



STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

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Abstract

This article deals with the issue of volunteering in sport. Participating in sport volunteering is beneficial because it increases social integration, social participation, and social awareness. With the growing importance of volunteering for both the volunteer and society, sport volunteering is becoming a phenomenon that fosters and encourages volunteer initiative. In Lithuania, volunteering in sport is still developing, so it is important to research the motivation of volunteers and direct their energy to volunteering.

The aim of the research is to reveal the attitude of students involved in sports towards sport volunteering from the gender point of view. The research was conducted in 2018–2019. The sample of research subjects was formed on the basis of criteria selection – 163 students of higher education institutions (102 from Klaipėda University and 61 from Lithuania Business University of Applied Sciences) participated in the research. The survey (written) was conducted by submitting questionnaires to the respondents in paper or electronic version. The research instrument consisted of 22 closed-ended questions aimed at revealing the attitudes and views of respondents towards volunteering in sport by gender. The methods of mathematical-statistical analysis were applied to data processing; statistical differences were evaluated using Chi-square (χ^2) criterion.

Main findings and value of the paper: research participants distinguished quite different psychological reasons that lead to volunteering. For male students it is more important to be part of the team (26.6%) and to feel valued, recognized (18.7%), whereas female students emphasize personal development (18.7%) and gaining self-confidence by participating in voluntary activities (12.5%), ($p < 0.001$). It was revealed that there was a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between the attitudes of male and female students towards the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer himself / herself. Most respondents, both male and female, see the benefits of volunteering in two areas: a way to try themselves in new activities and the opportunity to meet interesting people, share and obtain new ideas. However, male students find volunteering in those areas more beneficial than female students. It has been revealed that male students are ready to spend more time volunteering in sport than females, so this activity is more relevant for them ($p < 0.001$). More than a quarter (28.1%) of the male students from the research could volunteer up to 18 hours a week, while female students (23.4%) could devote up to 12 hours a week. Male research participants indicate the following opportunities: participation in sport activities (18.7%), acquisition of new skills (14.1%), while female participants emphasize better employment opportunities (17.2%), and acquisition of new skills (10.9%). A small percentage of females (3.1%) consider volunteering as an opportunity to participate in sport activities ($p < 0.001$).

KEY WORDS: attitude; volunteering in sport; motives for volunteering.

JEL: M12, I2, I23.

Introduction

The Law on Volunteering describes volunteering as a socially useful activity willingly carried out by a volunteer free of charge. Volunteering can be focused not only on the individual, but also on other goals, such as riverbank or forest management, assistance in sport competitions, and so on. (Malinauskas, 2010). Volunteers are actively involved in solving social, environmental problems, and other issues relevant to society (Kurapkaitienė & Sadauskas, 2013).

The issue of volunteering is still relevant because while volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations have adapted to a variety of changing circumstances, they are also likely to face many challenges in the future (Hoye, Cuskelly, Auld, Kappelides & Misener, 2019). It is therefore important to regularly measure and monitor the nature and extent of volunteer work.

In Europe, volunteering is a widespread civic engagement phenomenon. This can be illustrated by the fact that from 92 to 94 million adults (from 22% to 23% of the adult population) volunteer in the European Union (EU) (European Union, 2010). In Germany, for example, 2.8 million citizens participate in voluntary services in sport clubs (Wicker & Breuer, 2013). Approximately 10% of the population in Finland and 25% of the population in Holland volunteer in organizations related to sports (Groll, Koopmann, & Hansch, 2008).

Volunteering in Lithuania is taking up an increasing part of youth leisure. This phenomenon is gaining popularity and its benefits for young people are undeniable. This trend is revealed by the results of research conducted abroad (Aisbett & Hoye, 2015; Baxter, Kappelides, & Hoye, 2021; Hoye, Cuskelly, Auld, Kappelides & Misener, 2019; Schlesinger, & Nagel, 2016; Erturan-Ogut, 2014; Taylor, Panagouleas, & Nichols, 2012). Lithuanian scholars also analyse and research the importance of volunteering and the problems that hinder its development. Jonutytė (2007), in her work, presents volunteering in detail as an activity and as a phenomenon, Kurapkaitienė and Sadauskas (2013) revealed the links between volunteering and social work, Jezukevičiūtė and Skirmantienė (2015) analysed the importance of informally acquired competencies in the Lithuanian labour market. The spread of the volunteering phenomenon allows to supplement the resources of organizations, guarantees the transparency and openness of organizations hosting volunteers, and contributes to the development of public responsibility.

In scientific literature, volunteering is increasingly associated with the development of opportunities for young people to expand and improve their knowledge and skills (Jonutytė, 2007). In Lithuania, sport volunteering is still developing, so it is quite difficult to involve, attract and later retain volunteers, which is probably a more complicated process, as they need to be properly motivated and have their energy directed to

work. Also, to foster a sense of loyalty and develop a duty to work (Kerevičius, 2017). Other problems of volunteering are related to increasing requirements to special skills, lack of free time left after regular paid work, and growing disagreements about family responsibilities.

