



# **VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION IN SPORT: INSIGHTS FROM WOMEN’S RUGBY CLUBS IN ENGLAND**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Sport clubs in England increasingly rely on volunteers to sustain their operations and reduce the cost of service delivery. It is estimated that sport volunteering in the UK represents 26% of the total volunteering activity (Sport England, 2003). However, recent trends suggest a decline in sport participation and a move towards more flexible, individual activities outside the formal structure of traditional sport clubs (Nichols et al., 2016). This is also associated with a decline in formal volunteering levels. Rugby Union is one of the sports that has experienced a decline in participation rates. In particular, women’s rugby is still a developing sport, that shares volunteers, coaches and playing facilities with traditionally larger male clubs. This case study explores aspects of the volunteering experience that

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contribute to volunteers' satisfaction in women's rugby. Affective and cognitive components of satisfaction have been identified as significant among volunteers in English women rugby clubs. Understanding aspects of volunteer satisfaction will enable the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to tackle the decline in volunteer numbers and retain them within the rugby club network.

**Keywords:** women's rugby, job satisfaction, volunteer satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of volunteers to the delivery of sport participation opportunities and services has widely been acknowledged (Davies, 1998; Taylor et al., 1996). For example, it is argued that volunteers enable sport organisations to function by facilitating cost reduction, improving service quality (Jago & Deery, 2002) and bringing communities together by enabling individuals to strengthen social bonds and trust and develop a sense of citizenship (Putnam, 2000). Sport volunteering in England is vital to the playing of sport, as it represents 26% of the total volunteering activity (Sport England, 2003). Without the contribution of volunteers, community sports in England would cease to exist (Nichols et al., 2016). Several reasons can influence the decisions of individuals to start volunteering and commit to it. In the case of sport organisations, reasons to undertake volunteering include both altruistic and egoistic motivations. In particular, volunteers engage because of the love of sport, their desire to help the sport club they are affiliated with to function, to meet people and make friends, to contribute to the community, to develop skills and gain work-related experience that will facilitate future employment, or to help their children participation in sport (Chelladurai, 2006; Nichols et al., 2016). Therefore, individuals get involved in volunteering to fulfil a variety of needs and expectations. Thus, understanding and fulfilling volunteers' needs is critical to improved recruitment as well as volunteers' retention in sport organisations and leads to their satisfaction (Green & Chalip, 1998).

Currently, more than 18,000 women and girls participate in rugby regularly in England (RFU, 2018). In addition, almost 7,000 women take part in rugby regularly in one of the approximately 250 female senior and university teams affiliated to the Rugby Football Union (RFU), with approximately 150 clubs taking part in the national league structure of women's rugby (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). Female participation in English rugby is largely facilitated by a pool of dedicated volunteers who help women's rugby clubs to function. Records from the RFU suggest that most women's rugby clubs are run with the help of no more than five formal volunteers undertaking coaching, committee or general roles. This suggests a base population of approximately 750 specifically identified women's rugby volunteers (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). However, the population of club volunteers in women's rugby is to a degree uncertain (Koutrou & Downward, 2015). The volunteers in women's rugby may also share duties with the men's game, since most women's teams are merged with traditionally larger male clubs, where they represent sections of them and share coaches and training facilities (Koutrou & Downward, 2016).

Rugby is traditionally a male-dominated sport (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Women's rugby, however, is still developing. This is also evident by the fact that male's rugby had its own governing body, the Rugby Football Union since 1871, while women's rugby was formally established much later. Early female teams were formed by the student network, in particular by a group of women graduates who had practised the sport during their time at University and sought to continue their involvement with the sport after graduating (Houlihan & White, 2002). The early university teams that established the sport in the late 1970s included Keele University, University College of London, Imperial College, York University and St Mary's Hospital (Houlihan & White, 2002). Women's Rugby Football Union (WRFU) was established in 1983 and until 1994 was the governing body of women's rugby in England and across the UK. The teams that were the founding members of WRFU included: Leicester Polytechnic, Sheffield University, UCL, University of Keele, Warwick University, Imperial College, Leeds University, Magor Maidens, York University and Loughborough University. The establishment of WRFU was an attempt to

enable formerly marginalised social groups such as women to form their own organisational structures, express the views of like-minded individuals and challenge stereotypical views that certain sports such as rugby are male oriented (Houlihan & White, 2002). In 1994, following the example of Ireland and Scotland, which broke away from the WRFU, England and Wales also formed their own Unions. The Rugby Football Union for Women (RFUW) was officially formed in 1994 to run, promote, develop and govern both community and elite women's rugby in England. However, since 2014 the RFUW merged with the RFU and became one National Governing body with combined responsibilities for both male and female rugby in England (RFU, 2018).

