

# **AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOSPITALITY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS' MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION IN FOOD AND WINE FESTIVALS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the motivation and satisfaction of hospitality student volunteers in food and wine festivals. It aims to investigate and identify the factors that festival managers need to use to motivate, satisfy, and retain hospitality student volunteers in order to organize a successful event, and enhance festival operation, marketing, and personnel management. Data will be collected at the 10th Annual Food Network South Beach Wine and Food Festival in 2011. A survey questionnaire will be distributed to hospitality student volunteers over a full four-day event period. This study will contribute to the availability of the volunteerism literature and help to attract and increase festival organizers' and hospitality educators' interest in hospitality students' festival volunteering practice.*

**Keywords:** *festival, hospitality student volunteers, motivation, satisfaction*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Volunteers are an important human resource in festival and event operations every year. Rolfe, Ryan, and Bates estimated 76% of the festivals in the UK used volunteers (as cited in Elstad, 2003, p. 99). The majority of events were at least somewhat dependent on volunteer labor; and without the commitment from the volunteers, many events could not have been arranged (Elstad, 2003). The volunteer team works as a crucial component in the overall success of many major festivals and events. With a significant reliance upon volunteer workforces in

festivals and events, studying volunteers' motivation and satisfaction becomes a practical need. It is vital that festival- and event-organizers understand volunteers' motivation and their satisfaction in order to respond effectively to management needs in the areas of recruitment, operation, and retention. How well organizers understand the motivation and satisfaction of the volunteers is likely to be important in their management and, consequently, the overall efficiency of the festival operations (Farrell, Johnson, & Twynam, 1998).

There has been some valuable research on festival and event volunteers, but available literature specifically on hospitality student volunteers is scarce. The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the motivation and satisfaction of hospitality student volunteers in food and wine festivals. It aims to investigate and identify the factors that festival managers need to use to motivate, satisfy, and retain hospitality student volunteers in order to organize a successful event, and enhance festival operation, marketing, and personnel management. This study will contribute to the availability of the volunteerism literature and help to attract and increase festival organizers' and hospitality educators' interest in hospitality students' festival volunteering practice.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Festival and event volunteers' motivation**

Researchers have investigated festival- and event-volunteers' motivation and satisfaction. People are motivated to volunteer for various reasons. Knowing why an individual is volunteering can have a major impact on the success of the event or program (Dunn, 1989). Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) indicated the importance of understanding motivation to volunteer because agencies would be able to use this knowledge to appeal more persuasively to potential volunteers. Berger (1991) also noted that understanding the motivation for volunteering has critical importance for the recruitment and retention of volunteers because organizations base their recruitment and retention efforts on their assumptions about volunteers' motives. The primary conceptualization in the literature about volunteer motivation is altruism.

Based on the findings of the literature review and combined with the researcher's personal festival volunteering experience and observations, a conceptualization framework was conducted for this study: four elements contributing to the motivation of hospitality student volunteer include (1) altruistic motivation (Dunn, 1989; Fitch, 1987; Govekar & Govekar, 2002; Love, 2010; Schrock, 1998; Smith, 1981; Winniford, 1991; Ziemek, 2006); (2) material reward motivation (Elstad, 2003; Strigas, 2001); (3) self- and career-development motivation (Chapman, 1985; Ellis, 1994; Tsai, 2000; Zakour, 1994); and (4) social and leisure motivation (Arrington, 2006; Henderson, 1984; Jensen, 1977; Tedrick, 1989; Tsai, 2000). Each of the elements was hypothesized to significantly motivate hospitality student volunteers at the festival.

### **Festival and event volunteers' satisfaction**

Understanding volunteers' satisfaction is important for the stability, retention and success of the festival and event. A review of the literature revealed that while there is extensive research on job satisfaction for paid workers and employees, volunteer satisfaction has not been given much attention to date by researchers. Gidron (1983) discussed in his study that one reason little is known about job satisfaction in volunteering is that volunteer work was popularly perceived as

a purely altruistic act—an act which provides a person an opportunity to give, but not to receive. Gidon's study found that overall satisfaction of volunteers was related to two facts of job content (work itself and achievement) and two facts of job context (convenience and absence of job stress factors). Yet research related to factors influencing volunteer satisfaction still has limitations. There is a need for more research to enrich the body of literature related to volunteer satisfaction.

Elements affecting volunteer satisfaction surfaced in the literature review and formed a foundation for identifying the factors affecting volunteer satisfaction in this study. This foundation was strengthened by the researcher's personal festival volunteering experience and observations, and developed into a conceptualization framework consisting of four elements affecting the volunteer satisfaction: work itself (Arrington, 2006; Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002; Silverberg, Marshall, & Ellis, 2001); achievement and reward (Clary et al., 1998; Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002; Silverberg, Marshall, & Ellis, 2001); support service (Gidron, 1983), and relationships (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002; Gidron, 1983). Each of the elements was hypothesized to relate to and affect volunteer satisfaction.

Considering these findings in the literature review regarding festival- and event-volunteers' motivation and satisfaction, five research questions are advanced below:

RQ1: To what extent do the following factors motivate individual hospitality student volunteering in the Festival: altruism, social and leisure, material rewards, and self and career development?

RQ2: To what extent do the following factors affect the satisfaction of hospitality student volunteers: work itself, achievement and reward, support services, and relationships?

RQ3: What other factor(s) is (are) not included but has (have) significant importance in motivating hospitality student volunteers working for the Festival?

RQ4: What other factor(s) is (are) not included but is (are) significantly important in affecting hospitality student volunteers' satisfaction?

RQ5: Is there a significant positive relationship between hospitality student volunteer satisfaction and retention?

## **METHODOLOGY**

A survey instrument will be developed and administered for this study which will identify and analyze the reasons for hospitality student volunteers' motivation, the factors affecting their satisfaction, and the relationship between their satisfaction and retention in the Festival. The survey will be conducted at the 10th Annual Food Network South Beach Wine and Food Festival, which will be hosted by Southern Wine and Spirits of Florida, and Florida International University (FIU). The South Beach Wine and Food Festival is one of the largest and most well-known festivals of its kind in the United States and a major local event in Miami. Hospitality majors and minors who will participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Food Network South Beach Wine and Food Festival in 2011 will be chosen as the research population. The survey questionnaire will be designed based on the literature of Farrell, Johnson, and Twynam (1998); Tsai (2000); Silverberg, Marshall, and Ellis (2001); Chun (2003); and Arrington (2006) and

specifically modified for use in this study. A pilot study will be administered to 20 hospitality students who have previously attended the 2010 Festival. The survey questionnaire will also be sent to the Festival professionals and experts at the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management of FIU for pretest review to further ensure validity and reliability. This study targets a sample size of at least 300 respondents. The researchers will distribute and administer the survey at the 2011 Festival. Respondents will be selected by a convenience sample method of data collection. Respondents will be asked to complete the survey on a voluntary basis. The data collection will be over a full four-day event period. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations will be utilized to describe the data. The data analysis will be conducted with SPSS 17.0. A structural equation model (SEM) will be applied in the study.

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