



Motivation to volunteer: A case study of the Edinburgh International Magic Festival

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Motivation to volunteer: A case study of the Edinburgh International Magic Festival

Abstract

Purpose:

Using the inaugural Edinburgh International Magic Festival as a case study, this paper focuses on the motivational factors prevalent in a group of young event and festival volunteers.

Approach:

This paper will first review the extent of volunteering and, thereafter, will discuss volunteering in the festival and events industry. Focussing on motivations to volunteer, this paper will also identify key research that has examined volunteer motivation in the festival and event sector. Within the context of the festivals and events sector, the paper highlights the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer, the organisation and the community as a whole. This paper discusses volunteering as a means of developing specific skills and knowledge that improves volunteer’s CV’s and potentially has a positive impact on career opportunities and careers in the festival and event industries. Using the inaugural Edinburgh International Magic Festival as a case study, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with volunteers as a means of more fully understanding motivations to volunteer.

Findings:

The paper argues that volunteers in contemporary society approach a volunteering activity from a utilitarian perspective. The aim of such an episode is to improve industry specific skills and knowledge and positively impact on future career opportunities.

Practical implications:

Festival and event organisers require to fully understand the motivations of their volunteers in order to not only fully utilise existing skills, but also assist in the development of individually required skills and knowledge.

Value:

This paper argues for the development of specific training and development programmes for festival and event volunteers as a means of developing skills and enhancing career opportunities.

Keywords: Volunteers; motivation; skills development;

Introduction

Volunteering as an economic activity has recently acquired a prominent role in government strategies and population surveys. The increasing popularity of volunteering, especially amongst young people and students, is well documented and has been an increasingly popular research focus. Volunteering has been defined as ‘any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause’ (Wilson, 2000, p. 215). Whilst some voluntary activities might include monetary exchanges (e.g. archaeo-volunteers paying for the experience) or some form of obligation (e.g. volunteering for school credits) (Holmes and Smith, 2009), the lack of a monetary incentive is normally a key element in any volunteering relationship. Indeed, Freeman’s (1997, p. S141) suggestion that volunteering is ‘work performed without monetary recompense’, which ‘creates social output that would otherwise require paid resources’, is indicative of general opinion toward the volunteering relationship.

The 2008-09 Citizenship Survey report showed that 26 per cent of people in England participated in formal volunteering at least once a month, while 35 per cent volunteered informally at least once a month (Drever, 2010). Sports, recreation, education and social welfare were the most popular sectors for volunteers, with fundraising and organising or helping to run events and committees as the most widespread activities (Drever, 2010). Volunteering in the United Kingdom has received a substantial degree of governmental support; for instance the Scottish Volunteering Strategy published in 2004 recognised the rising popularity and importance of volunteering as a way of ‘supporting community activity and building respect for others’ (Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 3).

Government endorsed volunteer schemes such as Millennium Volunteers (which became Vinvolved in 2008) or the Prince’s Trust Volunteer programmes are increasingly recognised as a valuable tool for young people to gain skills and develop their future career opportunities through direct exposure to a learning environment (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2002; The National Youth Agency [NYA], 2007). Research undertaken by the National Youth Agency in 2006-07 shows that young people aged 11-25 reported the development of a wide range of personal and social skills through volunteering. It was found that in addition to a considerable increase in confidence and self-esteem, these volunteers developed a range of employability and interpersonal skills (NYA, 2007).

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With current conditions on the UK job market still dictated by the effects of the recession, the value of volunteerism as a means of skills development and a tool for increasing one’s career opportunities has been recognised within the national employment strategy framework. Both academic and public policy based literature shows that volunteering together with paid/unpaid work experience and internships integrated into the individual’s educational process are all very affective in developing personal transferable skills, whereby the short-term economic costs overshadow the long term advantages and added value in terms of enhanced career prospects (Busby and Brunt, 1997; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2009; Collins, 2002; Hirst, 2001; Janey *et al.*, 1991; Kelley-Patterson and George, 2001; Lam and Ching, 2007; Martin and McCabe, 2007). At the same time, research into volunteer motivation shows that young people increasingly and purposefully use volunteering as a way of increasing their chances to succeed on the labour market (see, for example, Barron and Knoll, 2009; Graham, 2004; Handy *et al.*, 2010; Hirst, 2001; Holmes and Smith, 2009; Kemp, 2002; NYA, 2007; Slaughter and Home, 2004). As Hirst (2001, p. 3) argues, ‘volunteering is for some individuals a career development strategy rather than just a route into paid work’.

