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Sport organizations often rely heavily on volunteers as a vital human resource to accomplish goals and missions. As the popularity of football bowl games has increased, organizers are placing more focus on staging ancillary events, indicating a heightened dependency on sport volunteers. Despite the growing scholarship on sport volunteers, one unexplored avenue within this literature is engagement, which allows organizations to retain and motivate individual volunteers. This study utilizes Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement to explore the role of engagement levels among volunteers at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) bowl games and how engagement relates to the recruiting and retaining of those individuals. While conducted in the context of college bowl games, college sport organizations who rely on volunteer support will be able to use findings to find more meaningful roles for their volunteers ensuring higher retention and support for this vital human resource.

Numerous organizations, especially in the nonprofit sector, rely heavily on volunteers to offer and provide services to carry out successful event operations. Within the context of sport, many organizations rely on the volunteer force to function, and more importantly, survive (Chelladurai, 2006; Cuskelly, 2004; Kim et al., 2007). This notion is particularly relevant in the college sport landscape, as the use of volunteers continues to be important (Bae et al., 2011). Additionally, over the past few years, the staging of major events has witnessed a growth in recruiting volunteers to ensure success (Allen & Shaw, 2009). One such example of a major sport event is that of postseason bowl games, which have become a multi-million-dollar industry and are among the most anticipated sporting events hosted in the United States annually (Ours, 2004; Seifried et al., 2018, 2019).

Notably, while event organizers are in need of volunteers, those who would volunteer are engaging less in those roles (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Cuskelly, 2004; Cuskelly et al., 2006). Research has reported a decline of volunteers in the United States (Ringuet-Riot et al., 2014; Warner et al., 2011). Therefore, sport organizations that rely heavily on volunteers are forced to compete to obtain them from a shrinking recruitment pool. Thus, a consensus among scholars is that the recruitment and retention of sport volunteers remains an important issue for sport managers (Wicker et al., 2014), in particular for those sponsoring college sport events because revenues gained from postseason bowl games have been instrumental in the financial viability of college sports programs (Jensen & Caneja, 2018; Wanless et al., 2019). Engagement regarding volunteers has been studied in for-profit and non-profit management fields for quite some time, growing within sport management over the past two decades (Wicker, 2017). Scholars pointed to the fundamental role volunteers play within the sport context, making them a necessity not only in regard to staging sporting events, but also in providing a helping hand for sport clubs and organizations (Adams & Deane, 2009; Cnaan & Godberg-Glen, 1991; Fairley et al., 2007; Getz, 1997; Kodama et al., 2013; Lasby & Sperling, 2007; Schlesinger et al., 2015).

Within sport, previous literature specifically examined volunteers' motivation (e.g., Bang & Ross, 2009; Farrell et al., 1998), satisfaction (e.g., Fairley et al., 2007; Reeser et al., 2005), and commitment (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Green & Chalip, 2004; Park & Kim, 2013). Simultaneously, the experiences of volunteers (Rogalsky et al., 2016; Sheptak & Menaker, 2016), along with perceptions to better understand how to recruit (Coyne & Coyne, 2001; Cuskelly, 2004) and retain them (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2007) have been explored. Locke and colleagues (2003) suggested poor management of volunteers is a factor for individuals to leave organizations along with not feeling valued, decreased levels of motivation and satisfaction, and having bad experiences (Green & Chalip, 2004; Fairley et al., 2007; Rogalsky et al., 2016). The ability to manage volunteers successfully plays a crucial role in addressing the continuous challenges of recruitment and retention strategies, which few scholars have focused on (Allen & Bartle, 2014; Cuskelly et al., 2006; Warner et al., 2011; Welty Peachey et al., 2013).

In sport management, researchers have primarily used the term volunteer engagement to describe why individuals chose to assume roles as volunteers and how much time they dedicate to do so (Hallmann & Harms, 2012; Swierzy et al., 2018; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). However, the term engagement has taken on several meanings in general management literature, with many stemming from Kahn's (1990) seminal approach towards personal engagement which goes beyond just motivation and choice, but focuses on psychological aspects such as effort,

meaningfulness and involvement in work (e.g., Harter et al., 2002; Shuck, 2011). Prior research on sport volunteers, however, has not examined this definition of engagement, specifically from a human resource perspective. Shuck and Reio (2014) defined human resource engagement "as a series of active and positive psychological states (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral)" (p. 47), underlining one's motivation with the intent to act. In this sense, human resource engagement represents a unique construct that influences one's role performance in the work environment (Saks, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of human resource engagement, operationalized hereafter as engagement, and how engagement influences a volunteer's behavior to ensure the successful staging of sporting events such as college postseason bowl games.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Scholars routinely position engagement as a unique construct with its own framework (Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Shuck et al., 2014). Specifically, human resource engagement can be defined as a series of active and positive psychological states (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) that are separate from already existing engagement-like constructs such as work engagement, organizational engagement, and job engagement. The intent to act prominently underlines one's motivation for engagement, which distinguishes engagement from other constructs (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Shuck et al., 2012; Shuck et al., 2011) as it "describes an active motivational state encapsulating the full working experience" (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2017, p. 958). Overall, engagement is a personally driven concept, meaning individuals choose the degree of their engagement (Harter et al., 2002; Wagner & Harter, 2006).