Despite a number of research on volunteering, its activities and the emerging trends, volunteering is still not given enough attention to make it attractive, promoting not only civic and social initiatives, but also personal self-expression and self-realization. In sport volunteering, a great deal of attention should be paid to the personal initiative of volunteers, its competence in planning and implementation, and the promotion of responsibility for the decisions made (Brabazon, Matisoff, & Ražaitis, 1999).

Scientific literature also distinguishes the benefits provided by sports volunteers, which interact with the problems inherent in volunteering: economy, competence and efficiency, motivation, large scope of sports activities and their exposure, retention of former athletes or sports professionals in sports, ensuring the relationship between sports organization and society, etc. So, this is what justifies the importance and benefits of sport volunteering not only for the volunteer himself / herself, but also for the organization and society.

It has been noticed that as the manifestation of various social problems increases in our society, the phenomenon of volunteering becomes especially vivid and important. The concept of volunteering varies depending on the goals and peculiarities of volunteering, but the main trends remain, emphasizing the main goals, grounds and guidelines of volunteering. With the growing importance of volunteering for both the volunteer and society, sport volunteering becomes a rather complex phenomenon, when the problems of sport volunteering interact with the fostering and promotion of volunteer initiative.

The aim of the research is to reveal the attitude of students involved in sports towards sport volunteering from the gender point of view.

Research methodology

A questionnaire prepared by the authors of the article, which was based on the studied sources of scientific literature, was chosen for the implementation of the research. The research instrument consisted of 22 closed-ended questions aimed at elucidating the attitudes of respondents towards volunteering in sport by gender. The questionnaire consists of two parts – demographic and diagnostic questions, which allow revealing the motives of students' choice of volunteering, the meaning of volunteering, the experience of volunteering by distinguishing the areas of volunteering in sport.

The research was conducted in 2018–2019. The sample of respondents was based on a criteria selection – 163 students of higher education institutions (102 from Klaipėda University and 61 from Lithuania Business University of Applied Sciences) participated in the research.

The survey (written) was conducted by submitting questionnaires to the respondents in paper or electronic version, i. e. by sending the questionnaire to the

respondent by email. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, but due to objective reasons (incorrect completion, failure to return the questionnaire to the research organizer, etc.) 163 participants took part in the research. Students of Klaipėda University accounted for 62.57 percent ($n = 102$) of the respondents, Lithuania Business University of Applied Sciences students – 37.4% ($n = 61$).

The distribution of the respondents by gender shows that 56% ($n=92$) of male students and 44% ($n=71$) of female students participated in the research. The distribution of the respondents by age reveals that 60.9% of students who participated in the research were 18-25 years old, a smaller part (32.7) was made up of students aged 25-35, and 6.3% of students were older than 35 years.

The distribution of students according to the experience in volunteering shows that the largest – up to 5 years – experience in sport was mostly attributed to students aged 18-25 (37.5%), whereas older students accounted for 22.0%. 10.9% of younger (18-25 years) and 4.5% of older (25-35 years) students had volunteering experience in sport up to 3 years. 9.3% of all respondents in various age groups have volunteered for the period of up to 1 year. 14.1% of the researched students of various age groups had no volunteering experience in sport.

Methods of mathematical-statistical analysis were applied to data processing. Statistical differences were evaluated using Chi-square (χ^2) criterion. The difference is considered statistically significant when the confidence level is $p < 0.05$. Mathematical statistical analysis of data was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 22.0 for Windows.

Research results

During the research, it was important to reveal the subjects' attitudes and motives that encouraged them to participate in voluntary sports activities. The results are presented from a gender perspective. Fig. 1 presents the attitudes of the respondents (male and female students) towards participation in voluntary sports activities.

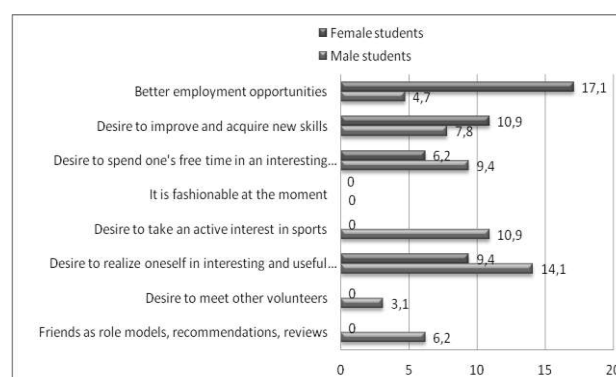


Fig. 1 Students' attitudes towards participation in voluntary sports activities by gender (%)

Relatively most (17.1%) of the female students who participated in the research expressed the attitude that they would be more actively involved in volunteering if it increased their employability, created opportunities to

develop and acquire new skills (10.9%), and enabled them to realize themselves in an interesting and at the same time a beneficial environment for others (9.4%).

