

FACTORS MOTIVATING SPORT EVENT VOLUNTEERS: AN INVESTIGATION OF PAST EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

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Abstract

The growing body of empirical studies examining the factors that motivate volunteer participation in sporting events appears to be heterogeneous with notable inconsistencies, underscoring the need for a comprehensive review. Given the diversity of methodologies, contexts, and outcomes, this study aims to summarize, synthesize, and describe the literature on factors motivating sporting event volunteer participation in a narrative manner. It employs a descriptive meta-analysis of the empirical studies, focusing on the antecedents and findings related to these motivations, and aims to provide an integrative framework for these antecedents. This framework offers a cohesive view of the factors motivating volunteer participation in sporting events. The study also identifies potential unexplored research opportunities in the domain and provides suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Sport event, sport management, event management, volunteer management, descriptive meta-analysis

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, an estimated 862 million people aged 15 and over engaged in volunteer activities each month worldwide (United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme, 2021). Particularly in the event industry, there has been a rapid increase in the demand for volunteers (Aisbett & Hoye, 2015). This trend is especially pronounced in sport mega-events; for instance, hosting an Olympic event can require up to 100,000 volunteers (Hallmann et al., 2023; Wicker, 2017).

According to Freeman (1997), a volunteer is typically defined as a person who participates in an event as an unpaid worker. In the realm of the sport business, sport event volunteers (SEVs) are a critical resource for the success of event management (Chutipongdech & Kampitak, 2022; Cuskelly et al., 2021; Doherty, 2009; Kim et al., 2024). Allen and Shaw (2009) explained that SEV's roles are diverse, encompassing tasks such as aiding in event planning, managing registrations, overseeing merchandise sales and revenue, marshalling events, serving as liaisons, and providing general assistance to participants.

Sport event organizers, particularly for large-scale events, heavily rely on volunteer

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assistance due to the vast numbers of volunteers required. Effective volunteer management is a valuable tool for these organizers (Cuskelly et al., 2021). Consequently, understanding the factors that motivate SEVs is crucial for organizers in terms of recruitment, selection, development, and retention (Allen & Bartle, 2014; Pauline & Pauline, 2009). Not surprisingly, this topic has garnered considerable attention from scholars over the past decades, beginning with the foundational work of Farrell et al. (1998) and continuing to recent studies such as Li et al. (2023), Teixeira et al. (2023), and Cho et al. (2023).

Volunteer motivation refers to the driving force that leads individuals to seek involvement in volunteer activities (Clary et al., 1998). Alexander et al. (2015) and Dickson et al. (2015) stated that this motivation is multifaceted, resulting in variation across different scales of SEV motivation. Consequently, numerous scholars have dedicated efforts to gain an in-depth understanding of the key determinants influencing a person's continued commitment to volunteering (Koutrou, 2018).

A substantial body of scholarship in event management has benefited from extensive research on SEV motivation. However, there is a recurring question about whether there are holistic findings that encapsulate various perspectives in this field (Chutipongdech & Zhao, 2024). The diverse demographic profiles of volunteers have led scholars to explore SEV motivation in various study contexts. Nevertheless, many studies on the factors motivating SEV participation remain fragmented and inconclusive. The heterogeneity of SEV research in terms of methodologies, outcomes, and settings is caused by the context-specific nature of sport events. This implies that findings from individual studies may have limited applicability, sometimes posing challenges for scholars in drawing objective conclusions from existing literature.

Given the diversity of empirical findings and the challenges practitioners face in fully leveraging the varied results available in the literature, there is a clear need for an integrated study that consolidates these findings within the field of SEV motivation. Consequently, this paper aims to summarize and synthesize the empirical literature concerning the factors motivating SEVs, employing a descriptive meta-analysis. This study concentrates on the antecedents and previous research findings and proposes an integrative framework that combines various antecedents and empirical findings from the literature. This framework is designed to enhance understanding of both academic and managerial communities regarding the factors influencing volunteers to participate in sporting events. Additionally, this study identifies potential unexplored research opportunities in this area.

The subsequent section provides a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology utilized in this study, establishing a foundation for the methodical approach undertaken. The third section of the study offers the results of the empirical research, which include the creation and presentation of an integrative framework for understanding the elements that drive involvement in SEV. Subsequently, this study presents and discusses the results of empirical research in order to further enhance the research field. In conclusion, the study provides a summary of the main findings and offers suggestions for further research in this field.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Meta-analysis

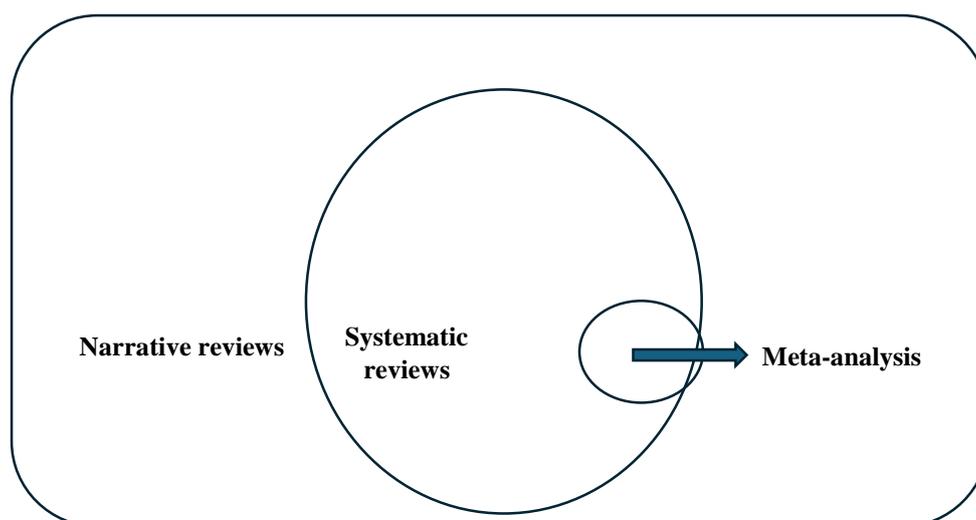
This study used a descriptive meta-analysis to summarize, synthesize, and describe the empirical literature regarding factors motivating volunteer participation in sporting events. Descriptive meta-analysis is a type of meta-analysis that firstly aims to examine the numerical relationship of included studies. However, due to the use of diverse research designs,

particularly qualitative and mixed methods in the reviewed studies, it was not possible to combine data from the included studies for a quantitative analysis that would examine the effect size or create correlation indices (Reynolds, 1992). Therefore, descriptive meta-analysis was the methodological approach used, as it allows for the collection and synthesis of results from multiple previous empirical studies in a descriptive manner without using statistical analysis (Cooper et al, 2007).