Kahn's Theory of Engagement: Need-Satisfying Approach

Kahn (1990) suggested an individual's experiences are indicators for engaged or disengaged behavior within the work context. These influences on engagement for individuals regarding their role performance can be complex. Factors such as emotional reactions/responses, personal experiences within the work context, and personal performance are indicators that shape the understanding as to why individuals are more or less psychologically present at work and how it affects engagement. Kahn (1990) defined personal engagement at work as "the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work role; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances," (p. 694). Further, the concept of disengagement demonstrates a withdrawal behavior from employees to apply physical, cognitive, or emotional energy toward their job performance. Thus, when feelings of disconnect surface between the personal self from their respective roles at work, employees can become disengaged. To assess if one is engaged or disengaged at work, an individual will subconsciously ask the following three questions, appealing to three psychological conditions: "(1) How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this performance?; (2) How safe is it to do so?; and (3) How available am I to do so?" (Kahn, 1990, p. 703).

Based on these questions, Kahn (1990) proposed the three psychological conditions of psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability as major components of engagement. First, psychological meaningfulness is linked to work elements that encourages or hinders engagement. Psychological safety aligns more with social systems to

become engaged. Lastly, psychological availability is described as possessing resources to engage in role performance, which some individuals experience more or less.

Psychological Meaningfulness. Psychological meaningfulness can be described as deriving meaning from one's work while also receiving a return on investment based on their role performance (Kahn, 1990). People experience meaningfulness when they perceive to be valued and feel useful while also not taken for granted. Additionally, when individuals perceive their input could make a difference, they will associate more meaningfulness with their job. However, as soon as employees feel their performance did not matter, little was asked of them, or expectations were lowered, a lack of meaningfulness can emerge. From a general understanding, one can link those perceptions back to another concept as to how individuals invest themselves not only into their tasks at work (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), but also their roles (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986) that positively affect others and satisfy one's personal needs (Maslow, 1954). Therefore, the first hypothesis stated:

Hypothesis 1 (H₁):   Psychological meaningfulness will be positively associated with increased levels of engagement.

Psychological Safety. Psychological safety can be described as being "able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). Situations, which are predictable, clear, and consistent allow people to feel safe, which in turn positively affects their trust development. Additionally, employees perceive that their personal engagement will not negatively affect them. Based on Kahn (1990), psychological safety is directly influenced by "interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style and process, and organizational norms" (Sung, 2017, p. 78). As a result, the second hypothesis stated:

Hypothesis 2 (H₂):   Psychological safety will be positively associated with increased levels of engagement.

Psychological Availability. Lastly, psychological availability is described as having physical, emotional, or psychological resources available that are vital for the individual to engage at a certain point in time regarding their role performance (Kahn, 1990). Individuals can be exposed to various distractions that have a direct influence on their level of engagement. One can express heightened or lower levels of engagement depending on how one deals with work and outside of work-related aspects. The four types of distractions that are negatively related to psychological availability are "depletion of physical energy, depletion of emotional energy, individual insecurity, and outside lives" (Jacobs, 2013, p. 15). As a result, organizations that have those resources available will experience more engaged employees within their setting (Kahn, 1990). Thus, the third hypothesis stated:

Hypothesis 3 (H₃):   Psychological availability will be positively associated with increased levels of engagement.

Similar to Kahn (1990), the majority of prior studies focused on identifying an individual's level of engagement. However, few have focused on organizational outcomes of this

engagement (Czarnowsky, 2008; Maslach et al., 2001). Since engagement is a personally driven concept, studying individuals' choice/degree of engagement could be used to create improved organizational work climates related to attitude, intention, and behavior (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; Wagner & Harter, 2006). Therefore, organizations need to better understand individual engagement to foster advantages and strong work climates. This conceptualization focuses on a full-spectrum experience of an individual rather than just one particular facet such as work, the organization, or one's job.

The Three Dimensions of Engagement

More recent literature has emerged regarding engagement, with the development of three dimensions: (1) cognitive engagement, (2) emotional engagement, and (3) behavioral engagement (Rich et al., 2010; Shuck, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Saks (2006) argued engagement does represent a unique construct because of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that influence one's role performance in the work environment. Shuck and Reio (2014) proposed that all three components work together, while Shuck, Osam, et al., (2017) also supported this notion as they view the three dimensions as interdimensional, unique, and symbiotic.

Cognitive Engagement. Kahn (1990) suggested that cognitive engagement means to invest mental energy into one's work role, or to be mentally immersed into work, allowing employees to be vigilant, focused, and attentive. As a result, cognitively engaged individuals are more attentive toward work-related activities and positive organizational outcomes, especially when individuals perceive their assigned or chosen tasks to be meaningful and safe along with being presented appropriate resources to get the work done (Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002a; Shuck et al., 2014). This includes any work-related experiences with one's job, the actual work, or the active role one holds while working (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2017). As previous literature made a case for having different types of engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks 2006), it would be important for organizations to understand what type of antecedents influence each engagement type. Cognitive engagement precedes an individual's decision-making that would result in his/her behavior to be engaged. It is necessary to concentrate on this area first rather than an individual's behavioral engagement when implementing development activities (i.e., training sessions) (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). For example, cognitively engaged individuals are mentally absorbed in their work because they see themselves contributing something of value and find meaning in their assignment (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2017).

Emotional Engagement. Emotional engagement is described as an individual's willingness to invest themselves emotionally into their work and toward positive organizational outcomes (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck et al., 2014; Shuck, Osam et al., 2017). A deepened level of emotional engagement allows employees to invest personal resources into affective appraisal and experiences, such as value, feeling a sense of personal meaning, believing, or connectedness to one's work role and overall work experience (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2017). At the same time, individuals with higher levels of emotional engagement are more attached and feel connected to the organization (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Here, it is important to point out that engagement starts with an emotional manifestation even though it was first developed

cognitively. At the same time, through behavioral engagement, affective perception influences one's physical manifestation of intention (Shuck et al., 2014; Zigarmi et al., 2009).

