AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT IN TAIWAN

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Abstract- This study investigated the recruitment issue of international volunteer in Taiwan. According to the background of volunteer service conscious increasing in the world, the effective recruitment process became indispensable. For fulfill the research purpose, an in-depth interview was conducted as method and convenient sampling was employed for selecting participants. The result indicated that there were no formal recruitment process for international volunteer nowadays; furthermore, appeared the problem of co-working, the lack of propaganda channel, and pre departure recruitment process. More importantly, the result of this study suggested that an effective and strict recruitment process to select an appropriate international volunteer candidate is an essential issue.

Keywords- International Volunteer, Recruitment Process.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study
The United Nations General Assembly declared annual December 5th as International Volunteer Day in 1985 (Tsai, 2000), this is a critical milestone for propagating volunteer service and the culture of volunteerism in the community. In the year of 2001, it is formally set as the International Year of Volunteers. Expecting through the announcements of policy which can call on every country to implement concrete spirit of voluntary service without borders. Afterward, resulting from the promoting of this policy, each country not only realize the importance of voluntary service for human in the world, but also gradually put resources into voluntary service (Chen, 2010, 2013). As the booming development of volunteer service awareness, in 2001, the Legislative Yuan has approved Volunteer Service Act in Taiwan. This legislated policy indeed renovate the domestic history of volunteer record.

In terms of three significant related security of regulations, the voluntary service is already become an essential mainstreaming value, and so does volunteer workers as being one of the important assets of the society (Chai & Lee, 2006). Lough (2010) indicated that “over one-million individuals (1,032,780) reported volunteering internationally at least once in 2008— an increase of over 145,000 volunteers since 2004 in United State.” Besides, population of international volunteer were counted by Tourism and Research Marketing in 2008, which over 1.6 Million people volunteering internationally every year (Horoszowski, 2013). Huang (2006) pointed out that the organization should set varieties of recruitment regulation, in order to arrange informal volunteer combination to be stricter.

1.2. The Motivation
After one of the researcher traveling abroad as a international volunteer for the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families in summer of 2015, found there is no international volunteer recruiting model in that organization. Furthermore, the researcher discovered there is a lack of standard and formal recruiting model for international volunteers in the literature. Only in international sport events there has been a discussion about volunteer demand, however, there is still a gap since there is no formal process that offers an explanation to choose suitable and appropriate volunteers for the organization.

1.3. Purpose and Question of the Study
The reasons and motives previously listed prompted the researcher to explore the international volunteer recruiting process and channel, also, the problem was faced in this field in Taiwan. Therefore, this study focused on exploring the theoretical international volunteer recruitment process and verifying the practical situation and problem in the processes. According to the purpose of this study, the questions were proposed as following: How to recruit international volunteer for organizations? What recruiting processes have been adopted? And what problems have occurred during the recruiting process, and after international volunteers selected and served for the organizations?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Development of International Volunteer Service
“Volunteer are the foundation of a strong development program” (Lysakowski, 2005, p. 12). Within several nonprofit organizations, the participants contributed their time, skills and labor domestically were belonging to national voluntary service; while those who devoted effort to serve abroad, was international volunteer service (Gallagher & Weinberg, 1991, p. 362; Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, & McBride, 2006). Although there was no clear definition for international volunteer currently, it still could refer that volunteer did service across the country’s boundaries through various
channels (Chen, 2013). In general, the international volunteers was specially defined those who left home country forward to other countries for providing service. Base on relevant literature reviews about international volunteer service, mainly include types, content, performance and relationship, and the importance of it. The previous study revealed that the most common service content comprised medical, humanitarian aid, cultural, and scientific and technological service exchange (Chen, 2013). Sherraden et al. (2006) pointed out the types of international volunteer could be distinguished by the nature of service as group and individual service, and the duration of service, including short-term, medium-term, or long-term. If participation could obtain satisfaction and highly self-demands on service, it would increase the service willingness of sustainability (Chen, 2013); and also grow up on following dimensions: political transformation, intelligence, moral, relationship, mental and culture (Kiely, 2004); moreover, relevantly could enhance the perception, mutual relationship and reorganization of professional skill (Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009). Cultivating leaders with international perspectives, inspiring diversity cultural sensitivity, and broaden learning experience abroad (Ho & Chiu, 2010). Among these numerous reviews, reported the importance of international volunteer service. However, even though Bussell & Forbes (2002) emphasized that recruiting of volunteer was prime important on managing volunteers, there was rarely indicated how to recruit volunteer, while these studies explained the important role of volunteer.