This paper presents volunteering in events and festivals as a strategy for young people to gain work experience and to develop a range of employability skills, such as team-working, networking and communication skills. Using the inaugural Edinburgh International Magic Festival as a case study, this paper focuses on the subjective motivational factors present in a group of young event and festival volunteers.

Special events and festivals volunteering

It has been shown that volunteering at special events is a relatively mature phenomenon and evidence suggests that such volunteering is becoming more popular (Lockstone and Smith, 2009). Researchers have indicated that many arts, cultural, music and sports events and festivals all over the world are increasingly dependent on the help of volunteers (e.g. Costa *et al.*, 2006; Goldblatt, 2002; Meyer and Edwards, 2007). A UK survey from the early 1990’s estimated that 76% of UK festivals involved volunteers, with 38% of festivals run entirely by volunteers (Rolfe, 1992). Similarly, The British Arts Festivals Association (BAFA) revealed that in 2008 up to 60% of the workforce of the 200 participating BAFA festivals comprised voluntary staff, the majority of whom assisted with management and production, and filled part-time seasonal positions (SAM and the University of Brighton, 2008). The concept of

volunteering at sports events (especially mega events) has been well documented and much research has focussed on the thousands of volunteers who help with the organisation and running of major sports events such as the Olympics or the Commonwealth Games (Carlsen and Taylor, 2003; Elstad, 1997; Farrell *et al.*, 1998; Giannoulakis *et al.*, 1998; Kemp, 2002; Ralston *et al.*, 2004).

The rising popularity of events and festivals volunteering has been coupled with a trend towards more unconventional forms of volunteering. This development has not only seen a rise in more time-intensive volunteering experiences where the volunteering activity is usually condensed into a few days, but also a greater focus on the personal benefits for volunteers (Volunteering Australia, 2006). It has also been found that event and festival volunteering usually occurs on an episodic basis (Holmes and Smith, 2009; Rolfe, 1992), although many of the volunteers involved in the event preparation and post-event administration return, or 'bounce back', to help with the same event for a number of years (Allen *et al.*, 2005; Holmes and Smith, 2009; Lockstone and Smith, 2009; Treuren and Monga, 2002; Volunteering Australia, 2006).

Stebbins (2004) explained volunteering behaviour through the leisure model of volunteering, which suggests that volunteering is "basically a satisfying or enjoyable experience (or a combination of both)" (Stebbins, 2004, p.4). Leisure volunteering comes in three forms: serious, casual and project-based. Events volunteering could then be classified as project-based leisure – "a short-term, reasonably complicated, one-off or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time" (ibid, p.7), whereby the important feature of the leisure perspective is that the main reason for volunteering is self-interest, as the volunteers' primary purpose lies in having a fun or satisfying experience.

Generally, it has been found that volunteering can benefit stakeholders involved in the event in various ways. Firstly, from an event or festival attendee's perspective, volunteers can provide an additional or enhanced experience. For example, attendees are able to enjoy an event that otherwise might not have taken place due to a lack of human and financial resources (Holmes and Smith, 2009; Kemp, 2002). The enthusiasm, interest and commitment of volunteers, can facilitate relationship building with the public and local community (Holmes and Smith, 2009), and the range of skills, knowledge and specific experience brought by volunteers can add value to the festival or event (Nichols and Ojala, 2009).

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Secondly, volunteering is believed to contribute to local social and community involvement and cohesion agenda. This is the case where event volunteers from disadvantaged groups are encouraged to develop their skills through involvement in various event volunteering schemes (Allen *et al.*, 2005; Carlsen and Taylor, 2003; Molloy, 2002; Moscardo, 2008).

