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The Commitment of Volunteers in Junior Sporting Organisations: A Mixed Methods Study

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The Commitment of Volunteers in Junior Sport Organisations: A Mixed Methods Study

Thesis Submitted by

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May, 2008

To Stephen, Aidan, Damien, and baby Rik

and in memory of my parents

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the dimensionality and targets of the commitment of volunteers (including committee members, coaches, officials, and volunteers in various other roles) in junior sport organisations, and the links between commitment and behavioural outcomes, specifically, intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the club or centre, and self-assessed performance. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design consisting of a quantitative (two studies) and a qualitative phase (one study) was employed. Drawing on Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general commitment model, the quantitative studies assessed commitment to three organisational targets: the organisation (defined as the centre or the club), the team of volunteers, and the volunteer role.

Participants were recruited from Little Athletics centres in New South Wales (Metropolitan Region) for the first study. Survey instruments were distributed to volunteers during a regional championship with 27 participating centres. One hundred and nine surveys were completed and returned. The data were subjected to reliability analyses and then analysed with techniques such as correlations, t-tests and ANOVAs. This study found that volunteers had distinctive affective commitments to the three targets assessed.

The second study, building on the findings of the first one, refined the survey measures and also examined intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the club or centre, and self-assessed performance. Participants were recruited from Little Athletics centres in Queensland. Survey instruments were mailed to all 120 centres. Two hundred and four surveys from participants representing 52 centres were completed and returned. The data were analysed with Partial Least Squares modeling

(PLS), stepwise regression, and logistic regression. This study found that volunteers held distinctive affective and normative commitments to the three targets, and that each target was related to a behavioural outcome. Specifically, organisational commitment and commitment to the role were related to self-assessed performance, commitment to the role was related to intention to stand down from the volunteer role, and commitment to the team of volunteers was related to intention to cease volunteering for the centre or club. The study also showed that committee members had a stronger commitment than volunteers in other roles, and that volunteers without children (or without children currently enrolled in the volunteers' respective centres) had a stronger commitment than volunteers with children. Volunteers with more experience, particularly those with four or more seasons of experience, had significantly stronger commitment than volunteers with less experience.

The final study explored and explained the findings of the quantitative phase in more depth and to allow volunteers to "use their own voice" in discussing their commitment. This study consisted of seven focus group discussions that were held in various locations in Queensland. The participants were 34 volunteers (17 of whom had taken part in the second quantitative study, and 17 representing various other junior sport organisations in Queensland). This study illustrated that volunteers believed that their commitment was multidimensional, developed over time, and could be directed at various targets. This study also highlighted other issues closely linked to commitment, including volunteers' perceptions of other volunteers, non-volunteers, and clashes and conflicts amongst these groups.

Taken together the results of the three studies indicate that commitment is a multidimensional construct that can be applied to various organisational targets. Volunteers

held distinctive affective, normative, and, to a lesser extent, continuance commitments to their organisations, their team of volunteers, and their volunteer roles. There are also differences in commitment amongst volunteer subgroups, such as committee members and volunteers in other roles, and volunteers with children and volunteers without children.

From a theoretical viewpoint this research shows that, despite the differences between volunteers and paid workers, commitment frameworks such as Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) may successfully be applied to a sport volunteer context. Specifically, volunteers are committed to their organisations and to other organisational targets, such as other volunteers and volunteering roles, and these commitments have implications for volunteer behaviour. From a practical viewpoint this research makes a contribution that can assist volunteer managers in their policy making. For example, a better understanding of the nature of commitment and its implications may inform what type of commitment to foster. Future research should continue to investigate the dimensionality of volunteer commitment and volunteer commitment to other targets, as well as the implications of these commitments for volunteer behaviour.

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Statement of Previously Published Work Relating to this Research

The following peer-reviewed papers were published during candidature and have been incorporated into the thesis. The candidate was the principal author for all the work listed below.

Engelberg, T. (2007). Measuring the commitment of volunteers in community-based sport. Book of Proceedings: Educational Research: Who needs it? Educational and Professional Studies Conference, Griffith University, November 21, 2006.

Engelberg, T., Zakus, D.H., & Skinner, J. (2007). Organisational commitment: Implications for voluntary sporting organisations. *Australian Journal on Volunteering, 12*(1), 26-34.

Engelberg, T., Skinner, J., & Zakus, D.H. (2006a). The commitment of volunteers in community-based sport: A research review and agenda. *Third Sector Review (Special Issue: Sport and the Third Sector), 12*(2)*,* 81-96.

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Material from this thesis was presented at the following peer-reviewed conferences:

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Engelberg, T., Skinner, J., & Zakus, D.H. (2007). Commitment targets, turnover, and performance of volunteers: A mixed methods study. Paper presented at the 22nd North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2007), Fort Lauderdale, FLA, USA, May 29-June 2.

Engelberg, T., Skinner, J., & Zakus, D.H. (2006). Commitment targets, turnover and performance of volunteers: A study of junior athletics. Paper presented at the 21st North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2006), Kansas City, MO, USA, May 30-June 3.

Engelberg, T. (2006). Exploring the commitment of volunteers in Little Athletics centres. Paper presented at the Inaugural Volunteering Research Symposium, Melbourne, VIC, March 7-8.

Engelberg, T., Zakus, D., & Skinner, J. (2005) The commitment of volunteers in Little Athletics centres. Paper presented at the Sports Management Association of Australia and New Zealand (SMAANZ) Annual Conference, Canberra, November 25-26.

Engelberg, T., Skinner, J., & Zakus, D.H. (2005) Exploring the dimensions and targets of the commitment of volunteers in junior athletics. Paper presented at the 13th Congress of the European Association for Sport Management (EASM 2005), Newcastle Gateshead, UK, September 7-10.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Estella (Terry) Engelberg   Date

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has”.

Margaret Mead

“Volunteers aren’t paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless”.

Anonymous

1.0 Volunteers and Volunteering

In Australia, volunteers are the key human resources of many community-based sport organisations. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2001) figures show that 4.4 million people volunteered during the year 2000. Of all volunteer organisations, associations, and other groups, the recreation sector attracts, after the community welfare sector, the largest number of volunteers (Cuskelly, Harrington, & Stebbins, 2002/2003): 1.1 million persons aged 18 years and over (8.2% of the adult population) undertook voluntary work for sport and physical recreation organisations in the year 2000. More recent ABS figures (2006a) indicate that the number of volunteers in sport, recreation, and hobby organisations rose to 1.8 million adults (12.1% of the adult population) in the year 2002. Of these volunteers, over half are involved with junior sport.

The significance of volunteering in the sport sector is noteworthy not only because of the number of people involved, but because of the time they invest. This is highlighted by the fact that of all ‘highly committed volunteers’ (a term given by Lyons and Hocking, 2000, to those who contribute more than 300 hours per year or an average of 6 hours per week), nearly 53% volunteer in sport organisations. In sum, this reinforces the importance

of volunteers as a fundamental set of human resources, essential for the running and, ultimately, the existence of community-based sport organisations.

Volunteers in all sectors undertake a variety of activities such as assisting organisations to run smoothly, providing information and advice, and providing practical assistance. The specific tasks will vary from organisation to organisation but, according to Stephens (1991), two underlying dimensions for volunteering are leadership and nurturance. Leadership will be reflected in the volunteer's choice of roles such as administration and management (for example, serving on boards or committees). Nurturance describes roles that focus on serving or on one-to-one interactions, such as coaching and officiating, or to general help around the club.

Volunteers also contribute a significant number of hours of unpaid work. In Australia this figure reached 704.1 million hours with almost one third of volunteers working for more than one organisation (ABS, 2001). In sport specifically, volunteers contribute approximately 130 million hours per year (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006). This illustrates the enormous economic significance of their work. At the same time, volunteering also has a significant non-economic impact (Chelladurai, 1999). Tedrick and Henderson (1989) note that volunteers are perceived as more credible, legitimate, and sincere by those who use their services. The freedom from a concern with financial rewards means volunteers can be critical and objective about their organisations (Chelladurai, 2006).

Volunteer organisations can be classified on the basis of their instrumentality, that is, whether their main purpose is to provide benefits for their members or other groups; or their expressiveness, whether their purpose is to offer opportunities for their members to

satisfy sociability or ideological needs (Chelladurai, 2006). Sport organisations usually fall under the instrumentality function, although the sociability function is also generally served. Chelladurai contends that in junior sport organisations the key motive to volunteer is production oriented; that is, to carry out club activities for the benefit of the children and youth enrolled. Concurrently, such organisations can serve other functions for children, youth, and adults, such as interaction with other people (a social motive), as well as the promotion of the sport.

Research on volunteers' motives for volunteering has focused on the issue of recruitment, but little is known about how volunteers behave once they have become volunteers (Pearce, 1993). Knoke and Prensky (1984) identify three main incentives that drive people to become volunteers; utilitarian, affective, and normative. Utilitarian incentives include volunteering to improve or acquire skills/knowledge/experience. A parent who serves in his or her child's club also derives utilitarian benefits, enabling the child to participate in the sport. In terms of affective incentives, the benefits of social contact can be the main source of attraction for volunteers, although the key purpose of many voluntary organisations is instrumental. Affective incentives include enjoyment of other people's company or the sharing of common experiences. Finally, normative incentives are reflected in the need to do a good deed and the satisfaction derived from helping others (Chelladurai, 2006).

The achievement of organisational goals is usually quite central to the normatively-driven volunteer. It is not unusual for these volunteers to want to feel that their efforts are effective, particularly those in more formal roles (Pearce, 1993). Normative concerns are also strong amongst those who feel strongly about an issue (for example, helping the sport

career of their child, or having a past involvement with the sport). Pearce (1993) suggests that service-related motives and goal-oriented motives may not remain as attractive with the passing of time. She believes that in the absence of commitment to other individuals in the organisation, goal-attracted individuals are likely to find alternative ways of goal pursuing which emphasise the people over the organisation.

1.1 The Importance of Volunteer Commitment

The commitment of volunteers is recognised as critical to the effective organisation and delivery of community-based sport (Cuskelly, McIntyre, & Boag, 1998). Committed individuals participate wholeheartedly in organisational activities, thereby contributing to organisational goals and success, and simultaneously enjoy an enhanced sense of wellbeing (Chelladurai, 2006). Nonprofit volunteer-run organisations, in general, face key challenges, one of which is a decline in the number of hours given to sport organisations (Lyons & Passey, 2005). The outcome of this situation, as Doherty (2005) stresses, is that "there are fewer volunteers doing more work" (p.10), a fact of which volunteers are keenly aware. For example, recent figures show that almost 60% of all volunteer hours were contributed by only 2.5% of the population, who volunteered on average for more than 300 hours over the year (ABS, 1999).

Another pressing issue is the fact that increasing participation in sport is not being matched by an increasing number of volunteers (Cuskelly, 2004). Junior sport specifically is very labour-intensive and subject to additional legal and risk management requirements (for example, the need for volunteers to have police clearance, positive notice, or "blue cards" to be allowed to work with minors). Anecdotal evidence suggests that complaints about the lack of parental involvement or help with their children's sport activities currently

abound, many non-volunteer parents have a childminding attitude (Nichols et al., 2005), and club administrators and committees are at a loss when it comes to getting more adults involved in all areas of club functioning and management (Symmons, R., personal communication, September 5, 2005). Appeals to involve more parents are a feature of both government and club level publications, such as *Keep it fun: Supporting youth sport* from the Western Australian Department of Sport and Recreation (n.d.) and *On the right track* from the Queensland Little Athletics Association (QLAA, 2004), to name but a few.

Recruitment and retention are not the only issues many organisations have to face. Anecdotal evidence in junior sport organisations, such as the Little Athletics Association of New South Wales (LAANSW) and the Queensland Little Athletics Association (QLAA), suggests that many volunteer roles are neither being filled nor providing fulfilment. Many centre administrators complain that parents are reluctant to remain and serve as volunteers on committees or any kind of management role, whilst other centres have an urgent need for coaches and officials/ age marshalls (Strong, S., personal communication, March 28, 2004). In North Queensland, regional development officers in Football Queensland (formerly Soccer Queensland) have recently noted difficulties in relation to the retention of coaches for the junior leagues (Abela, D., personal communication, May 15, 2005).

Volunteer performance is also a key priority (Hoye, 2007; Paull, 1998, 2000; Whitney & Lindell, 2000). As Pearce (1993) notes, “Complaints about work performance of volunteers are frequent enough that the matter deserves serious attention” (p. 84). Furthermore, volunteer-run sport organisations, from the locally to the nationally- based, are currently facing a more complex legal environment than was the case in the past, an environment that demands more professionalism and a greater responsibility for volunteer

actions (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Hoye (2007) also highlights the recent efforts of governments, including the Australian Government, to influence the quality of governance of their respective sport systems through the production and dissemination of guidelines (e.g., ASC, 2005). Given these concerns, the study of the impact of commitment on both retention and performance is a worthwhile endeavour, especially as there is considerable research evidence supporting the link between organisational commitment and various aspects of organisational success (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Research on organisational commitment has primarily focused on the situation of traditional, paid workers (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Volunteers' situation differs from that of paid workers in many different ways. For example, volunteers' behaviour is less likely to be subject to coercive power (Etzioni, 1961; Pearce, 1993) as they are not dependent on organisational rewards. Pearce (1993) states that this creates conditions of normative uncertainty, where social expectations and organisational values are less defined than they are for the remunerated worker. This allows volunteers a degree of individual independence and freedom, where their own psychological states, such as their attitudes, should have a greater influence on their behaviour.

Attempts to extend organisational commitment research to volunteer-run organisations have been comparatively limited. Several studies have used Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) conceptualisation and measures (the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire--OCQ) to assess the organisational commitment of volunteer populations such as fundraising workers (Dailey, 1986), technical army personnel (Dornstein & Matalon, 1989), and crisis centre workers (Brown & Zahrly, 1990). Other studies have used

Meyer and Allen's (1997) conceptualisation and measures, although generally only for the affective dimensions (e.g., Grube & Piliavin, 2000). Recently there have been attempts to assess the multidimensionality of organisational commitment of volunteer board members of various non-profit organisations (e.g., Dawley, Stephens, & Stephens, 2005; Preston & Brown, 2004; Stephens, Dawley, & Stephens, 2004).

In sport specifically, Cuskelly (1995) and in collaboration with his colleagues (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Cuskelly, Boag, & McIntyre, 1999; Cuskelly et al., 1998) has contributed to the understanding of the organisational commitment of volunteers. This research has extended the applicability of the organisational commitment framework (particularly, as operationalised by Mowday et al., 1979) to the sport volunteer context. It assessed key antecedents that impact on the development of organisational commitment (such as personal and structural characteristics), work experience variables, process issues (perceptions of committee functioning), behavioural involvement, the changing motivations of volunteers across time, and their impact on organisational commitment. In terms of outcomes of organisational commitment, Cuskelly and colleagues examine one key outcome -volunteer retention- an outcome which, as outlined earlier, is considered to be central to the success of sport organisations (Chelladurai, 1999). Finally, and from a methodological viewpoint, much of Cuskelly and his colleagues' work has applied longitudinal designs, better suited to examine developmental issues in commitment.

Other significant work in the area of sport volunteer commitment has been conducted by Green and Chalip (2004) and work with their colleagues (e.g., Costa, Chalip, Green, & Simes, 2006) who explored the commitment of event volunteers. Dorsch, Riemer, Sluth, Paskevich, and Chelladurai (2002) examined the antecedents of volunteer

commitment and Hoye (2007) examined (affective) commitment, involvement, and performance of board members.

Despite this progress in the understanding of the organisational commitment of volunteers, three issues merit further exploration. The first one concerns the nature of commitment. Nature refers to the types of attachments individuals develop for their organisations and to the targets of those attachments (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). It has been argued that affective attachments are central to the volunteer experience, but that normative motives, such as feelings of obligation and the influence of societal and other norms, can shape commitment (Pearce, 1993). Although calculative motives do not appear to be as central to the volunteer experience as to that of the paid employee (volunteers do not receive remuneration for their services and volunteering is not necessary for survival), issues such as time and effort invested in the organisation may impact on volunteer commitment. Meyer and Allen's (1997) framework provides a useful vehicle to examine these concerns as it assesses three dimensions of organisational commitment. Cuskelly and colleagues' research has used Mowday et al.'s (1979) framework, which represents an affective orientation only (an exception was Cuskelly et al.'s 1999 study of differences in the organisational commitment between paid and volunteer sports administrators). The OCQ, however, has come under some harsh criticism in recent years as there are problems regarding the homogeneity of the commitment construct and the wording of some of the items (Benkhoff, 1997, provides a detailed critique).

