Volunteering Opportunities in a Multilingual and Multicultural Society

多言語・多文化な社会におけるボランティアの可能性

リンチ ギャビン（人文学部国際文化学科准教授）

Gavin　LYNCH(Faculty of Humanities, Associate Professor)

〈Abstract〉

This paper introduces the current situation of volunteering from the point of view of volunteer opportunity providers as well as the volunteers themselves. It develops the idea of the motivations behind volunteering, especially in groups with an ethnically, linguistically, skills, societal, culturally (etc.) differing background, and uses the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) model developed by Clary et al. (1998). Fieldwork data from two dissimilar areas in Japan, namely Okinawa and Ishikawa prefectures, are referenced. This paper is written as a companion to other fieldwork reports and research papers by the author.

〈Keywords〉

Multilingual/Multicultural Volunteering, VFI model, Fieldwork

1　Introduction

Volunteer work can be either formal or informal and, according to Wilson and Musick (1997), is based on the understanding that it is (1) human capital requiring productive work, (2) social capital requiring collective behaviour, and (3) cultural capital requiring collective behaviour. These three requirements of human, social, and cultural capital help to define a large part of both what volunteer opportunity seekers and providers are seeking. Tilly and Tilly (1994) define volunteer work as "unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owns no contractual, familiar, or friendship obligations" (p. 291), showing a focus on the obligation mindset behind the concept of volunteering, while Voicu and Voicu (2009) focus on behaviour of volunteering as part of how we express our level/identity of participative culture at an individual as well as a national level. Underdeveloped participative cultures could be seen in nations which were under authoritarian control (such as former communist bloc countries) as, due to the high levels of central planning and surveillance, people were extremely limited in how they could use their initiative, stunting associative life (Voicu and Voicu, 2003) due to stronger introjected

versus intrinsic motivation (Triola, 2021), where motivation did exist. They point out how a person's country of birth and upbringing can greatly affect their propensity to seek out or offer volunteer opportunities, meaning that having a knowledge of a person's cultural, national, and society background, summed up as part of a person's "social capital" which can be combined with income and educational values to provide valuable information to volunteer program organisers (Voicu and Voicu, 2009). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that a volunteer event that is offered to a diverse international audience (of participants) would be more difficult to manage, i.e., would need a manager with a greater understanding of a wider range of personality and background characteristics in order to approach the potential maximum benefit from the volunteer resources available. It is noted that one quote above refers to volunteering as being an "unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owns no contractual, familiar, or friendship obligations" (Tilly and Tilly, 1994), but this research aims to show that such thinking is outdated, and that community-based volunteers can, and often do, feel obligations to their community and that, while they do

receive some remuneration, it is not the main purpose or reason behind them providing their services. Examples from rural areas in Japan, namely Izena Island in Okinawa Prefecture and rural Hakusan city in Ishikawa Prefecture are mentioned, with more focus on the former at this stage of research. This paper delves further into the characteristics of volunteers with a view to informing organisers of their highest potential target audience, using literature review and statistical/survey data as it is available.

2　Background and Literature Review

2-1　Volunteer Profiles Outline

Smith (1994) used the phrase "dominant status" to describe people who are of a younger age, better education, and richer in terms of wealth, with strength in all three showing a more "dominant" status of the individual in terms of altruism and volunteerism. Sztompka (1999) introduced the concept of trust (or, specifically, a lack of trust in some countries which have more controlling governments such as was prevalent in the former Eastern Europe communist bloc) in determining propensity to participate in, frequency of joining, and personal investment in volunteer activities, with a lower level of trust correlating to a lower number of self-chosen volunteer participation events (meaning true volunteering, including altruism). However, volunteering can have altruistic main traits (Wuthnow, 1993) and un-altruistic facets including "driven by selfish concerns" such as because of "anticipated praise or to escape possible guilt", and, therefore, "whether volunteering reflects altruism or self-interest is an ongoing controversy that parallels the altruism-egoism debate in social psychological research." (Cornelis, Van Hiel & De Cremer, 2013). This is developed by Batson, Ahmad & Tsang (2002) who proposed four reasons why people participate (voluntarily) in the community, namely:

Egoism: To ultimately improve the personal welfare of the participant

Altruism: To provide benefit to the welfare of others

Collectivism: To provide benefit to the welfare of a collective

Principlism: To uphold moral principles (that are impartial and universal)

The above show that a group of volunteers may have, within that group, different reasons for participating in a volunteering event.

