Reconsidering the Role of Training in Event Volunteers' Satisfaction

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The demand for volunteers to help plan and run sport events continues to rise. In order to better recruit and retain volunteers, there is a need to identify the means by which to enhance their overall satisfaction with the volunteer experience. One hundred and forty-seven non-specialist volunteers from the Sunbelt IndyCarnival completed questionnaires measuring their job satisfaction, evaluation of their training, organisational commitment, sense of community at the event, and satisfaction with their opportunities to share opinions and experiences during training. A LISREL model was formulated to test the relationships among the variables. Their sense of community had a positive effect on their commitment to the event organisation, and their commitment to the organisation had a direct effect on their job satisfaction. It is argued that the training of event volunteers should be conceived and designed as an opportunity to build a sense of community among volunteers and staff so as to enhance volunteer commitment and satisfaction.

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The landscape of event volunteering is changing. There are several trends that, if continued, will create added challenges for organisations wanting to utilise volunteers in the planning and delivery of their events. Research suggests that the available pool of volunteers may be decreasing. In Australia, there has been a decline in the percentage of people who volunteer at events, although those who do volunteer are contributing a higher number of hours (Lyons & Fabiansson, 1998). In Canada, a comparison between the 1987 and 1997 Statistics Canada Survey of Volunteer Activity indicated that in absolute terms the number of hours volunteered throughout a year had declined (Reed & Selbee, 2000). In contrast to the Australian case, the number of people volunteering had increased slightly, but there was a 22% decrease in the amount of time provided by the average volunteer. One of the reasons for the decline in aggregate volunteer work hours is that women, who until recently constituted a traditionally available volunteer pool, are less available because many of them have entered the work force (Freedman, 1997, 1999; Smith, 2004; Tiehen, 2000). Given the increasing difficulty in securing volunteer labour, many organisations have announced their intention to be more efficient in their volunteer recruitment and retention (Reed & Selbee, 2000).

The challenges for sport event managers are exacerbated by their increasing reliance on volunteers if the events are going to be economically and operationally viable (Chalip, 2000; Green & Chalip, 1998). Further, many sport organisations would not exist without the support of volunteers (Cuskelly, McIntyre, & Boag, 1998; Doherty & Carron, 2003). Consider, for example, that approximately 41,000 volunteers helped to organise and run the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, while 45,000 contributed their labour to the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, and 70,000 volunteers are expected to help host both the 2008 and 2012 Summer Olympic Games to be held in Beijing and London, respectively. In addition, the importance of volunteers is highlighted by the fact that many sport federations who help train athletes and send officials, are themselves dependent on volunteers. Clearly sport, in general, and sport events, in particular, must identify those factors that make volunteering attractive.

The challenge of attracting volunteers for sport events is further exacerbated by the increase in the number of events using volunteers. Recent decades have witnessed a significant increase in the use of events by national, regional, and local governments as part of their economic development mix (Mules & Faulkner, 1996; Getz, 1998; Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Ali, 2003). The three trends described above — a decrease in aggregate available volunteer hours, the growing significance of volunteers at events, and the increasing incorporation of events into communities' economic development mix – contribute to an increasingly competitive market for volunteers. If volunteers are viewed as resources (which is what they are for the organisations recruiting them), then because they are increasingly scarce, they are also increasingly valuable. It makes intuitive sense that this highly competitive

context requires organisations that rely on volunteers to become aware of the factors influencing recruitment and retention of volunteers. However, despite the industry's trends, Cuskelly and Boag's (2001) assertion that "little research effort has been directed to clarifying … what factors influence retention or turnover behaviour" (p. 71) in the context of sport volunteers remains a fair assessment of the current state of knowledge.

Interestingly, the evolution of human resource management followed a pattern similar to the one described above. Worker shortages propelled researchers and managers to explore alternative and effective ways to decrease turnover and increase employee retention. As a result, research into human resource management has identified several conditions that can affect whether individuals choose to stay with or depart from the organisation. One of the factors that has consistently affected employee retention is satisfaction (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003; Hayhurst, Saylor, & Stuenkel, 2005; Jamison, 2003; Perkins & Benoit, 2004). That is, satisfied employees are more likely to stay with their organisation. Since satisfaction plays a significant role in employees' retention, it would be useful to identify some of the antecedents that influence volunteer satisfaction. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the antecedents of volunteer satisfaction.

