

# Impact of Volunteer Management Practice on Volunteer Motivation and Satisfaction to Enhance Volunteer Retention

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*Retention of volunteers is a major problem. Although many researchers have attempted to develop solutions and models to enable higher retention rates of volunteers, few have attempted to find a causal relationship between volunteer management practice and retention. This research has attempted to mitigate this problem of volunteer retention using volunteer management practice but through the process of enhancing motivation and satisfaction of volunteers. Theoretical framework, hypotheses and research methodology including the research instrument have been developed.*

**Keyword:** Management practices- volunteer –Retention-motivation – satisfaction

## 1. Introduction: Current Scenario on Volunteerism and Volunteer Retention

Volunteerism is an important function in many societies. For instance a study about volunteers (Finkelstein 2008) in the United States shows that adult volunteers (44%) contributed to the equivalent of 9 million full-time employees who would have cost an estimated \$239 billion. Furthermore, volunteers are seen to contribute in a number of areas including but not limited to charities, sports, social work, healthcare, environment, recreation, politics, religion and culture (Salamon & Sokolowski 2001). Thus the importance of volunteering function to any society is highlighted by these examples.

## 2. Literature Review

While volunteerism is seen as an important component of any society. Table (1) provides example of the importance of volunteers through the number of volunteers who contributed to the successful conduct of summer and winter Olympics since 1980. Statistics show that there is a steady decline in the number of volunteers who serve long in a particular organization. For instance Sozanska, Tosner & Fric (2004, pp.315-340) have indicated that the number of volunteers in Hungary dropped from 506,142 in 1995 to 313,000 in 1999 and in Slovakia adult volunteer population reduced from 19% to 13% in 2000.

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**Table 1** Estimated number of volunteers for the Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games since 1980

Summer Games	Number	Winter Games	Number
1984 Los Angeles	28742	1980 Lake Placid	6703
1988 Seoul	27221	1984 Sarajevo	10450
1992 Barcelona	34548	1988 Calgary	9498
1996 Atlanta	60422	1992 Albertville	8000
2000 Sydney	62000	1994 Lillehammer	9054
2004 Athens (est)	60000	1998 Nagano	32579
		2002 Salt Lake City	20000

Source: Statistics on the number of volunteers who contributed to the Summer and Winter Olympics (Reeser et al. 2005)

Finkelstein (2008) highlights the struggle volunteer organizations undergo to retain volunteers and brings a number of factors that could be responsible for volunteers to leave the organization. Although researchers have studied this phenomenon, there is no conclusive solution that has been suggested by researchers for the volunteering organizations to implement. Although there are a number models that have been developed which include variables and antecedents by many authors the success of such models are limited, For instance important factors identified by Finkelstein (2008) include volunteer dissatisfaction, de-motivation, time spent volunteering and volunteer longevity but the outcomes of using the model proposed by Finkelstein (2008) are not conclusive. The reason for this inference arises out of the fact that the findings of Finkelstein (2008) do not provide evidence on the correct reason for satisfaction in terms of the longevity of volunteer stay in an organization or the motive to help(Finkelstein 2008). Thus while many other authors have identified variables that contribute to volunteerism and the duration of sustained volunteerism like for instance the model suggested by Omoto and Snyder (2002, pp.846-867) none of the models appear to have addressed all the variables or their interrelationship that could suggest a way forward for volunteer organizations to have a good hold on volunteer retention (Omoto and Snyder, 2002). Recently conclusions drawn by Cuskally et al. (2006), Hoye et al. (2008) and Sozanska, Tosner & Fric (2004, pp.315-340) indicate a strong need to examine the impact of another construct namely management practice on volunteer retention, satisfaction and motivation. They argue that volunteers' retention could be enhanced through better management practice though their research is highly focused on particular contexts and are not generalized. The relationship between volunteer retention and management practice thus could be seen as two of the important constructs that need to be studied further. This is a major and important need that could enrich the volunteer literature. These discussions led to the problem statement. The paper has been structured in the following way: problem statement, research questions to be answered, aim of the research, research objectives to be achieved, theoretical framework, conceptual model, hypotheses, research methodology adopted, research design used, conclusions and significance of this study. Thus this discussion leads to the following problem statement.