The second concern centres on the targets or focus of volunteers' commitment. The application of commitment research to the sport volunteer context has typically extended the commitment conceptualisation to the organisation as a whole; this would generally

mean the *club*. However, individuals in organisations can become committed to other constituents, targets, foci, subfactors, or domains that are part of that organisation (Brooks & Wallace, 2006; Cohen, 2003; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Morrow, 1993; Reichers, 1985). For example, individuals can become committed to their occupation, their work team, or their supervisor, amongst other entities. These different commitments are believed to interact and shape an individual's overall commitment profile (Cohen, 2003).

Adopting a multiple commitment framework is seen to add value to the concept of commitment and to its predictive power (Cohen, 2003). Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) found, for example, that high occupational commitment, but not high organisational commitment, was related to an occupational-specific activity (e.g., attending courses). Although it is recognised that retention is a key outcome in volunteer contexts, other desirable outcomes need to be pursued. These may include intention to remain in a specific volunteer role, performance, participation in organisational activities, participation in training courses, and fulfilment of specific roles, amongst others. These outcomes may be related to target-specific commitments.

The third and final concern is methodological. With notable exceptions (e.g., Biggs & Swailes, 2006; Keyton, Wilson, & Geiger, 1990; Kushman, 1992; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2000) research on the commitment of paid workers and volunteers has been quantitative. This research has been very useful to answer questions about the extent of different forms of commitment and of factors statistically associated with commitment. However, contextual issues such as the experience of being committed and explanatory issues, such as the circumstances in which commitment develops are better explored with qualitative methods (Ritchie, 2004).

1.2 Research Questions

Given the shortcomings in research into the commitment of volunteers identified in the preceding section, namely, the predominance of unidimensional approaches, the narrow focus (organisational commitment exclusively), and the need to uncover details about the experience of being committed and the circumstances in which commitment develops, the research questions for this study are:

1. What is the nature of volunteer commitment in community-based junior sport organisations?
2. What are the implications of volunteer commitment for volunteer organisational behaviour?
3. How do volunteers themselves conceptualise their commitment?

This research aims to add to the existing literature in three ways. First, it will continue to examine the nature of the organisational commitment of volunteers in community-based sport organisations, specifically in junior sport organisations. Further, unlike previous work (Cunningham, Sagas, & Ashley, 2001; Cuskelly, 1995; Dornstein & Matalon, 1989; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Hoye, 2007), this research will add to the understanding of the nature of volunteers' commitment by using a multidimensional framework (Meyer & Allen, 1997) to examine the affective, continuance, and normative dimensions of organisational commitment. Research using Meyer and Allen's framework has been found to be applicable to the volunteer context (e.g., Dawley et al., 2005; Preston & Brown, 2004; Stephens et al., 2004) and a more complete picture of organisational commitment can emerge from examining each dimension.

Second, it adopts Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model of commitment to identify and assess volunteer commitments to two other organisational targets: the team of volunteers (work group commitment) and to the volunteer role undertaken (roles may include coaching, officiating, and administrating among others). It will then identify relevant target organisational consequences, for example, intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the organisation, performance, and examine the link between each commitment target and these behavioural outcomes.

Third, it combines quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry to better understand the organisational commitment of volunteers. The combination of methods (Ritchie, 2004) will provide greater insight into organisational commitment. Some of the advantages of combining or mixing methods include getting further explanation or a more in-depth view, particularly if there are any subgroups of interest that are too small (e.g., non-parent volunteers in junior sport) as these may have an important perspective that cannot be studied with statistical methods.

1.3 Research Design

In order to answer the research questions a two-phase mixed-methods design consisting of both quantitative and qualitative methods is used (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006). This is called a *sequential explanatory design* where quantitative methods are used first and qualitative methods are used later. The key purpose of this design is to build upon initial quantitative results. It is well suited to research in which the qualitative data can explain significant results or findings that need further exploration, and where more details or depth about a phenomenon are required (Morse, 1991; Ritchie, 2004). For the purposes of this research, the quantitative methodology provides answers to the questions concerning

the strength, the dimensions, and the targets of volunteer commitment and their relations with behavioural outcomes, such as turnover intentions and performance. The qualitative methodology addresses issues such as the nature of commitment as experienced by the volunteer, allowing further, richer exploration of any particular phenomena identified in the quantitative research. As Creswell and Plano-Clark (2006) note: "Each method provides a distinctive kind of evidence and used together they can offer a powerful resource to inform or illuminate policy or practice". (p.38) The final analyses integrate and bring together findings from the research as a whole.

The quantitative phase is further subdivided into two parts. Part 1 consists of a smaller study. Its main purpose is to explore the applicability of the commitment construct to the following targets: the organisation (in this context, the club or centre), the team of volunteers, and the volunteer role. To achieve this, measures of commitment are adapted to reflect the volunteer situation, as existing measures have generally been developed for paid workers. Part 2, building on the results of Part 1, refines and continues to develop the commitment measures and examines the relationships between the targets of commitment and three outcomes: intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the organisation, and performance. Differences between volunteer subgroups, such as committee members and volunteers in other roles, are also examined. Phase 2, consisting of focus group discussions, explains and explores some of the findings identified in Phase 1. To achieve this goal, participants are probed about their meanings of commitment and their explanations as to the reasons underlying differences in commitment between volunteer subgroups. Figure 1.1 illustrates the key elements of this research design, including the sample, procedures, and analyses.

Figure 1.1. Research design diagram: sequential explanatory mixed-methods design.

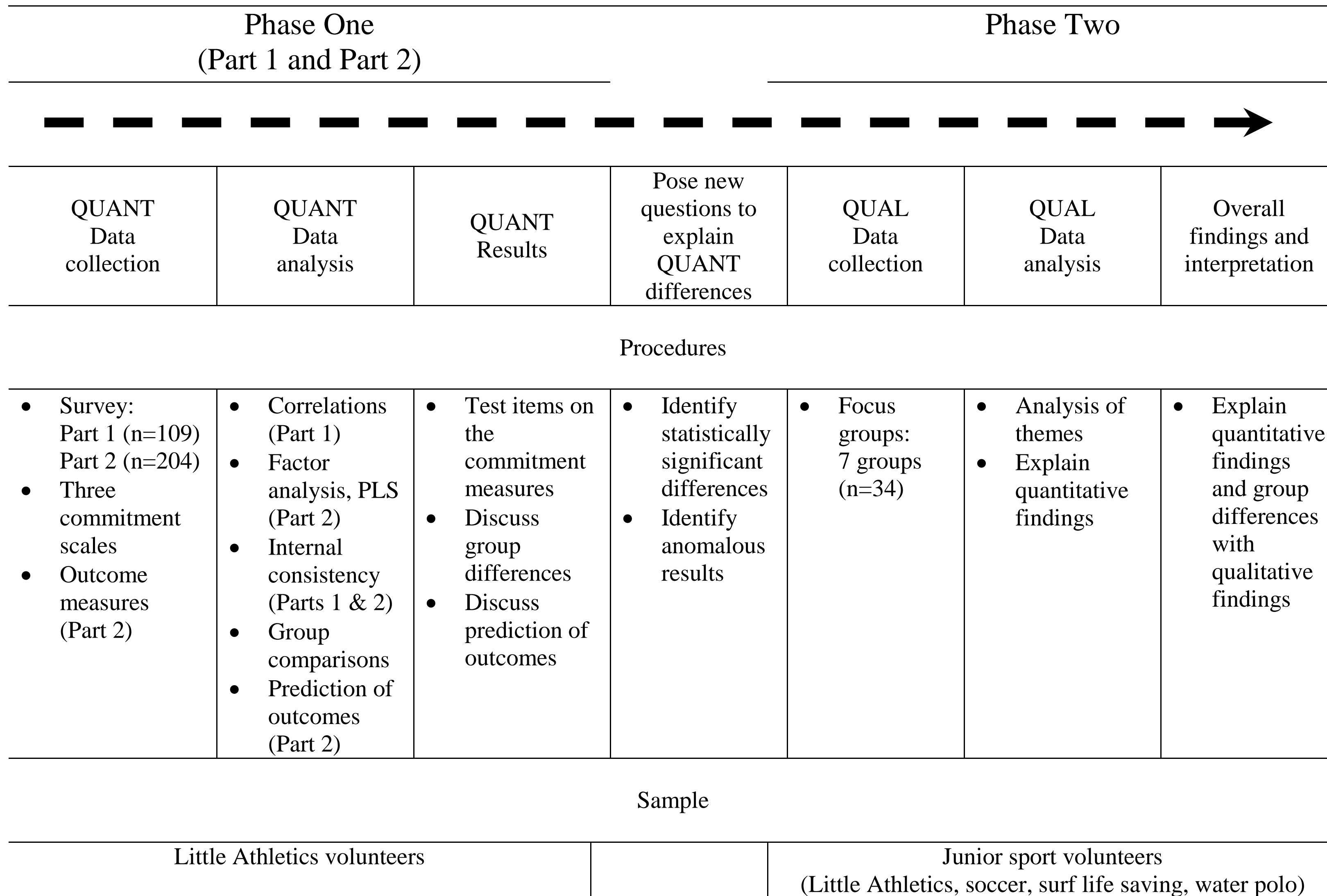


Figure 1.1 shows the specific quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. For Phase 1, survey instruments for Part 1 and, for Phase 2, focus groups. Figure 1.1 also includes details of the total number of individuals that participated in each study and the organisations/sports involved.

For the purposes of this research, and given the nature of the research questions, the researcher developed new scales based on Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model of commitment to assess affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the centre (organisational commitment), commitment to the team of volunteers, and commitment to the volunteer role. Meyer and Herscovitch's model provides guidelines as to the development of such scales and to their application to various settings. This model has particular value in guiding research into the combined influence of multiple targets (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). The psychometric properties of the newly developed scales were examined in depth. To assess the outcomes of interest, which are intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the centre, and self-assessed performance, the researcher also developed new scales suitable for the examination of these outcomes in junior sport organisations.

The qualitative phase consists of focus group interviews. Focus groups allow for an interaction amongst participants whereby participants "illuminate the research issue" (Lewis, 2004, p. 58). Focus groups involve discussion and the integration of views, and allow participants to reflect on what others have said, thus bringing out the spontaneity of the stronger social context (Finch & Lewis, 2004). As Gibbs (1997) stresses, focus groups can be particularly useful in attitudinal research. This is the case when the purpose is understanding commitment. Lewis also notes that focus groups allow the

researcher to tease out the differences amongst participants and this process provides an opportunity for those differences to be discussed.

Focus groups offer diversity in terms of group composition, but at the same time there is a degree of commonality between the participants (all are volunteers in junior sport). The nature of this research topic, commitment in sport volunteering, is amenable to group discussion as sensitive or confidential issues are unlikely. Volunteering is essentially a social activity where the dynamics of interaction amongst volunteers and those they help are central to the volunteering experience. Focus group research has several other advantages. The researcher guides the interaction, which allows time for reflection and refinement of individual views and encourages the group to focus on issues that require deeper exploration. From a practical point of view, focus groups also have the advantage of affording the researcher the ability to hear the views of several people in the same location and at the same time; for example, in the organisation's clubhouse, as interactions can be tape-recorded for later transcription.

Access to participants for both phases of the research was negotiated with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the respective State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) and senior representatives of local sport and recreation government bodies, such as Sport and Recreation Queensland (SRQ). For the purposes of Phase 1 (Part 1), the researcher sought permission from the CEO of the Little Athletics Association of New South Wales (LAANSW). The CEO allowed data collection for Part 1 during the Regional Metropolitan Championships during the 2004-2005 season.

Due to the researcher's subsequent relocation to QLD, permission to conduct Part 2 was sought from the CEO of the Queensland Little Athletics Association (QLAA). The CEO agreed to distribute survey packages to all 120 Little Athletics

centres in Queensland. For Phase 2, the researcher contacted a smaller subsection of participants from Part 2 who had agreed to participate in a follow-up study. In addition, more participants were recruited amongst various sport clubs and organisations in Queensland with the cooperation of SRQ. Ethical clearance for each of the three studies was granted by Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (University Research Ethics Database Protocol Number EPS 19-04-HREC, see Appendices A, B, and D).

1.4 Research Impetus

The motivating impetus for this research arose from the researcher's prior interest in and involvement with volunteer-run sport associations and events, particularly in athletics and road running. The researcher has always valued volunteering and the benefits it provides for the community and was the creator and driving force behind an annual local fun-run (*American Women's Club of Montevideo Fun Runs for Charity*) that attracts major sponsors. The researcher has also worked as a volunteer for associations such as Athletics New South Wales, South Eastern Little Athletics Centre (Sydney), and Townsville North Star. She is currently a volunteer walk organiser for the *Just Walk It* program of the National Heart Foundation and Sport and Recreation Queensland (SRQ). Also, she recently started a non-profit running and fitness club for children aged 5 to 15, *FITTA Kids/Riverside Junior Runners*, in her local area in Townsville.

1.5 Justification for the Research

Without the work of volunteers community-based sport organisations would not survive. This has been recognised by sport organisations and relevant government and non-government bodies alike, such as the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). The

document *Volunteer management: A guide to good practice* (ASC, 2000) highlights the issues of recruitment and retention of volunteers in sport organisations. This document also stresses the need on the part of sport organisations to understand the motivations of their volunteers.

The research assists volunteer-run sport organisations on a practical level. For example, it can educate sports administrators/volunteer coordinators about the importance of considering their key organisational aims as precisely as possible (e.g., retaining volunteers, retaining volunteers in particular roles, such as coaching, volunteer performance, and so forth) and then to match these aims to the actions required to achieve them. An understanding of the multidimensional nature of commitment may also guide administrators in the development of policies/guidelines to achieve desired outcomes. In this respect, if the wrong type of commitment is fostered (for example, increasing continuance commitment by providing rewards), organisational performance may decline, as volunteers only exert effort conditional upon further rewards.

From a theoretical point of view, this research also extends the current body of literature on organisational commitment, thereby contributing to theory and research in sport management. This research extends the applicability of the multidimensional commitment framework (Meyer & Allen, 1997) to the sport volunteer context. This research also investigates Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) propositions that the commitment construct can be applied to other targets. These aims therefore fill a gap in both commitment research and sport management as a discipline.

1.6 Definitions Used in the Research

The definitions used for the purposes of this research are:

Commitment: "A force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets" (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301).

Commitment targets: An organisational entity or behaviour towards which commitment is directed. For the purposes of this research, three targets will be under investigation: commitment to the club or centre (the organisation), commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role.

Junior sport organisation: A non-profit club, centre or association providing organised sport and recreation activities for children and youth 17 years of age and under. Generally incorporated entities and having a constitution, these organisations operate under the rules and policies of an umbrella state or national governing body and are run exclusively or primarily by volunteers.

Volunteer (work) team: All the volunteers working in a club or centre in any capacity. For example, committee members, coaches, officials, general helpers.

Volunteer role: The informally or formally designated activities, responsibilities and functions of a volunteer within the sport organisation. Roles may include: office bearer--or committee member--coach, official, time-keeper, general helper among others. Similar to an occupation, volunteers often fulfil more than one role.

1.7 Delimitations

The research seeks to examine commitment of volunteers in sport organisations. However, the following delimitations are applied:

The target organisations are community-based non-profit clubs or centres catering exclusively or chiefly for junior participants, 17 years of age or under. For practical and

time management concerns, most of the volunteers were drawn from Little Athletics centres/clubs in either NSW or QLD. The sample selected for Part 1 of the quantitative phase consisted of volunteers belonging to a subsection of all Little Athletics centres in NSW. Only volunteers from centres belonging to Region 3 (Metropolitan) were included, as the data were collected during the Region 3 Championships. Region 3 is the largest of all five LAANSW centre regions, with 27 out of a total of 197 LAANSW centres.