Several researchers have successfully employed this method in social science studies (e.g., Kim & Kaewnuch, 2018; Toufaily et al. (2013). Some of these studies stated that: A descriptive meta-analysis is considered most suitable given that the reviewed articles differ in some ways including the research method (e.g. surveys, experiments, case studies, or a combination of these methods). A confirmatory meta-analysis would not be suitable in this case because the effect size categorization would be inconsistent, or not available for some of the studies (Akpan &Shanker, 2017, p. 200).

Furthermore, descriptive meta-analysis is particularly useful when researchers deal with different research designs, diverse findings, and various contextual settings that make statistical analysis inappropriate. It specifically addresses the heterogeneity of the included studies, focusing on the conflicts and heterogeneity of research findings from multiple previous empirical studies. However, if the included studies exhibit a high level of heterogeneity, descriptive meta-analysis can sometimes resemble systematic reviews. This is because the relationship between systematic reviews and meta-analysis is similar, as seen in Figure 1 (VA Center of Excellence, 1998; Susantitaphong, 2022). Moreover, if researchers employ similar systematic review guidelines and set predefined frameworks, such as the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), it compounds the similarities between systematic reviews and descriptive meta-analysis. However, with narrative synthesis, descriptive meta-analysis specifically provides a qualitative synthesis and descriptions of research domains, whereas systematic reviews produce a comprehensive synthesis that may contain qualitative and quantitative results. Table 1 illustrates the similar key characteristics between systematic reviews and meta-analysis.

Figure 1 Relationship among Various Types of Reviews



Source: VA Center of Excellence (1998)

Table 1 Key Characteristics among Different Types of Reviews

Compared elements	Narrative reviews	Systematic reviews	Meta-analysis	
			Descriptive meta-analysis	Quantitative meta-analysis
Review scope	Panoramic view		Telescopic view	
Focus	Background knowledge		Foreground knowledge	
Bias	Susceptible to bias	Bias minimized through selected protocols		
Aim	Obtain background knowledge	Summarize and synthesize multiple relevant research studies	Summarize, synthesize and describe multiple heterogenous empirical studies	Pool similar data from multiple empirical studies
Process	Non-structured review	Structured review derived from clear predefined guidelines and frameworks	Structured review	
Method	Narrative synthesis	Includes both qualitative and quantitative syntheses	Narrative synthesis	Statistical analysis
Output	Give knowledge background	Produce a comprehensive synthesis that may contain qualitative and quantitative results	Provide a qualitative synthesis and description of a research domain	Generate single definitive answer from statistical analysis
Outcome	Options for research designs		Direct future research	

Study Selection and Search Strategy

Given the heterogeneity of research designs and findings from SEV literature, this study employed a descriptive meta-analysis, as explained above. In order to ensure transparency and reduce bias in the research process, the study used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Checklist 2020 (Page et al., 2021). This guideline is widely recognized for conducting meta-analyses (Flegr & Schmidt, 2022; Thompson et al., 2022). The initial phase of the publication-based meta-analysis involves gathering pertinent information through a review of the literature. The initial collection of empirical papers used in the meta-analysis came from two separate published databases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. These databases were selected because of their wider journal coverage, reliability, and access to leading academic peer-reviewed papers, thereby ensuring the comprehensiveness and quality of the papers included for data analysis (Chutipongdech & Kampitak, 2022; Singh et al., 2021; Zhu & Liu, 2020).

To comprehensively capture all relevant research on SEV motivation, the keyword combinations used in the search strategy were “motivation AND sport event volunteer”, and a combination of the following terms: “volunteer motivation” AND “sport event.” This careful selection of search term combinations was designed to ensure an accurate and exhaustive collection of subsequently published papers relevant to the study’s focus (Saunders et al., 2018). Using the established key relevancy terms, all years and all document categories were

searched since, initially, a complete literature collection should be attained.

Following this extensive compilation of research, particular outcomes were sorted using inclusion criteria. The eligibility of studies for inclusion was determined based on specific criteria, as outlined in Table 2. These criteria were designed to align with the research objectives of the study, ensuring both high relevancy and quality of the selected papers.

Table 2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

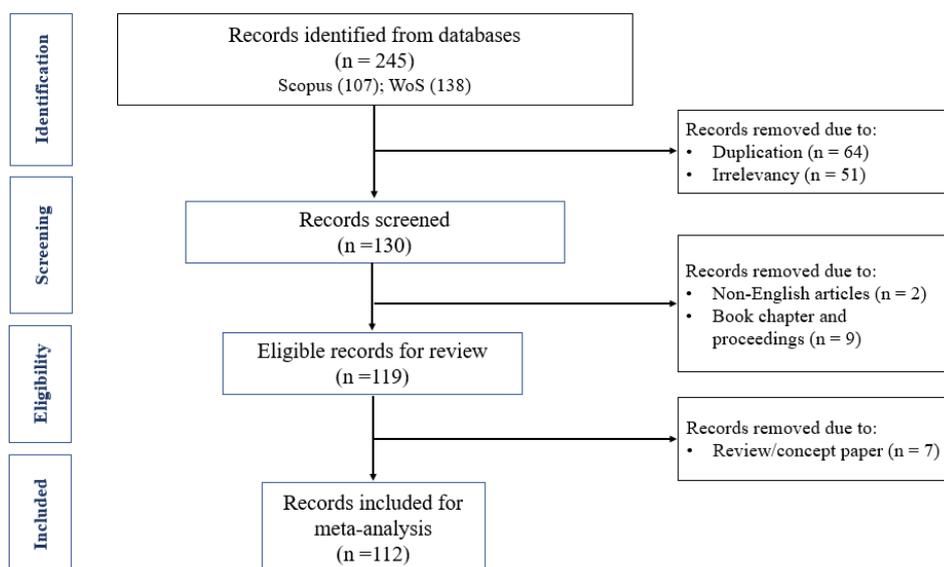
Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical research articles • Studies specific to sport events • Articles indexed in selected databases • Articles must be relevant to SEV motivation and include at least one of the following search items: research questions, keywords, key relevancy terms, title, or body of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies not related to sport events • Articles not peer-reviewed in English • Articles that do not discuss factors motivating sport event volunteer participation. • Concept papers, book chapter and conference proceedings

As the research objective of this study was to summarize and synthesize the empirical literature related to factors motivating volunteer participation in sporting events using a descriptive meta-analysis, only empirical research articles were included in the analysis. Review and conceptual papers were removed from the data analysis. Included papers must have been peer-reviewed in English and specifically related to sport events. Conference proceedings and book chapters, which were not clearly indicated as having passed the peer-review process, were also omitted from the analysis. Included empirical studies were required to discuss the research domain, which was the factors motivating SEV participation. Figure 2 illustrates the selection and exclusion process of the considered empirical studies.