A relatively large part (14.1%) of male respondents indicate that they would be more motivated to participate in voluntary sport activities by the following factors: opportunities to realize themselves in interesting and useful activities, desire to take an active interest in sports (10.9%), desire to spend one's free time in an interesting way (9.4%).

The aim was to find out the motives that led to participation in voluntary sport activities (Figure 2).

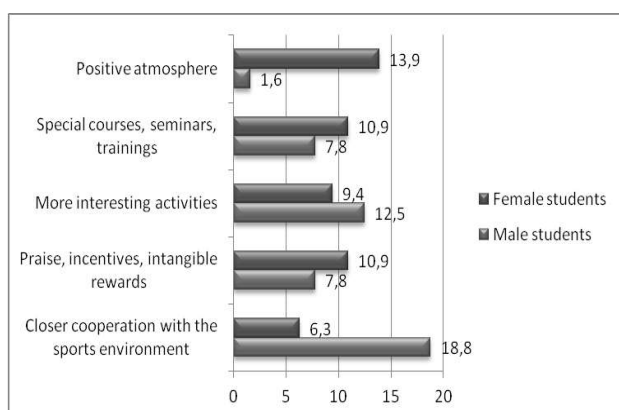


Fig. 2 Distribution of the most significant volunteering motives by gender (%)

The relatively largest number of male students who participated in the research (18.8%) indicate that the most significant motivating factors are closer cooperation with the sports environment, more interesting activities (12.5%), praise and incentives (7.8%), motivation to participate in special volunteer development courses (7.8%).

The female participants of the research distinguish other most significant motives of volunteering – positive atmosphere (13.9%), praise (10.9%), motive to participate in volunteer development courses (10.9%), as well as the importance of more interesting activities (9.4%). It can be observed that more male than female students focus on closer cooperation with the sports environment, whereas female participants of the research do not emphasize this motive of volunteering. Both groups of research participants – females and males – emphasize that volunteers would be even more motivated by more interesting activities, a better incentive system, special volunteer courses and other training.

Another question of the survey was aimed at finding out the psychological reasons of the respondents, which may lead to active volunteering (Figure 3).

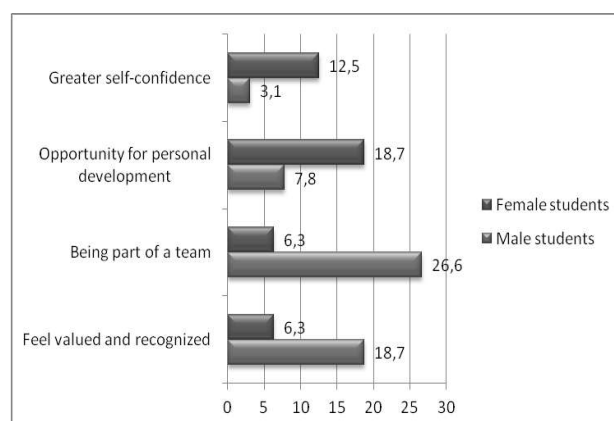


Fig. 3 Psychological reasons for choosing volunteering (%)

The relatively largest part (26.6%) of male students reveal that it is important for them to feel part of the team when volunteering, for 18.7% of male students it is important to feel valued and recognized. These psychological reasons are not so important for another group of respondents – female students, because they emphasize completely different reasons for volunteering – opportunities for personal development (18.7%) and the opportunity to gain more self-confidence (12.5%), ($t=45.927$, $df=3$, $p=0.000$), ($p<0.001$).

It can be stated that male students are more focused on the desire to be useful to the team, group, community, while female students pay more attention to personal development and gaining experience. This suggests that research participants indicate quite different psychological reasons for volunteering.

The aim of the research was to find out the respondents' attitudes about the factors that hinder volunteering (Figure 4).

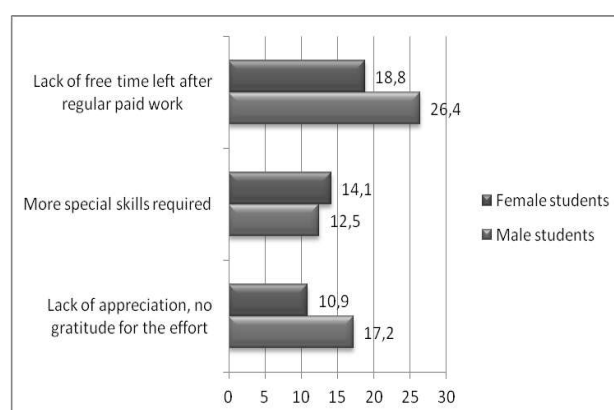


Fig. 4 Students' attitudes towards factors hindering volunteering (%)

The data show that a relatively large part of both male (26.4%) and female (18.8%) students indicated a lack of free time as the main factor hindering volunteering in sport ($p>0.05$). The distribution of responses shows that respondents (17.2% of male and 10.9% of female students) also lack a positive evaluation of volunteering activity. Some students mentioned the need for special knowledge and skills, the lack of which hinders volunteering in sport (12.5% of male students and 14.1% of female students).

