

Evaluation of Voluntary Work in the Field of Delivering Recreational Services To Individuals with Disabilities

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to evaluate voluntary work in the field of delivering recreational services to individuals with disabilities from the perspective of volunteers in training, management and attitudes. The sample included 93 volunteers and a questionnaire was designed to collect data. The most important conclusions, poor awareness among some voluntary organizations about the importance of training for promoting the efficiency of volunteers and achieving the goals of voluntary work as desired. Voluntary organizations need to pay more attention to the evaluation of their performance. The attitudes of volunteers towards voluntary work in the field of delivering recreational services to individuals with disabilities are positive. This is reflected in the success of the voluntary institutions and other state institutions to provide their members with information and knowledge related to volunteering.

Key words: Voluntary Work % Recreational Services % Individuals with Disabilities % Training % Management % Attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Voluntary work is a key driver for the development of human societies, especially the sectors that need to be given top priority. To be specific, individuals with disabilities suffer from poor services and limited facilities, so they need volunteering contributions that may offer them different kinds of support. Al-Khatib [1] defines volunteering as an effort exerted by an individual willingly to serve others for free, where a volunteer is strictly complies with all the regulations and rules of voluntary work. Talat [2] stresses the importance of voluntary work for the development of human societies and the accomplishment of its objectives. It also emphasizes that voluntary work develops the personality of volunteers and teaches them many values that can hardly be acquired otherwise, such as social interaction and devotion.

Recreational activities play a great role in the lives of individuals with disabilities who invest their leisure times, make self-development and have stress reduced. Having gone through various recreational experiences, those individuals can learn new skills and use them at work, home and in family relationships. Such individuals can get involved in other areas of life, increase their

self-satisfaction and develop their physical, kinetic and social potentials. Recreation provides support, communication and encouragement for individuals with disabilities [3, 4].

Volunteers can play an important role in the success of delivering recreational services to individuals with disabilities. In this regard, Chelladurai [5] indicates that volunteers are one of the most important human resources for many sporting and recreation organizations. As long as recreation is concerned, volunteers can offer various kinds of support for individuals with disabilities. For instance, they can take part in the management aspects of recreational activities, provide physical support to participants when needed, teach recreational skills for them, assist in self-care activities for individuals with disabilities and help them move during the recreational program when needed. Moreover, they play a part in evaluating recreational programs [3].

Cuskelly and Auld [6] point that successful sporting and recreation organizations not only maintain the number of volunteers, but also spare no effort to increase the levels of HR performance and satisfaction. They stress that volunteers leave those organizations for many reasons related to management, non-management, personal and institutional problems. Though the actual

reasons should be recognized, what is more important is to ensure that they are not related to management and volunteer policies at the organization.

Many studies and references on voluntary work address some of the factors that remarkably contribute to the success of voluntary work and, accordingly, the success of the mechanisms employed to attract volunteers. Such factors include the selection of volunteers, training processes, management, organization, evaluation and motives [1, 6-9].

Volunteers are an essential part in the evaluation of institutions. Volunteers are more credible, confident and logical when they work freely in a favorite activity and go beyond personal financial considerations. So, they can be objective and critical in their evaluation of organizational processes and the organization can get constructive feedback and keep following the organization in the right track [10].

Based on the current situation of the Egyptian society, the need of institutions to increase the number of volunteers for the success of recreational services provided to individuals with disabilities, the vital role of recreational activities in the lives of individuals with disabilities, the important roles played by volunteers in such services and the need of institutions to identify why volunteers leave, so that they can introduce new mechanisms to attract volunteers, this study is important, since it is based on the evaluation of voluntary work in the field of delivering recreational services to individuals with disabilities. It aims at inspecting the current situation from the point of view of volunteers in their capacity as keen observers.

Aims of the Research: This study aims at evaluating volunteers who deliver recreational services to individuals with disabilities, with reference to the three parameters of training, management and attitudes. Its questions are: How far civil organizations take into account the considerations related to training volunteers who deliver recreational services for individuals with disabilities? To what extent do civil organizations consider the management aspects of voluntary work in delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities? What is the nature of the attitudes of individuals regarding voluntary work in delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities within the components of the.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study uses a survey approach in which voluntary work, in delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities, is evaluated by volunteers in training, management and attitudes.

Research Sample: The study sample has been taken randomly and it includes 93 volunteers, 44 males and 49 females, from Ain Shams and Helwan universities. Respondents are also volunteers in civil associations delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities. The average age of volunteers is 23.5 years and the average years of volunteering are 2.66 years.