Most volunteer experiences are comprised of two key components: (1) training and (2) task execution. Consequently, volunteers evaluate their experience in terms of the quality of their training and the satisfactions they obtain on the job (Elstad, 1996; Wisner, Stringfellow, Youngdahl, & Parker, 2005). When working at events, the sense of community that volunteers obtain in their volunteer setting has been shown to play a significant and direct role in determining their satisfaction with the volunteer experience (Green & Chalip, 2004). Green and Chalip's (2004) measure of satisfaction aggregated job satisfaction and training evaluation into a single index. However, since training and on-the-job experiences occur during different phases of the volunteers' time with the organisation, it is reasonable to treat job satisfaction and training evaluation as separate dimensions of the overall volunteer experience. Event volunteers receive most, if not all, of their training prior to the event. Even the staff involved in training may be different from the staff overseeing volunteers' efforts during the event. It makes sense, then, that volunteers would evaluate their training as a separate experience from their job (i.e., the work done at the event). In this way, training evaluation is distinct from job satisfaction. Volunteers' evaluation of their training is important for two reasons. First, volunteers' enjoyment of their experience will depend on their sense of competency in their assigned role. Second, training is the beginning of a volunteer's experience. Unlike work settings, this is a leisure experience, freely chosen to obtain enjoyment. If a volunteer does not enjoy the training experience, he or she may choose not to return for the event itself. Separating training evaluation from job satisfaction leads to the following two hypotheses:

H1: Higher levels of volunteers' sense of community at the event for which they are volunteering will lead to higher overall job satisfaction.

H2: Higher levels of volunteers' sense of community at the event for which they are volunteering will lead to higher overall training evaluation.

Commitment is thought to be an important concept linking individuals to their organisation (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1984). In workplace settings, commitment has been shown to decrease absenteeism, reduce turnover (Baron & Greenburg, 1990; Blau, 1986; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Somers, 1995), and increase performance and productivity (Colarelli, Dean, & Konstans, 1987; Reichers, 1985). The organisational commitment literature distinguishes between attitudinal commitment and behavioural commitment (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982). Attitudinal commitment is a function of an employee's attitudes toward the organisation. These attitudes are thought to reflect an individual's level of psychological involvement with the organisation (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Behavioural commitment is more a function of ongoing and persistent behavioural activities that limit the behavioural options of the individual (cf. Becker, 1960). Cuskelly and Boag noted that volunteer settings tend to have "behaviourally weak environments with low performance expectations" (p. 68). Thus, the attitudinal component of commitment is expected to play a larger role in the commitment of volunteers to event organisations.

The literature on human resource management typically models organisational commitment as an outcome of job satisfaction (e.g., Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992) and training evaluation (Griffeth & Hom, 1995; Spears & Parker, 2002). However, in the case of volunteers, it is reasonable to expect that organisational commitment will be a precursor of job satisfaction. There are two reasons for this expectation. First, volunteers are choosing to give their discretionary free time to the organisation. Thus, to a degree, their commitment to the organisation is a prior condition for volunteering. Second, a substantial volume of symbolic interactionist work on role choice demonstrates that commitment is a precursor (rather than an outcome) to role identification and satisfaction (Stryker & Burke, 2000). This is consistent with work on event attendance (Green, 2001) and sport volunteers (Green & Chalip, 1998) that highlights the role that commitment to the sport subculture plays in the choice to attend or to volunteer. Nevertheless, role commitments do change, and are affected by the social environment (Orrange, 2003; Reich, 1997). In the case of volunteers, organisational commitment has been shown to be positively affected by volunteers' sense of community (Green & Chalip, 2004). This leads to the following three hypotheses:

H3: Higher levels of volunteers' organisational commitment will lead to higher overall job satisfaction.

H4: Higher levels of volunteers' organisational commitment will lead to higher overall training evaluation.

H5: Higher levels of volunteers' sense of community at the event for which they are volunteering will lead to higher levels of organisational commitment.