The sample for Part 2, the quantitative phase, included volunteers drawn from Little Athletics centres in Queensland. Six survey packages were sent to each of the 120 QLAA centres via the QLAA office. Completed questionnaires from 204 volunteers representing 52 centres were returned. Of these 204 volunteers, 17 agreed to participate in a follow-up study (Phase 2). Other participants for this phase were recruited from a variety of junior sport clubs in Queensland with the assistance of SRQ.

Another delimitation is that variables closely linked to commitment are not directly assessed. These include, among others, satisfaction, motivation, and involvement, as well as commitment to other organisational targets, such as the sport, volunteering, or the participating children.

1.8 Limitations

The following limitation was identified:

As with any study, the findings can only reflect the views of the individuals participating. For example, the data for Part 1 were collected during a LAANSW regional championship. Given the nature and importance of the event, there was a high likelihood that the majority of volunteers present were highly experienced and motivated. Consistent with this assumption, 69% of respondents in this study were

experienced volunteers; that is, they had served as volunteers for over six seasons and had assisted in sanctioned events regularly. This may not have constituted a representative sample of Little Athletics (or junior sport) volunteers where individuals, particularly parents, normally help for the duration of their own children's participation in the sport. Similarly, survey instruments for Part 2 were distributed to each centre via the QLAA Office due to privacy reasons preventing research access to individual volunteers. Distribution of all survey packages to eligible volunteers could not be guaranteed. Every effort was made to include a broad and representative sample of volunteers within each of the organisations featured.

1.9 Assumptions

The following assumptions were held in regards to this research:

This research assumes that the responses of participants will be honest reflections of their attitudes towards their sport clubs, their team of volunteers, and their respective roles within their clubs or centres.

This research assumes that the responses of participants will not be biased or affected by the testing environment or the influence of other people.

1.10 Thesis Overview

The thesis consists of six chapters. A brief summary of the contents of each chapter is presented below.

Chapter 2 reviews and critiques the commitment literature, and identifies themes and gaps that provide the foundation for this research. The chapter covers the topics of definitions, theoretical frameworks and models, commitment development research (antecedents, correlates, and consequences of commitment), and the assessment of organisational and other workplace commitments. The chapter also reviews the scope

and impact of volunteering in Australia, volunteer motivations, and volunteer commitment in sport and other voluntary organisations. The chapter concludes with a problem statement which introduces the research, its significance and contribution.

Chapter 3 describes the first study, Part 1 of Phase 1 (quantitative phase) of the research. This chapter covers the methods, including the sample and procedures, and instrumentation; the statistical analyses conducted to assess the distinctiveness of the commitment constructs and the reliability of the scales; also, the findings, including an assessment of differences in commitment by volunteer subgroups (such as committee members and volunteers in other roles) and Part 1's implications for Part 2 of this phase are presented.

Chapter 4 describes Part 2 of Phase 1. This chapter covers the methods, including the sample and procedures, instrumentation, and a detailed discussion of how the measures in Part 1 were further refined and modified. The statistical analyses conducted, including an assessment of the reliability and validity of the scales and an examination of the links between each of the three targets of commitment and their relation to each of the three outcomes under study are presented, along with the findings and implications for Phase 2 of the research.

Chapter 5 describes Phase 2 (qualitative phase) of the research. This chapter covers: the process of sample selection, allocation to focus groups, and the data collection materials and procedures; the analyses conducted on the data; the findings of this phase, including accounts from participants; and this phase's implications for the research.

Chapter 6 draws together the findings of the research as a whole. It opens by revisiting the main research questions and then addresses specific themes, such as the

nature of organisational commitment, the targets of commitment, and the outcomes of commitment. The chapter then discusses the theoretical and applied implications of the research and the contributions of the research. The chapter concludes by offering suggestions for future research.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the topic of volunteering in Australian sport, its significance and magnitude, and the challenges it is currently facing. Issues such as the introduction of more stringent legislation, the increasing complexity or managing sport organisations, and people's decreasing time for leisure pursuits such as volunteering, are affecting volunteers' attitudes and behaviour, in particular their organisational commitment. It was argued that the commitment of volunteers is critical to the effective organisation and delivery of community-based sport. However, despite progress in the understanding of volunteer commitment, questions regarding the nature and impact of this commitment still remain unanswered.

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to examine the nature of volunteer commitment by exploring the dimensions and targets of commitment, and to examine the implications of such commitments as to the intention to remain volunteering and performance. Specifically, this research addresses the commitment of volunteers in community-based junior sport. An explanatory mixed-methods design is used.

In the first, quantitative phase, survey instruments are distributed to volunteers at Little Athletics centres. The purpose of the first phase is to extend Meyer and Allen's (1997) and Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) frameworks to these contexts and to assess the links between the various commitments and intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the sport organisation, and self-

assessed performance. The purpose of the second, qualitative phase, is to explain and explore the quantitative results in more depth. In this follow-up, commitment is explored with a smaller sample of volunteers drawn from Phase 1 and from other similar sport clubs or organisations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part will review definitions, theoretical frameworks and models, development of commitment, and the assessment of organisational and other workplace commitments. The second part focuses specifically on applications and research in volunteer contexts, with a review of topics such as the significance and impact of volunteering, volunteer motivations, and volunteer commitment. Throughout the chapter key themes and gaps in the literature that provide the foundation for the current research are identified and drawn together.

2.1 Organisational Commitment: A Conceptual Overview

Organisational commitment has received considerable attention in a variety of workplace settings (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Mowday et al., 1982). Research and theories date back to the late 1950s and, to this day, the construct continues to be a lively area of study arguably because commitment has been shown to be linked to worker behaviours such as turnover and performance. A striking feature of research (primarily early research) on organisational commitment is the wide variety of definitions given to the term commitment (Allen & Meyer, 2000). For example, some define it as an attitude towards an organisation as a whole (Blau & Boal, 1989; Buchanan, 1974) often with emotional underpinnings or accompanied by a strong belief in organisational goals and values (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Conversely, others define commitment as a behaviour (e.g., Becker, 1960; Salancik, 1977), a view that focuses on the overt manifestations of commitment (Zangaro, 2001),

as a worker becomes committed to an organisation because of sunk costs that stand to be lost upon leaving the organisation, such as pay and benefits. In this respect, the individual is bound by consistent lines of behaviour or "side-bets". Alternatively, an individual may feel bound to an organisation because of a perceived lack of alternatives of employment. Since the 1980s a new conceptualisation of commitment (Cohen, 2003; Morrow, 1993; Reichers, 1985) has broadened the focus to include commitment not just to organisations as a whole, but to related entities such as careers, work teams, unions, and customers, to name a few (see, for e.g., Brooks & Wallace, 2006).

Despite these wide ranging conceptualisations, it is currently agreed that commitment has a core essence that distinguishes it from other work-related constructs, such as job satisfaction or motivation (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), in that it influences behaviour independently of other motives and attitudes (Brickman, 1987; Scholl, 1981). General conceptual commonalities indicate that commitment is a stabilising or obliging force that gives direction to behaviour (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The following sections of this chapter explore these issues in further depth.

2.2 Definitions and Frameworks: Late 1950s to Early 1980s

Early definitions of commitment, such as Kelman's (1958), Etzioni's (1961), and Kanter's (1968) derive from organisational and sociological theories that attempt to explain involvement in social organisations (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). These definitions provide an insight into the nature of the linkages between the individual and the organisation**.**

Kelman (1958) argues that three different processes--compliance, identification, and internalisation, guide individuals' behaviour. These processes may lead to the same behaviour, which in the case of volunteering could be deciding to become one or to

continue to be one. For example, Cuskelly et al. (1998) suggest that an individual may decide to volunteer as a sport administrator on the expectation of gaining approval from others on the board or committee (compliance), but continue to volunteer because of the development of a sense of identification with other board members.

In a similar vein, Kanter (1968) proposes three interrelated dimensions that operate to increase a person's ties to the organisation: continuance, cohesion, and control commitments. Continuance commitment occurs when individuals make personal sacrifices to join or continue with an organisation. Upon deciding to join the committee of a sport club, for example, an individual becomes aware of the need to invest time to the fulfilment of that role, leaving less time for other leisure pursuits. Cohesion commitment denotes an attachment to social relationships in an organisation. Organisations, such as sport clubs, frequently foster member cohesion by offering incentives such as club uniforms or orientation days, efforts which are aimed at increasing this type of commitment (Mowday et al., 1982). Control commitment is the attachment to the norms of the organisation that shape behaviour in the desired directions. This commitment exists when volunteers act in ways that the organisation would approve of, and that are believed to be in the best interests of the organisation.

Finally, Etzioni (1961) argues that organisations exert control over individuals (members) and that this control depends on the nature of the individual's involvement with the organisation. This involvement can be of a low or high intensity and of a positive or a negative nature. Etzioni refers to positive involvement as commitment and to negative involvement as alienation. Moral involvement is one such positive attachment and, according to Etzioni, it is based on the internalisation of the organisation's goals, values, and norms through which identification with authority are

developed (Mowday et al., 1982). This conceptualisation is particularly applicable to voluntary organisations where the appeal of organisational values and congruence of these values with the individual's can be central to the volunteers' motivation. This is a key feature of sport and sport organisations. Kanter's (1968) and Etzioni's categories share some similarities, but whereas Etzioni's categories denote organisational influences that may operate under different circumstances, Kanter's three dimensions are highly interrelated, operating at the same time to reinforce ties with the organisation (Mowday et al., 1982).

2.2.1 Behavioural and attitudinal commitment: two sides of the same coin?

According to Mowday et al. (1982) and Reichers (1985) a significant development in the literature on commitment was marked by the distinction between the attitudinal and the behavioural viewpoints, a distinction identified by both Staw (1976) and Salancik (1977). This distinction, as Meyer and Allen (1997) note, has significant conceptual implications, as well as implications for commitment measurement and for the study of commitment development (i.e., antecedents, correlates, and consequences of commitment). In Mowday et al.'s words:

> Attitudinal commitment focuses on the process by which people come to think about their relationship with the organization. . . . Behavioral commitment, on the other hand, relates to the process by which individuals become locked into a certain organization and how they deal with this problem. (p.26)

The early work of Becker (1960) laid the foundation for the behavioural view of commitment as a force tying the individual to a particular organisation. Becker posited that commitment rested on the perceived importance of the costs associated with discontinuing a line of activity, such as employment or organisational membership.

Becker described commitment as a process in which individuals make side-bets, which link "…extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity" (p. 32). Similarities can be drawn with Kanter's (1968) continuance commitment with its emphasis on profit gained by continued association and cost associated with leaving.

Comparisons can also be drawn with Etzioni's (1961) low intensity involvement with its emphasis on a calculative exchange relationship between individuals and their organisations and Kelman's (1958) compliance process. In this respect, Mowday et al. (1982) note that when individuals have made sacrifices to join or remain with an organisation, they may come to feel that "I have sacrificed so much for this organization that we must keep it going" (p.23). In the context of the sports volunteering experience, a coach may initially perform this role with a club in order to help children, including their own children, prepare for competition. Over time, the coach may acquire new skills, formally through courses and informally through specialist experience acquisition. Investing time in the club may mean sacrificing involvement in other sports or leisure pursuits and with it the realisation that continuing with this involvement is the right course of action, thus reinforcing the commitment.

Hrebiniak and Alutto's (1972) definition also focuses on costs associated with leaving an organisation. They define commitment as "a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual-organizational transactions and alterations in side-bets or investments over time" (p. 556). Mowday et al. (1982) note that once the commitments are made, an individual must find mechanisms of adjustment to such commitments, thus creating a self-reinforcing cycle, often through cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). The individual becomes committed to a particular course of action. An attitude (or mind-set) may develop as a consequence of the commitment to the course of action and

can develop retrospectively, as Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest, as a justification for a course of action. The goal of research under this approach is to elucidate how an individual becomes committed to a course of action.

Salancik (1977) was another key proponent of the behavioural approach. He argued that the then current conceptions of commitment were too restrictive in that they did not give direction as to how to create commitment. Furthermore, Salancik believed that commitment is relevant to organisations in many more ways than just staying in the job. The view he presented "is grounded in behaviour and the implications of behavior in one situation for behavior in another" (p. 4). Borrowing heavily from Kiesler's (1971) work, Salancik defined commitment in terms of the binding that individuals have to their behavioural acts. As such, Salancik contends that "a concept of commitment implies that behavior, or action, be a central focus" (p. 4). He added that the degree of commitment stems from the extent to which a person's behaviours are binding.

In this respect, Salancik noted that four characteristics make behaviours binding thus determining the extent of commitment: explicitness, revocability, volition, and publicity. Explicitness refers to the extent to which an action has taken place, for example, standing for treasurer at the sport organisation's annual general meeting (AGM). Revocability (or reversibility) of the action refers to the extent to which an individual can try out a given behaviour to see if it suits. Following this line of reasoning, it should be easier for a volunteer than a paid worker, to try out a role or position in a sport organisation. Volition, the third characteristic, refers to the individual's freedom of choice, the fact of deciding to become a volunteer because of the individual's own decision to do so. Finally, publicity refers to the extent to which the action is made public. In the example of the individual who nominates for treasurer

at the sport organisation’s AGM, it can be assumed that he or she will have done so in a public manner when filling in a nomination form or putting their hand up when the position became available. As Meyer and Allen (1997) write “… after taking actions under these conditions and becoming ‘bound’ to continue with the organization, employees will attempt to justify their actions, retrospectively, by developing emotional attachment to the organization” (p. 49).

Unlike behavioural commitment which focuses on the process by which individuals become bound to an organisation (Mowday et al., 1982), attitudinal commitment, as previously discussed, is concerned with another process: how individuals construe their relationship with their respective organisations. The work of Etzioni (1961) and Kanter (1968) incorporate these notions. The attitudinal approach, which is favoured by organisational behaviour researchers, centers on the attitude or mind-set that individuals develop as they come to identify with the goals or values of the organisation and wish to remain in it (e.g., Buchanan, 1974; Porter et al., 1974). Buchanan defined commitment as:

> A partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of the organization, to one’s role in relation to goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth. (p.533)

Porter et al. (1974) define commitment as a psychological process which operates in an additive function including three core factors: an individual’s desire to remain a member of the organisation; his or her willingness to exert high effort for the organisation; and his or her belief in the values and goals of the organisation. In Porter et al.’s words:

> the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Conceptually, it can be characterized by at least three factors: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. (p.27)

The study of attitudinal organisational commitment has involved the measurement of hypothesised antecedents, such as positive work experiences, personal and job characteristics, and outcome variables, such as increased performance and reduced turnover (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The chief objective of this type of research is to establish connections between the relevant variables to see whether they are related to one another or whether there are causal relations amongst them (though the latter cannot be established with the cross-sectional designs which much of organisational commitment research employs). Mowday et al. believe that a common theme that runs through the conceptual work on organisational commitment is the notion of exchange: Individuals join an organisation with certain skills, expectations, needs, desires, and expect an organisational environment where these can be used or satisfied.

When the organisation succeeds in providing such an environment, then commitment will likely increase, but when the organisation fails to provide employees with what they need then commitment should diminish. Mowday et al. (1982) also make the important point that commitment, when viewed as an attitude, is a global concept “…reflecting an affective response to the organization as a whole” (p.28). As such, it is an attitude that is more stable over time, unlike job satisfaction which emphasises the specific task at hand.

In brief, although the behavioural and the attitudinal approaches are closely related, they reflect different research traditions (Meyer & Allen, 1991). As these authors state:

> In the attitudinal approach …the behavioral consequences of commitment are likely to have an influence on the conditions that contribute to stability or change in commitment. In the behavioral approach, attitudes resulting from behavior can be expected to affect the likelihood of that behavior occurring again in the future. (p.62)

Although the distinction between the two types of commitment still remains, neither approach is superior to the other as both phenomena are clearly related (Mowday et al., 1982). Many subsequent conceptualisations (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1997) have tended to emphasise the attitudinal approach, commitment as a psychological state, whilst at the same time acknowledging that the psychological state can develop retrospectively or prospectively, in line with the behavioural approach.

