

## **THE MOTIVES MALAYSIANS VOLUNTEERS ASSIGN FOR SERVING AS VOLUNTEERING FOR SUKMA GAMES**

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### Abstract

*Volunteering activities are positive experiences that attract volunteers to spend their free time to benefit society while increasing the volunteers' job satisfaction and self-esteem (Chang et al., 2012). However, research on the motives of sport volunteers and the impact of volunteerism on the self-esteem of sport volunteers in Malaysia is scarce, and the present study was aimed at contributing to the filling of this knowledge gap. The purpose of this study is to determine the motives Malaysian volunteers assign for serving as volunteering for SUKMA Games. A total of 376 Malaysian volunteers for the SUKMA Games in Perak in 2018 participated in the study. A Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were administered to 376 Malaysian SUKMA Games volunteers. Data were collected, collated, analysed and interpreted to ascertain the main findings of the SUKMA Games volunteers' motives and their influence on their self-esteem levels. This study showed that Malaysian volunteers had several motives for volunteering with the highest motive identified as understanding. There was also a significant positive relationship between motive for volunteering and self-esteem level among SUKMA Games volunteers. Overall, all Malaysians volunteered because they had a high motive for volunteering. Volunteering also improved the self-esteem levels of Malaysian sport volunteers.*

**Keywords:** *volunteerism, sport volunteerism, volunteers, self-esteem*

## INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism is a potent, dynamic, long-term, planned and unifying force for society, and it benefits both society and volunteers, and it occurs within an organizational setting (Cordingley, 2004; Penner, 2002). According to Farrel et al. (2004) and Rimm (2002), participating in volunteering activities strengthens the social bonding among community members and is important contributor to life expectancy for volunteers.

Volunteerism is popular in Malaysia (www.dosomething.gd, 2012). For example, there are approximately seven registered volunteers for every 1,000 Malaysians. However, most of the volunteering in Malaysia happens in sports (www.dosomething.gd, 2012). Since the research examines the motives and self-esteem of sport volunteers, it is important to define them. A sports volunteer is a person who helps with the organization of a sporting event or recreational physical activity for the benefit of others, without receiving any payment other than a token for personal expenses (Irish Sport Council, 2008). Taylor et al. (2003), concurred that a sports volunteer is an individual who helps others in sport while receiving no remuneration but only personal expenses. While sports volunteering is popular among Malaysians, there is no current research on the motives of Malaysians in engaging in sports volunteering and its impact on self-esteem. The current study addresses these issues.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The question to be posed here is: what is volunteering? According to Rochester (2010), volunteering has three main overlapping components, and they are unpaid work or service, activism and leisure (Rochester, 2010). These three components help researchers to understand volunteers' experiences and how they manage their activity when volunteering to help others.

Unpaid work or service in volunteering operates in a similar way to paid work and provides similar rewards. Activism occurs when volunteers participate in volunteering activity to express and share values and come together to support each other. Leisure is a long-term commitment, and it is linked to the structure of a career and the sense of identity of volunteers. Unpaid work or service, activism and leisure are used to understand volunteers and their reason for engaging in volunteering (Sport England, 2016).

Veitch (2013), Casey (2014) and Saisan et al. (2014) observed that individuals can develop their skills, create networking, advance their career, make new friends, stay physically healthy, and enhance their social relationships, and combat depression through participation in volunteering activities. Lindsay et al. (2004), described volunteering activities as involving a "win-win-win" situation of benefits for society, the recipients of the volunteering activities, and the volunteers. Konrath et al. (2012), also found that volunteers benefit from lower mortality risk.

Volunteers have motives for volunteering and there are also gender differences in motives for volunteering and this would be explored in the present study. For example, Fletcher and Major (2004), observed that females had higher motivation to volunteer compared to males. They also found that females had higher long-term intrinsic motivation while males had higher short-term extrinsic motivation for volunteering.

The level of education of volunteers influences their motives for volunteering. Choi (2003) confirmed this by suggesting that educational qualifications influence motives to volunteer. However, the influence of education on volunteering is inconclusive. While Choi (2003) supported educational level-link on motives to volunteer, Ecklund and Park (2005), a study of Asian American community volunteers found that higher educational level did not increase participation in volunteerism.