The research revealed the respondents' attitudes to the factors that encourage more active participation in volunteering. The study data are presented in Figure 5.

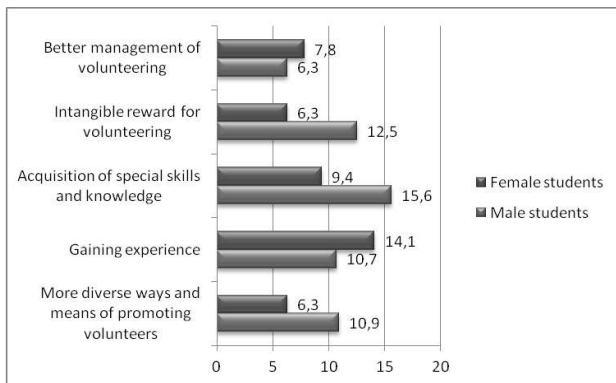


Fig. 5 Factors encouraging students to participate more actively in volunteering (%)

It can be stated that male research participants would be encouraged to become more involved in volunteering by acquiring special skills and knowledge (15.6%), intangible reward for volunteering (12.5%), more diverse ways and means of encouraging and motivating volunteers (10.9%). Gaining experience as an important factor is indicated by both male (10.7%) and female (14.1%) students, thus, this tendency is relevant for both groups of respondents ($p > 0.05$).

The research was aimed at identifying areas of volunteering that were attractive to respondents in which they could contribute to the organization of sport events. The results of the research are represented in Figure 6.

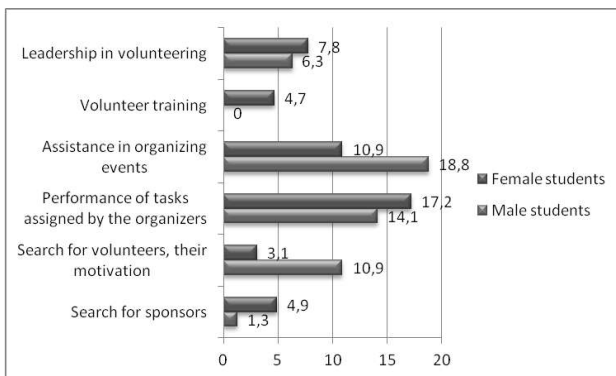


Fig. 6 Distribution of students by attractive areas of volunteering (%)

The data obtained during the research reveals that 18.8% of the male students participating in the research would like to contribute to the organization of sport events, 14.1% – to perform the tasks assigned by the organizers, 10.9% – would like to look for new volunteers and motivate them.

The female participants of the research give priority to the performance of tasks assigned by the organizers (17.2%) and the opportunity to contribute to the organization of sport events (10.9%), they would like to be in charge of voluntary activities (7.8%), search for new volunteers and motivate them (10.9%), search for sponsors (4.9%).

In general, it was observed that the female students of the research focused on slightly more passive areas of volunteering, while the male students chose more active volunteering methods, but no statistically significant differences were found in terms of gender ($p > 0.05$).

The research aimed to find out how much time respondents could devote to volunteering (Figure 7).

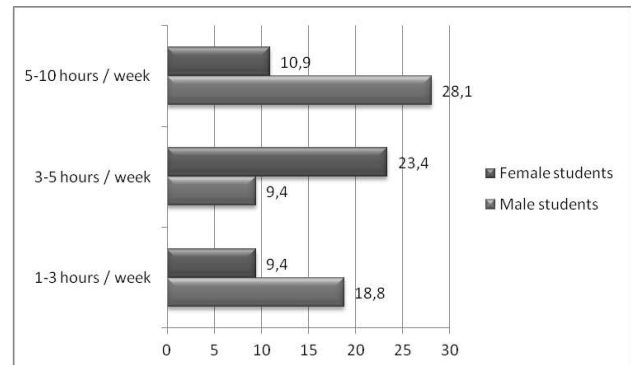


Fig. 7 Distribution of time devoted to volunteering per week by gender (%)

The analysis of the data suggests that 28.1% of the male students from the research could volunteer between 5 and 10 hours per week. Also, a significant proportion of male respondents (18.8%) could devote about 1-3 hours a week to volunteering. This shows that male students are ready to spend more time on volunteering in sport than female students and this activity is more relevant for them ($t=25.514$, $df=2$, $p=0.000$), ($p < 0.001$).

The female students of the research (23.4%) indicated that they could devote 3-5 hours per week to volunteering, and from 5 to 10 hours per week could be performed by 10.9%. Summarizing the results of the research, it can be noticed that male research participants may devote more time to volunteering than female research participants. Such research results may be determined by the subjects' personal attitudes, interests and priorities.

It was also aimed at finding out the respondents' attitudes about the meaning of volunteering. The data presented in Fig. 8 reveals that the majority of male respondents perceive the meaning of volunteering by the fact that volunteering is beneficial to the community (15.6%).