2-2　Deeper Understanding using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) model

Clary et al. (1998) developed a Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) model which is used to frame a survey of volunteers' motivation for choosing to participate in any particular volunteering event. It measures six volunteering functions: Career, Enhancement, Protective, Social, Understanding, and Values (Oostlander et al., 2014), and can underpin research and management data gathering surveys into volunteer engagement. Furthermore, recruitment and retention of volunteers is an increasing concern for volunteer managers, leading to a greater need to understand what their motivation is to donate their time and energy resources to a certain project, event or organisation (Benson et al. 1980; Clary & Orenstein 1991; Penner & Finkelstein 1998; Farmer & Fedor 2001). Research by Clary et al. (1998) found that both men and women rated the motives of Values, Enhancement, and Social as being the most important, while Understanding, Protective, and Career were the lowest ranked (among American volunteers according to a national survey), although Papadakis, Griffin and Frater (2004) found that this varied if the survey participants had previously had volunteer experience or not, with those who did have such experience rating Values, Understanding and Enhancement as the three highest of the six motives. This should signal to volunteer recruiters that four of the six motives should be focused on as follows:

Values and Enhancement: Catch-all motives for potential volunteers regardless of their previous experience,

Social: For new volunteer recruits, and

Understanding: For more experienced volunteers.

This can go towards settling inconsistencies and disagreements that exist in the volunteer research space, and include the motive experienced by the new volunteer recruits (namely, Social), (Fitch, 1991) and is important since "volunteer recruitment and retention are positively correlated to the degree to which the volunteer experience meets the motivational function(s) of the volunteer" (Benevene, Buonomo & West, 2020). Much of the below description of the VFI motives references this strongly.

2-3 Description of the VFI motives

The VFI, developed by Clary et al. in 1998 to measure six motivational functions, is a 30-item measurement tool which assesses volunteering reasons, with the six motives included described below:

Values: "Being useful for society and doing something for others". (Bocsi, Fenyes, & Markos, 2017, p. 120). This is an altruistic (external-oriented) feeling and is frequently cited by volunteers as their reason for joining an activity or organisation.

Understanding: A desire to learn, gain first-hand experience, knowledge and skills.

Social: Influence of others (including a type of peer-pressure of wishing to "strengthen bonds" with others, and desire for recognition and social rewards.

Career: The potential that volunteer experiences will lead to better chances of gaining certain employment, or of adding leverage (now, or in the future) to wage negotiation through "resume-building volunteering" (Bocsi, Fenyes, & Markos, 2017).

Protective: Volunteer actions that help avoid negative personal consequences to the volunteer such as avoiding feelings of guilt which may appear due to the gap in wealth or (un)fortunate circumstances (Stukas, Snyder & Clary, 2016).

Enhancement: To boost self-esteem and/or ego through a greater feeling of being needed. (Chacón, Gutiérrez, Sauto, Vecina, & Pérez, 2017).

3 Case Studies of Community Involvement

3-1 Izena Island, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan

Izena Island is located in Okinawa Prefecture, off the main island which includes Naha city, the largest city and location of the largest airport. It is located at (26.9326, 127.9363), at GPS coordinates in Decimal Degrees, and is approximately 120 kilometres by road and ferry almost directly north of Naha city, served by two ferry crossings per day. An airport exists on the island (Izena Auxiliary Airfield, ICAO JP-0454, ZZZZ) but it has not been used by general commercial aircraft for a number of years, and is for emergency use only with no fuel service, meaning the only way of access is by the aforementioned ferry from the main island. The author of this paper inspected the airport (landing strip) personally in March 2022, and it seems to be in good repair and was obstacle free (including approach obstacles), showing potential for reopening/

development at a future time if necessary. The area of Izena Island is 15.3 square kilometres, and is mostly flat, cultivated with sugar cane (Walker, 1954) and with very few tourists from outside of the prefecture (author interview with local people in March 2022). Its population has dropped from a low base of 4,400 inhabitants in the 1950s (Walker, 1954) to 1,367 people in 745 households by 2020 (Izena Village, 2023). The rest of Okinawa Prefecture in general, on the other hand, has experienced a population rise in the same period, coming close to doubling its 1960 population of 883,000 people to 1,457,162 in 2020. The average of 1.8 people per household in Izena Island suggests that the number of children are few, indicating a continued drop in population in the future, and this is confirmed by the number of children in Izena elementary school falling from 108 children in 2011 to 91 children in 2021 (Gaccom, 2021).

There are various events each year in Izena Island and, as part of fieldwork, Izena Island was visited and an interview was conducted with Mr. Shiohira (permanent staff at Izena Environmental/Tourism Association). He was born on the island, and is now in his 20's. Various questions about the events were asked, with particular emphasis on the large events held throughout the year. Okinawa-based free writer and translator, Ms. Toguchi was hired to join the research trip, and her help was invaluable. The following information was gathered:

Izena Island Triathlon and Izena Shouen Marathon

Held in October each year, the Izena Island Triathlon includes a swimming section (2km), bike (66 km, 5 laps outer circle of island) and run (20km, 2 laps, inner circle of island). A total of approximately 560 athletes can join, including 500 for the individual category and 20 teams of three people for the team category. It was learned that local participation is necessary for this event to occur. The accommodation offered on the island (by local hotels) is a maximum of 399 people in total, leaving 161 people without anywhere to stay. There is a campsite in the west of the island which can take more people but, on the contrary, there will be some people staying in the accommodation who are not connected to the triathlon event. It is estimated that from 100 to 200 people need accommodation during the triathlon. The interview with Mr. Shiohira revealed that many of the people on the island open their homes to the athletes, providing them with a place to stay. Some of them are paid for this by the visitors,

but it still falls under the following categories of VFI motives: Values, Protective and Enhancement. Indeed, without such members of the community opening their homes, holding the triathlon event at such a scale would not be possible. It was also learned that most of the athletes came from other areas in Japan, meaning that a high knowledge of foreign languages would not be generally necessary.