As it may be expected, given that women's rugby was established by a student network, participants and/or volunteers in women's rugby are of a higher educational background (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). Since women's rugby is largely sustained by its volunteers, it is important to consider aspects of the volunteering experience that volunteers find satisfying and rewarding, and how women rugby clubs in England could further improve these. Since satisfaction is an important determinant of both paid employees and volunteers' turnover and retention, and has also been shown to influence an organisation's performance and effectiveness (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Koutrou & Downward, 2016), this commentary explores aspects of satisfaction that women rugby clubs could look at in their attempt to provide a rewarding experience for their volunteers and aid to their retention.

## **JOB SATISFACTION**

In the context of traditional work environments, job satisfaction is defined as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing the fulfillment of one's important job values, providing the values are compatible with one's needs" (Locke, 1976, p. 1304). To this end, satisfaction is an individual's "feelings or affective responses to facets of the situation" (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969, p. 6). Job satisfaction can be further described as an individual's affective

response to their job taking a holistic perspective (global satisfaction), whereas individuals reflect on the extent they experienced overall positive feelings from their work, or it can be seen as a cognitive response to particular facets of the job or the situation, for example an individual's satisfaction with their supervisor, pay, working hours, working environment the rewards of the job or with communication in their department (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Affective satisfaction is more subjective in nature, as it focuses on the feelings one has for the situation overall, whilst cognitive satisfaction is more logical and objective, as it evaluates facets of the situation (Locke, 1976). Affective job satisfaction consists of two elements, moods and emotions. Moods are longer-lasting but there is no clear cause of them, while emotions are more intense, short-lived and what causes them is more clear (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Emotions can be positive such as joy, pride, hope, enthusiasm and satisfaction or negative such as fear, stress, anxiety (Vecina & Chacon, 2005).

Satisfaction with volunteer experiences could be evaluated by looking into both cognitive and affective processes. For example, the expectancy disconfirmation theory that is originally proposed to evaluate consumer satisfaction suggests that volunteers could be compared to consumers (Oliver, 2014). Consumers tend to continue purchasing a product or service if they are satisfied with the outcome of consumption. Similarly, volunteers who are satisfied with the outcome of their volunteering experience will continue to volunteer. However, satisfaction is a multi-dimensional psychological process, thereby not only the outcome but all the elements that are carried out during an experience need to be considered (Oliver, 2014). For example, expectations are considered a key determinant of satisfaction followed by perceived performance on the actual outcome (Milan & Esteban, 2004). Therefore, it may be expected that volunteers will continue to volunteer or may seek involvement with further volunteering opportunities when their initial experience with volunteering meets their expectations from involvement. This thus implies that satisfaction is an emotional response to an experience, after a cognitive evaluative process has taken place (Oliver, 2014).

## **VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION**

Volunteering represents a form of work. Volunteers are perceived as an integral part of the labour force of a sport organisation. Since volunteers are assigned to specific duties and responsibilities, their satisfaction has been often compared to paid employees and traditional working environments, which provide a financial compensation in return for their staff contributions (Chelladurai, 2006). The literature argues that volunteers' job satisfaction is founded in a link between motivations, expectations and actual experiences (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Ralston & Rhoden, 2005). However, research on volunteers' job satisfaction has been limited (Nichols et al., 2016), despite the fact that volunteering is made up of distinctive elements that differentiate it from traditional work (Oliver, 2004). These elements include volition, expressive orientation and the perceived values of the rewards obtained, which are dissimilar to those of paid employees. Volition refers to the free-will of volunteers to engage in work without expecting any financial benefits in return. Rather, volunteers engage in such social pursuits as a way to spend leisure time in activities that matter to them the most. On the contrary, paid work involves a coercive element since individuals engage with it to meet social and economic demands (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2011; Gidron, 1985; Pearce, 1983). An additional element that distinguishes paid and voluntary work is its expressive orientation. Volunteers' primary expressive orientation lies in their desire to contribute to their organisation and society, to help their sport club to function, or to meet the needs of significant others such as their children or friends. On the other hand, paid employees are primarily motivated by self-oriented reasons and their expressive orientation is focused on satisfying materialistic or tangible rewards. The final element that distinguishes volunteers from paid employees is the perceived value they place in the obtained rewards. Volunteers place significant value on the intangible rewards obtained from their volunteering participation such as friendship, camaraderie, helping others, feeling needed or contributing to their sports' club viability. On the contrary, paid employees place more value on the tangible rewards such as the financial compensation, benefits' package or salary (Cnaan & Goldberg-



Glen, 1991; Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2011; Gidron, 1985; Pearce, 1983). Taking that into consideration, it is important to determine what elements contribute to volunteers' satisfaction since their experience is associated with the fulfilment of different needs compared to that of paid employees.