2.2. Sufficiency of Recruitment Process
Commission (2000) proposed that recruitment aimed to satisfy human resource necessary of organization effectively and delivered their services. There were five steps about the HR recruitment process, see figure 1, included: (1) recruitment objectives, (2) strategy development, (3) recruitment activities, (4) intervening job applicant variables, and (5) recruitment results (Breauagh, 2008). The third part importantly contains: recruitment methods used, information convey, recruiter used, extending the job offer. And the fourth part includes: the attention, interest, self-insight, and decision making process of applicant, message credibility, accuracy of applicant’s position expectation.

Nevertheless, nonprofit sport organization could not formally fit in profit HRM policy (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). Sargeant and Wymer Jr. (2007) noted that recruiting volunteers were complex tasks; however, as essential as if nonprofit organizations met client needs. Rufer (2015) also identified that a complete volunteer recruitment training program included a process and number of hours, so it was hard to implement and defer from state to state. Chen (2013) also emphasized through recruitment orientation, it would be more helpful for understanding international volunteer content, promotion and learning.

According to Piromkam, Samahito, and Prasertsiripan (2014), there was one volunteer management model that had been developed for an international game in Thailand, see also figure 2, which consisted of three parts: (1) Preparation, (2) Implementing, and (3) volunteer networking.

In summarizing above finding, mentioned about the importance of international volunteer and recruitment, which definitely is the significant fundamental assets with the worldwide promotion. Moreover, the recruiting process of profit organization did not appeared in international volunteer game or nonprofit organization. However, the recruitment process in international volunteer field was not formal as profit organization, this area should be specially focused. Thus, this research was going to exploring the recruiting process applied on international volunteer currently in Taiwan.

III. DESIGN

For fulfill the purpose, this study investigated screening mechanism, propaganda channel, inadequate volunteer performance comment, difference between the information provided by the recruiter and reality of volunteer service, and suggestion for appropriate recruiting process.

3.1. Research Method
Based on this study, the researcher adopted interview as a method to invite 6 participants with qualitative

Figure 1. A model of the recruitment process Source: Breauagh (2008).

Figure 2. A Volunteer Management Model
research approach in this paper. Through semi-structured interview from recruiters and international volunteers purposively selected, utilizing multiple-case study to obtain stronger evidence with thick description of the real condition. According to Alexander (2004) reported McMillan and Schumacher mentioned in 1997, “phenomenology is the exploration of an individual’s experience with a particular phenomenon.” Because this study aimed to explore the international volunteer recruitment process currently and experimental perspective with observation from researcher, there was a need to adopt exploration research.

3.2. Participants
There were six participants involved in this research. The criteria for defining the participants was: (a) administrators or leaders in nonprofit organization with experience of recruiting international volunteers. (b) international volunteer have been abroad to service at least 2 weeks as short term service. Through convenience sampling, six interviewees were interviewed in this research, they were divided into three pairs those come from three different institutions. Each pair consisted of a recruiter and an international volunteer.

3.3. Data Collection & Data Analysis
In this research, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interview, and adopted on-line interview by Skype based on interview questions outline. For making sure the validity of interview questions, a pilot interview was conducted, then the formal interview question outline was expanded from the primary research questions. The questions were open-ended, and each interview was taken approximately 60 minutes and tape-recorded. The record was confirmed by interviewees to ensure the integrity of information before data analysis. The data analysis of the study followed a step-by-step process proposed by O’Connor and Gibson (2003), including: organizing the data, finding and organizing ideas and concepts, building overarching themes in the data, ensuring reliability and validity in the data analysis and in the findings, finding possible and plausible explanations for findings, an overview of the final steps. For raising the reliability of data analysis, peer review was employed. This research adopted data coding to reduce large quantities of information into a form. The coding number were classified to four categories, for example, [Aa201] means the information was cited from organization A, a recruiter answered the first sentence of the second interview question.

3.6. Research Procedure
This study contained nine steps as following: to identify research topic, research questions and purpose, literature review, determine the research method, set sampling criteria, develop interview questions, implement pilot test, modify interview questions, conduct interview, analyze data, and conclude research findings.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Assessment Mechanism
Currently, the application form and interview was adopted into the assessment mechanism for international volunteers recruitment by recruiters of all nonprofit organizations. They all emphasized the motivation of international volunteer. Most of recruiters requested the service experience [Ba101], [Ca101]; but language ability was not so necessary for them. Few of recruiters placed importance on planning and writing skill [Aa101]; several of them believed that the person who participated in recruitment orientation appeared high motivation will be given priority [Ba101]; the rest of them demanded the participant should have service experience domestically, and willing to change [Ca101].