Event organisers who wish to involve volunteers are often discouraged by the cost of recruiting and training new volunteers (Rolfe, 1992). Researchers have therefore started focussing more on the factors that influence volunteer retention (Costa *et al.*, 2006; Elstad, 2003; 2009; Kemp, 2002; Nichols and Ojala, 2009; Slaughter and Home, 2004; Smith and Lockstone, 2009). Understanding what motivates volunteers and fulfilling their expectations of the volunteering experience has been shown to be instrumental to achieving high levels of volunteer satisfaction and thus, to help facilitate higher retention levels (Clary and Snyder, 1999; Costa *et al.*, 2006; Farrell *et al.*, 1998; Goldblatt and Matheson, 2009; Hoye and Cuskelly, 2009; Slaughter and Home, 2004; Strigas and Jackson, 2003).

Volunteer motivation research

Motivational theory is guided by different perspectives. The economic perspective, for example, considers volunteer-supplied labour as a commodity, and provides several models for the supply of volunteer time (Day & Devlin, 1998; Menchik and Weisbrot, 1987). Handy *et al.* (2010) apply this perspective to examine the signalling function of volunteering in student volunteers, who use their volunteering experience as device through which they signal the (potential) employer that they possess qualities that make them the candidate of choice.

The functionalist perspective on volunteer motivation posits that that people volunteer in order to fulfil psychological functions, and volunteer satisfaction can only be achieved if volunteers' roles and activities are in line with their personal motivations. Various methodological approaches have emerged to measure volunteer motivation and perhaps the simplest approach to categorising volunteer motivation is Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen's (1991) unidimensional factor model based on (a) altruistic and (b) utilitarian motives. The altruistic (value-based, intrinsic) category includes helping others, helping the society, charitable giving, or religious motivations. The utilitarian (i.e. extrinsic, egoistic, or material) motivational factors are based on the prospect of getting something out of the volunteering

experience, and include the concept of career enhancement by increasing one's human capital, acquiring new skills and knowledge. The model was replicated by many (Farrell *et al.*, 1998; Slaughter and Home, 2004), however, apart from making a neat distinction between the two different approaches, the model has been criticised for its simplicity and lack of internal validity (Wang, 2004).

Multiple-factor models present a more holistic picture of volunteer motivation. Approaching motivation from a psychological perspective, Clary *et al.* (1998) created the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). Motivation to volunteer is explored in six distinct dimensions: Values, Understanding, Enhancement, Career, Social and Protective. The framework has been used and validated in a variety of volunteer contexts as it offers a useful tool for testing volunteer motivation at a certain point in time. Nevertheless, one might argue that the positivist nature of the framework does not take into account the changes in motivation, demographic factors or indeed the individuality and subjectivity of the issue, which is somehow demonstrated by the sheer amount of academic literature and different views on motivation in volunteering.

Authors such as Clary *et al.* (1998) and Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) have discussed motivational theory within the context of human services volunteerism, however, Farrell *et al.* (1998) and others have shown that motivation for special event volunteers is different from that of other volunteers. Commitment to the event and its participants are, in fact, important motivators (Farrell *et al.*, 1998; Giannoulakis *et al.*, 2008). In addition to that, establishing universal understanding of volunteer motivation within the events sector might prove difficult as the plethora of different types of events will attract volunteers with different objectives and backgrounds (Baum and Lockstone, 2007; Goldblatt and Matheson, 2009; Hoye and Cuskelly, 2009).

Research in events has mostly discussed volunteer motivation in the context of sports events (Farrell *et al.*, 1998; Giannoulakis *et al.*, 2008; Kemp, 2002; Pauline and Pauline, 2009; Ralston *et al.*, 2004; Strigas and Jackson, 2003; Wang, 2004). Farrell, Johnston and Twynam (1998) adapted Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen's (1991) scales. They identified four main components of sports volunteer motivation, which they labelled Purposive, Solidary, External traditions and Commitments. Purposive factors suggested that volunteers were doing something useful, contributing to the community and helping to make the event a success,

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and these were rated highest in the particular context of a curling tournament. In introducing the latter two categories Farrell *et al.* (1998) acknowledged the importance of external social influences on volunteer motivation.