If sense of community and organisational commitment play vital roles in determining volunteer satisfaction, then the practical challenge is to identify means to enhance both. Green and Chalip (1998) argued that sport volunteers will value experiences that augment or deepen their sense of involvement and interaction with others who share an interest in the sport's subculture. In their study of Olympic volunteers, Green and Chalip (2004) argued that the training of event volunteers is "a time for volunteers to build relationships and to strengthen their joint sense of purpose" (p. 64). They contended that training should be structured to foster interactions among volunteers. By so doing, volunteers are provided an opportunity early in the volunteer experience to strengthen their sense of social connection to the sport and to those with whom they will work. This contention was consistent with recent applications of educational theory to workplace training. Billet (2002) argued that workers must be allowed to exercise their own agency during learning in order to enhance their sense of commitment to the work in which the organisation is engaged. Rismark and Sitter (2003) reported that allowing workers to share and compare experiences and insights regarding their jobs enhances the quality of community among workers. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

H6: The greater volunteers' satisfaction with their opportunities to share their opinions and experiences during training, the greater their sense of community at the event.

H7: The greater volunteers' satisfaction with opportunities to share their opinions and experiences during training, the greater their sense of commitment to the event organisation.

The specific bases for training evaluation and job satisfaction are grounded in separate experiences. Training evaluation is based on matters having to do with the training itself, such as interest, clarity, and convenience (cf. Kirkpatrick, 1998; Martocchio & Webster, 1992). On the other hand, job satisfaction is conceptualised with reference to the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards the job enables (cf. Muñoz de Bustillo Llorente & Fernández Macías, 2005; Smith, Loring, & Hulin, 1969; Wood, Chonko, & Hunt, 1986). Thus, the two can be modeled independently. Nevertheless, the two are complementary dimensions of the event volunteer's overall experience (Elstad, 1996; Green & Chalip, 2004), so they should be correlated. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H8: Event volunteers' training evaluation and job satisfaction are positively correlated.

The eight hypotheses form a model of the relationships among volunteers' job satisfaction, training evaluation, organisational commitment, sense of community, and satisfaction with their opportunities to share opinions and experiences during training. The resulting model is diagrammed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Hypothesised Model
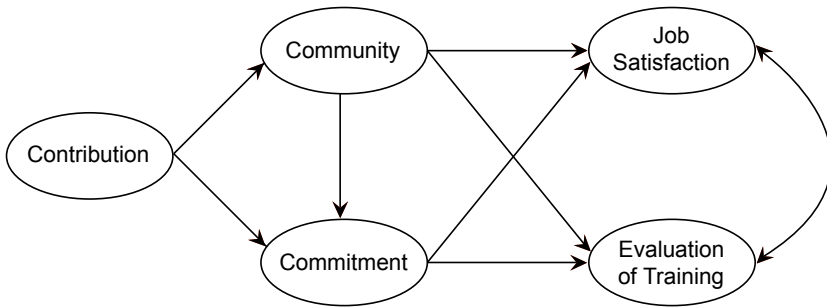
Method

Setting

IndyCarnival is an annual event that takes place on the Gold Coast of Queensland, Australia. The Gold Coast IndyCar race (which is the penultimate race of the FedEx Cart Championship series) is the centerpiece and culminating event of IndyCarnival. A number of support races take place over the four days leading up to the IndyCar race. The event organisers report that the event attracts approximately a quarter of a million spectators each year.

The event requires a workforce of 1500 volunteers. These volunteers are divided into two distinct groups: specialist and non-specialist volunteers. Specialist volunteers fill technical roles associated with the races. They are often itinerant volunteers who travel from race-to-race. They bring their specialist skills to the volunteer role, so training is limited to briefings regarding race procedures. Although the event organisers would not provide specific statistics, they stated that year-to-year retention rates are high.

Non-specialist volunteers fill non-technical roles (e.g., ushering, information distribution, surveillance at spectator gates). They are provided a day of formal training prior to the event. Training is designed to familiarise the volunteers with the event's organisation and expectations regarding their performance. This

includes the structure of event organisation, event policies, requirements of their various roles, reporting and supervision systems, and appropriate means to handle questions, complaints and problems. The event organisers stated that the year-to-year retention of non-specialist volunteers was inadequate — a problem they attributed to poor satisfaction among non-specialist volunteers.

Non-specialist volunteers were selected as the target population for this study for two reasons. First, retention of specialist volunteers was not an issue. Non-specialist volunteers, on the other hand, tended to volunteer only once. Event organisers were concerned about retaining more volunteers from year to year. Second, non-specialist volunteers received training, whereas specialist volunteers did not. Specialist volunteers were experts who usually travelled from event to event. They brought advanced skills to the events that were not available within the existing event staff. Therefore, only non-specialist volunteers were considered for this study.