2.3 Definitions and Frameworks: Mid 1980s to Present

Until the mid 1980s commitment theory and research were characterised by varying definitions and research traditions and inconsistent research findings. After this time, however, new debates and related changes took place (e.g., Morrow, 1993; Reichers, 1985). For example, whilst the earlier work was dominated by the attitudinal-behavioural dichotomy, new work started to favour more complex, multidimensional approaches to commitment, and, more recently, the recognition that commitment can be directed to other entities (also referred to as targets or foci).

A significant contribution was the recognition that commitment involved obligation or moral responsibility (Wiener, 1982). Wiener believed that the existing

models of organisational commitment lacked definitional precision, theoretical integration, and predictive power. Instead, Wiener proposes that commitment is a normative motivational process and suggests that the organisational behaviour of individuals is contingent upon internalised normative pressures, such as personal moral standards, and that these pressures may have long term effects on behaviour. Consistent with an identification approach, which contends that commitment is an intervening construct that is a mediator between certain antecedents and outcomes, Wiener argues that this normative-instrumental approach is broader in scope. Following from Fishbein's behavioural intentions model (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) Wiener defines commitment as "the totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way which meets organizational goals and interests" (p. 421). Wiener's unidimensional conceptualisation is important in that it highlights the impact of normative (societal/other people's) pressures in shaping attitudinal commitment. This impact is also reflected in subsequent multidimensional conceptualisations that include a normative component, such as Meyer and Allen's (e.g., 1991, 1997) model and Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, and Sincich's (1993) model that is discussed below.

Multidimensional conceptualisations of organisational commitment borrow from earlier work but acknowledge that organisational commitment is more complex than emotional attachment (attitudinal commitment), perceived costs (behavioural commitment), and moral obligation (normative pressures). Organisational commitment results from the interaction of all three components or dimensions. For example, Kelman (1958) is credited with laying the foundation for the multidimensional approach (Suliman & Isles, 2000) as Kelman linked compliance, identification, and

internalisation to attitudinal change, whilst Etzioni (1961), according to Zangaro (2001), described commitment in terms of moral, calculative, and alienative involvement.

Of the multidimensional conceptualisations that emerged in the 1980s, Meyer and Allen's (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997) three-dimensional or three-component model is arguably the most significant and is currently the most widely used framework in organisational commitment research. Their model has the following components. Affective commitment reflects an individual's emotional attachment to and identification with his or her organisation. This individual *wants to* remain in the organisation. A continuance commitment, which reflects an individual's decision to remain with his or her organisation because of the costs associated with leaving it. This individual *needs to* remain in the organisation. Finally, a normative commitment, which reflects an individual's feeling that he or she should remain with the organisation because of a sense of duty or obligation. This individual feels he or she *ought to* remain with the organisation.

Research examining the model is extensive and generally supports the various dimensions described and have been documented in several reviews including Mathieu and Zajac (1990), Meyer and Allen (1997), and Meyer et al. (2002). In proposing their own definition and analysing the various definitions and conceptualisations, Meyer and Allen acknowledged the key commonalities and differences. The key similarity, as Meyer and Allen point out, is that commitment has a core essence that distinguishes it from other workplace related attitudes or motivation. The key differences appear to centre on the dimensionality of commitment and its nature or origin. In formulating their model, Meyer and Allen sought to reconcile these matters by identifying the common themes (commitment is a mind-set that binds an individual to an organisation)

and diversity of the origin of that mindset (an affective, a continuance, or a normative mind-set). Individuals are assumed to differ in the strength of the presence of the various commitments. The combination of the three mind-sets represents an individual's organisational commitment profile.

Another influential multidimensional model was that of O'Reilly and his colleagues (e.g., Caldwell, Chatman, & O'Reilly, 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Following from Kelman's (1958) work on attitude and behavioural change as reviewed earlier, O'Reilly and colleagues construed commitment as a psychological bond tying the individual to the organisation. This bond can take three different forms which, in keeping with Kelman's nomenclature, O'Reilly and colleagues called compliance, identification, and internalisation. O'Reilly and Chatman stated that

> compliance occurs when attitudes and behaviors are adopted, not because of shared beliefs but simply to gain specific rewards. In this case, public and private attitudes may differ. Identification, in Kelman's terms, occurs when an individual accepts influence to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship; that is, an individual may feel proud to be part of a group, respecting its values and accomplishments without adopting them as his or her own. Internalization occurs when influence is accepted because the induced attitudes and behaviour are congruent with one's own values; that is, the values of the individual and the group or organization are the same. (p.493)

In this multidimensional conceptualisation, an individual's commitment can comprise varying combinations of these three psychological states: compliance, identification, and internalisation. The behavioural consequences of these states can also

be different. As such, compliance (when attitudes and related behaviours are adopted to gain a specific reward), identification (accepting influence to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship), and internalisation (accepting influence because the attitudes and behaviour are congruent with own values) have been related to outcomes such as prosocial behaviour, turnover intention, and turnover. Although studies examining these processes have been confined to the paid employee situation (e.g., O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), the above outcomes are also central to the management of volunteers in organisations. While O'Reilly and Chatman's model is similar to Meyer and Allen's, their research findings are mixed. For example, although O'Reilly and Chatman found support for the three- dimensional structure of their commitment measure, subsequent research (Caldwell et al., 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vandenberg, Self, & Seo, 1994) showed that the distinction between identification and internalisation was not always clear.

Other multidimensional models emerged in the early 1980s. For example, Angle and Perry (1981) distinguish amongst two types of commitment based on the results of a factor analysis of items from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire or OCQ (Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974). They labelled this *value commitment*, which typifies a commitment to support the goals of the organisation, whilst *commitment to stay* is the "commitment to retain their organizational membership" (p. 4). Similarly, Mayer and Schoorman (1988, 1992) found that there appeared to be two dimensions underlying organisational commitment. Value commitment was the label applied to "a belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values and a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization" (p. 673) and *continuance commitment* to "the desire to remain a member of the organization" (p. 673). In sum, the first

dimension resembles an attitudinal orientation, whereas the latter denotes a bind to the organisation.

Jaros et al. (1993) propose a multidimensional model and labelled their dimensions affective, continuance, and moral commitment. The continuance dimension corresponds with Meyer and Allen’s continuance commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), but Jaros et al.’s moral commitment is more akin to Meyer and Allen’s affective commitment, not normative commitment. Other differences, as Meyer and Herscovitch highlight, refer to the nature of the affective commitment. Jaros et al. place more emphasis on the actual affect experienced by employees than Meyer and Allen do and they use an adjective check list as an assessment tool.

Penley and Gould’s (1988) framework is based on Etzioni’s work on organisational involvement and identifies moral, calculative, and alienative dimensions. As Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) point out, the moral commitment corresponds to Jaros et al.’s (1993) definition and with Meyer and Allen’s (1991) affective commitment dimension. The calculative dimension is similar to O’Reilly and Chatman’s (1986) compliance commitment. The alienative commitment bears similarities with the continuance commitment identified by both Meyer and Allen and Jaros et al.

In reviewing the various frameworks, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) warn scholars of the dangers of adopting labels to describe commitment dimensions. There is certainly the problem of confusion arising from using the same terminology for the description of different commitments. For example, Jaros et al.’s (1993) moral commitment (internalisation of goals and values) is more closely related to Meyer and Allen’s (1991, 1997) affective, rather than normative commitment. Second, Meyer and

Herscovitch believe that labels do not convey the richness of the constructs they are intended to describe. After considering the nature of the constructs they seek to define in their general model, Meyer and Herscovitch kept the affective, normative, and continuance labels, basing this decision in part on the fact that these labels are well established in the literature following Meyer and Allen's extensive work. At present, Meyer and Allen's framework and related measures, which are reviewed later, continue to be the most widely used in organisational commitment research.

In conclusion, it is now generally accepted that commitment is an attitude and multidimensional in nature. The strength of the multidimensional frameworks is the acknowledgement that commitment is more complex than emotional attachment, internalisation processes, perceived costs, or moral obligation. Commitment is the result of an interaction amongst these components.

2.4 Multiple Organisational Commitments

Definitions, theories, and research on commitment have typically focused on the attachments or bindings that an individual has for his or her organisation as a whole. As Chelladurai (1999) suggests, the label organisational commitment strengthens this focus. It is known, however, that individuals can develop commitments to other organisational targets or entities (Becker, 1992; Brooks & Wallace, 2006; Cohen, 2003; Lawler, 1992; Morrow, 1993; Reichers, 1985).

According to Reichers (1985), organisational commitment can be more accurately understood as a collection of multiple commitments to various entities that comprise the organisation. Reichers' arguments are based on organisation theory specifically, the notion that organisations are "coalitional entities that compete for the individual's energies, identifications, and commitments" (p.469). An increasing body of

literature on multiple commitments was recently integrated by Cohen (2003). In this work, Cohen strongly argues that the study of multiple workplace commitments is of extreme importance for both theoretical and practical reasons as individuals in organisations are exposed to more than one commitment at one time. This approach has advantages over the commonly used "global" approach to organisational commitment in that it addresses the question of what the employee/volunteer is attached to and how this attachment affects behaviour. Furthermore, it allows the distinction amongst individuals, who, although seemingly equally committed to the organisation as a whole, may hold different commitments to individual targets or constituents.

What are those multiple entities to which individuals can become committed? The literature refers to these as foci, entities, targets, collectivities, and/or domains (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Brooks and Wallace (2006) posit that organisational commitment is comprised of subfactors (which include, among others, career commitment, values and beliefs, and work ethic). Recently, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) stated that commitment can be directed to both an entity and/or to behaviour, a distinction that has implications for the prediction of target-related behaviours. The entities and behaviours that the individual can become attached to include: the work group, the supervisor, the occupation, and the achievement of organisational change, among other targets (Cohen, 2003, Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). In essence, the targets of commitment can be diverse and their assessment will depend to a large extent on the interests of the researcher. For example, targets of interest to sport volunteer-staffed contexts may be the club, the association to which the club belongs, volunteering as an act, the specific role undertaken (such as committee member, official), the promotion of the sport, the team of volunteers, and/or the athletes.

For the multiple commitment framework to be useful both from theoretical and applied viewpoints, several issues have to be considered (Cohen, 2003). First, commitments have to be psychologically distinct to individuals: if they are, then their interrelation and their relation to hypothesised antecedents and outcomes must be examined. Most importantly, it must be established that the study of these commitments advances the understanding of organisational behaviour over and beyond what organisational commitment alone can achieve. Research to date has provided support for continuing with the study of multiple commitments (Cohen, 2003). Studies have found that individuals distinguish between commitment to the organisation and commitment to various targets and that these relate differently to other variables. Targets studied include: supervisors/leaders (e.g., Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004), the work group or team (e.g., Baruch & Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002; Vandenberghe et al., 2004), occupational/professional commitment (e.g., Baruch & Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002; Meyer et al., 1993; in sport contexts, Turner & Chelladurai, 2005), and job involvement (e.g., Blau & Boal, 1989). The multiple commitment framework appears to be culturally robust. In a large study that examined ten commitment forms using Meyer and Allen's (1991) scales with European Commission employees of 12 different nationalities, Vandenberghe, Stinglhamber, Bentein, and Delhaise (2001) identified eight commitment foci.

Two foci of commitment are described in more detail below, not only because of the amount of research attention they have received in paid settings, but because of their potential application to the volunteer context. These are occupational commitment and work group commitment.

Occupational commitment has received a substantial deal of attention (Meyer et al., 1993; Turner & Chelladurai, 2005). What characterises this type of commitment is the focus on the individual's profession, occupation, or career (Cohen, 2003). However, it must be noted that, conceptually, occupational commitment is distinct from job involvement and work in general. Blau (1985) argues that the focus of this form is more specific than work in general. Cohen suggests using occupation as the term of choice as it assigns commitment to a particular line of work, independently from a career pattern.

Extending this concept to a volunteer context would involve reference to volunteer jobs or, more accurately given their unpaid nature, volunteer roles. Although not all volunteer roles are clearly delineated, certain roles are characterised by certain duties, responsibilities, obligations, and experiences required. These may include coaching, officiating, administration roles, committee roles, and various others depending on the sport. The concept of commitment to a role may share similarities with Grube and Piliavin's (2000) role identity.

Role identity is conceptualised as a state in which a particular role becomes so important that the role comes to dominate the sense of self (similar to internalisation). In a study of retention and performance of American Cancer Society volunteers, Grube and Piliavin found that role identity was the most important factor in the prediction of amount of time given to and intent to leave the organisation. Furthermore, role identity was a better predictor of outcomes including intention to leave the organisation. Interestingly, Wilson (2000) suggests that, in the context of volunteering, commitment could be construed as an attachment to either a volunteering role over time, or an attachment to an organisation, though no further elaboration on this distinction is

provided. In sum, the concept of commitment to a role may be an important focus of study in a volunteer setting.

The second focus of interest is the work group or team. The work group or team is a definable, visible entity to the individual and can be appreciated as separate from the organisation as a whole and thus appears to have conceptual value (Cohen, 2003). Randall and Cote (1991) state that the importance of work group commitment is in its enhancement of social involvement, which reinforces the social ties the individual develops with the organisation. An increasing number of studies have examined work group commitment together with other commitments of interest, such as the supervisor and the organisation as a whole (e.g., Vandenberghe et al., 2004). In examining the distinctiveness of three targets of affective commitment (including the work group, the supervisor, and the organisation) Vandenberghe et al. found that their hypothesised antecedents were unique to each focus.

Work group commitment has also been found to be related to key outcomes, such as performance (Becker, 1992; Becker & Billings, 1993). Extending the work group or team conceptualisation to the volunteer context would involve considering the immediate collection of people volunteers work with. In a small club, this would consist of all other volunteers serving in the club, although it may be argued that in a larger organisation more work groups can be identified (e.g., committee, coaches, officials). Commitment to the volunteer team would be consistent with what Ellemers, Kortekaas, and Ouwerkerk (1999) propose, which is that group commitment is one of the three dimensions that contribute to the individual's social identity. First there is a cognitive component, second there is an evaluative component, and third there is an emotional

component, typified by a sense of emotional involvement with the group; in other words, affective commitment (Cohen, 2003).

In sum, Cohen posits that although more empirical work is required on the concept of work group commitment and more work is needed to establish a definition (and a measure) of this form, the available research evidence shows that it contributes to the understanding of workplace behaviours. The centrality of the social attachments that volunteers form in their respective organisations (as highlighted in Chapter 1) provides a preliminary indication that this focus may also be useful in volunteer-staffed contexts.

Can theory and research into commitment dimensionality and targets be integrated? It appears that this may be the case. Although the three-component model of commitment was originally developed to understand organisational commitment, it has also been applied to the study of commitments to other targets (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer et al., 2003; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). According to Meyer and Allen (1997), it is reasonable to suggest that an individual could feel affective, continuance, and normative attachments to any entity to which he or she has a psychological relationship. However, despite the voluminous research into the multidimensionality of organisational commitment and the increasing research on targets of commitment, there is still little theoretical and empirical work reconciling both, rendering this extension at present, still speculative.

Meyer et al.'s (1993) research is an exception. These authors attempted to extend the three-component model to one focus, the nursing occupation. Measures of affective, normative, and continuance commitment were developed and administered to two samples of student nurses. The items were created involving procedures similar to those used to create organisational commitment items. Examples of items were:

Affective – 'I am proud to be in the nursing profession.'

Continuance – 'I have put too much into the nursing profession to consider changing now.'

Normative – 'I would feel guilty if I left nursing.'

The new occupational commitment measures were then administered to the participants together with measures of organisational commitment and of other variables assumed to be antecedents and consequences of organisational and occupational commitment. Using factor analytical procedures, the authors found that a six-factor solution of three occupational and three organisational commitment factors provided the best fit to the data. They also found that the pattern of correlations between the new scales and antecedent variables were consistent with expectations: that is, their relations with antecedents differed. Finally, they found that occupational commitment added to the prediction of outcomes such as absence and intention to leave the occupation.