Other events including the Izena Shouen Marathon Competition revealed participant numbers of more than 400 people, also suggesting some cooperation from the local people, at least in terms of accommodation. The Shouen Festival and Unna- Festival were more local (meaning, more local people attended, or those who were extended family returning to the island), so the pressure on accommodation was not high as they could stay with family in many cases.

Whether strictly volunteer or not, the above is a case of how local participation is vital in local areas to allow events to be carried out successfully.

Issues for the Future

A major issue mentioned by Mr. Shiohira is the negative population growth of the island. If something could be done to reverse that, then the island would naturally become a more attractive place for people to move to and work, creating a virtuous cycle. Currently, due to the low population, children have to take a ferry to the main island in Okinawa (and then live there) while in high school, meaning they leave their families at the age of 15.

Fieldwork

Izena Island was visited in March 2022 and, with the help of the research facilitator, the conditions and life on the island were investigated. A farm visit was included and we could sample the sugar cane. The gusuku (a type of Okinawan stone castle enclosure) was visited, as well as some beaches. Restaurants and shops were also there, and we spoke with the owners. Spiritual places which go back centuries, including the places only permitted to be entered by females including Yuta (a female Okinawan Shaman) were also surveyed. The author is male, so it was observed at a distance while the female facilitator entered, with photographs taken by the author from outside. The climate on the island is an oceanic one, with average temperatures at a low of 19 degrees Celsius in January to a high of 29 degrees in July and August. Precipitation is

from a low of 62mm in January to a high of 171mm in June. From a tourism standpoint, the island appears to have the infrastructure and points of attraction to be popular, suggesting that the issue (of low popularity) could be one of ineffective marketing.

Further investigation and follow up is needed at a later date and at a different time of year.

3-2　Hakusan Group, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan

Hakusan city is an area in Ishikawa Prefecture, with a climate rather different from Izena Island. Due to the region including both the coastal region and mountainous areas, the climate differs greatly. The region focused on in this research fieldwork is the mountain village area of Shiramine, the southernmost part of Hakusan city, and it experiences one of the heaviest snowfalls in Japan. It is approximately 800 metres above sea level. The climate varies greatly, with average highs of 0°C and average lows of -6°C in January being experienced, while the warmest month is August with average highs of 24°C, and average lows of 16°C (National Centers for Environmental Information, 2022). The Hakusan mountain, 2,702 metres high, and in the prefectures of Gifu, Fukui and Ishikawa, is one of the three spiritual mountains of Japan alongside Mount Fuji (3,776 metres, straddling the prefectures of Shizuoka and Yamanashi) and Mount Tate (3,015 metres, in southeastern Toyama prefecture). Mount Fuji attracts over one million tourists per year, of whom 300,000 climb to the top (Dearsley, 2022), while Mount Haku has only 50,000 climbers annually (Hakusan City, 2022), despite being of lower height and an "easy climb" and possible to ascend and descend in one day. It ranks at number eight of the top 100 mountains in Japan (Walks, 2023), while Mount Fuji is at number 82 for hiking worthiness, so why is it not more popular? There is a Shinkansen train and then bus to the climbing starting area, suggesting that the reason might be, again, marketing related.

Hakusan Volunteer Groups

There are various volunteer groups connected to the Hakusan region, but they are limited in their appeal to multilingual/multicultural volunteers due to the dearth of information readily available. However, the university seminar model provides a gateway to access this region with major local universities including Kanazawa University and the Kanazawa Institute of Technology having regular involvement via their university local area

connection system, while a top-ranking national university, Tokyo University, also has a base in the Shiramine village in the region. These connections, as well as similar areas, will be investigated and explained, with data on how they are being expanded, in a further paper due to limited space here.

4 Conclusions/Findings

This preliminary/background study found that volunteer work, or that which can be considered as volunteer-connected according to the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) model, has a variety of motivations behind it, both from the project providers as well as the volunteers themselves. In particular, the diverse backgrounds and expectations of the volunteers should be investigated and the provision of different projects (or sub projects) can result in greater satisfaction and more fulfilling results for both sides. The issues of marketing, tourism infrastructure (or how current resources exist yet need to be better exploited), and volunteer project ideas and inroads are vital to be investigated and developed with an eye on attracting and effectively utilizing volunteers of a wide range of experiences and with multicultural and multi linguistic backgrounds in order to bring about improved results for all.

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