Sample

The sample consisted of 147 non-specialist volunteers from the Sunbelt IndyCarnival held on the Gold Coast in Australia. They ranged in age from 16-75 years (M = 45.1, SD = 15.2). Sixty-one percent of respondents were male, and thirty-nine percent were female. Only 20% of respondents had completed a university degree of any kind, but 36% had completed some tertiary study. Participants represented volunteers assigned to a cross-section of non-specialist volunteer roles. More than a third of the respondents (35.4%) were volunteering at IndyCarnival for the first time, 25% were in their second year of volunteering, 15% in their third year, and the rest had volunteered for IndyCarnival at least four years, but no more than seven. One third of respondents also volunteered with other sporting organisations, and forty percent also volunteered with non-sport organisations.

Procedure

Volunteers were recruited to the project via their volunteer work site. Survey packets were distributed to volunteers in the break rooms. Each packet contained a cover letter, survey, and return envelope. Volunteers were asked to complete the survey provided, seal it in the envelope provided, and return the survey to the drop box provided in the break room. Two hundred and twenty-five surveys were distributed. One hundred forty-seven completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 65.3%.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to measure volunteers' job satisfaction, commitment to the event, sense of community at the event, evaluation of their training, and contribution to training.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using eight of the original fourteen items in the Job Satisfaction Scale (Wood et al., 1986). The original scale measures four related factors of job satisfaction: satisfaction with information (4 items) satisfaction with variety and freedom (6 items), satisfaction with ability to complete tasks (2 items), and satisfaction with pay/rewards (2 items). Wood et al. reported initial reliability of .93 for information, .88 for variety, .80 for freedom, and .56 for pay and rewards. Subscales showed significant correlation with income, thus providing some evidence of nomological validity.

The variable of interest in this study was job satisfaction – the general factor underlying the four dimensions identified by Wood et al. (1986). Thus, a sample of items from each subscale was chosen to provide balanced representation of the four dimensions in the overall construct (e.g., the latent variable, job satisfaction). Two items from each subscale were selected for this study. The items were chosen on the basis of their relevance to the volunteer context and the strength of their factor loading in the original development of the scale. Each item was rated on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Some items were reworded slightly to reflect the volunteer work setting (e.g., "pay" was replaced by "rewards"). Satisfaction with information was represented by the items, "I am satisfied with the feedback I received about my job performance," and "There was enough opportunity to find out how well I was doing." Satisfaction with variety was measured with the items, "I am satisfied with the variety of activities my job offered," and "My job had enough opportunity for independent thought and action." Satisfaction with closure was represented by "I am satisfied with the opportunities that my job gave me to complete tasks from beginning to end," and "My job had enough opportunity to complete the work I started." Lastly, satisfaction with pay/rewards was measured with the items "I am satisfied with the rewards I obtained from my job," and "There were sufficient rewards for the job I did."

Commitment. Commitment was measured using six items from Mowday et al.'s (1979) measure of organisational commitment (Organisational Commitment Questionnaire [OCQ]). The six items selected were those most relevant to the event volunteer context. Volunteers responded to each item on a six-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Mowday et al. (1979) reported test-retest reliabilities for the original scale ranging from 0.62 to 0.72 over 2 and 3 months. The scale predicts turnover, tenure, absenteeism, and performance in work settings, with convergent validity coefficients ranging from 0.63 to 0.74 (Mowday et al., 1979). The original nine item short form includes items that are specific to work settings, but that do not apply to voluntary associations. A modified version of the OCQ has been used in a voluntary sport setting to predict parents' enduring involvement with soccer, and has been associated with program satisfaction

(Green & Chalip, 1997; 1998). Shorter versions of the OCQ, like the one used in this study, provide internal consistency measures of at least 0.79 in voluntary sport settings (Green, 1997; Green & Chalip, 1998; Green & Chalip, 2004).

Six items were selected to measure volunteers' commitment to the IndyCarnival: (1) "This event really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance," (2) "I really care about the fate of this event," (3) "I felt like an important member of the event team," (4) "I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this event be successful," (5) "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this event," and (6). "I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this event."