4.2. Recruitment Process
Each of nonprofit organizations conducted international volunteer recruitment with different demand, so that a variety of recruiting ways were adopted. The most inexact process contained application form filled in on line and face-to-face interview [Ca201]. More seriously, the organization released information at first which included service proposals in application form, and would conduct closer review by top-level supervisor after interviewing [Aa201]. For the most serious process, putting in a recruitment orientation before registration, and emphasizing if attendance rate of preparing phase was too low to participate continuously.

The most significant similar point was never adopted the general formal recruiting process of HR, and three organizations followed previous experience transmission. Furthermore, they considered that the original recruitment process can be improved [Aa202], [Ba202], [Ca202].

4.3. Co-Work Performance Comment
Two-third of volunteers had a good relationship and cooperation experience with other international volunteers during preparation period [Bb302], [Cb302]. However, during the adaptation process, recruiters and international volunteers almost had faced the challenge with international volunteer, who couldn’t follow team specification well, cooperated and then solved problem with other accurately, or even caused unpleasant experience of conflict on team cooperation [Aa301], [Ba301], [Ca301], [Ab302]. For instance, one team member of organization couldn’t hand over homework on time, arrived late and leaved early, couldn’t accord with self- and working expectation of team [Aa301]; as one international volunteer mentioned that "It was an unpleasant experience while the member had not take
duty in charge well, and even caused the inconvenience on teacher and partners” [Ba302].

Three-fourth of interviewees considered that the inadequate international volunteer with low motivation could be dropped out through recruitment process as a effective solution [Aa301], [Ba301], [Ca301], [Ab302].

4.4. Recruitment Channel
International volunteer obtained information to apply mainly through mass media, experience transmission, others recommendation, or community website. For instance, recruitment channel was adopted contained monthly publications of the organization [Ab101], experience transmission [Bb101], recommendation from others or facebook [Cb101]. All of these international volunteer thought that channel was still not perfect and could be advanced, because of insufficient information received.

4.5. Difference Between Job Opening and Reality of Volunteer Service
One of international volunteer mentioned the orientation content was too wide to be practical [Ab301]. Others had received experimental information, so they don’t think the gap was huge [Bb301], [Cb301]. This research assumed that if adopting experience sharing will narrow down the imagine and be more practical.

4.6. Suggestion for Recruitment Process
Based on interviewees’ advices, one of organization paid more attention on pre departure training and member interaction, so they proposed ideas about one training day and community service [Ca401]. Few of them thought oral interview should be arranged right after orientation [Ba401]. After interviewing, portion of them agreed to get more familiar or follow-up condition by inquiring significant others as two-way understanding [Aa401], [Cb501]. Three-fourth interviewees pointed out that propagating channel were insufficient, which should become more diversity, such as: recruitment orientation [Ba401], [Ca401], [Ab501], [Cb501]; internet media [Aa401], [Ba401], [Ab501], [Cb501]; experience sharing and document [Aa401]; department propaganda [Ba401].

Most of recruiters and international volunteer expected a pre departure training and allocated area activities were necessary, and were able to be screening process of recruitment before service. This research assumed that they stressed most importance on the pre departure training, and them improving propaganda channel

4.7. Extended Finding: Suggestion for Leaders
Although there were two-third of international volunteers indicated that they didn’t have unpleasant cooperation experience or conflict with other team members, they still suggested that the decision of staying or exiting had to be mentioned once facing this kind of challenge during preparation period [Bb302], [Cb302]. Recruiters should implement screening mechanism appropriately if there was negative impact appeared, or it will become more serious on cooperation [Bb401], [Cb401]. Thus, this study assumed that pre-departure training or a screening process was needed as part of recruitment, in order to get familiar with each other and determine whether the chosen candidates were suitable to travel abroad as volunteers or not.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Nowadays, international volunteer became indispensable human resource in this global world. Based on the importance of international volunteer, it is necessary to pay more attention on recruitment process to select appropriate candidates. According to the findings, there is no formal selected mechanism like general HR field or recruitment process for international volunteer within these institutions in Taiwan, almost followed experience transmission in internal organization. Furthermore, international volunteers indeed encountered challenges with inadequate international volunteer who actually can be screened out in the recruitment process.

Each of interviewees considered that the current recruitment process for international volunteer can be advanced and improved. Because there was a large gap between original recruitment process in their organization and their suggestion for future, this research suggest that that’s necessary to provide a serious and elaborate process to recruit. For instance, diversified propaganda channel, the elaborate recruitment orientation, and lengthen the adjustment period after recruiting with additional screening process.

Based on the study adopted exploration research through qualitative research methods, the researcher suggested that future relevant study may conduct the research via the quantitative research methods.

REFERENCES

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