Behavioral Engagement. Lastly, behavioral engagement is known as an individual's psychological state which positively affects performance (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010; Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2017). This type of engagement describes employees as more willing to invest extra effort into their work roles for the good of the team and organization, therefore portraying a "proactive behavior" (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 19). This engagement type does not actually address action-related behavior, but rather an employee's psychological willingness to invest effort into his/her work role and active working context, therefore connecting it to observable behavior. Ultimately, working harder does not result in higher levels of behaviorally engaged individuals. Rather, behaviorally engaged individuals direct their energy and intensity towards their psychological willingness to give more. Their perception of being willing to invest more will manifest into behavior but cannot be observed at that moment in time.

Engagement "is not only identity focused, but also a present-focused state looking toward the future encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects" (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2017, p. 958). It is a dynamic process in which the cycles of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement are continuously being monitored, evaluated, and adjusted. Based on one's ability to evaluate situations that inform engagement to assign meaning and value, new appraisals can be identified. Shuck, Osam et al., (2017) highlighted that "this process continues through a cumulative building and a reciprocal affect which guide the experience of an employee being engaged" (p. 268). As previously mentioned, the notion of engagement along these three dimensions has not been highly researched in the sport management field, and it has not been examined from the context of volunteer management. A central discourse in this line of scholarship is that it is imperative to expand our collective understanding of how engagement can be applied to examine and understand the sport volunteer experience and performance (Allen & Bartle, 2014).

Volunteers in Sport

Over the past two decades, there has been an increased interest in the literature on volunteerism within the sports industry (Wicker, 2017). Volunteers are fundamental for the staging and success of sporting events, while also aiding throughout various nonprofit sport clubs and organizations (Adams & Deane, 2009; Cnaan & Godberg-Glen, 1991; Fairley et al., 2007; Lasby & Sperling, 2007). Prior research investigated the recruitment and retention of volunteers through levels of commitment (Cuskelly et al., 2002; Mowday et al., 1982). Research has highlighted a significant relationship between commitment, retention, and performance, suggesting an increased level of commitment to the organization and volunteer roles demonstrates better performance and retention rates (Engelberg et al., 2011; Hoye, 2007). Simultaneously, research suggested that a volunteer's motives affect their response to organizational problems (Garner & Garner, 2011). Thus, addressing one's motivation and meeting personal motives, along with individual experience, could increase levels of engagements.

Even though Allen and Shaw (2009) did not specifically examine the concept of engagement within sport volunteers, the researchers were able to make connections to the engagement literature as they assessed sport volunteers' willingness to "give that little bit extra"

(p. 84), which is part of personal engagement (Kahn, 1990). Based on this study and utilizing a work engagement scale, Allen and Bartle (2014) suggested there could be meaningful insights in applying engagement among sport volunteers to investigate factors that foster or hinder engagement while at the same time understanding affective outcomes.

Volunteer Satisfaction

Satisfaction among volunteers is crucial for the overall success of the event and any future events (Farrell et al., 1998) and emerged as a key concept within the volunteer engagement literature (Sheptake & Menaker, 2016). In order to satisfy volunteers, understanding their motives, experiences, perceptions, and behaviors are important. It could allow organizers and managers to address management, planning, and recruitment tactics. Additionally, volunteers are more likely to return and continue to volunteer if they had a satisfying experience (Green & Chalip, 2004). Therefore, for event managers, it is important to ensure volunteers have a positive experience throughout the event as it affects their satisfaction levels and in return impacts their likelihood of returning for successive events (Farrell et al., 1998). In both sport and non-sport settings, scholars have demonstrated that engagement significantly predicts volunteer satisfaction (McMorrow, 2014; Vecina et al., 2012). Considering previous research suggests engagement positively influences satisfaction in work settings (e.g., Harter et al., 2003; Saks, 2006), it also becomes important to explore this relationship within the context of the present study.

Regardless of size, location, or sporting event, it is fundamental to have volunteers with a satisfying experience and to understand what aspects made their voluntary engagement successful in their opinion. Since sport event organizers, as well as nonprofit sport clubs, do need adequate numbers of volunteers to continuously return, analyzing what would increase their satisfaction levels would be beneficial. Ultimately, this could be used for future recruitment and retention strategies in the hopes of decreasing the level of turnover. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented:

Hypothesis 4 (H4):   Engagement will be positively associated with satisfaction.

Intention to Remain

There are various sport organizations and sporting events which rely on the services provided by volunteers in order to create a successful event, yet experience difficulties in recruiting those individuals (Cuskelly, 2004; Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). Within the United States in 2018, the value of sport volunteerism was worth $ 43 billion (AmeriCorps, 2018). Volunteers represent an important workforce for various sport segments, ranging from small scale (i.e., college sporting events such as track and field meets) to major events, such as the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and College Football Playoff. Additionally, planning ahead of time to prepare for the number of volunteers needed and what type of capacity their services are required is crucial (Barr, 2018). However, recruitment and retention issues of volunteers for sport events are usually rooted in marketing strategies (Green & Chalip, 1998).