In a similar vein, Strigas and Jackson (2003) presented a five-factor model to explain volunteers' motivation to participate in sports events. These were Material, Purposive, Leisure, Egoistic, and External factors. While consistent to a certain extent with earlier findings of Farrell *et al.* (1998) - the primary motives for volunteering within the specific sports events context included enjoyment, contributing to the success of the event, and putting something back into the community -the authors emphasised leisure element within events volunteering (Stebbins, 2004).

On the other hand, data on volunteers in the cultural events and festivals context have been relatively sparse. Articles by Barron and Knoll (2009), Elstad (2003; 2009) and Monga (2006) therefore offer an invaluable insight into volunteering in special events and festivals. Barron and Knoll (2009) used Clary *et al.*'s (1998) VFI model to explore motivations of volunteers at a small cultural festival. The authors determined that the younger volunteer group was motivated primarily by the Understanding function, which demonstrated itself in the desire to learn more about oneself. The Value function (consistent with altruistic motivation) was rated second most important, while the Career function (developing one's skills and improving career opportunities by gaining experience) came third.

Slaughter and Home (2004), Elstad (2003) and Monga (2006) all built upon the traditional models of volunteer motivation with added dimensions to reflect better the specific contexts of festival volunteering. Slaughter and Home (2004) reported that Australian long-term/repeat special events and festival volunteers were primarily motivated by a belief that they were being helpful, and doing something that would be beneficial to society and their community. This was closely followed by the motivation to socialise and to be part of a group/community. The opportunity to gain new skills and experience and the pursuit of personal development were seen as beneficial, but not decisive factors. Similarly, Elstad's (2003) study of Norwegian jazz festival volunteers indicated the importance of the opportunity to socialise, as well as the link between the event and hobbies/interest of the volunteer. In addition to that, it was shown that altruistically-oriented motivation was most indicative of volunteers' continuance commitment (Elstad, 2003).

Finally, Monga's (2006) study of special events volunteers utilised a five-dimensional model of volunteer motivation. In addition to altruistic, utilitarian/instrumental and solidary/social factors, Monga's (2006) model included two categories specific to special events: affiliatory motivation and egoistic motivation. Monga's findings support earlier theories that claim that affiliatory motivation (wanting to make the event a success, interested in the activity), and egoistic motivation (aimed at achieving personal goals, enhancing feelings of worthiness and self-esteem) are among the highest-ranking motivational factors in events volunteers. Monga's (2006) results show that instrumental motivation, which includes the opportunity to develop one's skills and career opportunities, tends to rank relatively high. However, the author points out that his findings can only be interpreted depending on category distribution of volunteer responses, which can be subjective as it is 'difficult to analytically distinguish between the various dimensions as there is some degree of overlap between them' (Monga, 2006, p. 59).

The diversity of the research findings suggests that there is not one generic response to the issue of volunteer motivation. It differs depending on the nature of the volunteering activity, the context in which it is measured, and the demographics of the target group. However, previous studies have shown that in the specific context of episodic events younger volunteers, who are also the object of this study, were more likely to be motivated by a chance to learn more about themselves and to develop personal skills and career opportunities (Barron and Knoll, 2009; Holmes and Smith, 2009; Kemp, 2002; Slaughter and Home, 2004).

Methodology and research methods

Research on volunteerism has traditionally employed a variety of deductive processes, testing a plethora of hypotheses and pre-determined theories. Festival and event volunteer motivation researchers have typically approached the problem from a positivist perspective, utilising quantitative research techniques such as surveys and questionnaires, and processing data with the help of statistical data analysis tools. While mostly deductive in nature, such research tools tend to measure a set of pre-determined hypotheses, searching for answers to the 'what' questions and not allowing for any additional factors to enter the researcher's process of reasoning (Yin, 1994). Volunteers in the events and festivals context have been shown to demonstrate a multitude of motivations and it is very likely that their perceptions and experiences of the volunteering activity differ. In order to gain a degree of emotional depth, which is not possible to achieve simply by analysing quantitative data, a qualitative research

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approach has been chosen as a more appropriate research strategy. Qualitative research is considered to be ‘concerned with understanding things rather than with measuring them’ (Gordon and Langmaid, 1988, p. 2), whereby the ‘subjectivity and the authenticity of human experience’ (Silverman, 2010, p.138) allows the researcher to gain an insight into the different meanings, experiences and attitudes of research subjects (Holloway *et al*, 2010; Veal, 2006).