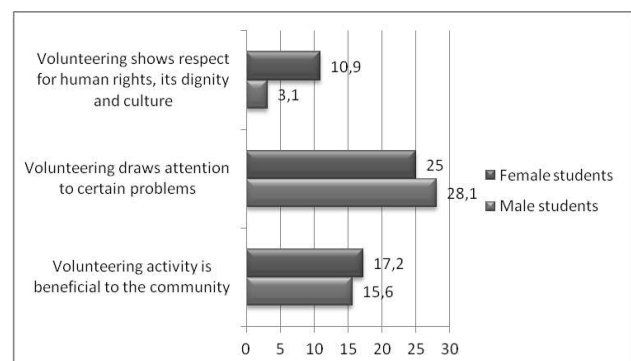


Fig. 8 Students' attitudes towards the meaning of volunteering (%)

The respondents of both genders see the meaning in volunteering as it draws attention to certain issues relevant to our society (28.1% of males and 25.0% of females).

Female students (53.1% overall) expressed more positive attitudes towards volunteering in sport than male students (46.8% overall). More female students (10.9%) than male students (3.1%) emphasized the connection between volunteering and human rights, its dignity and cultural values, ($p > 0.05$).

It can be noticed that these attitudes towards volunteering in sport are similar between the two groups of respondents: both male and female students, as a significant factor is that volunteering is not only valued for personal benefit to the volunteer but emphasizes the pursuit to benefit others, to pay attention to the problems which are sensitive to the society and to solve them.

The aim of the research was to find out how students understand the main advantages and benefits of volunteering at various sport events. The research data are represented in Figures 9 and 10.

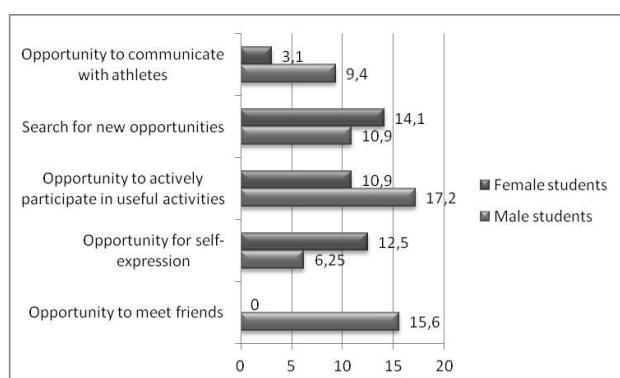


Fig. 9 Students' attitude towards the advantages of volunteering in sport (%)

Relative majority of male students in the research notice that volunteering at various sport events is important for them because of the opportunity to actively participate in useful activities (17.2%), meet friends (15.6%), communicate with athletes (9.4%), look for new opportunities (10.9%), realize oneself (6.25%). The female participants of the research evaluate volunteering in various sport events as an excellent form of self-expression (12.5%) and a way to search for new opportunities (14.1%), as well as highlight the importance of active participation in a useful environment for oneself and others (10.9%). In conclusion, male students associate volunteering at various sport events with leisure, good way of spending it, positive emotions, active participation in useful activities, whereas for female students the form of self-expression, the search for new opportunities are more important.

It was expedient to find out the opinion of the respondents as to why volunteering in various sport competitions can be beneficial for the volunteer himself / herself (Figure 10). The presented data disclosed that many respondents – both male and female students – understand the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer as a way to try themselves in new activities (21.8% of males, 14.1% of females), realization of young people's ideas and activity (28.1% of males and 17.2% of

females). These two emerging trends are relevant for both groups of the respondents, but there were significant statistical differences in terms of gender ($t=10.715$, $df=3$, $p=0.013$), ($p < 0.05$), as more male than female students see benefits for themselves in these areas of volunteering.

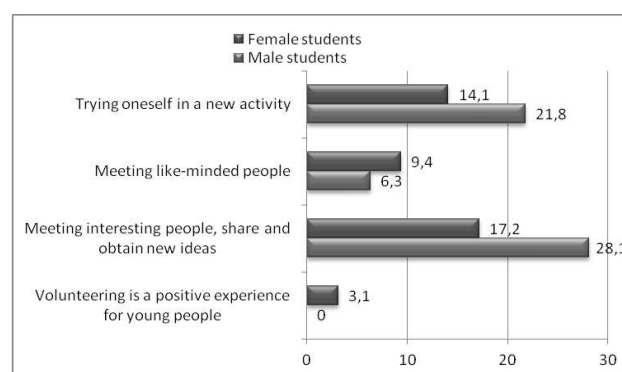


Fig. 10 Students' attitudes towards the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer himself / herself (%)

The female participants of the research also emphasize that volunteering at various sport events gives the volunteer the opportunity to meet like-minded people (9.4%) and to gain a positive experience (3.1%), which can be useful later in life. In conclusion, it can be stated that all research participants subjectively evaluate the benefits of volunteering as an opportunity for the realization of their ideas, dissemination of activity, self-expression.

