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Differences in Volunteer Motivation Across Self-Esteem Levels: A Study of Negeri Sembilan Seven Wonders Challenge 2.0

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I. Introduction

Volunteer involvement plays a critical role in the operational success of sporting events, particularly in community-based sport tourism contexts. Volunteers contribute time, effort, and expertise without financial compensation, making effective volunteer management a strategic priority for sport organizations [1]. Prior research indicates that sport volunteers are driven by diverse motivational factors, including love of sport, career orientation, social interaction, and personal development [2].

Although numerous studies have examined volunteer motivation in mega sport events, limited research has explored how psychological factors such as self-esteem influence motivational differences within small-to-medium sport tourism events. Existing literature largely focuses on demographic predictors, while internal self-concept variables remain underexplored in localized Malaysian sport contexts. Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall evaluation of self-worth, may shape how volunteer experiences are interpreted, particularly in relation to personal growth and intrinsic satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to (1) identify dominant motivational factors among volunteers of the Negeri Sembilan Seven Wonders Challenge 2.0 (NS7WC 2.0), (2) determine their self-esteem levels, and (3) examine differences in motivation across self-esteem categories

II. Methods

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental design. The population consisted of all registered volunteers of the Negeri Sembilan Seven Wonders Challenge 2.0 (NS7WC 2.0). Based on information provided by the organizing committee, the total number of volunteers was 40 individuals (N = 40). Due to the manageable population size, a census sampling approach was adopted, whereby all volunteers were included in the study.

Volunteer motivation was measured using the Volunteer Motivation Scale for International Sporting Events (VMS-ISE), while self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics, motivational factors, and self-esteem levels. As normality assumptions were not met, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was conducted to examine differences in motivational factors across self-esteem categories (low, normal, high). Effect size (ε^2) was reported to determine the magnitude of differences.

III. Results and Discussion

A. Demographic Profile

The respondents consisted of 40 volunteers, with 21 males (52.5%) and 19 females (47.5%). Most volunteers were aged between 22–25 years (52.5%), followed by 18–21 years (47.5%). All respondents were Malay (100%). The majority held a bachelor's degree (82.5%) and reported monthly income of RM2,500 and below (92.5%). In terms of volunteering experience, 35% had volunteered three to five times, while 30% had volunteered more than seven times.

B. Motivational Factors

Descriptive analysis indicated that intrinsic motivations were more dominant than extrinsic rewards. Love of sports recorded the highest mean score (M = 6.13, SD = 1.11), followed by career orientation (M = 6.04, SD = 1.18) and expression of value (M = 6.00, SD = 1.14). Extrinsic rewards recorded the lowest mean (M = 5.05, SD = 1.37). The findings suggest that volunteers were primarily driven by internal interest and personal fulfillment rather than tangible incentives.

The dominance of intrinsic motivation, particularly love of sports and career orientation, supports previous findings that sport volunteers are primarily driven by internal interest and developmental opportunities rather than extrinsic rewards [4]. Young adults often view volunteering as a platform for skill and career development [5], indicating that intrinsic satisfaction was the main driver among NS7WC 2.0 volunteers. The lower emphasis on extrinsic rewards also aligns with Self-Determination Theory, reinforcing that psychological fulfillment is more sustainable than tangible incentives in sport volunteer engagement.

TABLE I
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

	M	SD	Rank
Love of Sports	6.13	1.11	1
Career Orientation	6.04	1.18	2
Expression of Value	6.00	1.14	3
Patriotism	5.90	0.95	4
Personal Growth	5.86	1.00	5
Interpersonal Contacts	5.83	1.13	6
Extrinsic Rewards	5.05	1.37	7

C. Self-Esteem Level

The self-esteem analysis showed that 50% of the volunteers showed normal self-esteem, 42.5% expressed low self-esteem, and 7.5% expressed high self-esteem. Although the majority of the volunteers were found to have steady self-perception, a significant number was found to have a reduced self-evaluation. The distribution implies that despite the fact that the majority of volunteers had balanced self-worth, there is a significant number of them who might have doubts about their abilities.

Self-esteem has been considered a significant psychological structure that shapes the competency and social approval judgments of people [6]. Self-esteem-related differences can influence the perceptions of the individuals in terms of their contribution, confidence, and personal development in a volunteer context. Hence, volunteer participation can't be perceived only through the demographic issues, but through the psychological self-images that contribute to participation and experience.

TABLE II
SELF-ESTEEM LEVEL

		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Self-Esteem Level	Low self-esteem	17	42.5
	Normal self-esteem	20	50
	High self-esteem	3	7.5

D. Differences in Motivation Across Self-Esteem Levels

The Kruskal–Wallis H test revealed a statistically significant difference in Personal Growth motivation across self-esteem categories, $\chi^2(2) = 12.80$, $p = 0.00$, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.33$, indicating a moderate effect size. Post-hoc analysis using Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction showed significant differences between low and normal ($p = 0.02$) and low and high ($p = .007$) self-esteem groups.

The significant difference in Personal Growth motivation indicates that self-esteem influences how volunteers perceive volunteering as a developmental experience. Individuals with lower self-esteem may view participation as a way to build confidence and competence, as self-worth shapes perceptions of success and growth [6], whereas those with higher self-esteem may approach volunteering from a more secure perspective. In contrast, no significant difference was found for Extrinsic Rewards, $\chi^2(2) = 0.52$, $p = 0.77$, $\varepsilon^2 = 0.01$, suggesting that material incentives are not meaningfully influenced by self-esteem levels. This supports sport volunteer literature indicating that internal satisfaction is generally more influential than external motivators [7], emphasizing the importance of prioritizing developmental and internally rewarding experiences in volunteer management.

TABLE III
DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATION ACROSS SELF-ESTEEM LEVEL

	χ^2	df	p	ε^2
Personal Growth	12.80	2	0.00	0.33
Extrinsic Rewards	0.52	2	0.77	0.01

**p < 0.05 indicates statistically significant difference*

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that intrinsic motivation remains the primary driver of volunteer participation in NS7WC 2.0. While self-esteem did not influence all motivational domains, it significantly affected personal growth motivation. These findings provide practical implications for sport event organizers. Volunteer management strategies should emphasize developmental opportunities, skill-building experiences, mentoring systems, and recognition mechanisms that enhance internal satisfaction. By aligning volunteer roles with intrinsic motivational factors and psychological needs, sport organizations may improve volunteer retention and long-term engagement.

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