Quality Assessment

The study employed a two-stage screening process, collaboratively executed by the first and second reviewers, to ensure rigorous quality assessment in study selection as suggested by

Figure 2 PRISMA Flow Diagram



Schardt et al. (2007), and Sivaramakrishnan et al. (2021). In the initial stage, the first reviewer examined the titles and abstracts of the articles retrieved from Scopus and WoS, assessing their eligibility based on the predefined search strategy. This process was vital for the accurate identification and selection of relevant studies.

Following the initial screening, both the first and second reviewers engaged in a thorough full-text review of the selected articles. This stage involved detailed discussions to assess each article's suitability, strictly adhering to the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Table 2. This collaborative effort ensured a comprehensive and unbiased selection of relevant studies.

Figure 2 illustrates that a total of 245 records were initially retrieved from the Scopus and WoS databases, covering articles indexed from 1994 to 2023. During the first review phase, 115 academic papers were excluded, as determined by the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Specifically, 64 records were identified as duplicates, and 51 papers did not focus on SEV motivation. For instance, studies set in contexts other than sport events, such as those by Cnaan et al. (2017), Fayos et al. (2019), Kővári and Raffay-Danyi (2022), Vinnicombe and Wu (2020), and Qi (2021), were excluded. These studies were disqualified as they explored volunteer motivations in different event types.

Moreover, the selection criteria necessitated the exclusion of non-English studies, such as those by Kogan and Kvon (2019), as well as book chapters and conference proceedings, to maintain consistency and focus in the analysis. Following this rigorous two-stage screening process, which involved careful data collection and review, a total of 112 studies were ultimately deemed suitable for inclusion in the descriptive meta-analysis.

Data Coding, Extraction, and Analysis

The coding process for the final set of 112 studies was carried out using a specifically developed coding schema, as outlined by Pigott and Polanin (2019). This schema was designed to highlight the key characteristics of the included studies. A detailed coding sheet was developed, tailored for descriptive meta-analysis, which encompassed various parameters. These parameters included identification number, list of authors, year of publication, title of the record, name of the academic journal, keywords, contextual setting of the study, event location, employed theoretical frameworks, data collection and analysis methods, scale measurements, sample size, and key informant details, main findings, and suggestions for future research. After the initial extraction and coding of all records, each article was thoroughly screened based on the elements in the coding sheet. This comprehensive process was crucial to gather the necessary information for constructing an integrative framework.

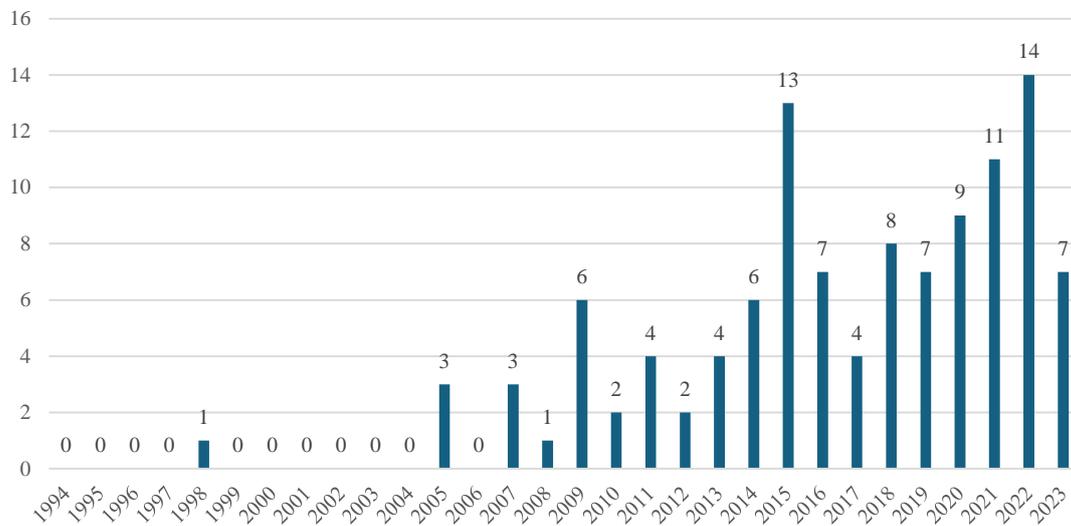
RESULTS

The findings from the descriptive meta-analysis indicated that out of the 245 records initially reported by both databases for the period 1994–2023, only 112 records successfully met the criteria and were included in the final meta-analysis.

Over the past 30 years, the earliest academic paper on SEV motivation identified in this study was published by Farrell et al. in 1998. Interestingly, no additional papers on this topic were published until 2005, as depicted in Figure 3. A notable increase in publication significance began in 2009, marking a period of heightened academic interest in this field. From 2009 to 2022, there was an average of 6.93 papers published per year, indicating a growing trend in SEV motivation research. The year 2022 saw the highest number of publications, with 14 papers, followed closely by 2015 and 2021, with 13 and 11 publications respectively.

Figure 3 Yearly Frequency of Empirical Research Examining Sport Event Volunteer Motivation

Year of Publication



Authorship

In the realm of SEV motivation research, Tracey J. Dickson stands out as a leading contributor, as detailed in Table 3. She has published a total of 7 articles, with her first appearing in 2013. This initial work explored SEV motivation at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Kirstin Hallmann and Erik L. Lachance are also notable for their substantial contributions to the field, both ranked second in terms of their prolific output. Hallmann’s first publication in 2012 delved into the determinants of volunteer motivation and their impact on future voluntary engagement at major sporting events. Erik L. Lachance, meanwhile, made his first mark in the literature in 2020, further enriching the discourse on SEV motivation.

Table 3 Top Contributing Authors

Contributor (as a first author)	No. of articles
Tracey J. Dickson	7
Kirstin Hallmann	5
Erik L. Lachance	5
Hyejin Bang	4
Niki Koutrou	4
Heetae Cho	3

Other notable contributors to the SEV research domain include Hyejin Bang and Niki Koutrou, each having conducted four significant studies during the study period. Hyejin Bang and her team are particularly renowned for developing the Volunteer Motivations Scale for International Sporting Events (VMS-ISE), a prominent motivation measurement scale widely used in numerous SEV studies. On the other hand, Niki Koutrou and her team were especially productive in 2016, publishing three of their seven research articles in this year. Heetae Cho has also made a notable impact with three SEV articles, beginning in 2020. Additionally,

Salvador Angosto, Paul Downward, Eunjung Kim, Chrysostomos Giannoulakis, Jennifer L. VanSickle, Justine B. Allen, Jon Welty Peachey, David Lamb, Selina Khoo, May Kim, and Farideh Sharififar have each contributed significantly to the field, producing important studies in SEV research between 1994 and 2023.