2.4.1. Meyer and Herscovitch's general model of workplace commitment. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) integrated this extension of the three-component model into their general model of workplace commitment by stating that an individual can become committed to a workplace target (entity or behaviour) because of a feeling of *desire* - affective commitment, a feeling of *need* - continuance commitment, and/or a *sense of obligation* - normative commitment. This model is based on the premise that our understanding of organisational behaviour will be enhanced if the conceptualisation of commitment remains constant across targets. This premise appears promising not only for future work on the commitment of paid workers but particularly for the study of volunteer commitment where the volume of theory- based work is limited.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) acknowledge that most models or frameworks include a dimension reflecting an affective bond that appears to contribute to a mind-set characterised by a “desire” to follow a course of action, such as remaining in the organisation. It is also assumed that individuals become committed because of a “perceived cost” of failing to that course of action, such as losing the benefits of belonging to the organisation. Finally, some models acknowledge that individuals may feel a “perceived obligation” to pursue a course of action. Following this, Meyer and Herscovitch propose the following unifying definition:

> Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets. As such, commitment is distinguishable from exchange-based forms of motivation and from target-relevant attitudes, and can influence behavior even in the absence of extrinsic motivation or positive attitudes. (p. 301)

After reviewing the theory and research pertaining to the dimensionality of commitment, Meyer and Herscovitch offer the following proposition:

> The mind-set accompanying commitment can take varying forms including desire, perceived cost, or obligation to continue a course of action. These mind-sets reflect distinguishable components of the underlying commitment construct. The strength of each mind-set can be measured and, together, these measures reflect an employee’s “commitment profile”. (p. 308)

Regardless of the context in which it is studied, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose that commitment should have a core meaning, namely a “binding force”. This force is characterised by different mind-sets, each of which shapes the behaviour that is relevant to particular targets. For example, in the case of organisational commitment,

the consequences could be quite specific, such as staying with the organisation, or other discretionary target-related behaviours, such as exerting effort on behalf of the organisation. In the case of occupational commitment, the target-related behaviour would be remaining in the occupation. According to Meyer and Herscovitch, the target behaviour will occur with a high degree of probability because the individual is bound to that behaviour.

This premise can be used to guide volunteer commitment research. An examination of the specific issues relating to the volunteer experience may shed light on whether all three of the proposed dimensions should be retained and, in addition, what targets of commitment are central to volunteers and to volunteer behaviour.

2.5 Section 1 Summary

Organisational commitment is a concept that received a great deal of attention over the last 50 years because of its impact on worker behaviours such as turnover and performance. Early definitions such as Kelman’s (1958), Becker’s (1960), Etzioni’s (1961), and Kanter’s (1968) derive from organisational and sociological theories that attempt to provide an insight into the linkages between individuals and their organisations. These theories laid the foundation for subsequent concept and theory building. A significant development occurred when it was recognised there were two key views on commitment: the behavioural view (e.g., Salancik, 1977) and the attitudinal view (e.g., Mowday et al., 1982). According to the former, organisational commitment is an attachment that individuals have for their organisation, which involves three factors: a strong belief in and acceptance of organisational goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation. In contrast, behavioural

commitment is defined in terms of *sunk costs*, a concept that derives from the work of Becker (1960), who posited that commitment rests on the perceived importance of the costs associated with discontinuing a line of activity, such as employment or organisational membership.

More recent theories and frameworks have favoured a multidimensional approach. These borrow from earlier work, such as Kelman's (1958) and Etzioni's (1961), but acknowledge that organisational commitment is more complex than emotional attachment (attitudinal commitment), perceived costs (behavioural commitment), or moral obligation (normative pressures). Such theories and frameworks have been proposed by Jaros et al. (1993), Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997), O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), and Penley and Gould (1988). Of these, Meyer and Allen's framework dominates organisational commitment research. This framework comprises the following dimensions or components. First, is an affective commitment, which denotes and individual's emotional attachment to and identification with the organisation. Second, is a continuance commitment, which represents an individual's decision to remain with the organisation because of the costs associated with leaving it or because other employment (or volunteering) alternatives are not available. Finally, normative commitment reflects an individual's feeling that he or she should remain with the organisation because of a sense of duty or obligation. Research examining this framework has been extensive, generally supporting the various dimensions described (e.g., Meyer et al., 2002) and thus it continues to be the most widely used in organisational commitment research.

The concept of commitment can be extended to entities, targets, or foci other than the organisation as a whole (Cohen, 2003; Morrow, 1993; Reichers, 1985). An

increasing body of literature in paid settings indicates that other workplace commitments, such as commitment to an occupation, to a work group or team, and to a supervisor, are psychologically distinctive to individuals and that these commitments may have implications for the prediction of target-related behaviours. For example, commitment to an occupation may have more relevance to the prediction of intention to remain in an occupation, whereas organisational commitment may be more relevant to intention to remain in the organisation.

Although there is a lack of research into volunteer commitment to specific organisational targets, this multiple commitment framework could reasonably be extended to volunteer workers. Volunteers can become attached to a particular role (such as committee member or coach) or to a work group (such as other volunteers). At present there are only emerging indications that Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of commitment can also be applied to other targets (e.g., Meyer et al., 1993). Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model of workplace commitment provides the foundation for this line of research. According to these authors it is reasonable to suggest that an individual can feel affective, continuance, and normative attachments to any entity to which he or she has a psychological relationship.

Their model proposes that commitment is a binding force characterised by mind-sets (desire, perceived costs, and perceived obligation) directed to an organisational target (e.g., organisation, work group, occupation) and that these mind-sets have implications to relevant courses of action (e.g., staying or intending to stay in the organisation, staying or intending to stay in the occupation). This premise will be the basis of this research. Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to three targets, the organisation (the club or centre), the volunteer team, and the volunteer role

will be assessed. These commitments will then be used as predictors of relevant target-related behaviours: intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the club or centre, and performance.

2.6 The Development of Organisational Commitment

The development of organisational commitment has received a considerable amount of research interest (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The reasons for such interest stem from two key concerns. The first is a theoretical concern as organisational commitment is, according to attitudinal definitions, an attitude that reflects a stable attachment that develops over time (Mowday et al., 1982). If, as Mowday et al. argue, commitment can be characterised as a process that unfolds with continuing organisational involvement, it is important to understand what factors may influence this process at various stages. The second concern is a practical one, as the identification of those factors or mechanisms might guide the management of human resources, paid or unpaid.

2.6.1 Antecedents of organisational commitment. The study of antecedent variables has arguably dominated research on organisational commitment as a whole (Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Cohen, 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002). Variables that have been found to be related to organisational commitment can be classified into personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender), organisational and leader characteristics (e.g., structure, size, leadership styles), and work experience and job characteristics (e.g., job scope). A review of the extensive research of antecedent variables can be found in Meyer and Allen (1997) and Meyer et al., 2002. For the purpose of this chapter, the following sections will discuss some of the significant findings as they relate to each component of commitment.

Affective commitment is defined as: an emotional attachment to, identification with, and an involvement with the organisation. This leads the individual to *want to* stay with the organisation. Following Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) conceptualisation, affective commitment is accompanied by a mind- set of desire. This mind-set "develops when an individual becomes involved in, recognizes the value-relevance of, and/or derives his or her identity from, association with an entity or pursuit of a course of action" (p. 316).

Meyer and Allen (1991) classify personal variables into demographic variables such as age, gender, and tenure and into dispositional variables, such as personality and values. Previous research shows only modest, if any, significant correlations between age, gender, and affective commitment (e.g., Angle & Perry, 1981; Morrow & McElroy, 1987; Pierce & Dunham, 1987). Although positive correlations have been found between tenure and affective commitment, it is difficult to attribute these solely or unequivocally to tenure, as tenure and age tend to vary together (Allen & Meyer, 1993). In sport specifically, Cunningham and Sagas (2004) examined the effect of group diversity on the organisational commitment of basketball coaches. The findings of their study indicated that being of a different race from other workers in a workgroup affects commitment and that such impact was felt by both "white and black" coaches.

The study of the effect of dispositional variables, such as personality and values, has not received the same amount of attention as demographic variables. There is at present no firm evidence that personality characteristics influence the individual's level of organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). However, a meta-analysis conducted by Cohen (1992) showed that personal variables such as need for achievement and motivation were stronger for blue-collar than for white-collar workers.

Organisational characteristics, such as type, size, structure, and industry sector may influence organisational commitment. Cohen (1992) found that the relationships between organisational commitment and its antecedents were different for workers in blue-collar and white-collar occupations. Specifically, personal variables affected low status workers more that than those in professions of higher status. Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analysis, however, did not find any strong or consistent pattern indicative of a link between organisational characteristics and affective commitment.

The study of work experience variables has dominated research into the development of organisational commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). Studies that have assessed these variables have also reported the strongest links with organisational commitment. Job scope, including job challenge, variety of skills used, and decision-making latitude, was found to be strongly linked to affective commitment (Dunham, Grube, & Castaňeda, 1994; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Mathieu and Zajac's meta-analysis reports several studies that have found that those individuals who are unsure of what is expected of them, termed *role ambiguity,* or who are expected to behave differently from situation to situation, *role conflict*, will show lower commitment. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis extended these findings.

Overall, research on the antecedents of affective organisational commitment is extensive (Mayer & Schoorman, 1988; Meyer et al., 2002). Although individual characteristics in isolation do not show strong links to organisational commitment, they were found to interact with work experiences. Research indicates that, collectively, work experiences are important determinants of affective organisational commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1997) the most important of these work experiences are those that emphasize supportiveness and fairness, a sense of personal importance and

competence, and the value of individual contributions to the organisation. In other words, Meyer and Allen believe that work environments where individuals are supported, treated fairly, and made to feel their contributions are important, will be more appealing. With regards to the role of individual perceptions, these authors conclude that there is evidence indicating that if individuals believe the organisation cares for them, then the impact of organisational experiences is stronger.

Continuance organisational commitment was defined as the individual's decision to continue employment/working relationship because it would be costly to leave the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This leads the individual to *have to* remain with the organisation. As such, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) state that "the mind-set of perceived cost develops when an individual recognizes that he or she stands to lose investments, and/or perceives that there are no alternatives other than to pursue a course of action relevant to a particular target" (p. 317). Research on continuance commitment has consistently identified these two distinct but related dimensions of continuance commitment.

The investments individuals make vary from organisation to organisation but normally include work and non-work related benefits such as seniority, status, training, and organisation-specific knowledge, friendships, and other social ties. Many of these benefits are also available to volunteers in non-paid settings. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) stress that, central to the notion of investments, is the individual's perception or awareness that it would be costly if he or she left the organisation. Without such awareness, continuance commitment may never develop or have an impact.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) report some interesting, if small, relationships regarding type of tenure. In this respect, they found that time spent in a particular

position may develop affect towards it, but time spent in an organisation is more likely to lead to the development of side-bets. Although personal characteristics do not appear to have a significant impact, the association of accumulation of benefits that come with age and tenure may combine in the development of this type of calculative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984).

The other key hypothesised antecedent of continuance commitment is employment alternatives. Similar to the perception of investments made, what counts here are the perceived viable alternatives that individuals have (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The perceptions of the availability of alternatives are quite complex as some individuals may weigh their alternatives in terms of the economic climate whilst others may view alternatives in terms of opportunities within their own industry. Yet others may weigh them in terms of own skills, transferability, and marketability. In voluntary sport organisations where demand for volunteers usually exceeds supply, appraisal of alternatives might not be as relevant. However, this may vary depending on the type of volunteer context (Dawley et al., 2005).

Normative commitment has been defined as a feeling of obligation to continue with organisational involvement. According to Meyer and Allen (1991) individuals with high normative commitment will remain in the organisation because they believe they have a moral imperative to remain. In other words, they remain because they feel this is what they ought to do.

Internalisation of norms may lead individuals to believe that organisational loyalty is appropriate (Wiener, 1982). Normative commitment is also said to develop as the organisation makes investments in its employees, particularly if these investments are perceived by employees as difficult to reciprocate (Scholl, 1981). This perception

may also occur in voluntary settings. If an organisation funds a volunteer to go on a training course, such as a coaching course, the volunteer may feel indebted to the organisation and may develop feelings of obligation to the organisation.

Meyer and Allen (1997) also suggest that early socialisation experiences might have an impact on normative commitment. Socialisation may carry messages about the appropriateness of certain attitudes and behaviours within the organisation, such as the idea that individuals owe it to the organisation to continue to their work. Finally, Meyer and Allen state that normative commitment might also develop on the basis of the psychological contract between individuals and their respective organisations (e.g., Rousseau, 1989). A psychological contract consists of a series of beliefs held by both individuals and their organisations regarding their reciprocal obligations. In describing the mechanisms involved in such contracts, Robinson, Kraatz, and Rousseau (1994) state that psychological contracts can change over time depending on how the parties perceive their obligations have been met.

Despite these theoretical underpinnings, little empirical evidence exists to support these assumptions and consequently very little is known about the development of this type of commitment. This appears to be due to the fact that normative commitment is a relatively new dimension in multidimensional conceptualisations. It may also be due to the difficulties inherent in assessing issues such as cultural norms and early socialisation experiences. There is also evidence that many of the same variables that are related to affective commitment are also related to normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This is not surprising given the relations amongst the constructs and the strong correlations found between affective and normative commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). It is possible, as Meyer and Allen argue, that some

types of positive experiences influence feelings of emotional attachment and feelings of obligation at the same time.

2.6.2 Correlates of organisational commitment. Organisational commitment was found to be related to other work attitudes such as job satisfaction and job involvement. Although there is still debate as to the causal order of these variables (e.g., Vandenberg & Lance, 1992), here they will be considered as correlates consistent with the work of other investigators, such as Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Meyer et al. (2002).

Mowday et al. (1982) noted that job satisfaction is distinct from organisational commitment in that the former is an immediate and limited reaction to job experiences. For example, a volunteer in a junior sport organisation may be committed to its values and ideals but find their particular volunteer job routine and unexciting. Organisational commitment is more global in that it goes beyond the task at hand and takes longer to develop. Further, organisational commitment is more stable, whilst job satisfaction may fluctuate depending on changes of the nature of the job itself. Studies in a variety or settings, including sport organisations, show that job satisfaction and organisational commitment are highly related (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002).

Job involvement is defined as “the extent to which an individual identifies with the nature and goals of a particular organization and wishes to maintain membership in that organization” (Blau & Boal, 1989, p. 116). Both constructs are related workplace attitudes, where job involvement focuses on the job and its characteristics, as well as to organisational commitment to the organisation itself. Thus, both attitudes are directed at different targets. Causal processes involving correlate variables are not fully understood. In the case of job satisfaction, evidence has been found for the hypothesis that

commitment causes satisfaction (e.g., Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992), which contradicts the most widely accepted model that job satisfaction leads to organisational commitment (Mowday et al., 1982).

2.6.3 Consequences of organisational commitment. Consequences of organisational commitment can be classified into consequences to the organisation and consequences to the individual. Of these, the former have dominated this line of research (Meyer et al., 2002). Consequences include turnover and turnover intentions, as well as performance and performance-related variables, such as attendance, organisational citizenship behaviour, and job performance. Consequences to the individual include health and wellbeing variables.

Following their multidimensional framework, Meyer and Allen (1997) postulate that all three dimensions of commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) will be related to worker retention: in other words, that these will be negatively correlated with individual's intention to leave the organisation (turnover cognitions) and to voluntary turnover. The authors also argue that each dimension will have quite different consequences for other work-related behaviours. For example, an individual who feels affective commitment will probably have a greater motivation to contribute meaningfully to the organisation than would an individual whose affective commitment is weak. However, if the strongest link to the organisation is continuance in nature, then he or she may develop feelings of resentment and frustration that may lead to inappropriate behaviour. Finally, an individual with strong normative commitment may feel tied to an organisation by feelings of obligation and duty. Meyer and Allen argue that, generally, this will lead those individuals to behave appropriately, although these individuals may develop resentment to this sense of indebtedness to the organisation.

Several studies and reviews have shown there is a negative link between organisational commitment and intention to leave and voluntary turnover (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Tett & Mayer, 1993). However, a meta-analysis by Randall (1990) found that the relationship between organisational commitment and outcome behaviours was not always strong (e.g., Jenner, 1984; Stumpf & Hartman, 1984). In general when such links exist, they are stronger for affective commitment, though significant correlations have also been found for other commitment dimensions (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Work performance can be assessed by measuring behaviours such as attendance, in-role job performance, and organisational citizenship behaviour. This assessment can be obtained in various ways, such as from the employees themselves, from their supervisors, or by examining actual output measures such as meetings attended, targets achieved, or reports completed (Wright & Bonett, 2002).