Drawing upon social-exchange theory, the sport organisation and the volunteer are tied to an exchange process, whereas the needs of both need to be met and the perceived rewards and costs of the relationship should be balanced in order for this relationship to be maintained (Doherty, 2005). Costs are negative consequences of the volunteering experience, for example the time needed to engage with an activity. Volunteers contribute with their time, services and skills and expect non-monetary rewards in return such as reimbursement of transportation and food expenses, uniforms and licenced apparel, social interaction, skills' development or meeting new people and making friends. If the costs of engaging with this process outweigh the rewards, the volunteer is more likely to withdraw from their duties and experience dissatisfaction (Emerson, 1976). Consequently, balancing rewards and costs is essential for retaining volunteers within an organisation and ensuring longevity of their services (Doherty, 2009; Emerson, 1976).

Volunteer satisfaction is essential in leading to higher levels of commitment to the sports organisation and then consistency in subsequent behaviour (Stebbins, 1996). This idea is associated with the distinction that is drawn between core and peripheral, or long-term and short-term volunteers (Pearce, 1993). Core volunteers are considered to be highly committed to their sport organisation as they undertake more formal roles and volunteer consistently over periods of time (Pearce, 1993; Planty & Reginer, 2003). Continuity theory can explain this commitment, as it assumes that individuals are "both predisposed and motivated toward inner psychological continuity as well as outward continuity of social behaviour and circumstances" (Atchley, 1989, p. 183 cited in Cuskelly, 2005). Thus, continuity theory implies that committed volunteers are more likely to form stronger bonds with their sport organisation and predisposed to undertake more formal roles, training or develop skills to maintain this relationship and identity for longer even after their playing career has ended (Cuskelly, 2004;

Stebbins, 1996). Stebbins (1996 cited in Cuskelly et al., 2006, p. 144) described core volunteers as constantly seeking satisfaction “through contributing to their own wellbeing or that of the general community.” Evidence suggests that the depth of involvement and engagement in sport and volunteering is integral to social capital development and accumulation for the individual. However, this also implies that the individual should constantly seek to maintain the level of obtained social capital through an exchange and reinvestment process towards other related activities (Harvey et al., 2007; Nicholson & Hoye, 2008; Putnam, 2000).

On the other hand, peripheral or casual volunteers contribute occasionally and express low levels of commitment to the sport organisation. Furthermore, casual volunteers can undertake volunteering pursuits that do not require specific skills and little or no special training is needed for them to undertake these roles (Cuskelly et al., 2006). The degree and extent of volunteers’ involvement are directly related. Thus, it could be expected that volunteers with a high degree of involvement are more likely to volunteer in their sport organisations for longer periods of time (Cuskelly et al., 2006). However, evidence suggests that sport volunteering is becoming more peripheral and casual due to the increased work and family commitments and the associated lack of leisure time that people nowadays experience (Cuskelly et al., 2006). For instance, Nichols et al., (2016) highlighted an approximate 15% reduction in the number of sport clubs in England between 2002 and 2009, which is further supported by a decline in sports club membership and an increase in informal sports participation between 2005/6 and 2013/4 as shown by the Active People Surveys, an annual measure used by Sport England to track sport participation trends in the country (Nichols et al., 2016). Active people surveys have shown a decline in participation in certain sports including rugby union as well as in swimming, tennis, football, golf, cricket and basketball respectively. On the other hand, increases have been noted for gym and fitness activities, athletics and recreational cycling. Thus a move towards a more flexible, individual participation outside of the formal club structure is evident (Nichols et al., 2016). This also suggests a decline in formal sport volunteering, since volunteering and sport participation are directly related and as people seek opportunities that match