Academic Journal Publication

Academic journals focusing on events and festivals serve as popular outlets for SEV research publications, as indicated in Table 4. Notably, the journal “Event Management” has published the highest proportion of SEV research articles during the study period, likely due to its primary focus on the analysis of events and festivals. This journal has featured twenty-one significant papers on SEV. Similarly, the “International Journal of Event and Festival Management” stands out as another leading journal in the field. It has published seven research articles, encompassing a wide range of event management topics, from small-scale festivals and business events to mega sporting events, thus providing a diverse platform for SEV studies.

The “International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations”, known as VOLUNTAS, has also played a significant role in disseminating SEV research. Catering to research in the voluntary and nonprofit organization sectors, VOLUNTAS published five studies related to SEV between 1994 and 2023. Additionally, considering volunteerism as a form of leisure activity (Kim, 2018), “Managing Sport and Leisure” (MSL) emerged as a relevant journal. Its focus on advancing understanding of sport and leisure management practices across voluntary, public, and commercial sectors made it a fitting platform for SEV research. Consequently, MSL published five studies related to SEV during the same period, further contributing to the field’s body of knowledge. Similarly, “Sustainability” emerged as another key journal, publishing six academic papers related to SEVs. This reflects its broader scope in integrating sustainability concepts with volunteerism in sports.

Table 4 Top Contributing Journals

Journal	Frequency
Event Management	21
International Journal of Event and Festival Management	7
Sustainability	6
VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations	5
Managing Sport and Leisure	5
Journal of Sport Management	4
Sport Management Review	4
European Sport Management Quarterly	3
Sport in Society	3

Several sport-related academic journals have been instrumental in contributing to the SEV domain. The “Journal of Sport Management”, “Sport Management Review”, “European Sport Management Quarterly”, and “Sport in Society” each published approximately four articles relevant to this field. Their focus on sport management aligns closely with the aspects of SEVs. Additionally, other notable journals, including “Current Psychology”, “Managing Leisure”, “Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport”, “Journal of Physical Education and Sport”, “Nonprofit Management & Leadership”, “Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development”, and “Tourism Management”, each contributed two papers to the study domain during the research period.

Theoretical Framework

As shown in Table 5, an analysis of the theoretical frameworks employed in the included studies reveals a notable finding: a significant proportion lacked a specific theoretical underpinning, aligning with observations by Kim (2018) and Angosto et al. (2021). Specifically, 50 out of the 112 papers did not articulate a clear theoretical basis. On the other hand, the most frequently adopted theoretical framework was Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), indicating its prominence and applicability in exploring SEV motivation.

Table 5 Most Frequently Employed Theoretical Frameworks

Theory	Frequency
Not available	50
Self-determination Theory	9
Functional Theory	8
Social Exchange Theory	6
Social Capital	4
Theory of Planned Behavior	4
Social Identity Theory	3

Self-Determination Theory delves into the interaction between social environments and individual characteristics, influencing various forms of motivation. It particularly distinguishes between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. This framework is crucial for predicting outcomes such as learning, performance, subjective experience, and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2015). In the context of SEVs, the theory’s focus on satisfaction, commitment, and retention, aligns well with the objectives and challenges faced in volunteer management. Therefore, Self-Determination Theory is highly compatible with and relevant to the SEV literature, offering insights into volunteer behavior and motivation (Kim, 2018).

Functional Theory (Clary et al., 1998) is another framework extensively employed in SEV research. This theory focuses on individual motivations (Salleh et al., 2022) for volunteering, operating on the premise that understanding an individual’s decision to volunteer requires uncovering the underlying needs or motivations that volunteering satisfies for them. Finkelstein (2008) emphasizes that this approach is essential for comprehending the motivational dimensions that drive volunteer participation.

Social Exchange Theory also forms a critical theoretical foundation within the research domain of SEVs. This theory, a prominent hypothesis in social sciences, offers a framework for understanding social interactions. According to this theory, social behavior is viewed as a result of an exchange process (Cook, 2015). In the context of SEVs, this theory is particularly relevant as it aligns with the idea that volunteers participate in sporting events driven by specific motivations and, in return, expect certain rewards or benefits. This reciprocal aspect of volunteer participation, as conceptualized by Social Exchange Theory, has been frequently cited in the records, underscoring its significance in explaining volunteer behavior in sport events (Satitsamitpong et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, the Social Capital theoretical framework can elucidate the impact of management practices on attitudes and behavior (Feinstein & Cathie, 2004), encompassing the network of connections and relationships between coworkers, acquaintances, and contacts, which can offer access to human resources (Zhigang et al., 2022). In the context of sport event volunteerism, volunteer management can assist volunteers in building social capital, which in turn can enhance their attitudes and behavior towards volunteering. Therefore, some past empirical research has examined how this management practice enhances the level of social

capital among individuals within an organization, subsequently affecting the positive experiences and motivation for volunteerism.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) highlights that the behavioral intentions and actual behavior of individuals are influenced by three factors: personal attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Cattapan et al., 2023; Napontun & Senachai, 2023; Wattanawaraporn & Manosudhtikul, 2024). These three components can act as mediators in the links between the motives of volunteers and their intentions to continue volunteering in the future (Bang & Lee, 2014). This framework has the ability to promote volunteering and can also be used for volunteer retention, specifically for retaining event volunteers (Lee et al., 2014).

Social Identity Theory pertains to an individual’s perception of themselves in relation to their participation in a certain group. In the context of SEVs, it can be implied that social identity involves the process of identifying with and engaging in social interactions (Hallmann & Zehrer, 2017). Previous research has shown that volunteering not only makes a major contribution to community social capital but also allows volunteers to participate in civic activities in society (Wilson, 2000).

Moreover, the included studies showcase a variety of theoretical frameworks, reflecting the diverse research interests and disciplinary approaches in SEV. These frameworks encompass theories such as Personality Traits, Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Pragmatic Critical Theory, Hierarchical Leisure Constraints Theory, Basic Psychological Need Theory, Altruistic Surplus Theory, Psychological Contract Theory, Theory of Contingent Valuation, Social Role Theory, Human Capital, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, Motivation-Satisfaction-Commitment Theory, and Individual Motivations Theory, among others. This breadth of theoretical application underscores the multifaceted nature of SEV research, offering insights into various dimensions of volunteer motivation.