Community. Volunteers' psychological sense of community at the event was measured using a four-item scale adapted from Nasar and Julian's (1995) 11-item sense of community scale. Nasar and Julian's scale was developed to measure psychological sense of community in neighbourhoods. They reported a Cronbach alpha reliability score of 0.87, and showed both discriminant and convergent validity.

Four items were adapted for this study: (1) "I am quite similar to other people working at the event,"(2) "If I feel like talking, I can generally find someone at the event to talk to right away," (3) "If there was a serious problem at the event, the people here could get together to solve it," and (4) "If I had an emergency, even people I do not know at this event would be willing to help." Items were selected on the basis of their relevance to the volunteer context and the strength of factor loadings reported in the original development of the scale. Items were measured on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Previous work with a comparable adaptation of the Nasar and Julian (1995) scale has demonstrated good predictive validity when studying sport event volunteers (Green & Chalip, 2004).

Evaluation of training. Ratings of the training program were obtained via six semantic differential scales. Semantic differentials were used based on Martocchio and Webster's (1992) work on training satisfaction. They report coefficient alphas ranging from .89 to 91. The pairings used are common to evaluation of training (cf. Kirkpatrick, 1998). The six semantic differentials deemed most relevant to the volunteer training setting used the following pairings: uninteresting/interesting, unclear/clear, inconvenient/convenient, unimportant/important, not useful/useful, and irrelevant/relevant. The pairings were measured on a nine-point scale ranging from -4 to 4, with a midpoint of zero.

Contribution. Contribution to training was measured with a single item: "How satisfied were you with your opportunities to share your opinions and experiences?" Responses were measured on a nine-point scale ranging from -4 (dissatisfied) to 4 (satisfied) with a midpoint of zero.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using linear structural equation modelling via the LISREL program (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). This method permits the researcher to specify (and test) the measurement of constructs and the hypothesised relationships among the constructs. A poor fit indicates that the relationships hypothesised do not exist; a good fit supports the validity of the hypothesised relationships, but does not indicate that there are no plausible alternatives.

Data analysis begins with a test of the conceptual model. If necessary, the model is revised. Items and relationships may be removed from the model based on their associated *t*-values, overall improvement in model fit, and conceptual integrity. Modification indices provided by the program can be used to consider missing paths that would improve the model's fit. Changes to the model are made sequentially, with fit statistics calculated after each change. Modifications cease when a reasonable fit to the data is obtained.

Results

An initial model was hypothesised based on the literature reviewed above (see Figure 1). Hypothesised relationships among the constructs are represented by arrows. Satisfaction with one's contribution at training was expected to positively impact volunteers' sense of community and commitment to the event organisation. These, in turn, were each expected to have a positive effect on evaluation of training and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction and evaluation of training were expected to correlate with one another. Further, sense of community was hypothesised to lead to increased commitment to the organisation . The initial model did not provide a good fit to the data: χ^2 (268) = 689.11, p < .001; GFI = .73; RMSEA = .10.

The first modifications were made to the measurement model. In keeping with the requirement that items used to measure the latent trait should load significantly on that trait, items which did not adequately represent the latent variable where eliminated one-by-one. One item representing community was eliminated. Three organisational commitment items, and three training evaluation items were eliminated. Only three of the eight items measuring job satisfaction were retained. Table 1 shows the latent variables and their retained measurement items. The resulting model was a better fit to the data: χ^2 (58) = 90.87, p = .004; GFI = .92; RMSEA = .054. Although the fit is fair, the GFI and the RMSEA are marginal, suggesting that a better fitting model could be sought.

Table 1: Summary of measures and their components

SAT:	Job Satisfaction
SAT1	I am satisfied with the variety of activities my job offered.
SAT2	I am satisfied with the rewards I obtained from my job.
SAT3	There were sufficient rewards for the job I did.
OC:	**Organisational Commitment**
OC1	This event really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
OC2	I really care about the fate of this event.
OC3	I felt like an important member of the event team.
COM:	**Sense of Community**
COM1	I am quite similar to most people working at the event.
COM2	If I feel like talking, I can generally find someone at the event to talk to right away.
COM3	If there was a serious problem at the event, the people here could get together to solve it.
TR:	**Evaluation of Training**
TR1	Overall, the training program was: uninteresting / interesting
TR2	Overall, the training program was: unclear / clear
TR3	Overall, the training program was: inconvenient / convenient
CON:	**Contribution**
CON1	How satisfied were you with your opportunities to share your opinions and experiences? Dissatisfied / satisfied