### **3. Problem Statement**

Literature hints at a relation between management practice and volunteer retention but there is no generalized model that could be used by volunteering organizations to follow. For instance Cuskelly et al. (2006) have developed a model that relates management practice with volunteer intention to remain but is applicable to the field of sports only. Similarly Sozanska, Tosner & Fric (2004, pp.315-340) have argued the importance of management practice and the need to encourage volunteers and support their intention to stay with an organization but have not developed any model. Thus the relationship between management practice and volunteer retention has not been studied in depth by researchers. Furthermore literature shows that there are many publications that argue that volunteer motivation and satisfaction could be used as constructs to enhance volunteer intention to stay and hence volunteer retention. However researchers have failed to use volunteer management practices to improve motivation and satisfaction and enhance volunteer retention (Cuskelly 2004; Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley 2001). Thus the main problem is lack of a generalized relationship between volunteer retention and volunteer management practice using moderating constructs as volunteers' motivation and satisfaction.

### **4. Research Question (RQ)**

Literature highlights the direct relation between management practices and intention to remain with an organization or retention of volunteers but excluded the important variables motivation and satisfaction in this relationship, which have direct impact on the intention to remain as volunteers and impact on the effectiveness of the management practices. The research questions are:

**RQ1:** Volunteers retention is a major problem in volunteering organizations. One of the possible reasons for this could be the management practices adopted by volunteering organizations. If so there is a necessity to know whether there is a relationship between management practices and volunteers retentions. Thus the first research question that should be answered is “whether there is a linkage between volunteer management practice and volunteer retention?”.

**RQ2:** If one attempts to answer RQ1, then the logical question that arises is “are there some important factors that affect management practices of volunteer organizations and volunteer retention that enable a linkage between the two core aspects?”.

**RQ3:** Literature on volunteers hints at the possible linkage of some factors to volunteering organizations' management practices and volunteer retention. However there has been hardly any study to link management practices of volunteer organizations and volunteer retention using factors through a model. If such a model could be developed, managers and volunteers could be assisted in their understanding of factors that enable longer retention of volunteers. Thus the second questions that need to be answered is “whether an empirical model could be developed to link the core aspects of management practice of volunteer organizations and volunteer retention using certain factors that affect the core aspects?”.

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While the answers to the research questions enable the researcher to provide predictability of the dependent variable by controlling the independent variables, the ultimate aim achieved by these predictors needs to be spelt out. Thus the research aim and objectives provided next address this aspect.

### **5. Research Aim**

Develop a relationship between volunteer retention and volunteer management practice using moderating constructs volunteer motivation and volunteer satisfaction to enhance the volunteer retention.

### **6. Research Objectives**

- Study the literature regarding the various models, concepts and theories related to volunteer management practice and volunteer retention to enable the researcher to gain an understanding of the current knowledge available in those areas.
- Critically review the literature to identify variables that can link volunteer retention and volunteer management practice
- Develop a research relational model to link the variables
- Develop hypotheses to test the relationship
- Design a research method to conduct empirical study and establish the hypotheses.
- Conduct an empirical research study with survey
- Analyze the data and conclude with finding.

### **7. Theoretical Framework**

The research work of Cuskelly et al. (2006) that has attempted to establish a relationship between management practice and volunteer retention forms the basis of this paper. Criticisms of the model developed by Cuskelly et al. (2006) include (a) it is applicable to field of sports only (b) six out of the seven correlates of management practice have not been found to be correlated with volunteer retention statistically (c) lack of a linkage between volunteer motivation and satisfaction to management practice and (d) lack relationship between volunteer motivation and satisfaction that are vital to retain the volunteers (Hoye et al. 2008). Positive aspects include the use of the widely accepted Human Resource Management (HRM) concepts (Sozansk et al. 2004), constructs that have significant correlation amongst themselves, the significance of planning as an important independent variable linked to volunteer retention problems and the validity and reliability of the instrument. Furthermore the research by Cuskelly et al. (2006) is a widely referred research publication. Thus the model developed by Cuskelly et al. (2006) is the basis for this research.