Research Methods

Given the large number of participants typically involved in sporting events, quantitative research methods have become the predominant approach for data analysis, as illustrated in Table 6. Notably, ninety-four studies employed quantitative methods. These studies commonly used a range of data collection techniques, including online surveys distributed through social networks, face-to-face questionnaire distribution, and invitations sent via email and newsletters. Convenient sampling is often chosen for selecting volunteers at sporting events, primarily due to its practicality and efficiency in reaching a large number of participants.

Table 6 Research Design in Included Empirical Research

Research method	Scale measurement
Quantitative method (94)	VMS-ISE (14), Modified VMS-ISE (6), SEVMS (15), Modified VFI (3),
Mixed method (2)	VFI (2), OVMS (2), and other measurement scales (54)
Qualitative method (16)	The remaining publications did not utilize specific scales as they were based on qualitative data.

Recognizing that volunteer motivations can vary significantly across different scales of sport events (Dickson et al., 2015), researchers have developed several measurement scales to accurately assess the factors influencing volunteer participation in these events. Reflecting their specific research domains, approximately 54 papers employed a variety of measurement scales, each tailored to their study’s unique focus. These scales include, but are not limited to, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), the Theory of Planned Behavior Scale,

Schakowsky’s (1994) Revised Involvement Scale, the Satisfaction Index, the Intrinsic Motive Fulfilment (IMF) scale, the Scale of Volunteer Benefits and Costs, the Affective Commitment Scale, and the Motivation to Volunteer Scale. Each scale offers specific insights, enabling researchers to delve deeper into understanding the multifaceted nature of volunteer motivations in sport events.

The analysis highlights several key scale measurements that have gained prominence in studies of SEVs. These include the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) developed by Clary et al. (1998), the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS) by Farrell et al. (1998), the Olympic Volunteer Motivation Scale (OVMS) by Giannoulakis et al. (2008), and the Volunteer Motivation Scale for International Sporting Events (VMS-ISE) by Bang, Won and Kim (2009) and Bang and Chelladurai (2009). Many of these scales were repeatedly employed throughout the coverage period, indicating their widespread acceptance and utility in the field. According to Table 5, the original and modified versions of the VMS-ISE emerged as one of the most popularly adopted scales in SEV studies. Similarly, the SEVMS was frequently used, underscoring its significance as a tool for investigating volunteer motivation in special events.

In the realm of qualitative research methods, 16 studies utilized a variety of techniques to gather in-depth insights. These techniques included field observations as seen in Peachey et al. (2014) and Tjørndal (2018), ethnography (Lachance & Parent, 2021; Sheptak & Menaker, 2016), semi-structured interviews (Chen et al., 2018; Parris & Peachey, 2012; Power & Nedvetskaya, 2022), and focus groups (Peachey et al., 2015). Furthermore, two studies notably integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods, leveraging the strengths of each approach for a more comprehensive analysis. In total, an impressive number of approximately 85,482 samples/key informants were involved in the 112 SEV-related studies conducted over the past 30 years, reflecting the extensive scope and impact of this research.

Contextual Settings

Figure 4 indicates that over half of the included studies selected multiple sport events as their research context. Here, “multiple sport events” refers to studies that either encompassed various sport events as their setting or focused on a specific sport event case study that included a range of different sports. In contrast, 46 records concentrated on single sport events. Among these, the most studied sports were golf, football, marathons, cycling, and rugby (as seen in Table 7).

Figure 4 Characteristics of Sport Events in Empirical Research

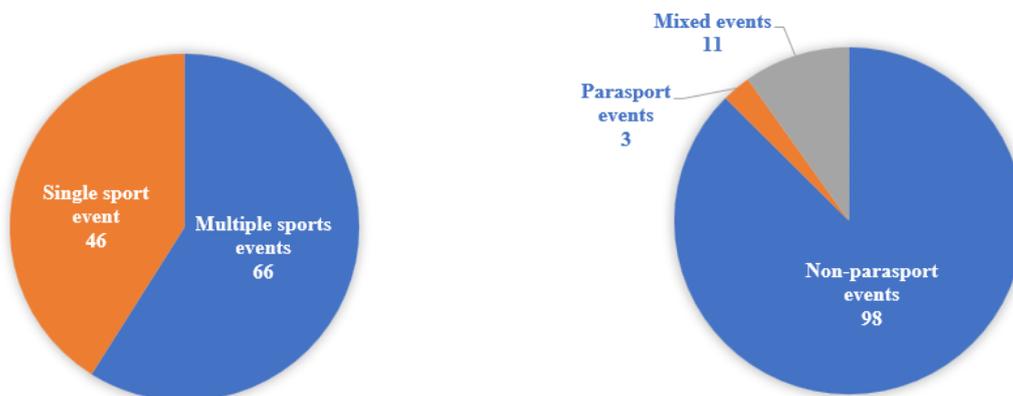


Table 7 Type of sports in Single Sport Events

Type of sports	Frequency
Golf	8
Soccer	7
Marathon / Run	6
Bowl	3
Cycling	3
Rugby	3
Tennis	3
Gymnastic	2
Ski	2
Handball	2
Triathlon	2
Hockey	1
Athletics	1
Basketball	1
Surf	1
Curling	1

In reference to Table 7, it is notable that no studies related to SEV motivation were conducted in Africa during the period examined. In contrast, a significant majority of the research was concentrated in European countries. Of the approximately 46 studies conducted in Europe, a substantial number were based in the United Kingdom. While the studies were distributed across the region, there was a noticeable concentration of research in countries such as Germany, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Spain, and Greece. The analysis also reveals a strong research presence in North America, with 33 academic papers produced between 1994 and 2023. Specifically, 19 studies originated from the United States, while Canada accounted for 14 papers.

Table 8 Geographic Location of the Study

Regions	Countries
Europe (46)	United Kingdom (16), Germany (6), Norway (5), Russia (3), Poland (3), Switzerland (2), Austria (2), Spain (2), Greece (2), Greenland (1), Ireland (1), Slovakia (1), Italy (1), Scotland (1)
North America (33)	United States (19), Canada (14)
Asia (23)	China (9), South Korea (4), Singapore (3), Malaysia (2), Iran (2), Japan (1), Taiwan (1), Qatar (1)
Australia (12)	Australia (9), New Zealand (3)
South America (6)	Brazil (6)

The summation of frequencies is superior to 112 since more than one region and country were employed in single empirical research.

Twenty-three studies focusing on SEVs were conducted in Asia, with a notable concentration in specific regions. China and South Korea emerged as significant contributors, accounting for nine and four studies respectively. The remainder of the research was distributed across various parts of Asia, including Southeast Asia (with studies from Malaysia and Singapore), West Asia (Iran and Qatar), and East Asia (Japan and Taiwan). However, it is important to note that the South Asia region was not represented in the SEV studies,

highlighting a geographical gap in the research landscape.