Retaining volunteers who share the organization's values and are committed to the organization's goals is important (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). With increased job satisfaction, intentions to turnover are lower which would save money because the organization does not have to seek out new volunteers and train them (Bang, 2011). Also, when organizations perceive to

gain more benefits from volunteers, volunteer retention rates were found to be better (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Considering higher levels of engagement, operationalized with its three dimensions, has been demonstrated to be related to increases in intention to remain (Shuck et al., 2014), which led the researchers to hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5 (H₅):   Engagement will be positively associated with intention to remain.

Engagement as a Mediator

Engagement has been found to serve as a mediator of a number of different variables. Maslach et al. (2001) proposed a model grounded in burnout literature with six work conditions, in which engagement functions as a mediating variable between those conditions and other outcomes. When individuals have positive experiences and emotions, they are more likely to also experience positive work outcomes. As such, engagement can be linked to work outcomes since it is described as having fulfilling and positive experiences at work, along with a positive mindset and mindset at work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Previous empirical research showed a positive relationship between engagement and organizational commitment, while it is negatively related to intention to quit (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Additionally, scholars established that engagement mediated relationships between antecedent and outcome variables (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Shuck, 2011). Therefore, the following hypotheses are presented:

Hypothesis 6 (H₆):   Meaningfulness will be related to satisfaction and intention to remain through engagement.

Hypothesis 7 (H₇):   Safety will be related to satisfaction and intention to remain through engagement.

Hypothesis 8 (H₈):   Availability will be related to satisfaction and intention to remain through engagement.

Bowl Game Context

College football is considered to be an important part of American culture and campus life, bringing students, alumni, and other supporters together (Popp et al., 2017; Seifried et al., 2018; Toma, 2003). As college football's popularity increased in past decades (Coakley, 2017; Eckard, 2013), the fall semester at many Division I NCAA institutions is now considered an important time of the year for universities, not only in terms of popularity among fans, but also due to the significant financial ramifications for colleges and universities stemming from ticket revenues, alumni donations, and future student applications (Martinez et al., 2010; McEvoy et al., 2013).

Much of this financial impact has come from the growth of college postseason bowl games and college sport organizations through the relational benefits of conference agreements, television contracts, and sponsorships (Seifried et al., 2019). For example, during the 2018-2019 college football season, the six College Football Playoff games produced five of the six most-watched cable events of the year, all telecasted on ESPN (National Football Foundation, 2019).

Initially, Thurow (as cited in McAllister, 1998) explained that many bowl games were utilized to promote the raising of money for charities. Additional scholarship suggests that as intercollegiate athletics grew into a business throughout the 20th century (Williams & Seifried, 2013), bowl games also helped generate additional business for the host city by increasing tourism from out-of-town visitors and contributing to the local economy through their tourism expenditures (Seifried & King, 2012; Zimbalist, 2009).

This rings especially true for the host communities that partner with tourism bureaus, chambers of commerce, and sports commissions to organize postseason events to increase the city's attractiveness (Griffith, 2010). With the number of bowl games increasing and host cities witnessing an increase in visitors, the focus shifted towards the development of additional events to ensure that spectators would prolong their stay and be part of the other festivities.

With the introduction of postseason bowl games, cities try to host those ancillary events in order to attract tourists and fans who are willing to travel and watch their respective teams compete. Thus, postseason bowl games are classified as a large-scale or mega-event sport tourism event that attracts numerous fans not only from the host city, but also from outside (Williams & Seifried, 2013).

As more activities have been added to expand the overall bowl game phenomenon, event managers have begun to rely more on human resources (Williams & Seifried, 2013). Previous research sheds light on volunteers as a whole, specifically exploring their motives to get involved in events and the creation of measurement scales to assess those reasons (see Bang & Chelladurai, 2003; Clary et al., 1998; Farrell et al., 1998; Green & Chalip, 2004). Utilizing information pulled from the IRS Tax Return form 990 documents, the number of volunteers has outgrown the number of actual paid staff over the years. This phenomenon is consistent with both larger, more prominent bowls such as the Sugar Bowl and Peach Bowl. In the case of the former, the Sugar Bowl documented 16 paid staff versus 131 volunteers in 2017 while the Peach Bowl reported that they relied on 475 volunteers and 28 paid staff members. In contrast, smaller bowls such as the Independence Bowl had six paid staff members and utilized 200 volunteers in 2017. These totals suggest that the bowl games themselves have considered volunteers as one of the most valuable human resources. However, no prior studies have explored engagement levels of human resources within this specific context. Therefore, as the number of bowl games and ancillary events increases, there is a need to do more studies.

Methods

A quantitative research design was utilized for the current study to investigate the relationship between independent variables (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability) and the dependent outcome variables (satisfaction and intention to remain), measured through engagement to analyze the strength between the variables.

The researchers were able to set up an in-person meeting with a representative of the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation in October 2019 as this organization was in charge of recruiting volunteers for the National Championship game hosted in New Orleans while also being responsible for the R+ L Carriers bowl game. Simultaneously, this meeting opened the door to get in contact with the executive director from the Football Bowl Association (FBA). An individualized survey for each bowl game was created in Qualtrics and sent to the executive director, who reached out to each bowl representative while the researchers were copied on to each email. Out of 41 bowl games, 10 bowls demonstrated interest and distributed the survey to

their volunteers at the beginning of January via email. Additional phone calls and follow-up emails were part of this study to establish relationships and to ensure the forwarding of the survey. Out of the 3,350 sent out surveys, a total of 464 were returned and deemed usable for a response rate of 15%.