The setting for the present study was the very first Edinburgh International Magic Festival [EIMF], a not-for-profit organisation created in 2010 with the purpose of producing an annual international arts festival with magic and variety performances as the main focus of the event. The increasing popularity of magic and illusion in recent years, as seen for example in the rising viewership of Derren Brown’s shows on British television, has contributed to the appeal of such events. In their first year the EIMF were hoping to attract between 3000 and 4000 people from a variety of consumer groups, attending shows and workshop that took place in the Scottish capital over the course of five days in July 2010. The festival is hedonistic in its nature, offering a “colourful programme of daytime and evening events” and the opportunity for its volunteers to “meet the best magicians in the UK and learn a few magic tricks” (Anon, 2010). The EIMF was selected as it represents an event organisation that offers best practise in volunteer management as identified in the literature (e.g. Goldblatt, 2002; Holmes and Smith, 2009; Jago and Deery, 2001). Furthermore, through collaboration with a local events management education provider the EIMF is successful in attracting a group of enthusiastic student volunteers, whilst working effectively with particular local stakeholder groups (Smith and Lockstone, 2009).

The 2010 EIMF volunteer team comprised a total of 16 volunteers, nine of whom took part in this study. Five of the volunteers were students recruited at a local university that provides courses in tourism and event management. The remainder of the volunteer group were recruited through the EIMF website (www.magicfest.co.uk) or through word-of-mouth. The sample group comprised six female and 3 male respondents, all aged 18-30. The majority were full-time college (1), undergraduate (4) or postgraduate (3) students. One respondent had recently graduated from university and was working part-time. Although only six individuals had direct experience of volunteering at events and festivals, all of the respondents had at least some degree of customer service experience and were used to

dealing with customers either in a retail or tourism/hospitality environment. Two of the interviewees also had theatre performance and production experience.

Data collection took place approximately one month before the event. The researchers undertook one-to-one in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 35-50 minutes, at various public locations as well as at a local university. Participants were given information about the purpose of the study and written consent was obtained. Topics and questions were designed to elicit responses regarding each participant's motivation to volunteer at EIMF, exploring general themes proposed by the motivational theory literature. Further questions and prompts were included to enquire about past volunteering experiences and attitudes toward volunteering, in order to identify any specific circumstances which may have contributed to a participant's volunteering decisions. The interviews were digitally recorded and summaries were written up. Responses were analysed using manual coding, scanning the recordings and flagging emergent themes and common volunteer views (Veal, 2006). Finally, the results were grouped into similar conceptual areas according to prevalent themes.

Findings and discussion

The main purpose of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what motivates young volunteers to get involved in working for a five-day arts festival, therefore the researchers tried to, first of all, understand how formal volunteering in general was perceived. Study participants confirmed that their general perception of volunteering and the prevailing motivational factors was rather one-dimensional, with pure altruism on one side of the scale and an instrumental, utilitarian activity on the other (Cnaan and Golberg-Glen, 1991). As a female (age group 18-24) student interviewee explained,

"I guess, in my head, I split [volunteering] into two categories, volunteering that is CV-gathering, i.e. beneficial for you. And then volunteering that is with some social aim, like my brother volunteers for Oxfam. And you do have volunteering for arts organisations, but that is not as noble as that, that is like build-up your CV."

Volunteering in the 'traditional' altruistic sense was seen as something noble, a charitable behaviour or activity which benefits others, such as fundraising, working with children and young people. On the other hand, the instrumental character of volunteering was associated

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with part-time work, internships or unpaid employment. In this sense, volunteering would mainly benefit the volunteer, and when referring to it, the study participants mostly talked about work experience, learning and CV enhancement. A female (aged group 25-30) student interviewee commented,

“[...] I feel quite career driven. I’ve done charity volunteering but once I’ve done festival volunteering that’s been very much like, this can get me on, this can get me the experience that I need. So I suppose the volunteering that I’m doing now would be quite different from the typical kind of volunteering that is working for free in the charity sector.”