In the Oceania region, Australia stands out with the highest number of publications, totaling ten records, while the remaining studies were conducted in New Zealand. This underscores Australia’s significant contribution to SEV research in this region. In South America, the majority of the data collected relating to SEV came from Brazil. Notably, Brazil was the host for major events such as the Youth School Games and the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which provided rich contexts for SEV studies.

Factors Motivating Sport Event Volunteer Participation

Based on the analysis of 112 studies, a wide range of determinants motivating SEV participation is presented in Figure 5 and Table 9. These determinants include altruism, the desire to gain new experiences, a sense of togetherness, transactional motivations, escapism, personal development, event interest, volunteering among friends, perceived obligation to volunteer, community spirit, material rewards, engagement with the sport, self-negotiation strategies, positive past volunteering experiences, leisure-related motivations, external attractiveness, and excitement.

Figure 5 Frequency of SEV Motivation Factors

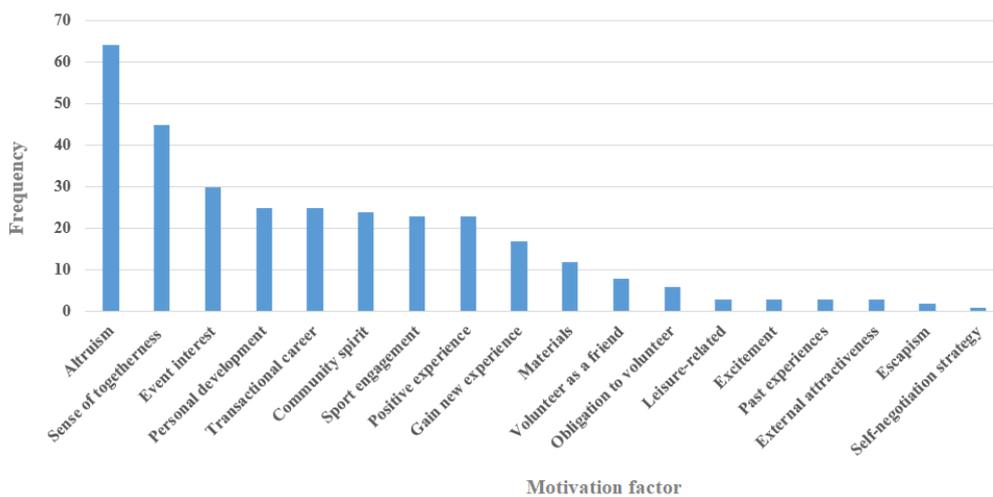


Figure 5 and Table 9 reveal that altruism is the predominant determinant motivating volunteers to participate in sport events. Altruism can be defined as a selfless concern for the welfare of others, driven by a genuine desire to make a meaningful contribution to the community and to prioritize humanitarian values (Hoffman, 1981).

Khoo and Engelhorn (2007) reported that altruism is the principal factor underpinning individual decisions, reflecting how individuals express their values through volunteering. Furthermore, Dickson et al. (2015) noted that SEVs adopt a more altruistic perspective after events, while Stukas et al. (2016) concurred that the satisfaction and personal fulfilment derived from helping others are among the rewards for those serving as SEVs. This motivation by altruism aligns with major SEV studies, including those by Cho et al. (2023), Hallmann and Harms (2012), Pauline and Pauline (2009), Farrell et al. (1998), and others.

There are also several motives that encourage SEVs to attend an event. A sense of togetherness, experienced by participating in sport events, grants volunteers social recognition. This egoistic factor is linked to various aspects of people’s needs for interpersonal relationships, networking, and social interaction, all of which influence volunteers to participate in sporting events (Giannoulakis et al., 2008; Pauline & Pauline, 2009). Interest in

Table 9 Sport Event Volunteer Motivation Categorized by Scale Measurement

SEV Motivation factor									
VFI	OVMS	Modified OVMS	SEVMS	VMS-ISE	Modified VMS-ISE	Other scales	Definition	Frequency	
Values	Purposive	Purposive	Purposive	Expression of values	Expression of values	Altruism	Desire to do something for others.	64	
Social	Egoistic	Egoistic	Solidary	Interpersonal contact	Interpersonal contact	Sense of togetherness	Social interaction and networking	45	
	Olympic-related	Olympic-related				Event interest	Self-interest in specific events	30	
Enhancement Career				Personal growth	Personal growth	Personal development	Need for skill development	25	
				Career orientation	Career orientation	Transactional career	Enhancing professional skills	25	
				Patriotism	Community involvement	Community spirit	Sense of community and national pride	24	
					Love of sports	Sport engagement	Self-interest in specific sports	23	
Understanding				Extrinsic reward		Positive experience	Satisfaction from past event volunteering	23	
							Gain new experience	Opportunities to increase, or apply knowledge, and obtain hands-on experiences	17
							Materials	Tangible benefits gained from volunteering	12
							Volunteer among friends	Spending free time with friends and family	8
							Obligation to volunteer	Self-interest in volunteer service	6
							Leisure-related	Recreational and relaxation needs	3
							Excitement	Seeking enjoyment and pleasure	3
							Past experiences	Past experiences in social activity	3
							External attractiveness	Image of volunteer organization	3
						Protective			
Self-negotiation strategy	Telling themselves to reduce constraints for participating events	1							

the event itself also impacts volunteers' decision-making (Alexander et al., 2015; Dickson et al., 2013; Reeser et al., 2005).

Personal development is another motivation that guides SEVs to participate in sport events, as volunteering can aid in improving self-evaluation, recognizing personal limits, building self-confidence, becoming more independent, and learning new skills (Ma & Draper, 2017; VanSickle & Diacin, 2013). Similarly, participating in an event provides transactional career opportunities, meaning that being a SEV can help improve professional skills that can advance an individual's career opportunities (Bańbuła, 2021; Hallmann & Zehrer, 2019).

Another determinant that impacts SEV participation is community spirit. Given the preference for national pride and community involvement, many SEVs enjoy not only engaging with the community but also deriving personal benefits and contributing services to their community (Bang et al., 2019; Downward & Ralston, 2005; Lamb & Ogle, 2019). Furthermore, many SEVs prefer to participate in their favorite sport, allowing them to connect with the specific sport they are interested in (Allen & Bartle, 2014; Hardin et al., 2007; Koutrou, 2018).

Positive volunteering experiences motivate SEVs to participate in future volunteerism as they stimulate intrinsic motivation and inspire volunteers to engage more deeply and commit further (Li et al., 2022). Such positive experiences often result from perceived support (Aisbett & Hoye, 2015) and a positive working environment (Hyde et al., 2016). Moreover, participating in sport events not only allows SEVs to gain new experiences through opportunities to increase their knowledge, learn, and gain hands-on experiences (Dickson et al., 2013; Poláčková et al., 2021), but also provides them with material rewards from volunteering (Rozmiarek et al., 2021; Vetitnev et al., 2018).