Attendance, sometimes assessed by examining its opposite behaviour, absenteeism, has been found to be related to affective commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). In Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis, only affective commitment was found to correlate negatively with absenteeism. The few studies examining the link between continuance or normative commitment with attendance have yielded weak or insignificant relations.

Job performance is a term used to describe aspects of in-job performance, such as duties, activities, and accomplishments that are considered part of the required features of the job (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Performance in general has received a great deal of attention (Riketta, 2002). Affective organisational commitment, in particular, is consistently being found to be related to harder work and better performance on the part

of employees (Meyer et al., 2002). These findings apply to studies that use self-report measures of performance (e.g., Stephens et al., 2005) and to those using independent assessments of performance (Vandenberghe et al., 2004). Examples of these measures are supervisors' ratings and employees overall performance in the job (Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989). Other studies found that correlations between organisational commitment and outcomes such as effort, absenteeism, and performance were significant but in the opposite direction to that hypothesized (e.g., Angle & Perry, 1981).

Riketta (2002) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the true correlation between attitudinal organisational commitment and job performance and to identify moderators of the correlation. The true affective organisational commitment – performance correlation obtained was .20, leading Riketta to conclude that this correlation is weak. Performance is a complex variable, governed as Meyer and Allen (1997) note, by a myriad of factors including knowledge, skills, and abilities. On the other hand the influence of one attitude, such as commitment, may be moderate. However, given that even modest changes in worker behaviour can have significant impact on the organisation, the link between attitudinal commitment-performance, however small, should not be disregarded.

The continuance commitment-performance link has been found to be in the right direction but very weak (Meyer et al., 2002). As Meyer and Allen (1997) speculate, it is not clear why continuance commitment should be negatively related to performance, a plausible explanation being that individuals may feel trapped in their organisations and consequently choose to perform less well. Similarly, few studies have assessed the link between normative commitment and performance, with the exception of Dawley et al.,

(2005), Preston and Brown (2004), and Stephens et al. (2005). Altogether, the relations between normative commitment and performance appear similar, though smaller, than those found for affective commitment.

Although it is difficult to define organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) most researchers and practitioners would agree that the concept can be understood as "going above and beyond" behaviour that is expected under the job/role description (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Behaviours such as helping others and undertaking extra tasks are all examples of OCB. Various studies have assessed the link between affective organisational commitment and OCB and found that significant relations exist (Meyer et al., 1993).

The organisation's message about what is desirable or expected may moderate the link between commitment and extra-role behaviour (Schaubroeck & Ganster, 1991). In this study, Schaubroeck and Ganster examined the willingness of volunteers to engage in extra-role behaviours in two types of organisation: service and non-service. The authors found that the relation of the volunteers' affective commitment and their willingness to perform this behaviour (a fund-raiser) was moderated by the type of organisation. In service organisations, affective commitment and participation were positively related. In nonservice organisations the variables were unrelated. These findings have interesting implications for the study of organisational commitment and OCB in volunteer organisations. Volunteers, for example, may appraise the aims of the organisations they serve when deciding whether to engage in extra-role behaviours.

The consequences of organisational commitment extend to the individual. Organisational commitment is believed to create a sense of belongingness and contributes to the wellbeing of organisational members. In the absence of organisational

commitment, individuals operate in an alienated environment that may cause stress and unhappiness (Chelladurai, 1999). Despite these significant implications, the link between organisational commitment and worker wellbeing has received little attention (Schmidt, 2007). Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis included some studies that looked at relations with stress and with work-family conflict. These studies showed that affective organisational commitment was negatively related to self-reported stress and to work-family conflict (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Reilly & Orsak, 1991). There is undoubtedly a need to continue to research the implications of commitment to outcomes of relevance to the individual, such as work-related stress and work-family conflict (Meyer et al., 2002). In light of the needs of modern organisations, for example, accommodating the various needs of different types of workers, the study of this type of outcome can no longer be neglected (Cohen, 2003).

2.7 Section 2 Summary

Affective commitment is the most researched dimension of organisational commitment. It appears to develop on the basis of personal, job, and organisation-related and work experience variables, the most central of which are work experiences (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Continuance commitment has two subcomponents, perceived sacrifice and lack of alternatives that, although highly correlated (Meyer et al. 2002), are conceptually distinct. Central to the development of this commitment is the notion that the individual has to perceive these subcomponents as relevant to their working situation. Although work experience, job-related, personal, and even environmental variables have been found to play a role in shaping continuance commitment, the understanding of the process by which the individual recognises sacrifices and alternatives, and how these may create ties with the organisation, is not fully understood

(Meyer & Allen, 1997). Normative commitment is the most under-researched commitment dimension.

The limited research conducted indicates that normative commitment develops following organisational pre-entry experiences, organisational socialisation, the nature of the psychological contract, organisation-specific variables, and the development of feelings of reciprocation with the organisation (Meyer et al., 2002). The most researched correlates of organisational commitment are job satisfaction and job involvement. In general, these are defined as attitudes that are closely related to, but distinct from, organisational commitment, the latter being a more enduring and stable attitude. In general, correlations with these two variables have been found to be high (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) although the issue of causal ordering as well as conceptual issues still need to be addressed to better understand these links.

There is strong evidence linking affective commitment to the organisation and to several organisational consequences, including turnover, turnover cognitions, absenteeism, and various performance indicators (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990, Meyer et al., 2002). Although many of these links have been found to be moderated by situational factors, the implications seem clear: affectively committed workers are more valuable workers. Less research has been conducted to examine the link between continuance commitment and the above variables. Taken together, findings point to negative correlations, an indication that perhaps individuals, who are primarily committed because they have to committed, are not motivated to attend or to perform. There is some evidence that normative commitment is related to the above behaviours, though the strength of the relationships is weaker than that found for affective commitment.

There is a very limited understanding about the relations between organisational commitment and personal consequences, such as stress and wellbeing.

The aim of this research is to examine the consequences or implications of organisational and other commitments. Accordingly, three outcomes of relevance to voluntary organisations will be examined: intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the club or centre, and performance. Following from Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) intention to cease volunteering for the club and performance are expected to be related to organisational commitment, although the contribution of the other two commitments will also be assessed. It is expected that intention to stand down from the volunteer role will be linked to commitment to the volunteer role (target-specific behaviour).

2.8 Measuring Organisational Commitment

Based upon the various conceptual approaches to organisational commitment (as detailed earlier) a number of measures have been developed. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Porter et al. (1974) and Mowday et al. (1979), and the Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales (ACS, CCS, and NCS respectively) developed by Meyer and Allen (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer et al., 1993) are the most widely used organisational commitment scales. Both the Meyer and Allen scales and the OCQ have been used in volunteer settings. For example, Preston and Brown (2004) used an adapted version of the former in a study of volunteer board members, whilst Cuskelly and colleagues research into volunteers in sport organisations used adaptations of the OCQ (e.g., Cuskelly, 1995; Cuskelly & Boag, 2001) and adaptations of the Meyer and Allen scales (Cuskelly et al., 1999). In a study of volunteer board members of sport

organisations, commitment, and performance, Hoye (2007) also used the OCQ (in its short form as described below).

The OCQ is the most widely used unidimensional scale[1]. There are two forms of this scale: the full version consists of 15 items and the short version which consists of nine items. Some questions are reversed to prevent response bias. Responses are recorded on a five or seven point Likert-type scale. Meyer and Allen's original affective, continuance, and normative scales (Allen & Meyer, 1990) consist of eight items each. The revised scales (Meyer et al., 1993) consist of six items for each dimension. The internal consistency of the scales, as estimated using coefficient alpha, is .85, .79, and .73 for the ACS, the CCS, and the NCS respective median reliabilities (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Factor analytical procedures have been conducted to assess the multidimensional structure of organisational commitment. Studies (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Dunham et al, 1994) have found evidence supporting the distinctiveness of the three dimensions of organisational commitment. Similar procedures have been used to ascertain whether the measures are distinguishable from measures of other constructs (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The measures have been found to be distinctive from measures of job satisfaction (e.g., Shore & Tetrick, 1991), career, job, and work values (Blau, Paul, & St. John, 1993), and occupational commitment (Meyer et al., 1993). Other research evidence shows that organisational commitment, job involvement, and work involvement scales can be used with minimal concept redundancy (Cohen, 2003).

A prevailing concern regarding the measurement of organisational commitment dimensions, are the high correlations normally observed between the ACS and the NCS, leading some researchers to question the utility of the NCS as a separate scale (Meyer et

[1] Although this is generally considered a unidimensional scale, the OCQ has come under criticism recently (e.g., Benkhoff, 1997; Bozeman & Perrewé, 2001; Commeiras & Fournier, 2001) as the factor dimensionality of the OCQ does not appear to be stable.

al., 2002). Other researchers (e.g., Dunham et al., 1994; Meyer et al., 1993), however, have found that, despite high correlations, affective and normative commitment show different correlations with other outcomes, thus justifying two separate scales. Meyer et al.'s (1993) study also includes a revision of the NCS and the comparison of both ACS and NCS (old and revised scales) to other variables. It appears that NCS is worth retaining, as Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) note, it is possible for an individual to have a feeling of obligation in the absence of a feeling of emotional or affective attachment.

Another concern is the dimensionality of the CCS. It has been established that there are two aspects to continuance commitment: an appraisal of investments made in the organisation and an evaluation of available employment/work alternatives (see development of commitment section). Factor analytical procedures of the CCS yield mixed results, suggesting a one factor structure (Dunham et al., 1994) or a two factor structure (McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990). Meyer et al. (2002) conclude that an important consideration for future research is the assessment of how continuance commitment relates to other constructs. The total scale or subcomponents of the scale, for example, the subcomponent assessing alternatives or the subcomponent assessing investments may be used and interpretations may vary according to how continuance commitment is operationalised and according to the specific interests of the researcher. At present, however, problems with the dimensionality of the continuance commitment dimension remain unsolved (Cohen, 2003).

Finally, Cohen (2003) notes that the correlations between the OCQ and the ACS are generally quite high, but suggests the use of the ACS as the latter scale shows good reliability and validity.

2.8.1 Multiple commitment scales. There has been some work conducted on the development of other work-related commitment scales. Meyer et al. (1993) developed a three-component scale of occupational commitment and recently Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) tested Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) model with a three-component scale of commitment to organisational change. As predicted by their model, Herscovitch and Meyer found that affective, continuance, and normative commitment to change were distinguishable from one another. The authors also found that commitments to this target were distinguishable from affective, continuance, and normative commitments to the organisation. Finally, Herscovitch and Meyer found that commitment to change was a better predictor of a change-related outcome (e.g., support for the change) than organisational commitment.

Vandenberghe et al. (2004) successfully showed that affective commitment to the organisation, the supervisor, and the work group, are distinguishable constructs by developing items based on the ACS and relevant to each target. Work is needed, however, to develop and establish the enduring psychometric properties of the other commitment dimensions, namely, continuance and normative commitment to the work group.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) suggest that, in developing measures, researchers should specify the focal behaviour and the target of interest. For example, if the target is the organisation and the focal behaviour is to remain in it, an affective item may be "remaining in this organisation is important to me". If the focal behaviour is achieving organisational success, then an item may be "working towards this organisation's success is important to me". The target and the focal behaviour will reflect the interests or the research questions of the investigator.

2.9 Qualitative Studies of Organisational Commitment

There have been very few qualitative and even fewer mixed-methods studies of organisational commitment both in paid and volunteer settings. This is a regrettable omission as little is known about how workers or volunteers themselves define commitment. For example, Reichers (1985) argued that employees' own experience of being committed had been neglected. Becker (1992) also contended that research places little emphasis on the individual's experience of being committed. He further argued that to elicit targets of relevance, researchers should ask the populations of interest what entities, behaviours, or courses of action come to mind when thinking about work conducted in organisations. Recently, Hoye (2007) suggested that qualitative measures may allow a richer insight into the complex interrelationship of commitment variables.

In a study of manufacturing employees, Randall, Fedor, and Longenecker (1990) found that, in their interviews, respondents highlighted their concern for quality, the willingness to sacrifice personal concerns for the organisation, willingness to share information, and presence in the workplace. As Singh and Vinnicombe (2000) note, these features would be lost if the OCQ were the only assessment of commitment used. Singh and Vinnicombe conducted a qualitative analysis of commitment amongst engineering managers in the United Kingdom and Sweden. The main thrust of their study was to explore whether males and females share the understanding of the meaning of commitment at work. The results of interviews with 37 managers showed that there were noteworthy gender differences with females more concerned about involvement and availability. Males, however, were more inclined to view commitment in terms of task delivery, being proactive, and being ready for challenge. Clearly this qualitative

study showed that there may be gender differences that may not be evident by examining the construct in a quantitative manner alone.

In a volunteer context, Keyton et al. (1990) studied the commitment of volunteers in a successful Methodist church. Focus group discussions unravelled that commitment was linked to three key factors. A "not afraid to try" attitude (p. 12), a willingness for volunteers to personalise their contributions, and a willingness to let volunteer assess what they are willing to do. The authors stressed the fact that quantitative methodologies are not easily translated into the volunteer context. Once more, these findings are unlikely to have emerged with a quantitative methodology alone.

There have been a handful of mixed-methods studies of commitment that merit mention. Kushman (1992) studied teachers' organisational commitment and commitment to student learning (two types of workplace commitment) in 63 elementary and middle schools. The first phase assessed the two targets of commitment with the OCQ and a nine-item measure specifically developed for the study respectively, as well as other organisational variables, such as job satisfaction and career satisfaction. Teacher turnover was also assessed. The subsequent second phase consisted of three comparative case studies which allowed a more fine-tuned analysis of teacher commitment. One of the issues that the mixed methodology served to illuminate was the fact that there is a complex relationship between organisational commitment and a behavioural outcome relevant to the context studied (i. e., student achievement). The case studies also served to illustrate the cyclical nature of the commitment-achievement relationship, an issue that would have likely been lost with a quantitative methodology alone.

Biggs and Swailes (2006) compared the organisational commitment of agency workers to that of permanent workers. In the quantitative phase their study found that permanent workers had stronger commitment than agency workers, but in a subsequent qualitative phase, agency workers were found to be willing to go “the extra mile” (p. 138) for their organisation, even if they changed employers frequently. The latter finding was only evident through the qualitative enquiry.

In sum, the studies reviewed provide compelling arguments for the inclusion of qualitative methodologies in the study of commitment. The present research will take up the suggestion of Hoye (2007) and will include a qualitative phase where participants’ meanings of commitment will be explored in depth.

2.10 Section 3 Summary

The assessment of organisational and other workplace commitments has been almost exclusively conducted quantitatively. Various measures have been developed for such purpose, with the OCQ (e.g., Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974) and Meyer and Allen’s (e.g., 1997) ACS, CCS, and NCS scales being the most widely used in paid and volunteer settings. Although various methodological and conceptual issues need to be resolved, for example, the strong relationship between affective and normative commitment and the dimensionality of continuance commitment, the literature reviewed indicates that Meyer and Allen’s scales, particularly the ACS, are appropriate for the assessment of organisational commitment.

Consistent with this assertion, recent research favours Meyer and Allen’s scales over others, including the well-established OCQ (Cohen, 2003). More work needs to be conducted to develop commitment scales to other targets whether these commitments are conceptualised as uni- or multidimensional. Meyer and Herscovitch’s (2001) general

model provides guidelines as to development of such scales and to their application to various settings. This model has particular value in guiding research into the combined influence of commitment to multiple targets (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001).

As such, Meyer and Herscovitch's model will be used to guide the development of measures to assess commitment to the targets of volunteer commitment in this research; namely, affective, normative, and continuance commitments to the volunteering role and to the team of volunteers. An adapted version of the ACS will be used to assess affective organisational commitment in this research. This adaptation is required because the ACS, and other scales, have been developed for paid-employee settings, and the terminology and content of the questions is frequently inappropriate for volunteer workers. Following Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), a new scale to assess continuance and normative commitment will be developed.