Evidence in the literature shows that volunteer motivation measured in various events contexts at a certain point in time is rarely one-dimensional; on the contrary, most authors have shown that volunteers are typically motivated by a multitude of factors with varying degrees of importance (Elstad, 2003; Farrell *et al.*, 1998; Giannoulakis *et al.*, 2008; Kemp, 2002; Monga, 2006; Pauline and Pauline, 2009; Ralston *et al.*, 2004; Slaughter and Home; 2004; Strigas and Jackson, 2003; Wang, 2004). This study, however, suggests that the participants tend to link the meanings they associate with either dimension of volunteerism with their own motivation to join the EIMF. The following three vignettes demonstrate the very subjective and individual circumstances that lead to a complex set of meanings which are connected to event and festival volunteering. (* The names of respondents have been changed to ensure anonymity).

Vignette No. 1: Jane

Jane* is a 25-year old media and marketing student who has been working part-time in various front-of-house jobs to support herself during her studies. She has been volunteering at events and festivals for some time and has already worked or volunteered at eight UK festivals, both major and small-scale. She has learned about the Magic Festival from her employer, who runs one of the festival venues.

Jane is proud to be part of the first ever Magic Festival and also sees it as an excellent networking opportunity. She believes that in today’s competitive job market it is about who you know, rather than what you know. In addition to that, Jane feels that apart from getting valuable work experience that she can add on to her CV, volunteering somewhere as unique and unusual as the Magic Festival can help her grab the attention of potential employers.

Jane associates volunteering in general with an opportunity to gain work experience, and she believes that festival volunteering can offer the marketing experience she needs. She feels that the fact that she is willing to give up her time to volunteer at festivals shows to prospective employers that she is more committed and enthusiastic than some of her peers. And while most of the festivals she volunteered for were connected to her interests or hobbies, and she would normally enjoy herself tremendously while volunteering, she goes into all her experiences with eyes wide open, ready to learn as much as she can.

Participating in a festival as a member of staff gives Jane an opportunity to experience things from a different angle, as she can see things the audience does not get to see. She is part of a team, and very much enjoys the 'buzz' and the team spirit that goes hand-in-hand with a festival experience. The material rewards and perks of working in a festival environment, such as free access and staff parties, are to Jane just another fun aspect that contributes to volunteers' team spirit.

Vignette No. 2: Tom

Tom* is 19 years old and currently unemployed. Has been a youth theatre member for years and is due to start a course in drama and acting at a local community college in two month's time. Tom spent the last twelve months volunteering abroad as a youth worker, leading theatre and film workshops for school children. The experience made him more independent and gave him the confidence to work with people.

When talking about volunteering in general, Tom makes a clear distinction between volunteering as helping people and volunteering as an egoistic, self-interested pursuit. Volunteering, however, is also about meeting people and learning about the self. At the moment though, he adds, he volunteers for himself to gain work experience.

He learned about the Magic Festival when searching for part-time jobs to fill the time between returning to Scotland and starting his course.

Although he had considered volunteering at a festival, the Magic Festival came as a nice surprise to him as he could utilise his theatre and backstage experience. Magic is something that has always attracted him and the prospect of learning a few magic tricks does appeal to him hugely.

But also, the Magic Festival offers an opportunity to Tom to gain experience in theatre and drama production, and backstage operation. Tom realises that it is currently relatively difficult to obtain paid employment, and volunteering represents a useful alternative to part-time work. Starting with short episodes of festival work, Tom is hoping to accumulate his volunteering experience in the lead-up to full-time employment.

Vignette No. 3: Joe

Joe* is 27 years old and having completed a degree in biology, he is now studying for a Masters degree in hospitality and events management. He

has volunteered at a festival before and has plenty of experience organising events on a casual and voluntary basis, in his role as a student representative.

Joe has gone into events and hospitality because he enjoys interacting with people, managing and leading people. He would like to have a career in events management but eventually wants to move on to film production, and is always on the lookout for opportunities to develop his skills and to build on the experience he already has.