Based on the analysis, several other factors motivate SEVs to participate in sporting events. Being invited to join an event by friends and family is another determinant for becoming an SEV (Hyde et al., 2016). The feeling of obligation to volunteer (Hallett et al., 2020), choosing volunteering as a leisure activity (MacLean & Hamm, 2007), seeking excitement (Güntert et al., 2015), escapism (Hardin et al., 2007), past social activity experiences (Lu et al., 2019), the attractiveness of volunteering organizations (Jiang et al., 2017), and a self-talk strategy (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022) that reduces constraints for participating as a volunteer are also various factors motivating SEVs to join events.

In summary, peer-reviewed articles that pertain to volunteer motivation in sport events have primarily concentrated on specific countries, mostly in the European region. These articles have been published in a diverse array of 55 journal titles spanning multiple academic disciplines. During 1994–2023, the motivation of volunteers for sporting events received significant research attention. From 2005 onward, the number of research papers included in this analysis significantly increased, reaching its peak in 2022. The majority of study publications have employed a quantitative research approach to gather data through survey methods, specifically targeting volunteers involved in multiple sport events. The focus of the present study was to assess the motivation of SEVs in terms of their dedication, contentment, inclination to continue their involvement, and also other constructs linked to researchers' interests. Self-determination theory found widespread application in various studies. Prominently, altruism and a sense of togetherness were the most common motivational factors stimulating SEVs to participate in sporting events.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to provide a comprehensive overview of the empirical research on the factors that drive individuals to participate as volunteers in sporting events. Due to the fact that SEV studies are too heterogeneous to be combined statistically, descriptive meta-analysis was employed to summarize and synthesize the findings from multiple studies

in a narrative form. Narrative synthesis is the process of grouping and describing findings from various studies based on shared themes or characteristics, in this case with the aim of examining the antecedents and conclusions linked to SEV motives. This section identifies trends within the literature without calculating a combined effect size and provides a description of the state of research on the SEV topic, highlighting common findings, discrepancies, and areas for future research.

Theoretical Evolvement and Scale Measurement in SEV Literature

The data analysis conducted during this study confirms the findings of Kim (2018) and Angosto et al. (2021), who stated that previous SEV research lacks a clear theoretical basis. This study revealed that previous SEV research initially developed measurement scales and relied on general volunteerism theory, such as the Functional Approach by Clary et al. (1998). Moreover, diverse psychological theories significantly impacted the remaining works that received theoretical backing, yet the majority of the studies disregard the strong evidence supporting these theories. This resulted in different measurement scales for SEV motivation, causing heterogeneities with notable inconsistencies in the outcomes of research in this domain.

However, given the growing body of SEV research, this study identifies imminent trends in which the motive factors seem to have become convergent due to the frequent use of similar measurement scales, leading to a next step for future research using quantitative meta-analysis. The data analysis revealed that scale measurements such as VMS-ISE, the modified VMS-ISE, and SEVMS, are among the top scales used for examining SEV's motivations. Therefore, this study proposes to encourage researchers in the field to develop a meta-analysis by drawing from previous research using such scales with similar motive variables.

Although the study reveals convergent trends in SEV motivational factors, it is notable that this resulted from research methods designed to examine the research domain. Specifically, the data analysis indicates that quantitative research methods have significantly contributed to SEV studies, likely due to the possibility of dealing with a sample group that includes a large number of volunteers in sporting events. As a result, SEV research requires innovative research designs, providing in-depth perspectives which reflect the different motivations of SEVs.

Contexts and Study Domains

The data analysis conducted in this study reveals the distribution of SEV empirical research, indicating that Europe has the highest frequency of research studies, followed by North America and Asia, while Australia and South America have fewer studies. The use of such contextual settings reflects the interconnections between the hosting of sports events and a country's level of development.

This relationship is intricate and has many different aspects. Several studies have noted that the purpose of hosting sports events varies depending on specific strategic objectives. These objectives can include legacy and long-term development (Grix & Houlihan, 2014), tourism and economic benefits (Preuss, 2007), political and social impacts (Cornelissen, 2010), economic capacity, and infrastructure (Matheson & Baade, 2004). This study also calls for similar research domains within developing countries to enrich the outcomes in the SEV literature.

Considering the types of sporting events employed in the included studies, this study reveals that there is a notable lack of studies within the event and sport literature regarding the requirements and participation of individuals with disabilities, although volunteering plays a crucial role in many economies and is essential for various sports and sporting events (Doherty, 2009).

Data analysis from 1994 to 2023 indicates that past research on SEVs predominantly used non-parasport events as the contextual setting. Notably, only 14 studies focused on parasport events when investigating SEV motivation. Of these, 11 studies combined non-parasport and parasport events, while the remaining three (Khoo & Engelhorn, 2007; Lachance & Parent, 2020, 2021) focused exclusively on parasport events. Although these 14 studies examined SEV motivation at parasport events, most, except for those by Darcy et al. (2014), Dickson et al. (2017), and Dickson et al. (2023), did not address research domains related to marginalized SEVs.

Darcy et al. (2014) pioneered a mixed research method to examine the experiences of volunteers with disabilities at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, highlighting the long-standing call for disability-focused research in event studies (Darcy, 2012; Darcy & Harris, 2003), which until then had been minimally explored. Dickson et al. (2017) subsequently quantitatively assessed the motivations of SEVs with disabilities at the same events. Later, Dickson et al. (2023) explored how marginalized groups, such as First Nations or those with disabilities, could be co-providers of event experiences.

To foster equity and uphold human rights, individuals expect to receive fair treatment regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, race, religion, or ability (Darcy et al., 2014). Research on SEVs has demonstrated their potential to enhance the social and human capital of the host community. However, studies examining the extent to which marginalized groups can also contribute as providers of sport event experiences remain limited (Dickson et al., 2023). Therefore, this study calls for future research related to marginalized groups, both in terms of sporting event contexts and research participation from disabled-bodied volunteers.

Future Research Agenda for SEV Research

As previously stated, this study calls for future SEV research to incorporate underdeveloped countries, disabled-bodied individuals, and research designs that allow for different and in-depth SEV perspectives. Based on the synthesis of future research suggestions from previous studies, as detailed in Table 10, this study highlights that past empirical research recommends that future researchers focus on SEV experiences by exploring additional motivational factors such as satisfaction (Chiu et al., 2023; Teixeira et al., 2023), past experiences (Kim et al., 2019; Yoo et al., 2022), cultural influences (Kumnig et al., 2015; Li et al., 2022), and other specific factors affecting SEV experiences (Doherty, 2009; Otto et al., 2022).