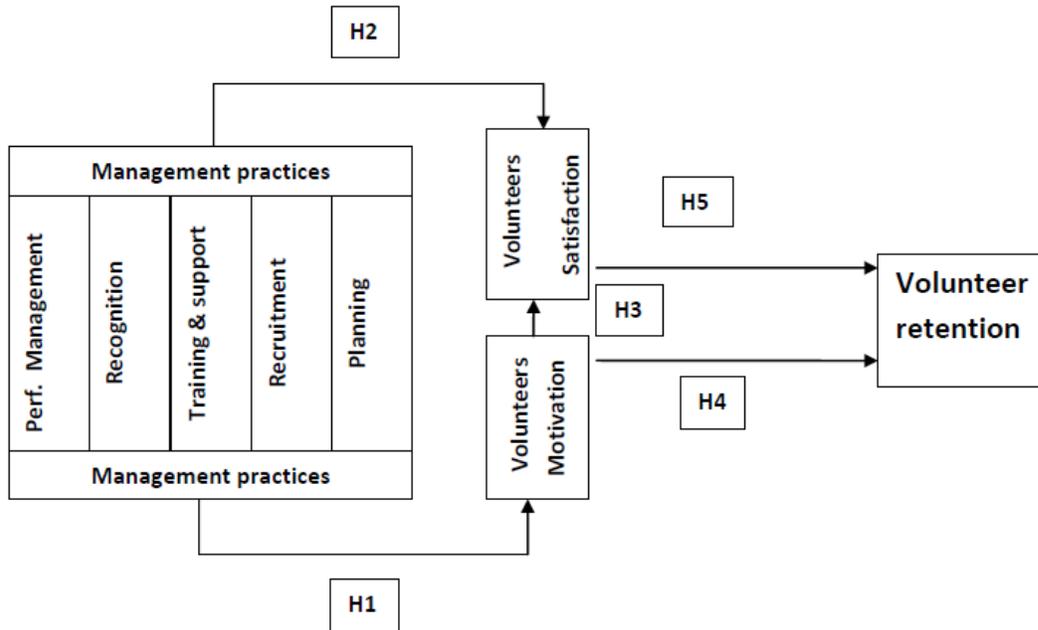
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In addition to the above, motivation has been found to be a major construct in volunteer research (Esmond & Dunlop 2004; Bruyere & Rappe 2007). Volunteer Motivation Inventory theory (VMI) is observed to have more attributes that are possible to be related to management practice when compared to other theories or models (Esmond & Dunlop 2004). Using VMI as basis for research is expected to have wider acceptance and lead to more reliable results.

Additionally, satisfaction as a construct could be used by applying the research outcomes of the research conducted by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002) who developed the Volunteer Satisfaction Index (VSI). VSI has been found to have conceptual relationship between management practice (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley 2002) on the one hand and volunteer retention (Boulton 2006) on the other. Additionally VSI has been found to have a relationship with volunteer motivation also (Nelson et al. 2004). Thus VSI forms the basis for developing the construct volunteer satisfaction in this research.

Volunteer retention is an area that is not well addressed in literature (Hoye et al. 2008). Research conducted by Hoye et al. (2008) has attempted to develop the concept of volunteer retention and offers a strong basis to further the research on volunteer retention. While the research outcome from the research of Hoye et al. (2008) could be criticized to be limited in use to sports activities and motivational aspects, it is seen that the research outcome could be used by applying the well developed and validated instrument for measuring volunteer retention with a relationship to motivation and satisfaction aspects. Thus volunteer retention is based on the results of the research outcomes of Hoye et al. (2008).

Figure 1: The Relationship Model:



## 8. Hypotheses

The causal relationship amongst the variables given in the relationship model has been well defined in the theoretical framework. Thus the following hypotheses have been developed for this research:

**Hypothesis H1:** Managements practices will be a positive predictor of volunteers' motivation.

**Hypothesis H2:** Managements practices will be a positive predictor of volunteers' satisfaction.

**Hypothesis H3:** Volunteers' motivation will be a positive predictor of volunteers' satisfaction.

**Hypothesis H4:** Volunteers' motivations will be a positive predictor of volunteers' retention.

**Hypothesis H5:** Volunteers' satisfaction will be a positive predictor of volunteers' retention.

These hypotheses have been derived from prior research conducted by Cuskelly et al. (2006) and other researchers(Hoye et al. 2008; Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley 2001). In order to test these hypotheses the following research methodology will be used.

## 9. Methodology

Research on volunteering has focused on developing models that use variables and relationship amongst the variables as described in the theoretical framework previously. While volunteer literature shows that researchers have used both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the choice of the most appropriate method is determined by the research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003). The research questions formulated for this research indicate the need to collect primary data from a large population in order to empirically test the relationship amongst the variables volunteer management practice, motivation, satisfaction and retention. Hypotheses have been developed to test the empirical relationship using statistical methods. The research method that could be adopted for this purpose therefore points towards the use of quantitative research method using which primary data was collected for statistically testing the hypotheses and the relationship amongst the variables. This is also consistent with the research method used by various authors (e.g. Cuskelly et al. 2006) who have used the quantitative research method with regard to the topic of volunteer retention. A pilot study was conducted initially to confirm the reliability and validity of the research instrument and is in line with the process adopted by other authors in prior studies.