Joe has learned of the Magic Festival volunteering opportunity from his friends at the university and was one of the first volunteers to approach the festival organisers. He finds the festival a very exciting new concept on Edinburgh's festival scene and is very keen to find out more about the festival from a managerial and organisational perspective. Joe is looking forward to being 'behind the scenes' and to peeking into the world of magic and illusion, as well as to the chance to meet and interact with new people.

Joe is aware of the range of employability skills required of graduates nowadays and believes that volunteering offers an opportunity for students to expand on their theoretical knowledge and to develop their competencies. He claims that his past working and volunteering experience in hospitality and events has helped him improve his self-confidence and communication skills, something that he intends to put on his CV. Volunteering to Joe is a way of developing himself personally and professionally; both through learning new skills and satisfying his need to help others.

The above vignettes reveal a number of subjective factors and motivations. Jane, the first participant, is very career driven, and aware of the challenges and opportunities of the current job market. As a full-time student she feels that she needs to gain as much work experience as possible while she is studying, in order to increase her chances of employment after graduation. This is typical of student volunteers in some sectors, for example, Edwards and Graham (2006) point out that volunteering is often the only way for museum and cultural studies graduates to "get a foot in the door". While Jane is very clear about the instrumental function as her primary motivation to volunteer at events and festivals, other factors also play an important role in her decision to volunteer at festival. The opportunity to meet new people and work in a team are to her an important part of the festival experience, although she does stress that while some people come to volunteer at festivals 'just for fun' and therefore take a more casual approach to voluntary work, she is here to learn. This finding is consistent to some extent with the results reported by Handy *et al.* (2010), who found that student volunteers who were motivated by a mix of instrumental, social and altruistic factors (as

opposed to one primary factor only), were more likely to volunteer, although not on a regular basis.

In Tom's case, volunteering at the Magic Festival was a bit of a coincidence. Even though he was consciously "*just looking for something to do*" before starting his course, festival volunteering might not have been his first choice. Nevertheless, he saw the festival as an opportunity to utilise his skills and knowledge in backstage operations and theatre production, and was very keen to get involved. Apart from his interest in drama Tom also showed a great degree of enthusiasm for magic and illusion. Motivational theory does suggest that the link to hobbies and interests of volunteers makes retention an easier task for managers (e.g. Elstad, 2003). For another one of the study participants (male, 23 years old) this was certainly the case. A computer games design student, this individual enjoyed learning magic tricks and aspired to becoming an amateur magician himself. The Magic Festival was for him an opportunity to not only learn new skills in performing magic, but also to mingle and interact with the performers and "*learn from some of the best magicians Scotland has to offer*".

Joe, the participant in the third vignette, derives much satisfaction from helping people, not only audiences at the festival, but mainly in the sense of the work he does for the festival organisers. He wants to help make the event a success, although at the same time he wants to develop his professional competencies. One of Joe's statements about volunteering demonstrates how volunteers sometimes give conflicting opinions about the altruistic/utilitarian nature of the activity:

'It should be an experience that satisfies my need to help, to develop myself professionally and personally'.

This could relate to the tendency of some volunteers to use 'altruistic language' when talking about volunteering. Handy *et al.*'s (2010) survey demonstrated that students reporting on their volunteering activities often succumbed to social pressures, which they believed required for them to see giving up their time to volunteer as a selfless, altruistic act. On the other hand, Joe's '*need to help*' could refer to just that, an egoistic *need* for something. As Andreoni (1990) noted, the 'warm-glow' feeling resulting from the act of helping or giving per se is often a factor present in volunteerism, however, does not always necessarily relate to

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altruistic activities. In this sense, even charity work could be seen as an egoistic pursuit and as something that can fulfil one’s need for personal and professional development.

In general, the utilitarian/instrumental factors of volunteer motivation that were related to skills and career development dominated among the interviewees’ responses. Five interviewees displayed an awareness of the skills set necessary in the festival and events sector and wanted to find out more about the sector as a potential career path. They consciously looked for opportunities to develop their skills and to build on their theoretical knowledge and existing experience. The study participants intended to highlight their festival volunteering experience to prospective employers by presenting it on their CV, thus assisting in differentiating themselves from the increasing number of other job seekers. The prospect of developing networking opportunities was also a draw, as was seen on the example of the young budding magician.