There have been few qualitative studies of workplace commitments in both paid and volunteer settings and even fewer mixed-methods studies. However, as the selected studies reviewed illustrate, and as stated earlier in this thesis, a richer, in-depth picture of commitment is more likely to emerge by harnessing both methodologies.

The following section and the rest of this chapter will examine volunteer associations and organisations, volunteer motivations, and volunteer commitment. The theories and concepts reviewed earlier will be applied to the volunteer context and linkages to the present research will be established.

2.11 Volunteers and Volunteering: Key Themes

Volunteering is, according to Wilson (2000), "any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization" (p. 215). In Chapter 1 it

was argued that volunteers are an important set of human resources, essential for the running and, ultimately, the existence of many community-based sport organisations. Australia has a long tradition of volunteering, particularly in the sport and recreation sector. As Cuskelly et al. (2006) point out, volunteer participation can be reported in several ways. Also as noted in chapter 1, 1.8 million adults volunteered for sport, recreation, and hobby organisations in the year 2002 (ABS, 2006a). In terms of numbers of hours donated, sport volunteers contributed approximately 130 million hours per year (Cuskelly et al., 2006). A recent survey conducted by Lyons and Passey (2005) titled *Giving Australia: Research on Philanthropy in Australia* also shows that Australian sport and recreation organisations attract a significant percentage of volunteers, some 17% of the adult population, and although some organisations have paid staff working alongside volunteers, many community-based organisations, including junior sport clubs and associations, are run entirely by volunteers. Further, the authors report that sport attracts one in five of all volunteer hours, the highest proportion of volunteer hours given (in comparison, religious institutions receive one in six, and education and non-profit groups receive one in eight volunteer hours).

Despite these seemingly impressive figures, the survey also suggests that whilst volunteer numbers are generally increasing, there is a marked decline in the number of volunteer hours given to sport organisations. Further, an analysis of trends conducted by Cuskelly (2004) shows that increasing levels of participation in organised sport are overreaching the existing human resource capacity of many sport organisations, particularly at the community level which is the basis and strength of a sport delivery system. Cuskelly suggests three avenues to address this situation: make greater efforts to recruit new volunteers, increase the number of hours volunteers currently give, or

improve the retention of existing volunteers. Of these, retention is of high concern for long-term management (Hibbert, Piacentini, & Al Dajani, 2003). Clearly, attracting new volunteers is important, but not as significant if those already volunteering continue or expand their involvement.

In the context of junior sport specifically, there has been a marked increase in the percentage of Australian children participating in organised sport; that is, from 60% to 62% (ABS, 2006b), a total of 1.6 million children aged 5-14 years in the 12 months to April 2003. In a study of parental involvement in junior sport, Kirk et al. (1997) stressed that "the delivery of junior sport in Australia would not be possible without the commitment of parents in volunteer roles" (p.62). This finding is consistent with the *National Junior Sport Policy* (instigated by the Australian Sports Commission - ASC) which recognised the crucial role parents play in supporting junior sport through their work as volunteers.

Sport and recreation organisations are facing other challenges and pressures stemming from the ever-changing nature of the sports sector, as well as to changes in society in general (Nichols et al., 2005). Three of these issues are: an increasing trend towards professionalisation, stringent legal requirements, and societal changes, such as increased leisure choices and busier lifestyles. The first two are leading to a demand for volunteers with specialist skills and knowledge. Amongst the specialist skills required are, for example, knowledge of financing which is now essential as these organisations receive operating income from various sources, such as government, sales of goods and services, membership fees, and special events (e.g., competition). Other sources of funding are sponsorship, donations, and revenue from fundraising events.

The management of these various revenues can be quite a daunting task (ABS, 1999). Although many non-profit organisations employ paid staff, others place some of these complex duties in the hands of volunteers. In the words of Greg Denny, the Australian Rugby Union's administration education manager,

> it is not simply a decline in the number of volunteers coming forward, but rather the amount and quality work they are expected to do have dramatically increased. A whole raft of legislation covering child safety, privacy, responsible use of alcohol and safe food-handling practices is all contributing to the pressure on the clubs. (ASC, 2006, p.2)

In other organisations professionals are gradually assuming more responsibility for tasks previously conducted by volunteers, which has a detrimental effect on volunteers desire to contribute (Cuskelly et al., 2006). In turn, potential volunteers may feel they do not have the necessary skills to function effectively in an environment which is heavily professionalised, more accountable, and more litigious (Auld & Cuskelly, 2001).

As these challenges continue to unfold, it becomes critical to understand and foster the commitment of volunteers. Research already conducted in this area (e.g., Cuskelly et al., 2002/2003; Cuskelly et al., 1998) indicates that the commitment of volunteers is recognised as central to the effective management of community-based sport and has been found to be linked to positive outcomes such as turnover, turnover cognitions, and performance. Before reviewing research on the organisational and other workplace commitment of volunteers, a summary of key issues pertaining to volunteers and volunteering that are closely linked to volunteer commitment will be reviewed. These issues are: typologies of volunteer organisations, volunteer motivations, and the volunteer experience.

2.12 Types of Volunteer Associations and Organisations

Most volunteer work in sport, as well as in other sectors, is undertaken for non-profit associations or organisations. Non-profit organisations are private, non-government organisations that often have a set of rules or a constitution that establishes it as a separate legal entity beyond the individuals who constitute it. Almost all sport and recreation clubs and associations in Australia are non-profit organisations, a situation which is unlike that of other countries where the major sport clubs are privately owned (ABS, 1999). These organisations have a set of characteristics which differ from those of other types of organisations (i.e., those that are for profit and whose human resources are mainly paid workers) and, at the same time, volunteers also have a set of characteristics which differ from those of paid workers. Together, these will have an impact on organisational commitment and attitudes and motives in general.

Pearce (1993) contended that the main feature of voluntary associations is the structural uncertainty of their settings:

> Organizational volunteering is inherently contradictory in nature. It is "work" – working within a formal structure to provide a service to others – and it is a "leisure activity" – something done whenever convenient because it is personally rewarding. . . . The problems of volunteers' limited time, uncertain motives, and a high degree of individual independence can result in debilitating levels of uncertainty for organizational volunteers. (p.9)

In junior sport organisations these contradictions are prevalent. For example, volunteers are aware that their work is done during their spare time, but also that their work needs to be conducted in a professional manner. This can create confusion, particularly among

parents who often report that they are unsure about what is expected of them (O'Keefe, K., personal communication, October 26, 2004).

What are the characteristics of voluntary settings? There have been several classification schemes which can be linked to different incentives for volunteering. Clark and Wilson (1961) provided an early typology which classified organisations in terms of the incentives these offered to their members. Material incentives are those that include any material benefit. In the absence of payment, work experience would constitute a material benefit. Solidarity incentives are those that encompass social activities, sense of group membership, and fun, as Pearce (1993) points out, these organisations allow flexibility in the goals pursued. Finally, purposive organisations are goal-oriented and focused on organisational goals. Junior sport clubs are most likely to fit this type, although solidarity incentives also attract many individuals to volunteer and motivates them to remain.

Knoke and Prensky's (1984) typology is also based on organisational incentives and useful for understanding volunteer motivations and commitment. Knoke and Prensky identify three incentives: utilitarian, affective, and normative. Utilitarian incentives include volunteering to improve or acquire skills/knowledge/experience. A parent who serves in his or her child's club also derives utilitarian benefits: enabling the child to participate in the sport. In terms of affective incentives, the benefits of social contact can be the main source of attraction for volunteers, although the key purpose of many voluntary organisations is instrumental. Affective incentives include enjoyment of other people's company or the sharing of common experiences. Finally, normative incentives are reflected in the need to do a good deed and the satisfaction derived from helping others (Chelladurai, 1999).

In contrast, Etzioni (1975) provided a classification based on the three compliance mechanisms that organisations use and that were previously discussed: coercive, utilitarian, and normative incentives. As such, coercive organisations are those that exert power over their members through the application of threat or physical sanctions. These would include, for example, prisons, custodial mental hospitals, and correctional institutions. Utilitarian organisations would include most profit-making organisations, both blue and white collar, and peacetime military organisations that exert power over their members through compliance (remuneration), calculative involvement, and a mild degree of commitment. Normative organisations are those where normative power is the key source of control over their members. These organisations have the power to give symbolic rewards and sanctions and usually elicit a moral involvement of high intensity. These organisations include religious organisations, colleges and universities, and, most importantly, voluntary associations.

Finally, Babchuk and Gordon (1962) provided a three-way classification that can be applied to sport organisations. Expressive organisations' key purpose is to satisfy members' needs. Palisi and Jacobson (1977) further subdivide these into organisations providing activities in which members can participate exclusively, such as: dancing or bowling; organisations focused on the sociability function, to meet and see friends; and organisations with ideological concerns at the core, such as a church group. Instrumental-productive organisations, by contrast, serve an instrumental purpose. This purpose could be directed at the organisation's own members, for example, a coaches' association, or directed for the benefit of others, for example, The Red Cross. According to Chelladurai (1999), many sport clubs serve several of the functions at the same time and members and volunteers may join a given organisation to satisfy different needs.

Organisations such as junior sport clubs are, strictly speaking, instrumental-productive for others, although as will be seen later, volunteers may offer their services to satisfy sociability needs as well as to help the children.

There are some similarities amongst the classifications reviewed; for example, the solidary incentive proposed by Clark and Wilson (1961) can be compared to Knoke and Prensky's (1984) affective incentive, material incentives are akin to utilitarian incentives, and both focus on the instrumental focus of the organisation. Both Knoke and Prensky's and Etzioni's (1975) studies address normative concerns; that is, the importance of doing something for the benefit of others. Etzioni's classification is closely tied with his conception of commitment and particularly useful in understanding commitment in voluntary associations and organisations. The next section will address volunteer motivations. It will be argued that volunteer motivations are quite complex and fluid, they evolve with the passing time and are not always consistent with the organisation's main goals and aims. All this has important implications for volunteer commitment.

2.13 Volunteer Motivations

What motivates volunteers to offer their services? Do all volunteers share the same motivations? According to Pearce (1993), volunteers do not have obvious reasons for volunteering. Pearce contended that volunteerism is inherently contradictory in nature, because it is work in a leisure context, which is done whenever personally convenient for personal reward and with uncertain motives and incentives. The reasons for volunteers' work vary significantly from person to person and may not match the goals of the organisation. In general, researchers have elaborated lists of reasons for volunteering (Cuskelly et al., 2006), rather than going into a deeper level of analysis.

Despite the stumbling blocks to the understanding of volunteer motivations, there have been some theoretical efforts that must be noted. Clary and Snyder (e.g., 1991, 1999, see also Omoto & Snyder, 2002) developed a functional model of volunteering. Its basic tenets are that "people engage in the same volunteer activity but do so to fulfill different motives" (p. 156). Based on their analyses of various types of volunteers, Clary and Snyder identified six key functions: values (to express the importance of helping others), understanding (to learn more or use skills), enhancement (to enable growth and development), career (to get experience for a future career or job), social (to meet other people, strengthen social relationships), and protective (to address personal concerns, such as guilt or personal troubles). Clearly, some of these core motives could apply to volunteering in sport, but precisely which ones is an issue that needs to be further explored.

Dávila de León and Chacón Fuertes (2004), aware of the myriad of volunteer motives, note that there are important differences amongst different types of voluntary activities. They posit that the models developed for certain volunteers, such as Omoto and Snyder's 2002 model, may not work for others, although there is a basic structure or model that is applicable to all volunteering activities (Dávila de León, 2003). In this model, intention to remain directly predicts actual staying and such intention is predicted by organisational commitment. In turn, organisational commitment is predicted by satisfaction with the activity. This model would have to be complemented with other variables, both individual and organisational, which take into account the type of organisation.

In sport specifically, the reasons for volunteering are somewhat different from those of volunteering in other areas. For example, Doherty (2005) outlined a sport

volunteering model based on research findings in this context exclusively. According to this model, there are three levels of volunteer motives, each of different relative importance.

At the top level is what Doherty (2005) calls the *core motive,* which is said to be to "help a cause" (p.31). This is, according to Doherty, "common (and most important) to all volunteers, and reflects the altruism in volunteering" (p.31). This motive is similar to the *values* function in Clary and Snyder's (1999) model.

In the middle, Doherty (2005) identifies the *primary motives* which in sport are "personal needs and interests" (p.31). Doherty notes that sport volunteers are more likely than other volunteers to become involved because someone close to them is involved or affected. Following this reasoning, in the case of junior sport, parents become volunteers because their own children are participants. This is consistent with the findings of the *Voluntary Work Survey* (ABS, 2000) that found that about two-fifths (43%) of volunteers with a sports involvement reported a reason for undertaking the work was due to a personal or family involvement (e.g., their children might play for the club). Another commonly cited reason was personal satisfaction (42% of volunteers). In contrast, helping others in the community was a more significant reason for volunteering in other areas (50% of volunteers in general gave this as a reason, compared with 38% of sports volunteers).

At the bottom level, Doherty (2005) identifies the *secondary motives*. These comprise "social" and "personal development" motives (p.31). These show overlap with the social, enhancement, and career functions in Clary and Snyder's (1999) model. As Doherty points out, there are variations amongst volunteers with respect to these motives. For example, younger volunteers may be keen to acquire career-related skills

and experience (career function) whilst other volunteers, including parents of junior athletes, may view social motives as an attractive bonus of volunteering.

Doherty's (2005) model also assists in understanding the motives of volunteers in specific roles, such as coaches and executives. In the case of coaches, the key factor appears to be satisfying their own needs and interests, particularly to help children. Despite these reasons, with increasing experience, helping children becomes relatively less important (Hansen & Gauthier, 1988; cited in Doherty, 2005). Accordingly, it is not surprising to see that many parent coaches discontinue their involvement once their children leave the club (Strong, S., personal communication, March 28, 2004). Wilson (2004) developed a mathematical model on the decision to enter a sports coach program and found two different models, one for males and one for females. Male coaches weighed variables such as having girls in the household involved in the sport and having work situations involving leisure or sport (such as being a teacher in a health club). Female coaches were more influenced by attitudes, but, like males, were also influenced by situational constraints like having a car, working hours, and their household situation.

For volunteers in executive roles, such as committee or Board members, Doherty (2005) notes that personal needs and interests, coupled with contributing with skills and experience, take precedence over motives related to child involvement. It is reasonable to suggest that in clubs that are exclusively for juniors, all these motives may be of equal weight. In addition, it is not uncommon for volunteers in junior clubs to be involved in more than one role, a fact which would further complicate (or add complexity) to the key motives for volunteering.

In summary, Doherty (2005) points out that research indicates that motivations change and evolve over time. As involvement increases and volunteers develop their own experiences of volunteering, motives are likely to change too. In line with this, Pearce (1993) had argued that motivation to join is not the same as motivation to remain and that little is known about the motivations of volunteers after they join their organisations. Pearce notes that motives may evolve in line with original reasons for volunteering. For example, serving motives have been found to decline after joining. In Pearce's words, "volunteer-staffed organizations which depend primarily on service-based recruitment appeals need to consider that this initial burst of enthusiasm, alone, is probably not sufficient to maintain organizational commitment" (p. 78). Social motives appear to strengthen with the passing of time (e.g., Nichols & King, 1998) not only in junior organisations but in sport organisations in general. Finally, the furthering of organisational goals appears to strengthen over time, above and over personal interests. In Doherty's words, "sport volunteers tend to get involved for themselves, and tend to stay involved for the organization (p. 32)", a mechanism likely to occur through feeling part of and identifying with the organisation, which is congruent with affective organisational commitment.

Finally, it is important to stress that general service motives may be fragile as too many organisations can offer these. Thus, each organisation "must proffer something particular for its own members" (Pearce, 1993, pp. 82-83). As such, goals have to be specific to the organisation. Most importantly, however, Pearce believes that although commitment to other individuals (the social rewards) is of crucial importance, the power of volunteers' social environments to bind them to the organisation has not

received enough attention. This would reinforce the importance of studying commitment to the volunteer team.