Sample

A slightly higher number in males (*n*= 250) than females (*n*=214) completed the survey. In terms of training preparation for the respective event, the majority indicated to have received in-person training (*n*=345), while the second highest group indicated to have not received any training (*n*=98), and some received online training (*n*=21). Most participants indicated their race as White (*n*=317), Black or African American (*n*=78), or Other (*n*=60). The majority of the sample identified to be older than 55 (*n*= 260) and the majority again indicated they have traveled one hour or less to volunteer in their respective bowl game (*n*=286). In terms of the amount of times one has volunteered for their respective bowl game, more than six times was the highest chosen one (*n*=165).

Measures

To measure antecedents to engagement, three previously verified scales were adapted from May et al. (2004) for this study that specifically addressed meaningfulness (six items), safety (three items), and availability (four items). To measure engagement, Shuck, Adelson, et al.'s (2017) 12-item employee engagement scale was used, which consisted of three sub-dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. Volunteer satisfaction was measured utilizing three out of eight items from Green and Chalip's (2004) satisfaction scale. The item "I am satisfied with the overall experience of being a volunteer" was adjusted to "I am satisfied with the overall experience of being a football bowl game volunteer". Lastly, intention to remain was assessed using three items from Price and Mueller's (1986) four item intention to stay scale. One item, "I plan to leave the organization as soon as possible", was removed from the scale as it did not fit the volunteer setting for the current study. For the purpose of the current study, questions were modified to fit the volunteer setting. For example, the item "I plan to stay at this organization as long as possible" was modified into "I plan to volunteer at this organization as long as possible." Another example "I plan to leave this organization as soon as possible" was adjusted to "I plan to never volunteer with this organization again."

Furthermore, scholars (De Vaus, 1986; Rubio et al., 2003) suggested to use a panel of experts who are familiar with the subject of study as they are able to establish face and content validity (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Thus, a panel of five experts in the field of sport management were recruited, who have previously conducted research on sport volunteers. After receiving feedback from each expert, some questions in the survey were adjusted to better fit the volunteer setting. Additionally, the reason for pilot testing is to establish construct validity (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Therefore, a pilot study with 60 undergraduate students with sport volunteer experience was conducted to review reliability and validity of scales used for this study.

Results

Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and correlation matrix for the scales included in the model. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate convergent validity. With the exception of one item in the safety scale, factor loadings met acceptable levels ($\beta \geq .5$) per Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010). Analysis of the measurement model conducted using *IBM AMOS 25* revealed acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 1135.04$, $df = 379$, $p < .001$; *RMSEA* = .065; *SRMR* = .052; *CFI* = .938).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha, and Correlations

	M	SD	a	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 - Engagement	6.39	0.765	0.941	1.000					
2 - Safety	6.18	0.961	0.683	.585**	1.000				
3 - Meaningful	6.39	0.832	0.957	.834**	.600**	1.000			
4 - Availability	6.46	0.593	0.846	.481**	.451**	.481**	1.000		
5 - IntentRemain	6.22	1.052	0.841	.388**	.249**	.454**	.391**	1.000	
6 - Satisfaction	6.20	0.915	0.766	.392**	.345**	.503**	.466**	.603**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypotheses Testing

Structural Equation Modeling was conducted using *IBM AMOS 25* to test the proposed hypotheses. The structural model had acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 1155.12$, $df = 379$, $p < .001$; *RMSEA* = .062; *SRMR* = .062; *CFI* = .937). The significant chi square value is most likely due to the large sample size and thus not a concern. All other fit indices fit within commonly accepted guidelines (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016). H_1 stated that psychological meaningfulness will be positively associated with increased levels of engagement. H_1 was supported ($\beta = .758$, $p < .001$). Meaningful experiences increase employee engagement. H_2 stated that psychological safety will be positively associated with increased levels of engagement. This hypothesis was also supported ($\beta = .146$, $p = .006$). Psychological safety increases levels of engagement from volunteers. H_3 stated that psychological availability will be positively associated with increased levels of engagement. Likewise, H_3 was supported ($\beta = .101$, $p = .004$).

H_4 and H_5 explored the role that engagement has in volunteers' feelings of satisfaction and intentions to remain. H_4 proposed that engagement would be positively related to volunteers' satisfaction. H_4 was supported. The standardized direct effect was significant ($\beta = .542$, $p < .001$). Likewise, H_5 was also supported. Engagement significantly influenced volunteers' intentions to remain (H_5) ($\beta = .476$, $p < .001$).

To check for full mediation as predicted in hypotheses 6 – 8, bootstrapping procedures were conducted to 500 iterations. H_6 predicted that engagement would fully mediate the