The unique nature of the festival was another factor that attracted some of the volunteers. They wanted to be part of something exciting, something that has not been done before. Although only two of the volunteers described themselves as ‘magic enthusiasts’, the majority reported that magic and illusion was of interest to them. Furthermore, as shown in two of the vignettes, volunteering for EIMF was seen as an ‘attention grabber’ which, when placed on their CV, could potentially help the participants gain further work experience.

Stebbins’ (2004) leisure model of volunteering, and the concept of events volunteering as project-based leisure in particular, could potentially be applied in cases where volunteers expected the volunteering experience to be enjoyable. As Jane put it,

‘I’m not just doing it for the fun, obviously, but that’s not to say I’m not going to enjoy myself!’

The Magic Festival was perceived by all of the study participants as a fun, exciting event. Furthermore, the notion of being part of the event as ‘insiders’, or part of the ‘VIP’ crew, was mentioned by a number of respondents. Two of the volunteers were particularly curious about getting ‘behind the scenes’ in the world of magic and illusion. Indeed it would appear that the insider status of backstage volunteers in particular was perceived as quite prestigious, as EMIF volunteers ‘get to see what no one else can see’.

Finally, social factors also appeared to be a motivating factor for some of the study participants. As the volunteer vignettes suggest, being part of a team and having an opportunity to meet new people with similar interests and background, socialising and 'having fun' together were all part of the festival experience and an important factor when applying for volunteer roles in the events and festivals sector. It was believed that team-working and interacting with other volunteers, staff and the audience can create a sense of something exciting. The 'buzz' of festival volunteering, as Jane put it, contributes to creating a team spirit.

Conclusions

This study aimed to determine the motivations as held by a group of volunteers at a newly created annual arts festival. The study has determined that this group of volunteers appears to be primarily motivated by the prospect of gaining valuable work experience that can be included on one's CV and utilised at some later point as a means of career enhancement. The researchers were surprised at the polarisation of the findings of the study which has highlighted perhaps a move away from altruistic motivations, such as volunteering as a means of helping others, to a more utilitarian motivation, such as using volunteering as a means of helping oneself. The participant's individual circumstances and background varied, and so did the particular nature of the skills and careers the volunteers wished to develop. Nevertheless, the instrumental nature of the volunteering experience clearly stood out in all the interviews.

The researchers were surprised to learn of the insignificance of altruistic motivations amongst this group of volunteers. Indeed no participant considered that they were taking part in this volunteering episode purely as a means of helping the event to succeed through giving freely of their time and skills. The results of this study appear to suggest that volunteering amongst this group of respondents was a part of a well considered career development strategy. It is contended that this finding is rather unusual in event and festival volunteer research undertaken so far. However it is recognised that this could be simply a consequence of the homogenous nature of the volunteer sample, as the majority of the EIMF volunteers were recruited among young people and university students.

The findings of this study have significant implications to festival and event organisers. This utilitarian approach will have an effect on the management of such volunteers and it is suggested that an understanding of this utilitarian motivation might result in the development of a structured and well-organised volunteer programme that can be used as an effective tool for developing volunteer's skills and knowledge, and assist in the creation of future career opportunities. Such a measured approach would not only satisfy the volunteers' motivations, but also allow the organisation to more efficiently utilise the volunteer. Key to this, however, is an understanding, on the part of the festival and event organiser, of the particular skills to be developed. Again, the development of a volunteer programme where an individual might have the opportunity to choose which skills they could develop through a period of volunteering might prove valuable to both the volunteer and the festival or event.

Like all research, this study has a number of limitations which the authors attribute to the relative weakness of interviews to present valid, reliable and trustworthy empirical evidence. Consequently, it is fully recognised that the results of this study present a snapshot of feelings amongst a specific group of volunteers at one festival, at a particular point in time. Although the authors make no or limited claims regarding generalisability of the results, this study has indicated a concentration on utilitarian motivation to volunteer and a lack of altruistic motivations. This finding should be of interest to a festival and event organiser whose strategy is to attract, retain, manage and especially motivate volunteers. It might be argued that only by developing such an understanding, will the goal of a successful festival or event be realised.

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