To thoroughly examine detailed SEV experiences, research designs must be reconsidered. Given the limitations of previously employed methods, there is a call to redesign research approaches that can more deeply explore volunteer experiences and motivations. Recommendations include employing mixed research methods (Dickson et al., 2023; Hinch & Cameron, 2020; Otto et al., 2022), utilizing in-depth qualitative methods (Lamb & Ogle, 2018, 2019; Vetitnev et al., 2018), and adopting comparative study designs to investigate volunteer demographics and motivational factors across various types and levels of sporting events (Jarvis & Blank, 2011; Kim et al., 2010a; Pereira & Cavalcante, 2019).

Furthermore, suggestions for future research include calls for studies to encompass a wider array of contexts and locations (Lachance & Parent, 2020; Power & Nedvetskaya, 2022), similar and diverse events (Skille & Hanstad, 2013; Yoo et al., 2022). There is also a recommendation to incorporate more comprehensive datasets to achieve broader sample coverage and generalize findings (Alexander et al., 2015; Allen & Bartle, 2014).

Future research is also recommended to use longitudinal studies to examine SEV motivations before, during, and after events (Cho et al., 2023; Hallmann & Zehrer, 2019; Lim & Ibrahim, 2020). This approach aims to broaden the exploration of the volunteer journey

Table 10 Suggestions for Future Research from Previous Studies

Future Research Suggestion Themes	Frequency
Elaborating other factors affecting motivation	42
Different contexts and locations	29
Longitudinal studies	23
Larger sample sizes	23
In-depth research design	20
Cross-sector comparison	13
Motivations of SEV with disabilities	3
Measurement variance in research	3
Implementation of current findings	2
Volunteer database generation	1
SEV segmentation	1
Data collection from volunteer organizations	1
Meta-analysis	1

(Tomazos & Luke, 2015) and to trace volunteering behavior across different stages of the events (Chen et al., 2018).

Other miscellaneous recommendations for future research include segmenting volunteers by analyzing specific groups (Koutrou & Pappous, 2016), employing meta-analysis to synthesize findings from multiple studies (Dickson et al., 2013), validating scale measurements, and measuring variance to evaluate the reliability and validity of measurement tools (Bang, Alexandris, & Ross, 2009; Kim et al., 2010b). Additionally, generating SEV databases (Rozmiarek et al., 2021) and collecting data directly from volunteer organizations can provide insights from those managing volunteers (Tjønndal, 2018). Implementing current findings to apply research insights in practical settings is also advised (MacLean & Hamm, 2007; Reeser et al., 2005).

In summary, although there is a growing body of research in SEV, there remain several opportunities to explore new and in-depth perspectives within this research domain. This study not only encourages researchers to employ qualitative or mixed methods to gain insightful perspectives on SEV, but also advocates for the use of quantitative research methods to develop innovative approaches for capturing multiple time frames of SEV, rather than relying solely on cross-sectional analysis.

The Introduction of an Integrative Framework of Factors Motivating SEV

With the availability of scale measurements and a diverse range of theoretical frameworks employed to explain SEV motivation, the results from previous research reveal several motivational factors influencing SEV participation, as illustrated in Figure 6. This framework offers a holistic view of volunteer participation in sporting events, elaborating on the diverse motivations of SEVs over the 30-year period examined. It synthesizes the various determinants and sheds light on the multifaceted nature of SEV motivation, which will be useful for researchers and practitioners to capture the ideas of SEV motivation within a single illustration.

As noted by Alexander et al. (2015) and Kim et al. (2018), SEVs form a diverse group, comprising various ethnicities, cultures, genders, ages, career backgrounds, personal traits, and prior volunteer experiences. The extensive range of backgrounds and traits among volunteers

is likely to impact their motivations, needs, desires, and behaviors.

However, the limited use of common scale measurements in previous studies suggests that the motivational factors identified, though numerous, may not fully represent all potential factors, as indicated in the integrative framework developed from previous empirical literature. Given the complex motivations of SEVs, this study agrees with Lachance et al. (2021) and Lachance and Parent (2021) that research on the volunteer experience has predominantly explored its relationship with various factors, resulting in a fragmented array of studies lacking a comprehensive understanding of the volunteer experience.

Figure 6 An Integrative Framework of Factors Motivating Sport Event Volunteer Participation



Despite the significant body of literature on SEVs in sport management (Wicker, 2017), SEV research still lacks in-depth studies that examine SEV experiences, and the hidden factors motivating SEVs to participate in sporting events.

CONCLUSION

Volunteers provide essential support across various sectors of society. Particularly in the sport and event industries, volunteers are crucial for successfully hosting events and serve as vital human resources. Consequently, the motivation behind sport-event volunteering has garnered significant academic interest over recent decades.

This study aims to deliver a comprehensive overview of the diverse factors motivating volunteer participation at sport events. The analysis presented in this paper sheds light on the current state of knowledge regarding sport event volunteer (SEV) motivation, drawing on literature indexed in Scopus and Web of Science from 1994 to 2023 through a descriptive meta-analysis. It synthesizes 18 different motives from a broad spectrum of 112 studies, providing valuable insights for human resource management at sporting events. Additionally, the study introduces an integrative framework, suggesting that it will be useful for researchers and event organizers involved in volunteer management to encapsulate the concepts of SEV motivation within a single illustration.

As SEV research continues to evolve, utilizing diverse settings for studies, this paper highlights opportunities for future directions in SEV studies to address the notable knowledge gaps. Specifically, it underscores the need for more theoretical grounding, with a focus on redesigning research methods to uncover in-depth studies on volunteer experiences, insufficient pre- and post-event analyses, and a call for research related to SEVs in para-sport events, focusing on marginalized individuals.

This study acknowledges its limitations. It is important to note that the study is descriptive in nature. Although it provides a comprehensive overview of the factors motivating SEVs, future research could involve quantifying the magnitude of the effect size of motivation factors across measurement scales by categorizing similar variables. The analysis based on the even effect size of similar SEV motivation variables could contribute to SEV literature and provide more precise implications for event organizers in managing volunteers.

Nevertheless, this study enriches the literature related to SEV motivation and serves as a foundation for potential future quantitative meta-analyses. Furthermore, the integrative framework of factors motivating SEVs can offer managerial implications to sport event organizers for strategic human resource management in the future.

STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

This work was supported by Ratchadapiseksompotch Fund Chulalongkorn University under grant number ReinUni_65_01_39_30. The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article. There are no human subjects involved in this research.

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