a more flexible lifestyle (Nichols et al., 2016). Thus, sport clubs should pay attention to the social and personal rewards offered to sustain sport volunteering and ensure job satisfaction of volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006). In this regard, Silverberg et al., (2001) concluded that job satisfaction of volunteers at public parks and recreation arises from a combination of the job environment and psychological needs that are met by volunteering. Therefore, volunteers expect recognition and appreciation, support to perform in their duties, sound operations within the club, good and clear communication with co-workers and meeting their needs and personal aspirations, in exchange for their continued time, effort and commitment currently and in the future. Similarly, Doherty (2005) concluded that community sport volunteers are more satisfied with the experience, when their volunteer role allows them the opportunity to use their skills, provides them with opportunities for growth and attainment of new competencies, offers them the opportunity to interact with others and form social relationships, allows the achievement of personal goals and is enjoyable and worthwhile. Aligning with cognitive satisfaction, and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, Doherty (2005) also found that certain aspects of the volunteering experience may lead to dissatisfaction among community sport volunteers. In particular, the significance of a poorly-run organisation, lack of challenging duties and responsibilities, lack of interest to the volunteer role, lack of appreciation and support to the volunteers, increased professionalisation and bureaucracy in running the sport and fulfilling national governing bodies (NGBs) requirements for funding and accreditation, and the associated time needed from the volunteer to dedicate to fulfil such tasks hinder volunteering and lead to dissatisfaction. Further, volunteers in English sports clubs reported dissatisfaction with the way their club is run, with the lack of recognition and appreciation for their efforts by Club officials, with the increased tasks they were required to undertake, and with the lack of adequate club facilities (Gaskin, 2008). Sport England (2003) also noted that the amount of time is needed for a volunteer to fulfil tasks related to NGBs accreditation and funding, the increased workload associated with shortage of volunteers and work being left to fewer people, the lack of planning and volunteer management are the main challenges

volunteers are faced with, which contribute to their dissatisfaction. A study conducted on members of voluntary sport clubs in Norway identified similar trends such as in the UK. For example, it was noted that lack of facilities, support, volunteer planning and guidance and support from sport governing bodies were the main reported factors leading to dissatisfaction amongst the volunteer workforce who participated in the study (Seippel, 2006). Schlesinger et al., (2012) noted the positive impact of the solidarity experienced through volunteering in sport clubs and job satisfaction on long-term volunteering commitment. Similar sentiments are expressed at sport events. For example, volunteers at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games were more satisfied by the opportunity to be part of a unique event, by being able to develop social bonds and networks and by the opportunity to fulfil task specific competencies (Elstad, 1996). Farrell et al., (1998) also concluded that the factors that determined satisfaction among the volunteers who helped with the Twin Cities Marathon included the level of communication prior to the event, support from the organisers, the extent of meeting their initial expectations through volunteering, recognition and appreciation from the event organisers and the participating athletes, good level of event organisation as well as the facilities of the event. Also, MacLeod and Hogarth (1999) suggest that satisfaction with specific job duties were major determinants of intentions to remain a volunteer. Reeser et al., (2005) also noted that event volunteers consider recognition and performance appraisals as key determinants of their job satisfaction. The aforementioned studies suggest that satisfaction is a fully attitudinal process embracing at the same time cognitive, affective and implicit behavioural elements. Thus, when considering volunteer satisfaction, the initial expectations of volunteers, the extent these have been met, the overall volunteering experience as well as facets of the situation need to be considered. This, allows volunteers to engage in both immediate and post-hoc reflections of their experience and provide a more objective account of satisfaction with their experience (Pearce, 2005). To this extent, a study on the satisfaction of volunteers in women's rugby in England was conducted to determine elements that the RFU need to look at in order to ensure more effective recruitment and retention of their volunteers.

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND SATISFACTION OF RUGBY VOLUNTEERS**

As noted earlier, the population of volunteers and participants in women's rugby in England is relatively small. A study on volunteers in women's rugby in England revealed that approximately 750 volunteers are formally associated with a female rugby club (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). This commentary further explores the population of volunteers in English female rugby clubs. By means of secondary desk research, snowball sampling and word of mouth initiatives with key stakeholders involved in women's rugby including a former RFU volunteer coordinator and the RFU East Midlands regional manager, an audit of respondents who formally volunteer in female rugby clubs were identified. The desk research identified a total of 100 rugby clubs taking part in the national league structure of women's rugby that had an active web-page or shared their contact information online. Initially, the researcher identified the contact details of the secretaries of these 100 female rugby clubs. The secretaries of these clubs were approached by email and asked to forward the link to an online survey to other key volunteers they have known of and were associated with their club. This snowball sampling technique gathered a sample of 168 volunteers. As mentioned, the study participants were invited to complete an online survey on their experiences, motivations and satisfaction with volunteering in women's rugby. Anecdotal evidence from regional managers of the RFU suggested that most female rugby clubs are run with help from a maximum of 5 specifically dedicated formal volunteers. This suggests that the population of formal rugby volunteers in women's rugby consists of approximately 500 individuals (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). Thus, the response rate achieved in this study (33.3%) was deemed satisfactory for empirical analysis.