Next, the relationships among latent variables were examined. Paths with *t*-values below 2 (i.e., *p* > .05)were eliminated in sequential fits. The elimination of a path can alter the magnitude and standard error of the remaining paths, so no more than one path was eliminated prior to re-examining model fit. Further, paths that had been eliminated were retested after others had been dropped in order to fully test the tenability of each of the original paths. As a result, five paths were eliminated: contribution → organisational commitment; organisational commitment → evaluation of training; community → evaluation of training; community → job satisfaction; and the correlation between job satisfaction and training evaluation. Examination of the modification indices suggested that the addition of one path (contribution → evaluation of training) would significantly improve the model's fit. Since that path was conceptually tenable, it was added. The final model fit the data well: χ^2 (61) = 81.39, *p* = .04; GFI = .92; RMSEA = .048. All paths are significant; *t* > 2.0, *p* < .05 throughout (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Final Model of the Antecedents of Volunteers' Job Satisfaction
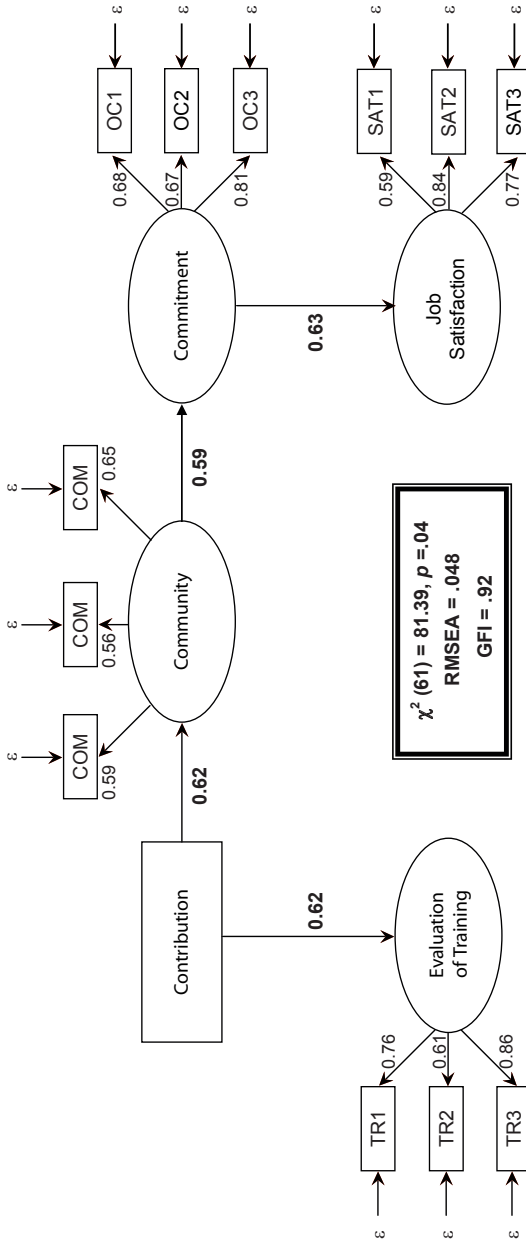
Inspection of Figure 2 shows that the final model is much simpler than hypothesised. Each construct affects only one other. Training satisfaction is affected only by contribution, and is not related to job satisfaction. Contribution has only an indirect effect on commitment through volunteer's sense of community. Sense of community does not directly impact job satisfaction. Rather, its effect is through organisational commitment.

Discussion

The final model supports three of the original eight hypotheses: H3 (commitment → job satisfaction), H5 (community → commitment), and H6 (contribution → community). In addition, contribution had been expected to affect training evaluation indirectly through commitment and community. Instead, contribution directly affected training evaluation (H2 and H4 are rejected). Thus, the precursors to job satisfaction and evaluation of training are less complex than expected given the findings in previous work. Each begins with volunteers' satisfaction with their opportunities to contribute, but that is all they have in common. The more satisfied volunteers are with their opportunities to contribute at training sessions, the more positive their evaluations of those sessions. For job satisfaction, the path is longer. Opportunities to share opinions and experiences during training helps build volunteers' sense of community at the event. Sense of community positively impacts volunteers' commitment to the event. Higher levels of commitment lead to increased satisfaction with the job. In other words, contribution benefits job satisfaction indirectly, through sense of community and commitment to the event organisation (H1 and H7 are rejected, but H3, H5 and H6 are retained).