How are motives to volunteer measured? According to Wijdada (2010), researchers use the functionalists' framework to investigate volunteers' motives (Hanan, 2015). Clary (1992), found that the functionalist framework uses six functions (motives) to assess volunteers' motivation and they are described below:

- 1) Values function- involves individuals seeking opportunities to express their values by pursuing actions related to altruism and humanitarian concerns.
- 2) Understanding function- motivates volunteers to learn, improve and exercise skills to ensure that none of these skills is left untapped.
- 3) Social needs function- permits volunteers to satisfy their need to strengthen and increase social relationships and interactions.
- 4) Enhancement function- helps volunteers to increase their psychological growth, self-development and boost their self-esteem.
- 5) Career function—allows volunteers to gain career-related experience for professional development, and increase volunteers skills in looking for jobs and to increase their job prospects; and
- 6) Protection function- helps volunteers to overcome negative feelings to deal with personal problems and reduce guilt feeling of being more fortunate in life than others (Clary, 1992).

Volunteers play important role in sports events. The growth of the sports industry and the expansion of youth sports programs have increased the demand for volunteers to assist with events organized by sports organizations (Grimm et al., 2006). According to Mirsafian (2012), volunteers are the main components in the organization of sports events, and they play their role without receiving any payment for their services (Taylor et al., 2003). Furthermore, volunteers contribute to the economic, non-economic and profit benefits for sports organizations (Bennett et al., 2005). This has encouraged many people to become sport volunteers. According to the Active People Survey (2012), 12% of British adults volunteered for sport. This is consistent with an earlier finding by Butt et al. (2007), which showed that 13% of British adults volunteered for sport.

On a personal level, sports volunteers gain social and psychological skills; build social relations and acquire new skills through volunteering (Beerli et al., 2002). Furthermore, Bennett and Barkensjo (2005), observed that sports volunteers engaged in volunteerism to get job experience and socio-psychological (egoistic) skills. Elements of socio-psychological or egoistic skills included volunteers' quest to find new friends, increase their self-esteem, improve their sense of belonging, and acquire job experience (Barkensjo, 2005).

Another major benefit for volunteers is the development and enhancement of their self-esteem. Since the current research evaluates the impact of volunteerism on volunteers' self-esteem, it was deemed necessary to review the literature on self-esteem and volunteers. Volunteers enjoy high levels of self-esteem and feelings of self-satisfaction through participation in volunteerism (Lee et al., 2014). Indeed, self-esteem improves volunteer's life satisfaction and job performance (Chanthiran, 2013).

Donnellan et al. (2011), defines self-esteem as an individual's evaluation of their self-worth. Self-esteem refers to the subjective evaluation of an individual's worth as a person (Robins et al., 2014). Rosenberg (1965) stated that self-esteem is a feeling that a person or an individual is good enough. Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) link self-esteem with egoistic motivations of getting job experience, finding new friends, and developing a sense of belonging.

Self-esteem involves self-acceptance and self-respect (Ackerman, 2011) and it is an individual's positive evaluation of his or her self-worth (Peter, 2002; Rosenberg, 1995). Self-esteem influences an individual's decision and choice as it has a motivational function that helps an individual to explore his or her potential (Ackerman, 2011). High self-esteem motivates an individual to strive towards the fulfilment of his or her goals and aspirations, while a low self-esteem individual thinks he or she is not worthy as a person and is not capable of feeling and experiencing happiness (Angela, 2019).

Self-esteem is also important in helping adults to manage their lives (Collins, 2005), as volunteers with high self-esteem are protected from negative feelings in life (Miller, 2000). In addition, Thotis (2001) observed that volunteering improved problem-solving, reduced stress levels, and increased self-esteem levels and enhanced the health of volunteers. Moreover, Brown et al. (2012), found a significant relationship between volunteerism and self-esteem.

Viviana (2014) observed that college students involved in volunteering activities had a higher level of self-esteem which developed through their interaction with the people they volunteered for. According to Chang et al. (2012), involvement in volunteering activity increased self-esteem level and provided psychological benefits such as satisfaction of life for volunteers. Overall, self-esteem is linked to participation in sport volunteerism (Grimm, 2006; Coleman, 2002).