Data Collection Tool: Respondent volunteers had to fill in a questionnaire form that investigated the three areas of training, management and attitudes and had three rubrics (often - sometimes - rarely). The researcher submitted the forms to 5 experts, who approved the three rubrics and the three areas surveyed, with rephrasing some statements and adding some others. The form was resubmitted to the experts after making the required amendments and removing the statements that received less than 80%. Therefore, the researcher based her conclusions on the assessment of the referees. The form was distributed among 19 students to measure the validity of internal consistency. The consistency of training reached 0.90, management (0.94) and attitudes (0.81). So, the final form came as follows:

Training: It means the preparation program taken by a volunteer to do his/her tasks effectively. It consists of two steps:

First: Asking the volunteer: have you received training before joining voluntary work? ? Yes ? No.

Second: A question addressed to volunteers who received training before joining voluntary work and who answered with "yes" to the first question). It includes 19 statements about the general considerations for training volunteers, such as basics of the training content, the atmosphere in which training is given in term of the number of trainee groups and training rooms.

Management: It refers to the management processes and procedures that may influence voluntary work, whether at the level of planning or implementation. It comprises 26

statements covering a range of management processes and procedures that should be considered by organizations when planning and implementing recreational services for individuals with disabilities. The statements include the principles of selecting and dealing with volunteers, the involvement of volunteers in some management processes for planning, organizing and evaluating the services provided, the assignment of responsibilities for volunteers and the requirements of delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities.

Attitudes: It refers to the attitudes of individuals towards voluntary work in the delivery of recreational services for individuals with disabilities. It was developed on the basis of its 3 components. The knowledge component includes 7 statements referring to the nature of knowledge and information of volunteers in relation to voluntary work in the delivery of recreational services for individuals with disabilities. The emotional component includes 7 statements dealing with the feelings of volunteers while they deliver recreational services for individuals with disabilities, in terms of appreciation, happiness, satisfaction and pride. The behavioral component covers 7 statements addressing the behavioral trends of volunteers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher will review and discuss the results of her study in light of the 3 areas of the questionnaire namely; training, management and attitudes. The data were processed by means of the differentiating measures of the evaluation measure. Explanation was based on the following parameters: (strong: 80% and above - average: 60% to below 80% - poor: below 60%).

First: Training: In the first part of training, the volunteers who received no training accounted for 32, 34.40%, of the study sample, i.e. more than one third of the sample. So, it can be concluded that some organizations ignore the important impact of training on volunteers and the institution or organization itself. In this regard, Hassanin *et al.* [11] notes that one of the main reasons why young people refuse to join sports voluntary work is that only few volunteer training courses are given. Many studies and references emphasize the importance of volunteer training, as the efficiency of volunteers has a remarkable impact on the success of sports and recreation

Table 1: Weights and percentages (training, management, attitudes)

Area	Number	Weights	Percentage
Training	61	2630	75.63
Management	93	5396	74.38
Attitudes	93	4705	80.30
Cognitive component		1557	79.72
Emotional component		1657	84.84
Behavioral component		1491	74.34

organizations. Trained volunteers are more self-confident and more motivated to assume additional roles within the same organizations. Training does not only benefit organizations, it also makes volunteering more attractive, rewarding and constructive for volunteers. It focuses on the required knowledge and skills which allow individuals to do their jobs or improve their performance [6, 8, 9]. Table 1 shows the results on the 3 areas.

Table 1 shows that not all organizations that provide training for volunteers take into account the drivers of successful and effective training, since the recorded responses were average. References and studies note that there are some factors that should be considered so that volunteer training can be effective. For instance, training should be based on the existing gaps between the required skills and knowledge and the volunteer abilities to achieve the required level through training. Training should be also intended to provide trainees with the skills that positively affect their effectiveness and to enrich them with information that affect their skills, attitudes and behavior towards the volunteering organization and sector for which they work. Volunteers should be trained to do the tasks required to achieve their goals [1, 3, 7].

Second: Management: Table 1 shows that not all organizations consider appropriately the considerations and procedures related to planning and implementation; which may negatively affect voluntary work and its goals. Cuskelly and Auld [6] state that the performance of an individual may be affected by management practices and work atmosphere. Therefore, the accomplishment of goals is affected, too. The average level of response may be attributed to the argument of Darwish *et al.* [12] on why planning fails, where perfect plans are developed. It may also be attributed to the lack of the required abilities, efficiencies and skills for management officers, the absence of specified responsibilities for the implementation of each step in the planning process, or the fact that the procedures taken are not based on adequate facts and information about the actual situation,

