpha

**B. Regression analysis**

Multiple regression was carried out to investigate whether the sense of community (SOC), community benefit, individual benefit, and social cost could significantly predict volunteers’ commitment level. Details are presented in Table 3. Using the enter method, the results of the regression indicated that a sense of community and individual benefit explain a significant amount of variance in the level of commitment among volunteers ( $F(4, 104) = 13.949, p < .05, R^2 = .349, R^2_{Adjusted} = .324$ )

TABLE III: REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
Sense of community	0.41	0.123	0.362	3.337	0.001
Community benefit	0.201	0.195	0.132	1.031	0.305
Social cost	-0.025	0.055	-0.038	-0.464	0.643
Individual benefit	0.317	0.152	0.213	2.094	0.039
R2	Adjusted R2	F	Sig		
0.349	0.324	13.949	0.000		

As shown in Table 3, community benefit (Beta = 0.201,  $t(104) = 1.03, p=0.305$ ) and social cost (Beta = -0.025,  $t(104) = -0.464, p=0.643$ ) did not significantly predict level of volunteers’ commitment. However, sense of community (Beta = 0.410,  $t(104) = 3.337, p < .05$ ) and individual benefit (Beta = 0.317,  $t(104) = 2.094, p < .05$ ) did significantly predict the volunteers’ commitment level.

**V. DISCUSSION**

The role of volunteers in the event industry is important as a backbone for the success of an event. The involvement of the local community as part of volunteer contributes to an impact not only on economic development but also contributes to the emotional feeling among volunteers. The discussion reveals that a sense of community and individual benefit contribute to their commitment to their involvement during the event. This is supported by the study of a sense of community that creates an impact on volunteer commitment during an event [24]. Thus, this is vital in the discussion that the highest of the drive factors for volunteer commitment during the event is the feeling of a sense of community. One of the reasons is because, the event was organized at their home town and thus, this is the main factor of the full commitment given by the community. The study shows that their involvement is not because of feeling rewarded in their community or getting economic advantage of social cost for their commitment, it is more of the deeper feeling to be part of the event.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

The involvement of volunteers during an event is very important, as the growth of events is one of the tourism sectors that contributes to economic and social impact for a country. The contribution from the involvement of volunteers to a country must not be denied as it involves time, money, and energy. The involvement of volunteers does not only benefit in generating income as a result of organizing an event, but it also involves many benefits to volunteer such as knowledge, experience, sense of community, feeling ownership, and others [1, 19, 23, 26]. Among these contributing factors, the discussion on the sense of community is still lacking. Hence, this leads to an in-depth discussion among researchers in exploring the role of a sense of community as volunteer motivation

during an event. There is the contribution of individual benefit and sense of community for volunteer commitment, however, this study only involves a case study of *Hari Keputeraan Sultan Nazrin Shah 2019*. Since there are many more types of events organized, future researchers should explore other types of events and motivations for volunteer involvement during an event.

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