However, no study in Malaysia has examined the relationship between volunteerism and levels of self-esteem of volunteers. Therefore, this study addressed this, by examining the relationship between sport volunteerism and self-esteem among Malaysian sport volunteers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The design of the study was a non-experimental quantitative survey that used a questionnaire for collecting the required data (Babbie, 2011) and this ensured objective measurement (Ghaffar, 2000) of motives and self-esteem of sport volunteers.

The data for this study were collected from a sample of 376 Malaysian sport volunteers aged between 18 and 27 years who had volunteered for SUKMA Perak 2018. They were randomly selected from among 1700 SUKMA Perak 2018 sport volunteers. The use of random sampling ensured that each of the 1700 sport volunteers had an equal chance of been selected as respondents for the study. It was aimed at obtaining a subset of the volunteers that was representative of the entire population of volunteers. As a common practice in educational and psychological research the sample comprised 20% of the population (Ender, 2003).

Each of the respondents completed a questionnaire of Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) adapted from Clary (1992). The volunteers also completed Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg et al. (1995). The VFI consisted of 30-items and respondents answered each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all important/accurate) to 7 (extremely important/accurate). The scale was divided into 6 separate functional motives. They were Protective, Values, Career, Social, Understanding, and Enhancement functional motives. The scoring for the VFI was for low, moderate and high motivations. Low scores ranged from 0-70, moderate scores were from 71-140, and high scores ranged from 141-210.

The RSES measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The RSES consisted of a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth. Respondents registered their responses on a 4-point Likert-type scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Higher scores on the RSES indicated high self-esteem, while lower scores indicated low self-esteem.

## **RESULTS**

The following section presents the results from the analysis of the data collected. Data were collated and analysed using SPSS to answer the research questions for the study using descriptive and inferential methods. The descriptive analysis reported the frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations to describe the respondents' demographic variables of gender,

age, and occupation. Descriptive statistics were also used to examine the motives for volunteerism and self-esteem levels among volunteers.

The inferential statistical analysis used Pearson correlation analysis and Simple Linear Regression. The Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the motivations of volunteerism and self-esteem levels among SUKMA Perak 2018 volunteers.

The following section presents the results from the analysis of the data collected for this study. Table 1 shows the results of the demographic variables for the sample for gender, age and occupation. Table 1 shows that there were 43.9% (n=165) males and 56.1% (n=211) females in the sample. It showed females were more involved in sport volunteerism than males. Regarding age, 76.1% (n = 286) were 18 to 20 years old, and they had the highest frequency of participation in volunteerism. This was followed by the 21 to 23 years old at 12.8 % (n = 48), the 24 to 26 years old with 7.7 % (n = 29) years old. Lastly, respondents aged 27 years old and above had the lowest frequency which was 3.5 % (n = 13). The results showed that most of the respondents were 18 to 20 years old, making them the most involved in sport volunteerism. Next, most of the sports volunteers were students with a percentage of 89.6 % (n = 337) and 10.4% (n = 39) had other occupation. It shows that students were more likely to engage in sport volunteerism compared to the respondents who already had careers.

*Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profile (n=376)*

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender (n=376)</b>		
Male	165	43.9
Female	211	56.1
<b>Age (n=376)</b>		
18-20	286	76.1
21-23	48	12.8
24-26	29	7.7
27 and above	13	3.5
<b>Occupation (n=376)</b>		
Students	337	89.6
Other Careers	39	10.4

The next section presents the results of the impact of volunteerism on sport volunteers' self-esteem. The results are presented in Table 2, and it shows that most of the volunteers had moderate self-esteem levels (n=306, 81.4%). Only 16 (4.3%) of the volunteers have high self-esteem levels, and 54 (14.4%) had low self-esteem levels.

*Table 2: Self-Esteem Level among Volunteers (n=376)*

Self-Esteem Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (0-12)	54	14.4
Moderate (13-24)	306	81.4
High (25-36)	16	4.3

In line with the objectives of the study, the next section discusses volunteers' levels of motivation (intention) for engaging in volunteerism. Table 3 shows that most of the volunteers 295 (78.5%) had high motivation for volunteerism. Its also indicates that 77 (20.5%) had moderate motivation to engage in volunteerism, while (n=4, 1.1%) had low motivation for volunteerism.