The data revealed an equal gender distribution, which means that not a particular gender is favoured or more likely to volunteer in women's rugby

in England. On the contrary, it has been found that males are twice as likely to volunteer in sport in general than women (Sport England, 2003). It was also found that age groups between 25 to 60 years of age were more likely to volunteer in female rugby compared to other age groups followed by those aged between 45 to 59 years (24.8%). However, there seems to be a trend in westernised societies of people between the ages of 35 to 44 years being more likely to volunteer in sport (Nichols et al., 2016). This is also linked to the approximately 27% of the sample of the current study who had dependent children. This perhaps suggests fewer connections with having children as the main motivation to join a rugby club than in other sports. It has been noted that in community sport settings, parents are more likely to be asked to volunteer to help facilitate their children participation than in other settings (Sport England, 2003; Nichols et al., 2016). Interestingly, out of the 27% of volunteers with dependent children, 12.4% were aged between 35 to 44 years and 8.7% being between 45 to 59 years of age. As generally sport volunteers with dependent children are between 35 to 44 years of age (Nichols et al., 2016), this wider age profile of volunteers in women's rugby is reflective of either older volunteers experiencing fewer work and family constraints or that perhaps they have had children later in life. The participants were also identified as being highly-educated, with 66.6% of the sample having a degree. Highly educated individuals are generally more likely to volunteer in sport than others (Nichols et al., 2016). However, this high incidence of degree-level education is also context specific. As noted earlier, higher education has been instrumental in facilitating the establishment and growth of women's rugby. In 1983 members of university women rugby teams across the UK were the founders of the original Women's Rugby Football Union (WRFU) that became the Rugby Football Union for Women in 1994 focusing solely on the promotion and support of female English rugby teams (Houlihan & White, 2002). Finally, 92% of the sample was White-British and 79% in full-time employment. This further supports the broader demographic trends of volunteers in English sport clubs (Nichols et al., 2016).

The previous sport and volunteering experiences of the participants in the study were also explored. A higher engagement to sport generally, and

particularly with rugby was evident among the participants. For example, it was found that 60% of the sample were actively participating in rugby with a further 44.1% participating in other sports. Furthermore, approximately 67% of the sample were primarily volunteering in the women's game but also helping out with the junior and male sections of the club. This indicates the joint efforts with the men's game and further supports the evidence that women teams are sections of larger male rugby clubs (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). Interestingly, 31.7% of the participants were also volunteering elsewhere, however, they also noted that rugby was the primary activity that were involved in with. This shows a broader commitment to volunteering among this sample and hints at the potential of bridging social capital and the transfer of effort and volunteer skills across contexts (Putnam, 2000). Further, the participants reported that they have been volunteering for the same club for approximately 7.3 years, dedicating approximately 8.6 hours per week on average during the playing season with a further 6.5 hours on average out of season. This suggests that most club volunteers in women rugby are core, with a high degree of commitment to their respective club. The volunteer roles that the participants were more likely to undertake included coaching (26.2%), Committee members (11.3%), (9.5%) secretaries and (7.1%) being team captains. Finally, both altruistic and self-interest factors were deemed as important reasons for the participants to engage with volunteering in women's rugby. The desire to help people (Mean = 4.20), meeting the volunteer's needs and interests (Mean = 4.11), meeting the needs of family and friends (Mean = 3.67) and helping the community (Mean = 3.59) were noted as the most important in the women's rugby volunteering context.

