

2018

## Volunteer Retention Within Bowling Green State University Athletics

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VOLUNTEER RETENTION WITHIN  
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

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Master's Project

Submitted to the School of Human Movement, Sport, and Leisure Studies  
Bowling Green State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION  
In  
Sport Administration

4/18/2018

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## Abstract

Partnerships are often made between sport management programs and university athletic departments to provide the athletic departments with student volunteers (Pierce et al., 2014). These sport management student volunteers provide athletic departments with a cheap labor force to properly staff and operate both events and normal business operations, while providing volunteers with altruistic benefits from volunteering (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). Understanding the factors that motivate sport management students to volunteer is important because it can assist athletic departments in satisfying and ultimately retaining their volunteers (Johnson et al., 2017). Smaller intercollegiate athletic departments, such as Bowling Green State University (BGSU), must utilize a multitude of student volunteers so that the department can properly operate while staying within budget.

The purpose of this study was to examine motivation, satisfaction and retention of sport management student volunteers within BGSU Athletics. This was so that proper techniques are utilized by the athletic department in the mutually beneficial relationship between BGSU Athletics and sport management students at BGSU. A 34-item questionnaire was distributed to sport management students at BGSU who were either currently enrolled or were enrolled in one of the previous four sections of the Sport and Event Management (SM 3010) course to measure the motivation, satisfaction and retention of volunteers within BGSU Athletics. These students were chosen for this study because part of the course requirement involved volunteering at a set number of BGSU athletic events during the semester. Twenty-two individuals participated in this study. Results indicated that sport management students at BGSU were motivated to volunteer by the motivation factors of *Career* and *Understanding*. Results also indicated that none of the factors were statistically significant in predicting satisfaction and retention. However, the

motivation factors that were most significant in predicting satisfaction were *Enhancement* and *Career*, and the motivation factors that were most significant in predicting retention were *Protective* and *Understanding*. *Satisfaction* was also found to be a more significant factor in predicting retention. Recommendations for BGSU Athletics on how to improve volunteer retention, limitations for this study and directions for future research on the subject were discussed.

## **Introduction**

When attending an event it is quite likely that large portions of the staff that are working the event are volunteers. Volunteers not only help fulfill staffing needs, but also ultimately help determine the successfulness of an event. Volunteers allow for events to be properly organized and implemented, which is why volunteers are so vital to organizations around the world both inside and outside of the sport industry (Doherty, 2006). Volunteerism provides the sport industry an invaluable service to a wide variety of sport organizations, which include community sports, intercollegiate sports and other major sporting events. Within intercollegiate sports, athletic departments often partner with sport management programs at their university to gain access to a volunteer workforce that provides a mutually beneficial relationship between an athletic department and sport management students at their university (Johnson et al., 2017).

Sport management students are provided with a variety of advantages and disadvantages from volunteerism when pursuing a career in sports. Volunteerism can give students experience in a variety of areas within an athletic department, which can help students narrow down what areas within intercollegiate sport interest them. Students who volunteer are also given the opportunity stand out against their peers when applying and interviewing for jobs in the future through their valuable experience volunteering. Volunteerism can help sport management students network by meeting a variety of administrators at all levels of athletic departments, and those connections may help students throughout their careers. Sport management students may also face disadvantages from volunteering, which include having a negative experience that may turn them away from the industry entirely or committing too much time to volunteering and experiencing burnout (Talbot, 2015). However, the positives to volunteerism certainly outweigh the negatives for sport management students, which can be avoided through sport management

students learning skills such as communication and time management. Athletic departments can also help sport management students avoid negative aspects of volunteerism through proper management techniques.

Intercollegiate athletic departments also are provided with a variety of advantages and disadvantages from sport management students at their university. With only 24 National Collegiate Athletic Association Football Bowl Subdivision athletic departments in 2014 generating more revenue than was spent on athletics, volunteers are an important part in allowing athletic departments to stay within budget (Burned, 2015). Volunteers provide athletic departments an affordable labor force that helps to reduce expenses while also being able to properly staff and operate both events and normal business operations. Utilizing sport management students at their university also allows athletic departments to build a network of potential employees to fill future vacancies within their department. Athletic departments may also face disadvantages of volunteerism, such as the time and resources that can be wasted through continually recruiting and training new volunteers (Johnson et al., 2017). Athletic departments can also struggle with a lack of accountability that can be held to volunteers as opposed to employees if mistakes are made within the department. However, just as with the advantages and disadvantages facing sport management students the advantages for athletic departments outweigh the disadvantages of volunteerism, which can also be avoided through proper management techniques and volunteer retention.

Volunteerism is ever more important at smaller intercollegiate athletic departments such as Bowling Green State University (BGSU). BGSU operates a total of 17 men's and women's varsity sports, but does so operating with the smallest athletics budget in the Mid-American Conference (Rucker, 2016). To be able to stay within their budget BGSU utilizes a multitude of



student volunteers each season throughout their athletic department. This volunteerism for sport management students at BGSU often begins with the undergraduate Sport and Event Management (SM 3010) course, which provides students with volunteer experience at a variety of BGSU Athletics events. Through this initial volunteer experience with BGSU Athletics it is important for students to be provided with a positive and beneficial experience, which will lead to students continuing to volunteer within BGSU Athletics. The purpose of this study was to examine motivation, satisfaction and retention of sport management student volunteers within BGSU Athletics. Determining the proper techniques that are utilized by the athletic department creates a mutually beneficial relationship between BGSU Athletics and sport management students at BGSU. BGSU Athletics may never reach 100% volunteer retention within the department, but it is important for BGSU Athletics to understand what factors lead to the retention of their student volunteers.