relationship between meaningfulness and the outcome variables of satisfaction and intention to remain. Standardized indirect effects of meaningfulness on satisfaction ($\beta = .410$, $p = .001$) and intention to remain ($\beta = .361$, $p = .001$) were both significant, H_6 was supported. H_7 predicted that engagement would fully mediate the relationship between safety and both satisfaction and intention to remain of volunteers. H_7 was partially supported. The standardized indirect effect on satisfaction was significant ($\beta = .079$, $p = .043$), but the standardized indirect effect on intention to remain was not significant ($\beta = .070$, $p = .051$). H_8 explored whether engagement fully mediated the relationship between availability and the outcome variables in the model. H_8 was supported. The standardized indirect effects on availability were significant on both satisfaction ($\beta = .055$, $p = .043$) and intention to remain ($\beta = .048$, $p = .035$). The total variance explained by the model (R^2) were (Engagement = .866, Satisfaction = .293, Intention to Remain = .227). Figure 1 presents the structural model.
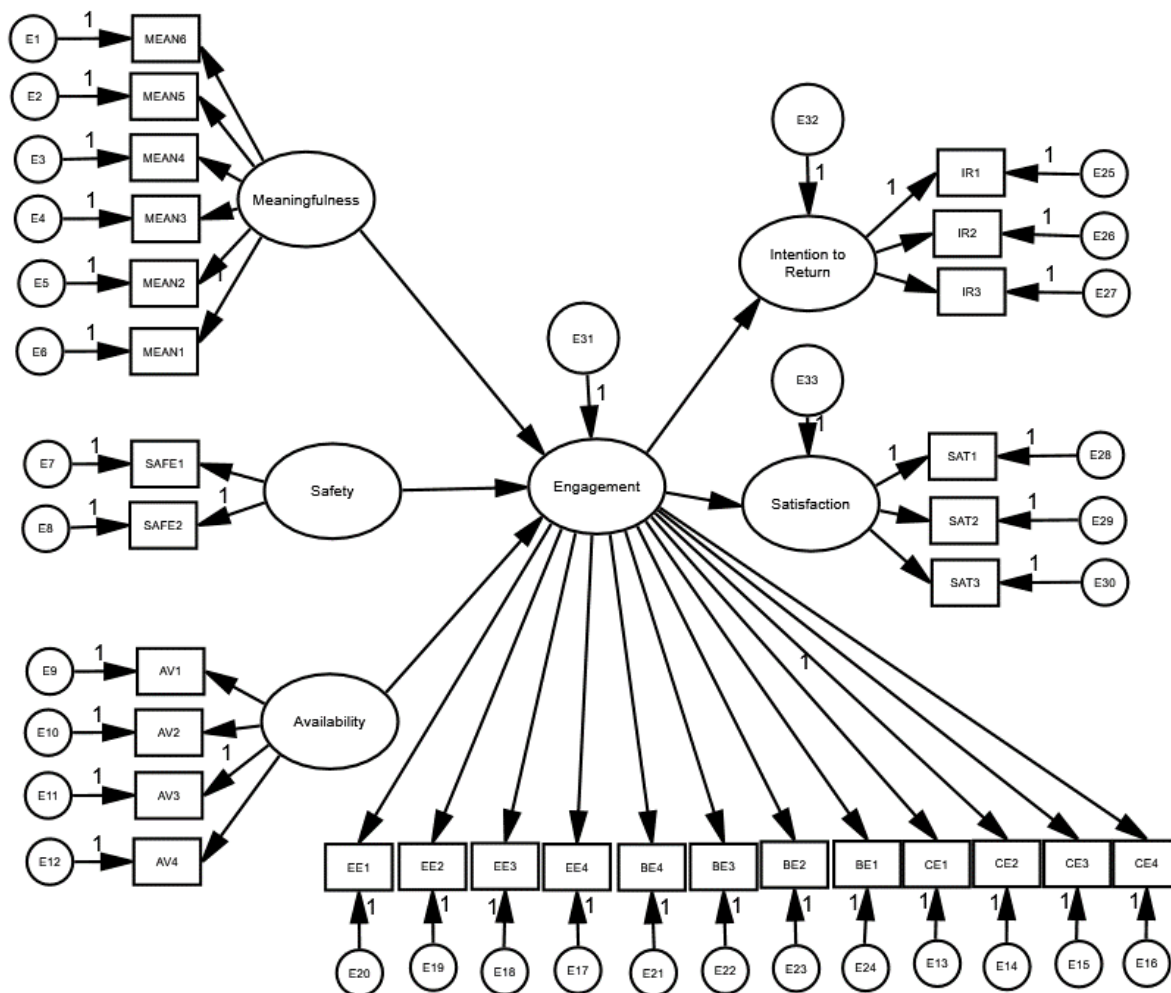

Figure 1.
Structural Model

Discussion

The major contribution of this study was the application of Kahn's (1990) engagement conceptualization with the college sport volunteer literature. While engagement has been studied within the general management realm, few studies utilized engagement in the sport industry (e.g., Svensson et al., 2021). Overall, this study added to the sport management literature, specifically developing a better understanding of sport volunteers at college football bowl games, by understanding how engagement influences sport volunteers' wants and needs. At the same time, this allows organizations to review current strategies and respond to these findings with the development of more meaningful roles.

Meaningfulness

The findings in this study support previous research in that there is a direct and significant relationship between meaningfulness and engagement. When individuals derive meaning from their involvement and task performance, they are more likely to be engaged as they perceive to do something that is worthwhile (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990). This consideration of value regarding the specific tasks assigned to sport volunteers builds on this current research, especially within the context of sport volunteers, and can be advantageous for event organizers from a practical perspective. For example, knowing that an individual sees value in volunteering for the fan fest during the national championship game (based on being able to pick certain time slots), the event organizer can attempt to understand if working directly with people would be something that speaks to the volunteer. The volunteers in this study associated their participation in carrying out different tasks to be meaningful for themselves, while they believed their actions of giving back to something bigger allowed for increased levels of engagement. Not only does their involvement focus on their personal needs, but also helping others. Thus, being able to involve volunteers in activities from which they derive meaning is crucial as it is a key point in witnessing higher levels of engagement to "give that little bit extra" (Allen & Shaw, 2009, p. 84).