The research was aimed at finding out the respondents' opinion about the opportunities provided by volunteering in sport (Figure 11).

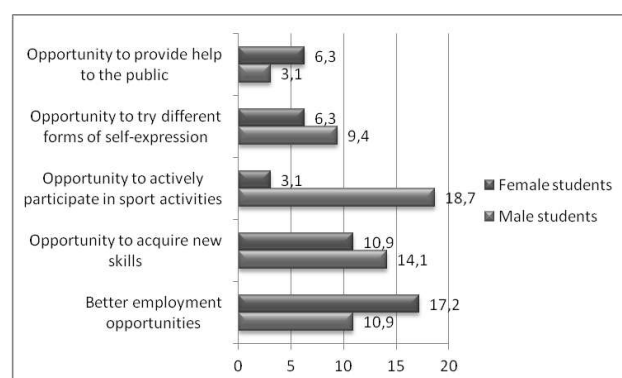


Fig. 11 Students' opinion about the opportunities provided by volunteering in sport (%)

It is observed that the research participants perceive different opportunities according to gender. When participating in voluntary related to sport, male participants see the following opportunities: to participate in sport activities (18.7%), to acquire new skills (14.1%), to get a job (10.9%), to try other forms of self-expression (9.4%). The female students of the research emphasize better employment opportunities (17.2%) and new skills (10.9%), ($t=21.886$, $df=4$, $p=0.000$), ($p < 0.001$). It is interesting to note that only a small proportion of female students (3.1%) see volunteering as an opportunity to participate in sport activities. Thus, they see volunteering in a broader context, i. e. not just in sports.

Discussion

Volunteering motives are one of the most important reasons why students choose to volunteer in sport. An analysis of students' attitudes towards volunteering in sport and their motives in terms of gender revealed similarities and differences with research conducted by other researchers.

Kerevičius (2017) found that the most important motivating factors for volunteers in sport are future career opportunities in the field of sports, values, networking, making new acquaintances, desire to communicate and interest in sports, and the least important factor is external reward. A similar trend was observed in other studies conducted by Lithuanian sports organizations (Šimkus, Fominiene, & Ivanova, 2014). The analysis of the motives and attitudes of volunteering in our research shows that a number of similarities and differences have been identified: it is important for female respondents to increase their employability, develop and acquire new skills, whereas for male students it is important to have the opportunity to realize oneself, the desire to take an active interest in sports, to spend their free time in an interesting way. The motive for external reward was not identified in our research. Dromantaitė-Stancikienė and Gincitienė (2014) state that the young age of female respondents can explain why career-related motives are so important – they seek to find a job and establish themselves, to take better positions. In the research of volunteering conducted by Šimkus et al. (2014), achievements and careers were more important for men than for women.

The respondents of our research indicate that when deciding to participate in volunteering in sport, the desire to realize themselves in an interesting and at the same time beneficial environment for others is important to them – this reason is more important for males than for females. Laskienė and Anusauskaitė (2008) note that young people decide to volunteer in sport sector because it is interesting for most young people to try it. Thus, the reasons for volunteering in sport indicated by our research respondents are similar.

The research conducted by Kerevičius (2017) revealed that there is a link between motivation and satisfaction with volunteering. Motivated sport volunteers are more satisfied with their work. Females were found to be more satisfied with volunteering in sport than males. Urbikienė (2010) notes that young people are motivated by the activities they support and believe in, which not only perfectly reveals their personality, but also helps them to get internal satisfaction and motivate them to work even better.

The participants of our research state that sport is a great opportunity for young people to participate in volunteering. One of the most important motives for volunteering in sport is closer cooperation with the sports environment. Laskienė and Anusauskaitė (2008) note that there were statistically significant differences between males and females in the internal motivation that led them to become sport volunteers: most females thought that volunteering in the sports sector was an opportunity to acquire satisfying new skills, and males were more motivated by personal sports interests. Only a small part

of females see volunteering as an opportunity to participate in sports.

According to the data of our research, most of the male students indicate that the most significant motivating factors for volunteers are closer cooperation with the sports environment, more interesting activities, praises and incentives, special volunteer development courses. The female research participants single out other factors that promote volunteering – praises, special volunteer training courses, interesting activities, meaningfulness of participation, positive atmosphere. According to the research conducted by Brusokas and Mikalauskas (2019), students are motivated by the desire to continue their involvement in sports. Noordegraaf and Celebi (2015) revealed that sport as a phenomenon remains a more important motive for males because they are not inclined to form emotional connections with other volunteers during volunteering. Anusauskaitė (2007) states that the desire to be among athletes as an important motive to participate in volunteering in sport was expressed almost equally by both females and males. According to our research, this reason to become a volunteer is more common among male students.