### *Research Questions*

The following research questions were examined in this study.

1. What factors have the most impact in motivating sport management students at BGSU to volunteer within BGSU Athletics?
2. How do motivation factors relate to the satisfaction of sport management student volunteers?
3. How do motivation factors and satisfaction relate to the retention of sport management student volunteers?

### **Review of Literature**

Volunteers are a valuable resource for a variety of types of sport organizations around the world, which is why the motivation, satisfaction and ultimately the retention of those volunteers

has been studied extensively in a multitude of areas of sport over the last two decades including: youth sports (Kim, Chelladurai, & Trail, 2007), major sporting events (Doherty, 2006; Fairley, Green, O'Brien, & Chalip, 2014; Fairley, Kellet, & Green, 2007; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998; Khoo & Engelhorn, 2011; Rogalsky, Doherty, & Paradis, 2006; Wang, 2004), and intercollegiate sports (Mathner & Martin, 2012; Mirsafian & Mohamadinejad, 2012; Johnson et al., 2017; Pierce, Johnson, Felver, Wanless, & Judge, 2014; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013).

Although there are a multitude of studies on the different type of sport organizations the studies vary in their research. One key trend throughout previous research on volunteerism is that motivational factors and satisfaction of volunteers ultimately leads to volunteer retention (Fairley et al., 2007; Johnson et al. 2017; Khoo & Engelhorn, 2011; Pierce et al., 2014).

### *Psychology of Volunteerism*

A key factor in understanding volunteerism begins with understanding the psychological contexts of volunteerism and the underlying human behaviors that lead to the motivations that make people volunteer (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, & Haugen, 1998). The studies by Clary et al. (1998) and Clary and Snyder (1999) have helped guide research on volunteerism for the last two decades specifically due to using functionalist theory to develop the Volunteer Functions Inventory, which help to understand the motivations behind volunteering. This scale has been used by multiple research studies to help determine the motivations of volunteers since its inception (Johnson et al., 2017; Pierce et al., 2014; Wicker & Hallman, 2013). The six factors in the VFI, first developed by Clary et al. (1998), include: values (expressing an altruistic and humanistic concern for others), understanding (opportunity for new learning experiences and the chance to practice previous knowledge), social (opportunity to work with others), career (opportunity for career-related benefits), protective (opportunity to reduce

guilt over being more fortunate than others), and enhancement (opportunity for personal development and satisfaction).

Other psychological theories that have helped to better understand volunteerism include self-determination theory and psychological contract theory (Allen & Shaw, 2009; Nichols & Ojala, 2009). Allen and Shaw (2009) found that self-determination theory was related to understanding the motivation, satisfaction and retention of volunteers due to the “free will or free choice” that goes with volunteers making the decision to volunteer. The findings by Clary and Snyder (1999) and Millette and Gagne (2008) can also be associated with self-determination theory; Clary and Snyder (1999) found that volunteers were less likely to volunteer again if the perception of external control was associated with their volunteer experience, and Millette and Gagne (2008) found that autonomous motivation played a role between job characteristics and satisfaction. Nichols and Ojala (2009) used psychological contract theory to understand the management of volunteers providing an overview of the positive and negative aspects associated with volunteers, including enthusiasm, an affordable labor force and reliability concerns.

#### *Volunteer Retention in Youth Sport*

Volunteerism within a community takes different forms, one of which can include volunteering for youth sport organizations. The research study by Kim et al. (2007) examined what organizations can do managerially to retain their volunteers. Kim et al. (2007) used three different volunteer retention models that incorporated person-task fit, person-organization fit, managerial treatment, empowerment and intention to continue volunteering and determined that organizations such as the American Youth Soccer Organization must focus on empowering their volunteers through the utilization of person-task fit, person-organization fit and managerial

treatment. It is important for organizations to get to know their volunteers and to assign those volunteers to be put in a position to succeed within the organization.

### *Volunteer Retention in Major Sporting Events*

Volunteerism is a very important part of the running of major sporting events held each year in countries around the world. Nearly one million people volunteer for sport organizations each year in Australia, Canada and England, and the hours that are contributed by those volunteers equate to 98,000 (Australia), 262,000 (Canada), and 450,000 (England) full-time paid positions within the sport industry (Doherty, 2006). With the heavy reliance that major sporting events have on volunteers it is important to understand role performance and role satisfaction because the two can be used to predict volunteer satisfaction and ultimately to volunteer retention (Rogalsky et al., 2016).

Using the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale, Farrell et al. (1998) and Khoo and Engelhorn (2011) had consistent findings when examining the motivators of volunteers at the Canadian Women's Curling Championship and at the first National Special Olympics in the United States, the top four motivators were the same between the two studies and included wanting to do something worthwhile, wanting to help make the event a success, wanting to create a better society through volunteering and wanting to put something back into the community.