## 10. Research Design

According to Sekaran (2003), a research design spells out the way through which data will be gathered and analyzed. The following design is thus developed for this research.

**Purpose of study:** Develop predictor variables of volunteer retention using hypotheses testing and explain the relationship amongst the different variables namely volunteer management practice (independent variable), motivation (moderating variable) and satisfaction (moderating variable) that are assumed to affect the dependent variable as volunteer retention.

**Type of study:** Literature shows that studies can be exploratory or descriptive or hypotheses testing (Sekaran 2003). The type of study used in this research was hypotheses testing. This is expected to provide correlational as well as cause and effect relationship amongst the variables.

**Type of data to be collected:** The main data collected were the responses from volunteers and representatives of volunteer management in numerical form. These responses are expected to be collected through the instrument developed for this research.

**The instrument developed for this research is attached in Appendix.** The end result of this exercise was the generation of quantitative data. Thus quantitative data in terms of measurement of the variables identified for this research formed the basis of this research. This is consistent with prior research (Clary et al. 1992; Taylor & McGraw 2006) .

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**Subjects from whom the data will be collected:** The main subjects were volunteers and representatives of the management of volunteer organizations.

**Population size and sampling design:** It is estimated that the total population of volunteers and members involved in volunteer management could run into several thousands. Thus sampling design procedures have been used to arrive at the number of subjects who were approached to get the responses for the questionnaire. Sample size that has been arrived at for the final survey is around 400 for an estimated error of 5% at 95% confidence interval. Here the variable is any type of volunteer or member involved in the management of any type of volunteer organization and not the volunteer organization itself. Thus the number of volunteer organizations was not significant as the researcher was expected to approach several volunteer organizations randomly without focusing on the type of volunteering activities carried out by the volunteering organization or the number of enrolled volunteers.

**Data analysis:** The collected data was analyzed using statistical procedures as has been the case in volunteer research literature related to quantitative research method (Clary et al. 1992, Taylor & McGraw, 2006). The data analysis thus revolved around descriptive statistics, correlation matrices analysis and regression procedures. Reference figures that were used to check the correlation were those used by Cuskelly et al. (2006).

**Reliability and validity:** Using descriptive statistics and based on data generated by researchers in previous research, the research instrument was validated. Cronbach's Alpha provided the reliability measure where as correlation matrix and regression analysis provided the validity for the research instrument developed for this research (Cuskelly et al. 2006). Cronbach Alpha has been fixed at 0.7 or above. Correlation coefficient based Pearson Coefficient was fixed at 0.3 or above for inter-item correlation and 0.5 for item-to-total correlation. This is consistent with prior research found in the literature and this describes the framework for testing the reliability and validity of the research (Clary et al. 1992; Taylor and McGraw 2006) .

**Time horizon:** Cross-sectional study was used in this research. In cross-sectional study, data is collected only once to capture the data "at the moment". Most of the studies in volunteerism have used cross-sectional study for instance Cuskelly et al., (2006). Data was collected over a period of one month in 2011 from volunteers of different organizations.

**Territory:** There is no specific restriction that has been identified by the researcher with regard to the territorial context. Virtually any voluntary organization in any country is a potential target for approaching volunteers and volunteer managers.

## 11. Conclusions and Significance of Study

This study contributes to knowledge by establishing a relationship between effective volunteer management practice and volunteer intention to stay by varying volunteer motivation and satisfaction. This in turn is expected to provide new knowledge on how to develop and adopt effective volunteer management practices to increase the longevity of the volunteer tenure which is currently lacking in the volunteer literature. This knowledge is expected to be useful to volunteer organizations, volunteers, community, academicians and researchers

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## Appendix

### The questionnaire instructions:

1. Answering this questionnaire takes approximately 15-20 minutes.
2. There are two options in completing this questionnaire:
  - a. Answering on the original questionnaire paper-sheet.
  - b. Answering the questionnaire electronically.
3. Please answer the following questions by selecting the most suitable answer.

### Personal information (please tick the one that describes you):

1. **Gender:**      Male      Female

2. **Age:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 years or younger | <input type="checkbox"/> 21- 30          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40             | <input type="checkbox"/> 41 - 50         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 60             | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-70           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 70 years or older   | <input type="checkbox"/> did not provide |

3. **Qualification(s):**

- primary    Intermediate    Secondary  
 Diploma    Bachelor    Postgraduate

4. **Occupation:** .....