*Table 3: Motivation for engaging in volunteerism among sport volunteers (n=376)*

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (0-70)	4	1.1
Moderate (71-140)	77	20.5
High (141-210)	295	78.

Next, the results examined the main motives sport volunteers assigned for participating in sport volunteerism. The results are shown in Table 4. It shows that the volunteer's main motive for volunteering was understanding, with means and standard deviations of ( $M = 5.55$ ,  $SD = 2.38$ ). The lowest mean score was for social motive ( $M = 4.85$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ).

The next section of the results examines the relationship between motivations for volunteerism and self-esteem levels among volunteers. The results are presented in Table 5, and it shows that there was a significant relationship between the motivations for volunteerism and self-esteem level among sport volunteers (Chi Square= $p < 0.05$ ).

*Table 4: Volunteers Motives for Volunteerism (n=376)*

	Means	Std. Deviations	Rank
Motives			
Understanding	5.55	1.38	1
Values	5.53	0.82	2
Enhancement	5.27	1.44	3
Career	5.04	1.53	4
Protective	5.03	0.94	5
Social	4.85	0.85	6

Table 5: Relationship between the Motivations of Volunteerism and Self-Esteem Level among Volunteers

	Value	df	Significance
Pearson Chi Square	26.91	4	.000*
Ratio	17.11	4	.002
Linear-by-Linear	0.89	1	.345
Association N of 376			
Valid cases			

\*\*p<0.05

## DISCUSSION

Malaysians are increasingly participating in sports. Sports volunteers are important in helping Malaysian sports organizations in hosting sports events. The present study examined sport volunteers' motives for participation in voluntary activities for sport in Malaysia. It also explored how participation in voluntary activities influences the self-esteem of volunteers.

The study explored six motives (factors), which were, understanding, values, career, social needs, enhancement, and protection. The present results showed that Malaysians volunteered for sports activities knowing that they were not going to receive salaries for it. This was in line with the findings of Buric (2004) and Mihajlovic et al. (2010), that volunteering activities were performed voluntarily, and was not done desire for salary but was mutually beneficial to the volunteers and organizations. Moreover, Lee et al. (2014), found that volunteering is an activity that is freely given and benefits volunteers, and organizations with no salary provided for the volunteers. Volunteers also participate in volunteerism to enhance their self-esteem or their worth as individuals (Robins et al., 2014).

Regarding volunteers' self-esteem, the results of the study showed that most of them had moderate (n=306, 81.4%) and not high self-esteem levels. The results might be attributed to the fact that volunteers focussed on obtaining extrinsic rewards (tokens for personal expenses) rather increase their self-esteem. This was concurred by Christian (2014) who found that volunteers spend time in volunteering activities to receive external incentives such as rewards and to observe social norms of giving one's free time to help others (Christian, 2014). The present results contradicted previous studies by Barkensjo (2005) and Mayer (2007), which observed that volunteers were attracted to participate in volunteerism to increase high self-esteem levels. Similarly, the results contradicted findings by Reese (2008) that found that individuals with high self-esteem including sports volunteers are aware of their strengths and abilities and have high self-belief and are also confident in trying new things.

The present results suggest that efforts should be made to increase the levels of self-esteem among Malaysian sport volunteers to move them from moderate to high self-esteem. This recommendation is important as individuals with high self-esteem enjoy several benefits,

including, a healthy lifestyle, while individuals with low self-esteem suffer negative consequences in life such as feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness (Crocker, 2006). People with low self-esteem also suffer from depression, under-eating, and dislike of their body image (Crocker, 2006). Factors that increase the low self-esteem of an individual are lack of support from family members, bullying, joblessness and feelings of not being appreciated, wanted and loved (Reese, 2008; Gyura, 2007). High-self-esteem on the other hand, leads to a positive view in life such as confidence, the taking on of difficult challenges and the having of high self-worth (Donellan, 2005), while low self-esteem causes negative self-talk and life problems, such as depression, anxiety, stress and self-destructive behaviours (Hill, 2006; Gyura, 2007).