One of the largest major sporting events in the world, the Olympics, is held every four years and is continually moving to different cities around the world each time it is held. Due to the size of the event and importance of volunteer retention at the Olympics multiple studies have been conducted to understand the motivations of people who not only live in the city that the Olympics is held to volunteer, but also the motivations of people to travel to future Olympics to

volunteer again (Fairley et al., 2007; Fairley et al., 2014; Wang, 2004). Wang (2004) examined the motivations of volunteers from the 2000 Sydney Olympics using the five-factor dimensionality of altruistic value, personal development, community concern, ego enhancement and social adjustment, and it was determined that the motivations of volunteers must be examined more in depth.

Fairley et al. (2007) used volunteers who had previously volunteered at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and made the decision to volunteer again at the 2004 Athens Olympics determining that nostalgia, camaraderie and friendship, connection to the Olympics, and sharing and recognition of expertise were motivating factors leading to the retention and reacquisition of volunteers from one Olympic games to the next. Again using volunteers from the 2000 Sydney Olympics Fairley et al. (2014) examined the role identity of pioneer volunteers, volunteers who were first engaged to work an event, to find useful information that could be used in the developing management strategies that could be utilized in the recruitment and retention of pioneer volunteers. Leading to role identity that was still evident 12 years after the games six themes were found in the experiences of pioneer volunteers: friendship and teamwork through prolonged volunteering, prestige and teamwork through a small group, behind the scenes access and knowledge related to the event, learning enabled through test events and transition to roles during the games (Fairley et al., 2014).

#### *Volunteer Retention in Intercollegiate Sport*

In intercollegiate sport volunteerism provides athletic departments with unpaid services and provides students altruistic benefits for volunteering (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). The motivations of those students to volunteer is important so that athletic departments are provided with a clear idea of the motivational factors related to volunteers in intercollegiate sport; it was

determined by Mirsafian and Mohamadinejad (2012) that social and obligation were the highest and lowest effective motivational factors leading to volunteerism by students. With the impact that student volunteers have on the success of athletic department events, it is important to develop a culture of volunteering with the athletic department at a university through the promotion of volunteering with the athletic department (Mirsafian & Mohamadinejad, 2012). With volunteer work not being perceived as an important factor in career preparation by sport management students, athletic departments already face a struggle in developing a culture of volunteering at a university (Mathner & Martin, 2012).

Pierce et al. (2014) and Johnson et al. (2017) examined the influence and relationship that exists between the motivation, satisfaction, and retention of students who volunteered with their universities athletic department. Pierce et al. (2014) developed a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire for use in the study by utilizing the findings of Clary et al. (1998); the survey helped determine that career, social and love of sport were the leading factors resulting in satisfaction. Building on Pierce et al. (2014), Johnson et al. (2017) examined the interrelationship of motivation, satisfaction and retention as it relates to sport management student volunteers. Johnson et al. (2017) used a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire to measure the responses of the participants in the study; the scores were analyzed through determining the mean score of questions within the 7 factors and utilizing least squares multiple regression analysis to determine the satisfaction and retention levels based on participants motivations. Johnson et al. (2017) found that students were retained as volunteers through career, social, and satisfaction.

This study built on Johnson et al. (2017) by providing a tailored understanding of the factors that lead to volunteer retention within BGSU Athletics. By understanding volunteer motivation, satisfaction and retention within BGSU Athletics it allows the athletic department to

utilize the proper techniques in the mutually beneficial relationship between BGSU Athletics and sport management students at BGSU. This mutually beneficial relationship provides BGSU Athletics an affordable labor force to reduce expenses and properly staff its' operations, and provides sport management students at BGSU an educational experience outside the classroom and prepares students for lifelong career growth (Mission, n.d.).

## **Method**

### *Participants*

Participants of this study were Bowling Green State University Sport Management undergraduate students (N= 22) who were either currently enrolled or were enrolled in one of the previous four sections of the course, Sport and Event Management (SM 3010). Students who were taking or had completed the SM 3010 course at BGSU were chosen for this study because part of the course requirements involved volunteering at a set number of BGSU athletic events during the semester. This study also examined the students' intention to continue volunteering within BGSU Athletics was deemed as an important factor in volunteer retention within BGSU Athletics.

To obtain full anonymity, the information for the study, which included the recruitment script and the link to the questionnaire, were provided to the instructor of the course, Dr. Amanda Paule-Koba, who presented the study via email to students who were either currently enrolled or had completed one of the previous four sections of SM 3010.

Participants of this study included seventeen men accounting for 77.3% of the total participants and five women accounting for 22.7%. These participation percentages mirrored the percentages of men and women in the undergraduate class. Of the twenty-two participants, nine were 18-19 years old, eleven were 20-23 years old, one was 24-29 years old, and one was over

30 years old. Eighteen of the total participants (81.8%) identified as White, three identified as Black or African American (13.6%), and one identified as Other (4.5%). According to the results thirteen were sophomores (59.1%), seven were juniors (31.8%), and two were seniors (9.1%). When asked to answer whether the SM 3010 course was the participants' first volunteer experience within BGSU Athletics, eight answered yes (36.4%) and fourteen answered no (63.9%). Of the participants who answered that they had previous volunteer experience, nine have had volunteered with BGSU Athletics for 1 Semester (40.9%), four have volunteered for 2 Semesters (18.2%), three have volunteered for 3 Semesters (13.6%), five have volunteered for 4 Semesters (22.7%), and one has volunteered for 5 or More Semesters (4.5%).