Safety

Psychological safety is another relevant factor in one's ability to express higher levels of engagement (Kahn, 1992) and the results of this study supported previous research that found safety plays a crucial role in enhancing engagement behavior from individuals (Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004). The current finding extends this idea within volunteer settings, as one will most likely be asked to work with others on tasks together. As such, the better the overall group dynamic among volunteers, people will feel more inclined to feel safe and able to express themselves. Further, having an environment in which one is able to create trust adds to psychological safety and, therefore the ability to show one's true self due to feelings of support. Additionally, for an event organizer, this is important to take into consideration as the pairing of volunteers with others, along with management style, will significantly influence levels of engagement. Building strong relationships and getting to know the volunteers will create better overall communication and safer environments in which people will be more comfortable to open up, thus exhibiting higher levels of engagement.

Availability

Importantly, three factors that can contribute to psychological availability are: physical, emotional, or psychological resources (Kahn, 1990). Britt, Castro, and Adler (2005) found that the availability of physical, emotional, and social resources also influenced the motivation of task completion, which was supported by Shuck (2010). Further, Shuck (2010) extended literature and supported that availability of resources decreased individuals' turnover intentions. It does not only depend on how emotionally available the volunteer is, but rather what does the event organizer offer in order for the volunteer to be able to demonstrate psychological availability. Sport events can be stressful and hectic, especially when dealing with upset fans and corresponding with unhappy customers.

Through training sessions (either in person or online), the organization can use its resources to educate volunteers on how to respond to certain scenarios to try and prevent any feelings of unease that could potentially hinder psychological availability from fulfilling the task. Managers need to avoid creating roles that are too stressful and demanding as this could hinder the ability to be psychologically available and, in return, exhibit higher levels of engagement (May et al., 2004). Following these suggestions, organizations may allow volunteers to feel more confident and able to express heightened levels of engagement due to the organization's involvement and resources.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction as an outcome of engagement has previously been addressed in various work settings (Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006). Researchers have consistently found evidence that engagement influences satisfaction and therefore reported a positive relationship. Since previous scholars mainly focused on satisfaction as a key outcome of volunteers (Farrell et al., 1998; Sheptak & Menaker, 2016), the results showed that engagement significantly impacts volunteers and increases their levels of satisfaction. As this study tried to address how to better recruit and retain volunteers, understanding what creates more satisfaction among the participants is crucial. Event organizers and volunteers are well aware of tasks that do not necessarily require increased amounts of attention. As Allen and Shaw (2009) discussed, handing out water is a basic task and one can argue that it does not require volunteers to be tuned in and be fully engaged.

However, since event organizers care about the overall outcome of the event and the perceptions of customers, fans, athletes, and the volunteers, it is important to communicate why even a simple task (such as handing out water) is important for the event. How volunteers are managed affects their levels of satisfaction and participation in volunteer activities (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Strigas & Jackson, 2003) along with communication efforts (Johnston et al., 2000; Pauline, 2011).

Intention to Remain

Intention to remain as an outcome of engagement was one of the key aspects within this study to be measured as scholars repeatedly voiced difficulties with this topic from a sport volunteer perspective (Cuskelly, 2004; Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). Previous literature on sport volunteers increasingly highlighted the importance of understanding the drive of volunteers to stay with one organization and to continue volunteering. General management literature found a

positive relationship between engagement and lower levels of turnover (Halbesleben, 2010; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Shuck et al., 2011).

With heightened levels of engagement and being cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally present during assigned tasks, volunteers will be more inclined to remain with the organization. Within this study, 57% of participants indicated they have volunteered more than six times for their respective bowl game. Researchers found that volunteers are more likely to return and continue volunteering (Green & Chalip, 2004), especially when developing positive and satisfying perceptions about the volunteer experience for a specific event (Coyne & Coyne, 2001; Farrell et al., 1998). With the relationship between engagement and intention to remain being positive and significant, the model suggests that lower levels of engagement would also show lower levels of intentions to remain. This result supports the notion to offer volunteer activities in which the individual can engage in to increase their willingness to return to volunteer.

At the same time, event organizers need to be observable and direct attention towards engagement levels due to its direct impact on retention. As previous research on volunteerism primarily focused on how satisfaction (Coyne & Coyne, 2001; Cuskelly et al., 2006; Green & Chalip, 2004), commitment (Dorsch et al., 2002), and motivation (Bang & Ross, 2009; Khoo & Engelhorn, 2011) influence willingness to remain, this study offers a new aspect to explore. Understanding that the more engaged volunteers are, the more likely they are to return creates a new way for event organizers to develop strategies to keep volunteers engaged at their task. For example, to increase engagement and, as a result, intention to remain, event organizers could introduce a t-shirt hierarchy. Each year a volunteer receives a shirt with a specific color. Each color represents the number of years an individual has previously volunteered at the specific event. The goal of this approach would be to entice individuals to aim for the next color as the organization's culture emphasizes and respects this type of work. This type of reward strategy might resonate well with volunteers if they perceive to be able to have even more of an impact the following year.

Results from the last three hypotheses showed that meaningfulness had a positive and significant relationship with both outcomes through engagement, which is an important finding. One major factor in meaningfulness is not only to derive meaning from the assigned task, but also to feel valued. Scholars highlighted when volunteers receive feedback and recognition in regard to their performance from event managers, that it will significantly increase their levels of satisfaction (Reeser et al., 2005). One can argue here that receiving recognition and feedback adds to psychological meaningfulness because the volunteer is receiving direct input about their performance. In support of previous findings, volunteers in this study articulated that the meaning given to their ability to give back has the most significant effect on satisfaction while their overall psychological well-being and intention to remain also halted positive results. What this indicates for future sporting events is the importance to create meaningful positions and experiences as volunteers in this sample indicated that meaningfulness was the most significant factor that contributed to overall satisfaction and intention to remain.