By analysing the psychological reasons that determine the choice of volunteering, our research revealed that to feel valued, recognized is a particularly important psychological reason for male volunteer, whereas female volunteers find opportunities for personal development more important. Downward, Lumsdon and Ralston (2007) note that the benefits and status of volunteering, as well as recognized qualifications that allow younger volunteers to demonstrate the acquisition of valuable skills, can be useful in attracting new members. Rawle (2004) and Ellis (2002) emphasize the need for young volunteers to gain recognition, gain practical experience, plan, organize work, participate in matches, competitions, sports festivals, and other sporting events; they must be supported and endorsed. The analysis of Urbikienė's (2010) data showed that the following motives encourage young people to participate in voluntary activities the most: realization of their talents and the opportunity to help others. The students mentioned the least important motives: greater respect for friends and the opportunity to emphasize their uniqueness.

Another psychological reason for choosing volunteering is the desire to gain more self-confidence. Volunteering is a great way to learn more about each other and develop a sense of responsibility in organizing work in a team and a sense of self-confidence (Cravens, 2006). Our research revealed that the desire to gain greater self-confidence is a more important reason for females to volunteer.

Our research revealed that male and female research participants see different opportunities for volunteering: male students see greater opportunities to participate in sports, acquire new skills, try other forms of self-expression, while female students emphasize greater employability and new skills. Burgham and Downward (2005) note that the results of volunteering can be seen as a kind of discovery where relevant skills can be used.

Participating in sport volunteering makes sense because volunteering in sport increases social integration, social participation and social awareness. According to the research conducted by Brusokas and Mikalauskas (2019), volunteers indicate that their voluntary activities are significant for them. Our research attempted to reveal how students perceive the meaning of volunteering in sport. It has been found that volunteering is not only valued in terms of personal benefits to the volunteer himself / herself, and both genders see meaning in volunteering because it draws attention to certain issues relevant to our society. More male than female students emphasize the benefit of volunteering to the community.

Kerevičius (2017) states that the need for females to volunteer in sport is related to values. The results of our research show that more female than male students emphasized the connection between volunteering and human rights, its dignity and cultural values.

Erturan-Ogut (2014) notes that volunteers in sport besides a career, gain a variety of social and personal benefits. Participation in volunteering is a win-win situation. Youth volunteering projects could improve individual development, social integration, social participation and social awareness. Urbikienė (2010) notes that volunteering benefits the object and subject of activity: young people want and have the opportunity to help others by realising themselves and doing what is interesting and educating. Jankauskaitė (2011) presents volunteering as a way of trying to discover and test oneself in community activities, which leads to self-awareness and discovery.

For most of the male respondents of our research, it is important that volunteering provides an opportunity to feel part of the team. These psychological reasons are not so important for another group of respondents – female students, because they emphasize other reasons for volunteering – the opportunity for personal development and the opportunity for greater self-confidence. Gaining new experience through volunteering is important for respondents of both genders.

A significant number of the males in our research notice that volunteering at various sport events is important to them because of the opportunity to meet friends. The respondents attribute this to the benefits of volunteering. Brusokas and Mikalauskas (2019) found statistically significant relationships between the opportunity to find like-minded people, build friendships, and establish their social status. Cravens (2006) notes that many people like to volunteer in a team, which can be just a group of friends who like to spend their free time together. Volunteers who work in a team are friends with the people or organizations they help to, they also believe in their work and are committed to it. In the research conducted by Laskienė and Anusauskaitė (2008), members of the Sports Volunteer Union agreed that social (communication) element is more important for them in volunteering than physical activity. This is confirmed by Urbikienė's (2010) research that young people also tend to engage in activities that involve their peers. Bakken and Ulseth (2004) researched the possibilities of an integrative role in volunteering in sport and found that females experience new forms of friendships much more often than males, and they also

maintain these relationships for longer in their gathering places. Schlesinger and Nagel (2016) argue that identification with one's club, positive (collective) solidarity, and job satisfaction are important for volunteering. In addition to these factors, the context also plays an important role.

It is extremely important for young people to reveal their strengths, which areas they like and succeed in while doing what they are capable of. This can be most evident when a person acts in an area that is acceptable to him / her, supports his / her idea, and satisfies like-minded people (Urbikienė, 2010). The organization and services of volunteers can be attractive to volunteers when that matches their strengths and expectations, when volunteers are allowed to choose the type of activity that best meets their physical and emotional needs. Whether volunteering will continue mostly depends on the type of tasks and the resulting satisfaction (Chelladurai, 2005). The data from our research show that there are statistically significant differences by gender in choosing an area where students would like to volunteer: male students are more active and willing to help to organize events, while female students choose a more passive role and would like to perform tasks assigned by organizers.