### *Measures*

Participants completed a 34-item questionnaire (see Appendix A) that measured the motivation, satisfaction and retention of volunteers within BGSU Athletics. Four demographic items were included in the questionnaire including gender, age, ethnicity and year in school. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the motivation, satisfaction and retention of volunteers within BGSU Athletics. To build on Johnson et al. (2017) the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) developed by Clary et al. (1998) was included in the questionnaire to assess the motivation of volunteers. The six motivation factors analyzed through the VFI include: (career) volunteering for career related benefits such as preparing for a new career, (social) volunteering to be with or to perform an activity that is important to friends, (values) volunteering to express altruistic and humanistic behaviors, (understanding) volunteering to obtain new learning experiences and the chance to practice knowledge and skills, (enhancement) volunteering to reach personal growth and enhance self-esteem, and (protective) volunteering to feel better about being more fortunate than others and the chance to work through personal problems (Clary et al., 1998). Four items



were omitted from the original VFI (see Appendix B) in the questionnaire for the items relevancy to volunteering within BGSU Athletics. Two items regarding whether the participants' volunteer experience began through the SM 3010 course and how long the participant has volunteered with BGSU Athletics were included. One item was included to measure volunteer satisfaction with the opportunities provided by BGSU Athletics. Lastly, one item was included to measure the participants' intention to seek further volunteer opportunities with BGSU Athletics.

### *Procedures*

Before this research study began it was submitted for approval to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Bowling Green State University. After approval was granted by the IRB (see Appendix C), prospective participants for the research study were contacted through email (see Appendix D). The email sent to prospective participants explained the purpose of the research study, asked if the participants were willing to participate in the study, and informed the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The informed consent form (see Appendix E) was also included in the email, and the prospective participants were asked to read prior to beginning the questionnaire. No incentives were utilized, and participants were assured that anything they reported through the questionnaire would remain anonymous. Participants were informed that only the researcher and his advisor would see the results of the questionnaire. Both the researcher's and his advisor's contact information were provided to participants in the event of any questions or concerns related to their participation in the study. If the participant was willing to participate in the study, they clicked on the link provided in the email and were directed to the online questionnaire. Two weeks after the prospective participants were contacted via the initial email, prospective participants were sent a reminder email to encourage the prospective participants to participate in the research study if the participant was willing.

### *Participation Rates/Response Rate*

Dr. Amanda Paule-Koba presented the study via email to 115 students who were currently enrolled or had completed one of the previous four sections of SM 3010. Data was collected through an online questionnaire via Qualtrics, an online-based software program. The total number of responses was 22, which led to a response rate of 19.13%. The low response rate experienced in this research study may be attributed to the high volume of emails that students receive each day. The low response rate may also be attributed to the length of the 34-item questionnaire.

### *Design and Analysis*

Upon the completion of the study the data was entered into a database using the SPSS Statistical Package. In accordance with Johnson et al. (2017), the four demographic items of gender, age, ethnicity and year in school were analyzed and reported through descriptive statistics. The six motivation factors were analyzed via measures of central tendency, and a score for each was determined by calculating the mean score of the questions within each factor (Johnson et al., 2017). Least squares multiple regression analysis was then used to predict the satisfaction and retention levels of volunteers based on the six motivation factors (Johnson et al., 2017). The BGSU Athletics specific volunteer items regarding whether the participants' volunteer experience began through the SM 3010 course and how long the participant has volunteered with BGSU Athletics were analyzed and reported through descriptive statistics.

### **Results**

Research question one wanted to find what factors motivate sport management students at BGSU to volunteer within BGSU Athletics the most. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) answered research question one by indicating which of the six motivation factors motivate

sport management students at BGSU to volunteer the most and the least based on a 5-point Likert scale. Sport management students who volunteer within BGSU Athletics were most motivated by *Career* (M = 4.20, SD = .867) and *Understanding* (M = 4.06, SD = .849). The least motivating factors were *Protective* (M = 2.67, SD = 1.317) and *Social* (M = 2.79, SD = 1.024).

**Table 1**

*Summary of Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) Factors*

	Career	Enhancement	Protective	Social	Understanding	Values
<b>Mean</b>	4.20	3.36	2.67	2.79	4.06	3.59
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	.865	1.064	1.317	1.024	.849	1.202

Research question two wanted to find how the six motivation factors measured by the VFI scale relate to the satisfaction of sport management student volunteers. The six motivation factors were used as independent variables with the dependent variable of satisfaction to determine if there was a correlation. Results indicated that none of the factors were statistically significant in predicting satisfaction. Although results showed no significant difference, insight was provided on which motivation factors are related to the satisfaction of sport management student volunteers. The factors that were the most significant in predicting satisfaction were *Enhancement* (Sig.= .300) and *Career* (Sig.= .326). The factors that were the least significant in predicting satisfaction were *Understanding* (Sig.= .710) and *Social* (Sig.= .617).

**Table 2**

*Summary of Least Squares Regression for Variables Predicting Satisfaction*

Model	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
<b>(Constant)</b>	3.119	1.035		3.014	.009
<b>Career</b>	.294	.289	.372	1.016	.326
<b>Enhancement</b>	.235	.219	.315	1.074	.300
<b>Protective</b>	-.093	.134	-.168	-.692	.500
<b>Social</b>	-.103	.201	-.131	-.511	.617
<b>Understanding</b>	-.115	.302	-.120	-.379	.710

Values	.095	.161	.161	.589	.565
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a. Dependent Variable: How satisfied are you with the volunteer opportunities provided by BGSU Athletics?