or are not adequately stable and flexible. Moreover, the average level of response may be caused by some failures in voluntary work in relation to the institutional support offered to volunteers (e.g. delegation of decision-making), or the nature of communication between the institution's team and volunteers. Bowdin [9] quotes Nancy McDuff as arguing that in order to maintain an efficient team of volunteers; an organization must support its team and volunteers as well and boost mutual support and trust. The institutional structure itself should foster communication between both parties to encourage cooperation and coordination for achieving the organization's goals, assigning responsibilities and delegating decision-making appropriately. A possible reason may also be the recognition of the institution to volunteers. In this connection, the study conducted by Abdel Razeq and Al Goyoushy [13] states that in order to increase the participation of volunteers in sporting activities, an appropriate atmosphere should be created, a consistent approach adopted for the assignment of tasks and the volunteer availability taken into consideration. The said average response may also be the result of the limited participation of volunteers in planning, organization and evaluation at the institution. Taylor [7] notes that volunteers should take part in all aspects of performance at the organization and they shall have the right to express their opinions.

Third: Attitudes: Table 1 shows that the attitudes of respondent volunteers towards voluntary work in the delivery of recreational services for individuals with disabilities are considered positive, as they accounted for 80.30%. An attitude is the result of interaction between the knowledge, emotional and behavioral components. So, the positive attitudes of respondents can be discussed and interpreted in light of their responses to the statements referring to each component as follows:

C Response to the knowledge component indicates that the respondents have positive information and beliefs regarding voluntary work in delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities; are aware that voluntary work is important for self-development and is considered as a social right; and believe that they should provide support for individuals with disabilities who have the right to practice recreational activities exactly as healthy people. This can be attributed to the impact of the multiple sources of information related to

volunteering and recreational services for individuals with disabilities on respondents. Those sources include media, education and training. It may also be the result of their previous experiences, since studies and references note show that media plays an important role in providing volunteers with information. The psychological attitude in its integral form includes all accumulated associations and information of an individual's previous experiences [1, 14-16].

C Response to the emotional component accounts for the highest percentage in the components of attitude, as it reached 84.84%. This indicates that respondents feel positive about the values and results of voluntary work in delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities. Such positive feelings may result from the fact that voluntary organizations pay attention to the emotional aspect by offering a motivating environment where volunteers are appreciated. References and studies show that such an environment is important for voluntary work, since it increases volunteer contributions and leads to the accomplishment of volunteering goals. Supervisors appreciate the efforts, achievements, motives and aspirations of volunteers, allow them to express their own views, provide emotional support for them [1, 8, 13]. A possible reason for the positive feelings of volunteers may also be that interaction between volunteers and individuals with disabilities during the delivery of voluntary services helped the volunteers feel content. Wittig [14] notes that the increased interaction between the members of different groups helps an individual develop more healthy conceptions of others. Under suitable circumstances, better relationships may be built. The response may be attributed to the previous positive experiences of volunteers in interacting with individuals with disabilities. Amsel and Fichten [15] argue that volunteering students who had previously used to interact with individuals with disabilities tended to deal with those individuals more easily than other students who had no such previous experience. Atwa [16] notes that an attitude is characterized by being acquired through one's experiences. Also, the psychological motives of the respondent volunteers are varied. Fitzgerald and Lang [17] note that the results of many studies establish that volunteers have motives varying according to their age and ranging from altruism,

self- fulfillment, learning new skills, spending free time, meeting people, making new friends and helping people.

- C Response to the behavioral component recorded an average percentage of 76.34%. The behavioral intentions of volunteers reflect their willingness to exert efforts for delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities and make them happy. This average response may be attributed to the experiences gained from voluntary work, the nature of the management of voluntary work in some organizations in term of how implementation responsibilities are distributed. Also, it may result from the fact that some of the training received by volunteers helped them be tolerant of individuals with disabilities. The study made by Schleien and Ray [18] shows that supervisors in recreational organizations should train cadres in the importance of having tolerance towards all individuals and caring for their behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Some voluntary organizations are vaguely aware of how much training is important for promoting the efficiency of volunteers and achieving the goals of voluntary work as aspired. So, they need to pay more attention to performance evaluation and survey the opinions of volunteers about it to get an objective outside view. The attitudes of respondents are positive towards voluntary work in delivering recreational services for individuals with disabilities. This indicates that voluntary organizations and other public bodies successfully provide individuals with adequate information and knowledge related to volunteering.

Recommendation: All civil organizations should provide training to their volunteers before they implement any planned activities. Training is crucial for developing the efficiency of volunteers and achieving the desired goals. Organizations should also consider the accuracy of the management processes and procedures that may affect voluntary work and should involve volunteers all over the processes of planning, implementation and evaluation. Public educational, social and media organizations should orchestrate their efforts to reinforce positive attitudes towards voluntary work in the delivery of recreational services for individuals with disabilities by focusing on the nature of the knowledge and emotional components of an attitude.

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