Gender influences self-esteem. Regarding gender, Aung (2018) found that female students had high self-esteem levels,  $n=62$  (33.33%) compared to male students,  $n=27$  (23.67%). The present study observed that Malaysian females volunteered more in sports than males, however, the influence of sport volunteers' gender on their self-esteem levels was not investigated. It is recommended that future research should explore the relationship between gender and sports volunteer's self-esteem.

Regarding motives for volunteering, the results of the study showed that Malaysian sport volunteers had high motivation for volunteerism ( $n=295$ , 78.5%). The results might be linked to the fact that the majority of the SUKMA Perak 2018 volunteers had high motivation for volunteerism as the task given matched their future career goals. In fact, most of the respondents were sports students with sport involvement backgrounds and they wanted to gain more experience in the handling of sports events by volunteering for sports activity. According to Houle et al. (2005), volunteers prefer a task with benefits that matched or corresponded with their personality and future career objectives as was observed under the present study. Moreover, volunteers participate in volunteering activities because they believe in their abilities to help and are aware that they can use the experiences gained in future careers (Andam, 2013).

Volunteers with high motivation for volunteerism, continue their involvement in volunteering to receive rewards such as personal growth (Bang et al., 2010). The high motivation for volunteerism observed under the present study was perhaps due to the benefits from volunteering such as social enrichment and life-experience that volunteers wanted (Doherty, 2009).

The study also showed the understanding motive as the highest motive for volunteering ( $M=5.55$ ,  $SD=2.38$ ) while the social motive was the lowest motive for volunteering ( $M=4.85$ ,  $SD=0.93$ ). Clary (1992) described the understanding motive as involving the gaining of experience to acquire new skills and utilize them in a real-world setting, while social motive was intended to strengthen social relationships. It appears that the volunteers for the present study wanted to acquire more experience and gain more skills (understanding motive) rather than strengthen their social relationships (social motive). This result confirmed those by Mark (2014), which observed that the understanding motive was one of the most important motives for

volunteers, while the social motive was a less important motive for volunteerism. However, the result of this study was contradicted a previous study by Hamidreza (2012), which found that the social motive was the highest motive for volunteers.

As stated above, the present study, found the understanding motive as the highest motive for volunteerism. This might be due to volunteers' use of volunteering activities to improve their knowledge and acquire skills.

While the majority of volunteers, had moderate self-esteem as stated above, the results nevertheless showed a significant relationship between motivation for volunteerism and self-esteem levels among the volunteers ( $Chi-Square=p<0.05$ ). This result was in line with a past study by Park (2002) that found a correlation between participation in volunteerism and the volunteers' self-esteem. Furthermore, Mayer et al. (2007) stated that people spend more time in volunteering activities as they have high self-esteem levels.

The present study found a significant relationship between sport volunteerism and self-esteem levels among SUKMA Perak 2018 volunteers. This is similar to the results of a previous study by Chang et al. (2012), which found that involvement in volunteering increased the self-esteem level of volunteers and provided them with psychological benefits such as life satisfaction. Furthermore, Veerasamy et al. (2013) found that there was a positive relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction, job performance and frequency of volunteers' involvement in volunteering activity. The results showed that an individual's level of self-esteem influenced his or her decision to become a sports volunteer. As Stukas et al. (2014) observed volunteers with high self-esteem spent more time in volunteering activities compared to volunteers with low self-esteem. In addition, Stukas et al. (2014) proved that there was a relationship between volunteerism and self-esteem among Australian volunteers. They found that Australian volunteers had high levels of personal well-being that included self-esteem, self-efficacy, trust and social connectedness.

## CONCLUSION

It is recommended any future study on Malaysian sport volunteers should include a qualitative component that would assess through in-depth interviews Malaysians motives for participating as sports volunteers. Malaysia is also a multi-racial and multi-religious country so future research should examine the influence of race and religion on the motives of Malaysians to volunteer for sports activities.

In addition, future research should examine the influence of race and religion on Malaysian sport volunteers' motive to engage in sport volunteerism. Malaysian sports organizations could rely on the findings of the present research on the motives of sport volunteers

to design appropriate message in advertisements to attract Malaysians to engage in sport in sport volunteerism.

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