Research question three wanted to find how the six motivation factors measured by the VFI scale and satisfaction relate to the retention of sport management student volunteers. Two least squares multiple regression analyses were performed to determine if there was a correlation with the dependent variable of retention. The first used the six motivation factors as the independent variables, and the second used the six motivation factors and satisfaction as the independent variables. In both the first and second analysis none of the factors were statistically significant in predicting retention. Although results showed no significant difference,, insight was provided on how the motivation factors and satisfaction are related to the retention of sport management student volunteers. The factors in the first analysis that were the most significant in predicting retention were *Protective* (Sig.= .127) and *Understanding* (Sig.= .168). The factors in the first analysis that were the least significant in predicting retention were *Career* (Sig.= .791) and *Enhancement* (Sig.= .781). The factors in the second analysis that were the most significant in predicting retention were *Protective* (Sig.= .065) and *Satisfaction* (Sig.= .101). The factors in the second analysis that were the least significant in predicting retention were *Values* (Sig.= .951) and *Enhancement* (Sig.= .862).

**Table 3**

*Summary of Least Squares Regression for Variables Predicting Retention*

Model	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Variables Predicting Retention (without satisfaction)					
<b>(Constant)</b>	2.238	1.100		2.034	.060
<b>Career</b>	-.083	.307	-.092	-.270	.791
<b>Enhancement</b>	.066	.233	.077	.284	.781
<b>Protective</b>	.231	.143	.363	1.615	.127
<b>Social</b>	-.290	.213	-.323	-1.360	.194
<b>Understanding</b>	.466	.322	.425	1.450	.168

<b>Values</b>	.053	.171	.078	.309	.762
<b>Variables Predicting Retention (with satisfaction)</b>					
<b>(Constant)</b>	.829	1.306		.635	.536
<b>Career</b>	-.216	.298	-.238	-.725	.481
<b>Enhancement</b>	-.040	.226	-.047	-.178	.862
<b>Protective</b>	.273	.136	.429	2.006	.065
<b>Social</b>	-.244	.202	-.272	-1.209	.247
<b>Understanding</b>	.518	.303	.472	1.711	.109
<b>Values</b>	.010	.162	.015	.062	.951
<b>Satisfaction</b>	.452	.257	.393	1.757	.101

a. Dependent Variable: How likely are you to seek further volunteer opportunities with BGSU Athletics?

## Discussion

The results of this study did not provide statistically significant evidence to link motivation of sport management student volunteers to satisfaction and retention. Even though there was not statistically significant evidence found, the results of this study did not show that BGSU Athletics does a poor job of retaining their sport management student volunteers either. This can be seen through the demographics question which asked for how many semesters the participant had volunteered with BGSU Athletics; results showed that thirteen (59.9%) of the sport management student volunteers had been retained as a volunteer by BGSU Athletics for at least a second semester. Although there were not any factors that were statistically significant this study provided an understanding of how the six motivation factors measured by the VFI scale relate to satisfaction and retention. Examining how certain factors are more significant than others when predicting satisfaction and retention of sport management student volunteers explains the understanding provided by this study. The six motivation factors in this study included: (career) volunteering for the benefits and growth that it can have on ones' career, (social) volunteering to be with or because it is important to friends, (values) volunteering for the altruistic and humanistic benefits it provides, (understanding) volunteering for the new learning

experience and the chance to apply prior knowledge and skills that it provides, (enhancement) volunteering to obtain personal growth and enhance self-esteem, and (protective) volunteering to work through personal problems and to feel better for being more fortunate than others (Clary et al., 1998).

The results from the VFI scale, which measured motivation of sport management volunteers, revealed that the order of the six factors by mean score was the same as Pierce et al. (2014) and Johnson et al. (2017). This study finding the order of the six motivation factors to be the same supports the results of the two previously mentioned studies, and shows that sport management students at BGSU share the same motivations to volunteer within their athletic department as their peers at other universities. *Career*, the highest scoring motivation factor, shows that what motivates sport management students at BGSU to volunteer within BGSU Athletics is for the benefit that this experience can have for their career in sport. This conflicts with the findings by Mathner & Martin (2012) regarding the importance that sport management students place on career preparation through volunteering, but shows that sport management students at BGSU place volunteer work as an important factor in their career preparation. *Understanding*, the second highest motivation factor, shows that sport management student volunteers are motivated by the opportunity to gain a better understanding through the educational experience that a volunteer receives through volunteerism. This understanding allows for sport management students to gain a better grasp of the knowledge and skills that the student learns in the classroom and already possesses. *Protective*, the lowest motivation factor, shows that sport management student volunteers are not motivated by their own personal problems in an effort to feel better. These results show that sport management students at BGSU are not making the decision to volunteer with BGSU Athletics due to feeling more fortunate than

others, which makes sense because even though it can do so in some aspects BGSU Athletics is not an organization whose goal is to assist those that are in need in the community. *Social*, the second lowest motivation factor shows that the opportunity to be in a social situation with friends or how others around them view volunteering does not motivate sport management student volunteers. Although the results of the VFI scale in this study were the same as those found by Pierce et al. (2014) and Johnson et al. (2017), Mirsafian & Mohamadinejad (2012) conflicts with the findings of this study because *Social* was the highest motivating factor for student volunteers. However, the difference in demographics between this study and the study by Mirsafian & Mohamadinejad (2012) can be attributed to the difference in the findings. This can be attributed to sport management students volunteering for non-social reasons and fulfilling their social needs outside of their volunteer experience.