The volunteer willingly devotes his or her time to solving other people's problems. The majority of both male and female students of the research indicated a lack of free time after work as a major factor hindering their participation in volunteering. This is confirmed by the research of other authors (Laskienė & Anusauskaitė, 2008; Taylor et al., 2012) where the relation between the lack of free time with the activity in volunteering has been established. The scientific literature (Laskienė & Anusauskaitė, 2008) indicates that the difference between the decision to become a volunteer and the time spent on this activity is very important. The volunteers from the Sports Union who participated in Anusauskaitė's (2007) research indicate that they volunteer in sports sector for an average of 1 to 3 hours per week. According to our research, male students could dedicate between 5 and 10 per week, and female students – half as much – up to 5 hours per week. Studies by other authors (Taylor et al., 2012) also confirm that the time spent volunteering in sport varies greatly depending on gender, age, and employment, but not on education and income.

The results of our research show that one of the barriers to volunteering in sport is too little incentive for volunteers. They indicate that they would like to receive praise or a wider range of incentives. However, the research of other authors (Schlesinger & Nagel, 2016) shows that specific incentives for volunteering do not have a significant impact on voluntary commitments.

Volunteering means using one's abilities and experience, acquiring new skills, changing social life (Bružienė, 2002). Professional skills in volunteering are reflected in the nature and practice of volunteering. Karasevičiūtė (2013) states that volunteering could be differentiated according to the profession or it could be one of the criteria when choosing a volunteer to perform a certain activity. Thus, institutions of different sectors are looking for a person who would be a professional in their field, able to combine his / her knowledge with practice, be responsible, creative and innovative.

Participants in our research also highlighted that they sometimes lack specialized knowledge and skills to volunteer in the field of sport. Thus, it can be argued that a person who has the opportunity to volunteer in a field related to his or her profession could develop his or her professional competencies and gain better employment opportunities. This is confirmed by previous research (Butkuvienė, 2005; Jonutytė, 2007; Šedienė, Rossbachas, & Valauskaitė, 2011), which presents participation in volunteering as an opportunity to acquire new knowledge and professional skills (teamwork, leadership) and use them for more successful establishment in the labour market.

The volunteer leader must have a thorough knowledge of both psychological and managerial features in order to communicate and collaborate properly. Volunteers will then, based on personal psychological motives, work successfully and enjoy even unpaid activities. Laskienė and Anusauskaitė (2008) state that a great deal of attention must be paid to the personal initiative of volunteers, the competence of planning and implementation, and the promotion of responsibility for the decisions made. Planning and coordination, organization and ability to organise are the most important factors for successful volunteering, and “if they stand and wait for instructions without knowing what to do, such activities are considered unproductive. The most effective workday for volunteers is also their happiest day” (Anusauskaitė, 2007, p. 52). This is confirmed by the research data we received, where students indicate that good volunteering management is important to them in order to encourage them to become even more active in volunteering.

Brusokas and Mikalauskas (2019) point out that the promotion of volunteering can manifest itself through motivation, support, training and events of volunteers. Tamutienė and Šimkus (2012) also state that in the stage of planning volunteering activities it is very important not only to understand the motives of volunteers and assess their needs, but also to assess risks, improve selection, and in the management stage – to organize volunteer training, support, monitoring, coordination and evaluation, in the empowerment stage – to improve the involvement of volunteers in the decision-making process. Recent research on volunteering in sport (Hoye et al., 2019) also highlights the importance of volunteer psychology and management in recruiting, supporting, and developing volunteers.

Comparing the research results of our and other authors (Brusokas & Mikalauskas, 2019; Kerevičius, 2017; Laskienė & Anusauskaitė, 2008; Noordegraaf & Celebi, 2015; Schlesinger & Nagel, 2016), it can be stated that students are quite positive about volunteering activities in sport. Respondents of both genders had sufficient volunteering experience to reveal specific respondents’ attitudes towards volunteering in sport. Factors that encourage or inhibit respondents’ participation in volunteering, as well as certain expectations of volunteers, have also emerged. Our research revealed that respondents identify the expectation of gaining more practical experience and special skills and knowledge, and emphasize the

importance of better volunteer management that would help them to become more active.

Conclusions

The research participants singled out quite different psychological reasons that lead to volunteering. For male students it is more important to be part of the team (26.6%) and to feel valued, recognized (18.7%), whereas female students emphasized the importance of personal development (18.7%) and gaining self-confidence by participating in voluntary activities (12.5%), ($p < 0.001$).

It was revealed that there was a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between male and female students’ attitudes towards the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer himself / herself. Most respondents, both males and females, see the benefits of volunteering in two areas: a way to try themselves in new activities and the opportunity to meet interesting people, share and obtain new ideas. However, male students find volunteering in those areas more beneficial than female students.

It was revealed that male students are ready to spend more time volunteering in sport than female students, so this activity is more relevant for them ($p < 0.001$). More than a quarter (28.1%) of males of the research could volunteer up to 18 hours a week, while females (23.4%) could devote up to 12 hours per week.

The male research participants see the following opportunities: participation in sport activities (18.7%), acquiring new skills (14.1%), while female students emphasize better employment opportunities (17.2%) and acquiring new skills (10.9%). A small proportion of females (3.1%) consider volunteering as an opportunity to participate in sport activities ($p < 0.001$).

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