Satisfaction with volunteers' experiences in female rugby clubs was also explored. A broad satisfaction with the experience was generally reported. The higher satisfaction scores among this volunteer sample were connected with overall satisfaction from the volunteering experience, the role undertaken and in particular its altruistic function in enabling the club to grow and sustain its activities as well as helping the community. In addition, rugby volunteers were generally satisfied with their relationships with co-workers within the club and group cohesion as well as with the opportunity

for personal growth, participation efficacy, tasks and assigned responsibilities. Moderate satisfaction was generally reported with regards to training, support received from the club and relationships within the club. This potentially shows that volunteers in women's rugby are left at their own devices to perform their tasks and there is no formal support and training mechanism in place to help them develop and perform effectively. Finally lower satisfaction scores were reported for job tasks, organisational support, rewards, communication and recognition from the club or the RFU. In particular, the volunteers in women's rugby expressed concerns with the lack of clarity with aspects related to volunteers' assignments, the club's goals and its general activities as well as what the expectations are from their clubs. An earlier study on volunteers in women's rugby in England found that dissatisfaction with clarity and communication practices within the club promote the likelihood of volunteers' substituting their efforts elsewhere as well as actively seeking of alternative contexts to volunteer to meet their needs (Koutrou & Downward, 2016).

## **CONCLUSION**

It is essential to sustain volunteer participation in sports by understanding why people volunteer and enhance volunteers' intrinsic satisfaction from the voluntary activity (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Sport organisations, club officials and national governing bodies should place more emphasis on identifying the various factors influencing volunteers' satisfaction with their experience (Chacon, Vecina, & Davila, 2007). This will inform volunteer recruitment strategies and will aid to the retention of a pool of trained and committed individuals willing for long-term engagement to the club. Without a dedicated pool of such volunteers the operations of the approximately 86,000 voluntary sport clubs in England would not be sustainable (Nichols et al., 2016). This is more likely to happen if the actual volunteering experience is satisfying, rewarding and meets volunteers' unique needs (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Consequently, satisfaction with the volunteering experience may lead to higher levels of



commitment with the sport organisation (Stebbins, 1996). This can be linked to the development of a network of experienced volunteers who develop core competences in running the sport and thus ensuring its sustainability (Farrell et al., 1998).

In summary, this chapter aimed to provide a comprehensive descriptive analysis of the characteristics and drives of volunteers in women's rugby in England and highlighted aspects of their experience that contributes to their satisfaction. The analysis focused upon 168 volunteers in female rugby clubs, which are taking part in the National League Structure of English rugby. The combination of altruistic and self-interest motivations was also relevant in this context confirming the broader sport volunteering literature (e.g., Sport England, 2003; Koutrou & Downward, 2016; Nichols et al., 2016) This case study further supports the broader volunteer satisfaction literature suggesting that both cognitive and affective components are important for determining satisfaction with the experience (Farrell et al., 1998; Milan & Esteban, 2004). volunteer satisfaction with the experience in sport clubs is not only related to fulfilling the volunteers' initial expectations, but depends on the extent volunteers are satisfied with their role, the support received, recognition and appreciation as well as on the communication within the club and relationships with co-workers. A previous study in the women's rugby context has confirmed the importance of these satisfaction variables and further supported that satisfaction with the volunteer role and the contribution made within the club increase the likelihood of volunteers continuing to volunteer in their respective clubs (Koutrou & Downward, 2016). Similarly, it has been reported that volunteers' understanding of their tasks and how to fulfil them is important for their satisfaction and lowers their perceived role ambiguity (Rogalsky et al., 2016). This is of particular importance, if sport clubs aim to retain and develop committed volunteers. Knowing the difference, one's role fulfilment makes to the organisation's goals and where each volunteer fits within the club may be vital for their satisfaction with their role. In particular, since volunteers do not expect financial rewards in return, they may place more value to the opportunities given to them for growth, achievement and self-actualisation, which as Herzberg (1966) would call

them are the motivators for a volunteer and may lead to their satisfaction. Consistent to previous research, it was found that volunteers in female rugby clubs are less likely to be satisfied with communication practices within their clubs, as well as the support and guidance received by their supervisors and this perhaps has affected their level of role clarity (Schulz & Auld, 2006). In general, the findings of this study highlight the importance of ensuring that volunteers are satisfied with their role, understand the value of their contribution, even if they perform less popular tasks, are supported to perform their duties throughout and are appreciated for their time and effort. Thus, to sustain their existing volunteer networks, female rugby clubs and the RFU need to work closely and ensure that their volunteers have a rewarding, meaningful experience by getting to know them, understand their skills and experiences, provide them with the necessary training and support, acknowledge their contribution both formally and informally through team building activities or special events and promote a rugby identity that is more collective than just the club, by bringing volunteers together to increase their sense of belonging to the wider rugby community and by helping them to understand the value of their contribution for the development and growth of women's rugby in England. Therefore, club officials and the RFU should pay attention to these satisfaction attributes in order to ensure high volunteer satisfaction and commitment for future volunteering.

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