The results of predicting satisfaction did not show any of the motivation factors to be statistically significant in predicting the satisfaction of sport management student volunteers. Although the results of this analysis since it did not statistical significance, a fair amount of conclusions can still be drawn when analyzing the data. The results showed that *Enhancement*, the most significant, was also significant in the study by Johnson et al. (2017). Pierce et al. (2014) and Johnson et al. (2017) both also found that *Career*, the second most significant, was significant in predicting satisfaction. *Enhancement* was the third lowest motivation factor and the most significant factor in predicting satisfaction; the results of this study show that sport management student volunteers derive the most satisfaction from personal growth and self-esteem. Sport management students therefore are the most satisfied through the self-enhancement and related benefits that they are achieving through their volunteer experience. *Career* being the highest motivation factor and the second most significant factor in predicting

satisfaction shows that sport management students at BGSU derive satisfaction from volunteering for career growth. Therefore, sport management students are satisfied with their volunteer experience due to the advancement and preparation that it provides them in their career path and goals. Although Johnson et al. (2017) found that sport management students derive satisfaction from social situations; the current study found that *Social* is not related to the satisfaction of sport management student volunteers. This can be attributed to sport management students having different priorities related to their volunteer experience and what situations lead to the students being satisfied with their experience.

The study by Johnson et al. (2017) was the first to examine the retention of sport management student volunteers. The first analysis, which included the motivation factors only, did not show any of the factors to statistically significant in predicting the retention of sport management student volunteers. As with the previous analysis for satisfaction, one can draw a fair amount of conclusions from the data provided by this analysis. This analysis showed that *Protective* and *Understanding* were the most significant factors in predicting retention of sport management student volunteers. *Protective*, the lowest motivation factor and the most significant factor in predicting retention, shows that sport management students may not be motivated to volunteer by their own personal problems in an effort to feel better, but protective reasons derive retention for them through volunteering. These results show that sport management students are continuing to volunteer with BGSU Athletics because they are able to work through and feel better about personal problems that may be ailing them. *Understanding*, the second highest motivation factor and the second most significant factor in predicting retention, shows that sport management students being motivated to volunteer by the opportunity for new learning experiences derives retention. The importance that sport management students place on being



able to apply their knowledge and skills into their volunteer experience is shown through these results. Although Johnson et al. (2017) stated *Career* as being significant in predicting retention; this study found that sport management students at BGSU in fact do not derive retention from volunteering for career growth. These results can be attributed to sport management students obtaining the career growth that they desired from BGSU Athletics and then moving onto the next step to advance their career.

The second analysis, which included the motivation factors and satisfaction, did not show any of the motivation factors or satisfaction to be statistically significant in predicting the retention of sport management student volunteers. Even though none of the factors were found to be statistically significant in predicting retention a fair amount of conclusions can still be found by the data provided. This analysis showed that *Protective* and *Satisfaction* were the most significant factors in predicting retention of sport management students at BGSU. As with the first analysis, *Protective* was again the most significant factor in predicting retention even though it was the lowest motivation factor. *Satisfaction* was the second most significant factor in predicting retention as with Johnson et al. (2017), which derives that the satisfaction levels of sport management student volunteers at BGSU is linked to predicting retention. It is worth noting that *Enhancement* was the second least significant factor in the first and second analysis for predicting retention; sport management students therefore do not derive retention from personal growth and self-esteem. It is also worth noting that *Values* was the third least significant factor in the first analysis and the least significant factor in the second analysis for predicting the retention of sport management student volunteers. However, the findings by Wicker & Hallman (2013) find the altruistic benefits that can be gained by the volunteer experience to be an important factor in a multi-level framework for engaging volunteers. This difference can be

attributed to sport management students at BGSU not being influenced to continue volunteering by any altruistic benefits and instead being influenced by the career advancement or the application of prior knowledge and skills that they may be provided with through the volunteer experience.

There is not one lone factor to motivate, satisfy and retain sport management student volunteers at BGSU, as was the case with Johnson et al. (2017). However, the results of this study show that *Career* can be associated with motivation and satisfaction, and *Understanding* can be associated with motivation and retention of sport management student volunteers. This is due to the significance of the factors comparatively to the remaining factors when analyzing satisfaction and retention.

### *Implications*

There are implications for BGSU Athletics as well as for other intercollegiate athletic departments provided by this study. This study was designed to provide information to BGSU Athletics on the motivations of their sport management student volunteers and how those motivations relate to the satisfaction and retention of those volunteers, but other intercollegiate athletic departments can use this information to benefit their department as well. Athletic department staff should promote the opportunity for career-growth and applying knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to motivate and recruit sport management students to volunteer. To satisfy their volunteers, athletic department staff should focus on recognizing sport management student volunteers for their hard work and put an emphasis on helping prepare volunteers for their careers after graduation. To retain their volunteers, athletic department staff should challenge sport management students to apply their knowledge and skills and provide volunteers with the opportunity to work through personal problems. The results also support the

need for further research on volunteer satisfaction and retention so that BGSU Athletics and other intercollegiate athletic departments can properly understand the factors that lead to volunteer satisfaction and retention within their athletic department. These details have a considerable impact on athletic departments being able to properly operate.