For example, prior scholarship has addressed the importance of creating a positive volunteer experience (Bang & Ross, 2009; Farrell et al., 1998; Rogalsky et al., 2016). A heightened amount of effort has been dedicated to train volunteers along with finding supervisors who will ensure that everything goes according to plan (Costa et al., 2006; Gladden et al., 2005; Shaw, 2009). Communication is a key aspect and should be used to ensure that volunteers are aware about how they are actively impacting the event. Results from Ralston et al.'s (2004)

study addressed some recruitment issues that led volunteers to think their skills were not accurately assessed, which in turn affected their perception of contributing to the event.

Safety was found to have a significant and positive impact on levels of satisfaction among volunteers through engagement. The participants in this study indicated that a safe environment increased their levels of engagement, which led to higher levels in satisfaction and intention to remain. For example, previous scholars Farrell et al. (1998) found that communication between volunteers was important, as social systems can enhance psychological safety (Kahn, 1990). For event organizers one key aspect is to create a space in which volunteers can stay true to themselves and feel that there are no negative consequences from their personal engagement. For example, some volunteer organizations try to pair individuals with others to whom they have some type of connection. When organizations rely on students to volunteer for an event, it would be advisable to try and have students from the same class or university work together.

Psychological availability significantly affected both outcomes through engagement. Due to this relationship being significant, volunteers in this study reported to have access to resources, which allowed them to be more engaged. At the same time, event organizers need to be aware of potential distractions that could hinder the volunteer's ability to engage fully. This can vary from being mentally and physically exhausted due to the task at hand, or it can be related to personal reasons. Event organizers need to ensure a healthy balance between demands and task fulfillment and for enough breaks that physical exhaustion does not occur. For example, most sporting events host a volunteer appreciation day once the event is completed to say thank you for anyone who was involved. This affects meaningfulness but can also increase emotional energy which directly affects psychological availability.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings are limited to Shuck, Adelson, et al.'s (2017) engagement model. Specifically, the findings are limited to the researchers' interpretation of data within human resources engagement and conceptualization of engagement applicable within the context of sport volunteers. This also sheds light on the limitations of the researchers and the quantitative design guiding this inquiry. As a result of the chosen methodology, findings from this study may be generalized to other sporting events or sport organizations. Although findings might illustrates what might have been found or might be found in previous and future studies on other sporting events, the behavior and characteristics of college football bowl games and participants in the current sample may not necessarily reflect the realities of other organizations and events of the same type of magnitude. Also, despite using a convenience sampling technique, the chosen organizations may only have provided access to a limited number of individuals within their organization or not forwarded the questionnaire at all.

Future research should examine other contexts within the sport industry, both in the United States and in other regions, through the lens of engagement levels of involved stakeholders. One particularly interesting avenue would be understanding the engagement of sport volunteers in general college sport context, as volunteers are strategically important for many intercollegiate athletics department (Dixon et al., 2015). Moreover, more comprehensive research, which should include other factors related to engagement from an antecedent and outcome perspective, could be conducted. The perceived levels of engagement among involved

personnel also warrants future research on other outcomes and to explore additional antecedents to engagement.

Implications for Practitioners

Engagement demonstrated to be a promising construct within the sport volunteer context, and the next step would be to explore how higher levels of engagement could be developed from an organizational standpoint. The results of this study suggest various implications not only for bowl game organizers, but also other volunteer organizations and practitioners in terms of developing meaningful volunteer experiences for those involved.

For example, event organizers could create training sessions and design interventions to directly educate supervisors and managers to pair volunteers with meaningful activities. Finding a task from which the volunteer derives personal meaning will lead to organizational benefits, such as lower levels of issues with turnover. Another key take-away is to distinguish volunteers from one another. Event organizers should specifically pursue volunteers who have strong aspirations to give back to their community as they derive meaning from their involvement and are more inclined to stay involved in the future. Furthermore, event organizers looking to increase meaningfulness associated with the assigned task could also design positive socialization programs to foster the building of relationships among volunteers (e.g., implementing team building activities to enhance volunteer relationships). Lastly, exit surveys should be included at the end of each event in order for organizations to be able to use the volunteers' feedback and improve on communication skills if necessary.

Conclusion

Overall, this study contributes to the college sport volunteer literature and call from scholars to expand on applying engagement (Allen & Bartle, 2014). Thus, with the sport industry's heavy reliance on volunteers, it is necessary to explore this area further as volunteers have been identified as a "hidden workforce" (Kemp, 2002, p. 109). Findings in this study extend our knowledge of engagement among sport volunteers and highlight suggestions for organizations. Guided by Shuck, Adelson, et al.'s (2017) engagement scale and using Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of personal engagement, the purpose of this study was to explore engagement levels among sport volunteers at college football bowl games. Additionally, this study sought to address the continuously resurfacing recruitment and retention issues (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2007) of volunteers by proposing approaches to increase levels of engagement. Findings demonstrated the importance for a volunteer's psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability to be present for levels of engagement to increase. Simultaneously, the measured outcomes of satisfaction and intention to remain were positively affected by engagement. This study found that specifically for sport volunteers, meaningfulness and safety proved to be most significant and therefore emerged as predictors of engagement.

The aim of this research was to create a heightened awareness of the relevance that engagement has for college sport volunteers and how organizations can better develop approaches to increase levels of engagement, which in turn would help design recruitment and retention strategies. Ultimately, this will aid organizations in their approach to meet organizational goals due to having a competitive advantage through engaged volunteers.

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