5. **Income (yearly):**

- less than \$1000    \$10000-19999  
 \$20000- \$29999    \$30000-39999  
 \$40000-\$49000    \$50000-\$59999  
 \$60000-\$69000    greater than \$70000  
 did not provide

6. **Volunteer service:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anew volunteer- just starting | <input type="checkbox"/> less than three month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-12 months           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years                     | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 years             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 years                     | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-8 years             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8-10 years                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 year            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20 years                   | <input type="checkbox"/> over 20 years         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> did not provide               |  |

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Please Read Carefully and Answer to What Best Describes Your Opinion in the Following Questionnaire:

Management practices :	1= never	2= rarely	3=Sometimes	4=often	5=always
<b>In managing its volunteers to what extent does your organization...</b>					
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Planning :</b>					
1.	Identify potential volunteers before events begins.				
2.	Provide role or job description for individual volunteers.				
3.	Actively encourage turnover of volunteers in key position.				
4.	Maintain database of volunteers' skills ,qualification and Experience.				
<b>Recruitment :</b>					
5.	Match the skills, experience and interests of volunteers to specific roles.				
6.	Develop positions to meet the needs of individual volunteers.				
7.	Actively recruit volunteers from diverse background.				
8.	Use advertising for volunteer recruitments (e.g., newsletters, online,....)				
<b>Training &amp;support</b>					
9.	Encourage volunteers to operate within a code of acceptable behavior.				
10.	Introduce new volunteers to people with whom they will work during the organization.				
11.	Provide support to volunteers in their roles (e.g., assist with the resolution of conflict).				
12.	Manage the work loads of individual volunteers where they are excessive.				
13.	Assist volunteers to access training outside the organization (e.g., accreditation training course)				
14.	Cover or reimburse the costs of volunteers attendance at training or accreditation course .				
15.	Conduct induction sessions for specific group of volunteers (e.g., supervisor, team leader,....)				
16.	Mentor volunteers, particularly when staring in a new role.				
17.	Provide sufficient support for volunteers to effectively carry out their task.				
<b>Recognition:</b>					
18.	Recognize outstanding work or task performances of individual volunteers.				
19.	plan for the recognition of volunteers.				
20.	Thank volunteers for their efforts (e.g., informal thanks you)				
21.	Publicly recognize the efforts of volunteers (e.g.,in newsletters, special events)				
22.	Provide special awards for long serving volunteers (e.g., life membership)				

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Performance management		1	2	3	4	5
23.	Monitor the performance of individual volunteers.					
24.	Provide feedback to individual volunteers.					

Satisfaction:	1= Very dissatisfied	2= dissatisfied	3= unsure	4= satisfied	5=Very satisfied
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Satisfaction:		1	2	3	4	5
25.	My relationship with paid staff.					
26.	How often the organization acknowledges the work I do.					
27.	The degree of cohesiveness I experience within the organization					
28.	The chance I have to utilize my knowledge and skills in my volunteer Work.					
29.	The access I have to information concerning the organization.					
30.	The freedom I have in deciding how to carry out my volunteer assignment					
31.	My relationship with other volunteers in the organization					
32.	The amount of interaction I have with other volunteers in the organization					
33.	The amount of time spent with other volunteers.					

Motivation	1= Not at all important	2 =Very unimportant	3 = Neither important nor Unimportant	4 =Very important	5 = Extremely Important
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Motivation		1	2	3	4	5
34.	No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.					
35.	I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.					
36.	I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.					
37.	I feel compassion toward people in need.					
38.	I feel it is important to help others.					
39.	I can do something for a cause that is important to me.					
40.	Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.					
41.	Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.					
42.	I can explore my own strengths.					
43.	Volunteering increases my self-esteem.					
44.	Volunteering makes me feel needed.					

Retention :	1=Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Undecided	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
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<b>Retention :</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>45.</b>	I plan to continue volunteering at this organization until end of this year.					
<b>46.</b>	I plan to continue volunteering at this organization next year					
<b>47.</b>	I am likely to be volunteering at this organization three years from now.					

<b>Retention:</b>	<b>1=Strongly Agree</b>	<b>2=Agree</b>	<b>3=Undecided</b>	<b>4=Disagree</b>	<b>5=Strongly Disagree</b>
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<b>Retention :</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>48.</b>	I intend leaving this organization altogether within 12 months					
<b>49.</b>	I intend to volunteer in the next 12 months but with a different organization					
<b>50.</b>	I intend to cease volunteering at organization as soon as another volunteer can be found to replace me					