### *Limitations*

There are a few limitations that stand out in this study. First, this study examined only sport management student volunteers who were taking or had completed one of the previous four sections of the SM 3010 course. Thus, since the study focused on sport management students who had taken the SM 3010 course, the findings may differ for others who volunteer within BGSU Athletics that are not doing so as a part of a class requirement.

Another limitation was the sample size of the study. Although the questionnaire was distributed to a number of sport management students at BGSU, the low-response rate experienced in the study may not adequately have provided the tailored understanding of the factors that lead to volunteer retention within BGSU Athletics. The results of this study are specific to BGSU so another university would not be able to use the results of this study to benefit their athletic department without conducting their own study on the motivation, satisfaction and retention of their sport management student volunteers.

### *Future Directions*

There are a few things that should be taken into account for future research on the subject when the limitations of this study are taken into account. Future research should include all sport management students who volunteer with BGSU Athletics. This would allow for a larger sample size and would allow for a more adequate understanding of the factors that lead to volunteer retention within BGSU Athletics.

Different questionnaire delivery methods should be taken into account in future research, such as distributing physical questionnaires, this would allow for a potentially higher response rate as opposed to those experienced with online-based questionnaires. Additionally, a qualitative study could add additional understanding of motivation, satisfaction and retention for sport management student volunteers at BGSU.

Finally, the results of this study were BGSU specific so other universities are encouraged to study sport management students who volunteer within their own university athletic department to determine their motivation, satisfaction and retention, this will allow for their findings to be specific to their own university.

## **Conclusion**

This study provided a considerable amount of insight for BGSU Athletics to the motivating, satisfying and retaining of sport management students who volunteer within the athletic department. BGSU Athletics, through using the results of this study, is now equipped with a better understanding of what motivates their sport management student volunteers and how those motivations are linked to the satisfaction and retention of those volunteers. The results of this study determined that sport management students at BGSU were most motivated to volunteer by the benefits that volunteering could have for career-related growth, and by the opportunity to gain a better understanding through the new learning experiences and self-development that volunteering provides. These factors could be taken into account and integrated into the process of recruiting volunteers by the BGSU athletic department.

The results of this study also provided insight on how the motivations of sport management student volunteers is linked to satisfaction. It was determined that sport management students were the most satisfied with their volunteer experience by the opportunity

of achieving personal growth and improvement in self-esteem, and by the preparation that volunteering provides to students for their future careers. To help their volunteers achieve satisfaction, BGSU Athletics could put an emphasis on recognizing sport management student volunteers for their hard work to help achieve personal growth and an emphasis on helping prepare volunteers for their careers after graduation.

Finally, this study also provided insight for BGSU Athletics on how motivation and satisfaction relate to the retention of sport management student volunteers. It was determined that sport management students were retained as volunteers by the reduction of their own personal problems through volunteering, and by being provided with new learning experiences to gain a better understanding of the knowledge and skills that sport management students already possess. An important piece of information also found in the results of this study was that a sport management student first being satisfied with their volunteer experience is an important factor in the retention of those volunteers. Lastly, BGSU Athletics could provide volunteers with the opportunity to work through personal problems and the opportunity to challenge volunteers to apply their knowledge and skills during their volunteer experience.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### Volunteer Retention Within Bowling Green State University Athletics

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Gender

Male

Female

Other

Age

19 or younger

20 - 23

24 - 29

Over 30

Ethnicity

White

Black or African American

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Other

What level of school are you currently?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Student

Please indicate how important or accurate each of the following reasons were for you in doing volunteer work.

	Not at all important/accurate	Slightly important/accurate	Moderately important/accurate	Very important/accurate	Extremely important/accurate
Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends volunteer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People I'm close to want me to volunteer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteering makes me feel important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People I know share an interest in volunteering.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By volunteering I feel less lonely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can make new contacts that might help my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can learn more about the field for which I am working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Volunteering increases my self-esteem.

Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.

Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.

Please indicate how important or accurate each of the following reasons were for you in doing volunteer work.

	Not at all important/accurate	Slightly important/accurate	Moderately important/accurate	Very important/accurate	Extremely important/accurate
Others with whom I am close place a high value on volunteering.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel it is important to help others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteering will help me to succeed in my own chosen profession.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can do something for an organization that is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can learn how to deal with a variety of people by volunteering.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteering makes me feel needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Volunteering  
makes me feel  
better about  
myself.

    

Volunteering  
experience  
will look good  
on my resume.

    

Volunteering  
is a way to  
make new  
friends.

    

I can explore  
my own  
strengths by  
volunteering.



Was your first volunteer experience with BGSU Athletics through the SM 3010 course?

- Yes
- No

For how many academic semesters have you volunteered with BGSU Athletics?

- 1 Semester
- 2 Semesters
- 3 Semesters
- 4 Semesters
- 5 or More Semesters

How satisfied are you with the volunteer opportunities provided by BGSU Athletics?

	Extremely dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Extremely satisfied
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How likely are you to seek further volunteer opportunities with BGSU Athletics?

	Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix B: Volunteer Functions Inventory

### Protective:

6. No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.

~~By volunteering I feel less lonely.~~ \*Omitted

9. Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.