As hypothesised, both sense of community and commitment influence job satisfaction. However, sense of community influences job satisfaction only indirectly – through its effect on commitment. This may be a unique characteristic of sport event volunteer contexts. Remember, these volunteers are not specialists. Therefore, the jobs they are assigned are often menial and without any obvious intrinsic reward. However, these volunteers are often attracted not to a job, but to the subculture of the sport or event. Therefore, the job's significance comes from their commitment to the event, not from the task. This suggests that the benefit of volunteering at a sport event is not a function of the job itself. Rather, it is a function of the opportunity to feel part of the subculture, which is represented experientially in the sense of community they obtain in their event volunteer role. This becomes a source of the volunteer's attachment and commitment to the event. This is true of the non-specialist volunteers. However, since the work of specialist volunteers is more closely identified with the skills necessary for a key event operation, the relationship between satisfaction and commitment may mirror that found in paid

work, such that job satisfaction increases commitment to the organisation (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Mueller, Boyer, Price, & Iverson, 1994; Wallace, 1995). Future research should consider possible differences between specialist and non-specialist volunteers.

The nature of commitment is also important here. Basing their conclusions on research with paid employees, Meyer and Allen (1984, 1991, 1997) have stressed that affective commitment to the organisation plays a vital role in employee performance and satisfaction. The three items retained to measure organisational commitment reference affect (using the words "inspires," "care," and "felt"). Future work should explore further the relationship between affective commitment and volunteers' sense of community and job satisfaction, particularly the ways the management and training of volunteers affects that relationship.

Event volunteers come together early in their volunteer experience (and sometimes for the first time) in the context of their training prior to the event. The opportunity to share opinions and experiences during training may enhance volunteers' sense of community because it is an early and tangible basis for interaction and indication of support from peers and supervisors. Research in work settings has found that the sense of community at work is a consequence of the quality of social interactions and support that workers feel they obtain from their peers and their supervisors (Pretty & McCarthy, 1991; Royal & Rossi, 1999). Future research should explore the psycho-social basis for the effect of sharing opinions and experiences in training, and should identify implications for related training procedures that might similarly enhance the effect of training on volunteers' sense of community.

The design of training systems that enhance the quality of social interactions among volunteers and between volunteers and paid staff may have additional benefits. If the training environment fosters a norm that encourages volunteers and staff to learn from one another, the level of learning that is obtained will be enhanced, and learning will continue during execution of the job itself (Billett, 2002; Rismark & Sitter, 2003). As a consequence, the event organisation's operations should benefit. Further work exploring and developing the means to capitalise on training-based methods that build a sense of community could foster substantial improvement in the effectiveness of event volunteer systems.

Doing so should also enhance volunteers' evaluation of the training experience. In this study, volunteers' evaluation of training was measured in terms of how clear, interesting, and convenient the training seemed. The significant effect of volunteers' own contributions makes good sense from a pedagogical standpoint as it would be expected to involve the volunteers more directly with the training experience, which should, in turn, enhance the clarity of the material and their interest in it (Clarke, 1988; Roby, 1988). This may also explain why the effect of the contribution variable on training evaluation was direct rather than mediated by organisational commitment, as hypothesised.

It is somewhat surprising that there was no correlation between training evaluation and job satisfaction (H8). Since both are aspects of the volunteer experience, it was expected that the two should share some variance in common. Perhaps this is a consequence of the differing points of reference in the two measures. Job satisfaction was measured with reference to the rewards and variety available. These were not the focus of training, which was designed to impart information about tasks and event organisation. Consequently training was evaluated with reference to matters relevant to information, rather than job rewards or variety. Although training and the job are each components of the volunteer's experience, they are evaluated differently.

The final model suggests that the methods for training volunteers need to be redesigned because the role of training needs to be envisioned anew. Training of volunteers, particularly what are termed "general" or "non-specialist" volunteers, is often a perfunctory exercise. Volunteers learn about the event and the specific tasks that will be required of them. However, if training is conceived as an opportunity to enhance volunteers' commitment by building their sense of community, then volunteer training is no longer merely an exercise in information dissemination. The training of volunteers becomes an opportunity to nurture the volunteer experience in a manner that enhances their relationship to the event organisation — both now and for the future.

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