17. Volunteering helps me work through by own personal problems.

~~Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.~~ \*Omitted

### Values:

~~I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.~~ \*Omitted

7. I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.

~~I feel compassion toward people in need.~~ \*Omitted

16. I feel it is important to help others.

19. I can do something for an organization that is important to me.

### Career:

1. Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.

8. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.

13. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.

18. Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession.

24. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.

### Social:

2. My friends volunteer.

3. People I'm close to want me to volunteer.
5. People I know share an interest in community service.
14. Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.
20. Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.

**Understanding:**

10. I can learn more about the field for which I am working.
12. Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.
15. Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.
21. I can learn how to deal with a variety of people by volunteering.
26. I can explore my own strengths by volunteering.

**Enhancement:**

4. Volunteering makes me feel important.
11. Volunteering increases my self-esteem.
22. Volunteering makes me feel needed.
23. Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.
25. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.

## Appendix C: IRB Approval



DATE: February 15, 2018

TO: Hisham Abad

FROM: Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [1182960-3] Volunteer Retention Within Bowling Green State University Athletics

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: February 14, 2018

EXPIRATION DATE: January 23, 2019

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the IRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on January 23, 2019. You will receive a continuing review notice before

your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or [orc@bgsu.edu](mailto:orc@bgsu.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board's records.

**Appendix D: Recruitment Script**

Dear Student,

I am conducting research pertaining to the factors that lead to the retention of sport management student volunteers within Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Athletics. As a student who has volunteered within BGSU Athletics you can provide considerable data to assist me in understanding volunteer motivation, satisfaction, and retention within BGSU Athletics.

Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire that can be accessed through the link provided at the bottom of this email. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All responses will remain confidential and completely anonymous, as there is no way for me to identify responses. Your decision whether or not to participate in the research study will have no impact on your grades/class standing, and will not affect you or your relationship with Bowling Green State University. By completing this questionnaire, you are giving your consent to participate in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself at [habad@bgsu.edu](mailto:habad@bgsu.edu) (440-376-4813) or my advisor, Ray Schneider at [rayschn@bgsu.edu](mailto:rayschn@bgsu.edu) (419-372-7234). You may also contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at [orc@bgsu.edu](mailto:orc@bgsu.edu) (419-372-7716).

PLEASE RESPOND BY FRIDAY, MARCH 16.

[https://bgsu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3fPBe7fIA1CZs3z](https://bgsu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3fPBe7fIA1CZs3z)

Sincerely,  
Hisham Abad  
Graduate Student  
Sport Administration  
Bowling Green State University

P: 440-346-7813

## Appendix E: Consent Form



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY  
School of Human Movement, Sport and Leisure Studies  
College of Education and Human Development

**Project Title:** Volunteer Retention Within Bowling Green State University Athletics

**Researcher:** Hisham Abad, Graduate Student, Sport Administration

**Advisor:** Dr. Ray Schneider, Professor / Interim School Director, Human Movement, Sport & Leisure Studies

### Study Purpose and Procedure:

You are being asked to voluntarily participate in my research study that I am completing for my Master's project. This study is going to evaluate the factors that lead to the retention of sport management student volunteers within Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Athletics. The aim of my research is to assist BGSU Athletics in understanding what factors motivate sport management students at BGSU to volunteer within the athletic department, and how sport management students view the volunteer opportunities that are provided. This study may also assist BGSU Athletics in the retention of its' sport management student volunteers, and in continuing to build the mutually beneficial relationship between BGSU Athletics and sport management students at Bowling Green State University.

If you agree to participate in this research study, your involvement will include completing a questionnaire, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. There are 34 questions included in the questionnaire that you may answer, with four demographic questions, twenty-eight using a Likert scale and two additional BGSU Athletics specific multiple-choice questions. You may complete the questionnaire at your convenience; the researcher has provided the link to the questionnaire at the bottom of this letter. Upon completion of the questionnaire, you will conclude your involvement in the research study.

If you agree to participate in the research study your responses shall be completely anonymous. You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time by closing the questionnaire in your Internet browser before submitting your responses. Your decision whether or not to participate in the research study will have no impact on your grades/class standing, and will not affect you or your relationship with Bowling Green State University. Your risks of participating in the research study are no greater than what is expected in daily life, thus your risks of participating is minimal.

The researcher and his advisor will be the only people who will have access to the participants' responses to the questionnaire. The researcher will maintain full confidentiality aside from his advisor's assistance. Participants will not be asked any identifiable information in the questionnaire. Please note that you are advised to clear your Internet browser and page history after taking the questionnaire.

Please contact Hisham Abad at (440) 346-7813 or [habad@bgsu.edu](mailto:habad@bgsu.edu) if you have any questions about the research or your participation in the research study. You may also contact the

advisor, Dr. Ray Schneider at (419) 372-7234 or rayschn@bgsu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (419) 372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu. Thank you for your time and participation in the research study.

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research.

Completion of the questionnaire indicates your consent to participate.

117 Eppler Center  
Bowling Green, OH 43403

Phone: 419.372.7234  
BGSU Web Site: <http://www.bgsu.edu>

**BGSU IRB - APPROVED FOR USE**  
**IRBNet ID # \_ 1182960\_**  
**EFFECTIVE \_\_02/14/2018\_\_**  
**EXPIRES \_\_01/23/2019\_\_**