2.13.1 Volunteering as leisure. Stebbins (1996, 2004) contends that volunteering has to be viewed as leisure, a non-coerced activity, a satisfying or enjoyable experience. Whilst volunteers may feel an obligation, even when they have the option to quit the activity at any time, the obligation can be described as flexible, typified by a lack of coercion, where there is a relative freedom to honour the commitment (Stebbins, 2000).

There are three main forms of volunteering as leisure according to Stebbins (2004): serious, casual, and project-based leisure. Serious leisure is defined by six core qualities which are: an occasional need to persevere (for example, a club's committee members will need to perform certain tasks over the course of the season or seasons to ensure club functioning); the opportunity to follow a leisure career (coaches and officials for example can progress up the ranks, even if their jobs are never remunerated); significant personal effort based on acquired knowledge, training or skill (related to the previous two qualities); it has durable benefits, such as self-actualisation and self-enrichment (related to the enhancement function of volunteering); it has a unique ethos; and participants tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuits. In sum, serious volunteers engage in a sustained and significant effort, providing benefits not only for their organisations, but for themselves. Serious volunteers are also known as *core* volunteers (e.g., Pearce, 1993) or *systematic* volunteers (Shibili, Taylor, Nichols, Gratton, & Kokolakakis, 1999).

In contrast, casual leisure includes both casual volunteering and casual play (Stebbins, 2004). The involvement is far less substantial, there is no career to follow as such and the efforts are more "one-off" than systematic. Volunteers who engage in

casual leisure are also known as *peripheral* volunteers (Pearce, 1993), *marginal* volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2002/2003), or *lend-a-hand* volunteers (Tedrick & Henderson, 1989). Many parents in junior sport clubs fit into this category, wanting to help their own child or children but not wanting a high degree of involvement (Cuskelly et al., 2006).

Finally, project-based leisure is, according to Stebbins (2004), a special category reflecting involvement in “one-off or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking” (p.7). Although it has the potential to build community, it is not serious leisure. Sport event volunteering may fall under this category.

According to Pearce (1993), core volunteers usually undertake formal roles, for example, committee members, and are deeply involved in the running of the organisation. In general, they also devote far more time to the organisation. Peripheral volunteers, in contrast, help occasionally or when it is needed, most likely in informal roles. Interestingly, these volunteers may be moved by a sense of obligation, such as helping at a sport carnival, but as Stebbins (2004) indicates, obligation need not be unpleasant, as the voluntary activity can provide the volunteer with satisfaction and pleasure. The work of casual or periphery volunteers should not be disregarded, particularly given the current pressures and demands, such as lack of time for leisure pursuits, which mean that volunteer tasks may have to be shared. It is also important to note that although these two key types of volunteers have been identified, there are no fixed boundaries as volunteer involvement may change over time. Thus, a heavily-involved career volunteer may eventually move to the periphery, whilst a casual volunteer may decide to make a career out of volunteering.

Core and casual volunteers, as well as non-volunteers, do not always interact in harmony and this can contribute to a "clash of cultures and motivations" (Nichols et al., 2005, p. 44). Reviewing research conducted for Sport England, Nichols et al. discovered that there were conflicts between core volunteers and parents of athletes (non-volunteers). Core volunteers were found to perceive the latter as just wanting a child-minding service for their children, whilst parents expected the full-service of a privately-run organisation. Pearce (1993) suggests that voluntary organisations consist of an activist core and a more inactive periphery and that the core are often perceived as influential, regardless of their position, whilst the periphery, although less involved, can still provide substantial help. Interestingly, Nichols et al. suggest that whilst the core are frequently overworked, it may be difficult for periphery volunteers to become more involved, due to long-established interpersonal relationships of the core. The core, Pearce adds, has a general resistance to welcome other volunteers. This situation may have implications for the development of volunteer commitment and volunteer behaviour.

2.14 The Commitment of Volunteers in Sport and Other Voluntary Organisations

The study of volunteer commitment has not received the same attention as that of the commitment of paid workers. However, and as noted in Chapter 1, the commitment of volunteers may be a key factor in achieving the same desirable organisational outcomes, such as retention and performance. The theory underpinning the organisational commitment of volunteers is similar to that of the organisational commitment of paid workers. Volunteer commitment has been conceptualised both as an attitudinal or a behavioural construct. It is found to be linked to a variety of personal, work experience, and organisational variables. Research on commitment targets or

commitment to specific organisational foci constituents has been even less preponderant. The remaining part of this chapter will review research conducted on the commitment of volunteers in voluntary organisations including sport and recreation organisations. Before this review, however, important differences between paid workers and volunteers will be outlined as there are implications stemming from such differences.

2.14.1 Differences between paid workers and volunteers. It was Pearce (1993) who highlighted important dissimilarities between both types of workers with relation to their organisational commitment. One key dissimilarity centres on the complex nature of volunteers' organisational involvement. Pearce noted that

> volunteers' commitment to their organisations is a reflection of the complexity of their organisational experiences. Volunteers usually are assumed to be very committed, since they are not compelled to work by financial need as are most employees. That is, in the absence of compelling external explanations, society, as well as volunteers, attributes high levels of commitment to organisational volunteers. (p.93)

Despite this premise, Pearce contends that commitment to the organisation cannot be assumed to be high for all volunteers.

Drawing on Knoke and Prensky (1984), Pearce argues that volunteers may be strongly committed to the goals of the organisation but have weaker ties to the institution itself. For example, volunteers who work for a junior sport club because they want to help their own children, might find alternative ways of helping, such as taking them to training sessions or driving them to events (Kirk et al., 1997). A parent who is committed to the development of the sport may make a monetary or other donation to

the club. In multiple commitment terms volunteers may develop commitments other than that to the organisation itself. These commitments may also impact on various target related behaviours.

It has been noted throughout this chapter that, theoretically, a distinction is made between attitudinal and behavioural commitment (Mowday et al., 1982). Attitudinal commitment denotes a mind-set. In contrast, the behavioural view suggests that commitment is the process whereby the individual becomes committed to a course of action (Mowday et al., 1982). Volunteer commitment has been studied from both perspectives, as will be seen in the following sections. However, Pearce (1993) contends that voluntary "work" is carried out in behaviourally weak environments with low performance expectations. This means that volunteers often perform their work when and how it suits them and are not subject to the same constraints paid employees are (e.g., keeping hours, attending meetings).

Volunteers' attitudes, unlike their behaviour, are not situationally constrained. Under such circumstances, the attitudinal view of commitment may be more appropriate (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). Some studies (e.g., Liao-Troth, 2001) have compared volunteers and paid-workers with respect to specific attitudes, such as organisational commitment, and found that the attitudes of both types of workers are not that dissimilar. Liao-Troth concluded that despite the differences between paid workers and volunteers, their organisational commitment is similar in nature, with the exception of the continuance dimension. This suggests that models developed for paid workers may be successfully translated into the volunteer context.

2.14.2 Antecedents and correlates of volunteer commitment. Research conducted on the links between volunteer organisational commitment and antecedent, correlate,

and consequence variables has provided similar findings to those of paid employee settings. In general, the relationships of personal and demographic characteristics to organisational commitment have been found to be non-significant or weak, whilst the relationship between volunteer motives, organisational characteristics, and work experiences are stronger (Pearce, 1993).

For example, Lammers (1991) studied the antecedents of organisational commitment of volunteers at a crisis and information telephone service. Lammers conceptualised organisational commitment behaviourally. In other words, he construed commitment as volunteer service duration. He identified three levels of volunteer involvement: individuals who dropped out during training, individuals who dropped out after training had taken place, and individuals who continued to volunteer during a commitment period. Lammers found that a combination of structural variables, volunteer motives, and personal characteristics influenced commitment and that the predictors of volunteering were not the same as the predictors of volunteering duration. Variables such as education, gender (being female), viewing volunteering as having value, and desire to learn a new skill, were related to level of involvement. However, volunteering duration depended upon the work environment, the task itself (i.e., whether it was satisfying), as well as relations with other volunteers.

Dornstein and Matalon (1989), in contrast, used an attitudinal conceptualisation of organisational commitment. Like Reichers (1985), these authors were concerned about the lack of a systematic approach to the study of the antecedents of organisational commitment. The authors examined the contribution of 17 variables, including personal characteristics, role-related characteristics, structural, and work experience variables to the organisational commitment of voluntary army personnel in Israel. Organisational

commitment was measured using the OCQ. The results of this study showed that eight of these variables including age, education, availability of employment alternatives, the attitudes of family and friends, and importance to the organisation accounted for 65% of the variance in organisational commitment. The authors concluded that these antecedent variables are similar to those that account for organisational commitment in other organisational settings.

Dailey (1986) believes that the study of the psychological processes that underlie the attitudinal commitment of volunteers is central to the understanding of the construct and its theoretical antecedents. Interestingly, Dailey notes that commitment may occur before the volunteer joins the organisation, a fact that may be attributed to the inducement of autonomy and self-governance that is typical of voluntary organisations. His study found that job satisfaction and job involvement accounted for a large amount of variance in organisational commitment, but that personal characteristics and need for affiliation only had a small role. Despite the differences between paid workers and volunteers noted earlier, Dailey concludes that the major constructs used to study the behaviour of paid workers are also relevant to volunteers and that the variables used to study work attitudes and organisational commitment for paid employees are associated with similar outcomes for volunteers.

Strong evidence has been found for the relation between individual perceptions and various work experiences on organisational commitment (Latham & Lichtman, 1984). The feeling of personal importance, of being wanted and needed, and perceiving that individual contributions are appreciated appear to foster organisational commitment. Latham and Lichtman found that this feeling explained the largest variance in commitment levels of volunteers working in a church setting.

In volunteer sport settings, and in a similar fashion to paid settings, satisfaction has been found to be closely linked to commitment and to intention to remain in the organisation (Cuskelly et al., 2002/2003; Henderson & Silverberg, 2002). Henderson and Silverberg highlight the fact that satisfaction may not influence commitment with the passing of time. Dorsch et al. (2002) found that satisfaction with organisational performance was a significant predictor of organisational commitment. As Kikulis (1990) had previously found, satisfaction with different facets of the organisation (e.g., role satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, co-worker satisfaction, reward- value satisfaction) may have a central influence in volunteers' behaviour.

The opportunity to engage in social interaction has also been found to play a key role (Cuskelly, 1995; Knoke, 1981; Latham & Lichtman, 1984). In a longitudinal study of volunteer sport administrators spanning across a 12 month period, Cuskelly et al. (1998) found that perceived committee functioning was related to organisational commitment, supporting the findings of an earlier cross-sectional study conducted by Cuskelly (1995). Cuskelly et al's study also includes various other variables, such as sociodemographics, behavioural commitment, and perceived benefits of volunteering. This study provided further support for the link between social interaction and organisational commitment, although structural characteristics (size, budget) were not as strongly related. The latter findings are similar to Knoke's who had found evidence for the effect of certain structural characteristics.

The role of general involvement has also been examined in sport volunteer settings. Cuskelly et al. (1999) note the differences between involvement in an activity, such as sport, and organisational commitment, where an individual can become involved without being tied to a particular organisation (cf. Blau & Boal's, 1989, view

of job involvement). It is possible for a volunteer to donate efforts to an organisation, to put something back into the sport or to pass on their expertise to others, reasons that underlie the motives of career volunteers according to Cuskelly et al., 2002/2003, or because of a moral imperative, such as perceiving that the organisation needs volunteers to function effectively. These underlying reasons may also account for differences in commitment between volunteers such as those who undertake administrative/management roles and those who take other roles, although this premise has not been investigated.

In conclusion, the available research in various volunteer settings indicates that personal and demographic characteristics may be related to organisational commitment. For example, education has been found to be related in some studies (e.g., Dornstein & Matalon, 1989; Lammers, 1991), but the findings for other personal characteristics only show a modest role (Dailey, 1986). In contrast, the key antecedents of organisational commitment are volunteer perceptions, such as feelings of personal importance to the organisation, and feeling wanted and needed (Latham & Lichtman, 1984; Pearce, 1993). For volunteer board/committee members specifically, the perceptions of committee functioning (e.g., Cuskelly, 1995; Cuskelly et al., 1998), having opportunities for decision making and for participation (e.g., Knoke, 1981), and having opportunities for social interaction (e.g., Cuskelly, 1995; Knoke, 1981) have been found to be key antecedents of volunteer organisational commitment.

2.14.3 Consequences of volunteer commitment. Because volunteer retention is one of the main concerns in volunteer-run organisations (Cuskelly, 2004; Cuskelly & Boag, 2001), the relation between organisational commitment and volunteer turnover has been examined. Cuskelly and Boag conducted a longitudinal study where they

assessed organisational commitment at several points during a sport season. They also focused on another variable, perceived committee functioning, to predict volunteer turnover. The strength of this study was that it employed a longitudinal design to better understand causal effects, which took advantage of the clear time frames that sport seasons provide. The authors found that organisational commitment was a predictor of turnover and that there was a temporal relationship indicating that commitment measured close to the time turnover occurred was a stronger predictor.

Cuskelly and Boag (2001) conclude that, consistent with findings of research in paid settings, organisational commitment has utility as an explanatory construct in turnover behaviour of sport volunteers. Despite this, the authors warn that whilst organisational commitment is a predictor of turnover, it accounted for a relatively small proportion of turnover behaviour. As has been discussed earlier, volunteers are normally not bound by the same constraints that tie employees to their organisations and situational aspects may predict volunteer turnover better than attitudinal aspects. For example, a parent may decide to volunteer to help his or her child through their training season but decide to leave once it is over or leave because of other competing obligations. Given the current pressures on busy parents as seen earlier, this outcome would not be surprising.

Other possible consequences of organisational commitment have received less attention. As Pearce (1993) notes, volunteers' work is undertaken in behaviourally weak environments where some activities may take place during discretionary time (e.g., compiling a club newsletter at home). Issues such as absenteeism and performance are likely to be situationally constrained (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001). Regardless of

commitment levels, if an individual experiences competing obligations, such as work obligations, these will have to take precedence over volunteer work.

Despite this, volunteer performance matters for the bottom line of sport organisations. The volunteer literature emphasises the importance of volunteer performance (Paull, 1998, 2000) not only because volunteers are accountable for the services they provide, but also given the ever increasing legal requirements of monitoring, evaluation, and responsibility. In particular, volunteer board performance in non-profit organisations, including sport organisations, was the subject of recent research (Hoye, 2007; Hoye & Auld, 2001; Preston & Brown, 2004).

Although the link between organisational commitment and performance in paid settings has not generally been found to be strong (Riketta, 2002) it has nevertheless been recognised that even a modest increase in performance could translate into significant benefits for the organisation. Two recent studies assessed the impact of organisational commitment and performance in non-profit organisations. In a study of volunteer board members of 38 social service organisations, Preston and Brown (2004) found that affective organisational commitment was strongly related to three measures of job performance. The relations with normative commitment were also significant but weaker.

Similarly, Stephens et al. (2004) conducted a study of board directors of chambers of commerce and examined the relation between directors' commitment to the board and self-reported measures of performance. Affective commitment was significantly related to self-reported performance, followed by normative commitment. Continuance commitment was unrelated to performance. In all, these findings reveal a similar pattern to that of paid-employee studies and suggest that the examination of the

commitment-performance relation is a fruitful avenue for research. These indicators of performance have to be appropriate to the volunteer situation. As Stephens et al. suggest, several indicators of performance may need to be included in future research. Pearce (1993) also notes that effort in its traditional meaning is not applicable to the volunteer setting.

Finally, Hoye (2007) conducted a study where he examined the affective organisational commitment, involvement, and performance of volunteer board members of country race clubs. Hoye found that commitment was a significant predictor of perceived volunteer performance, in line with Preston and Brown's (2004) and Stephens et al.'s (2004) findings. In addition, length of tenure (i.e., time board members had been serving in their roles) and hours dedicated to the role were also predictors of performance. It appears from this handful of studies in voluntary organisations, that the link between organisational commitment and performance may be significant, but more research will be required to validate these findings.

Recently, Silverberg (2004; see also Ellis, Kane, Silverberg, & Whitworth, 2002/2003) proposed a comprehensive causal model for understanding parks and recreation volunteers, which included organisational commitment as a central construct. Originally stemming from a functionalist perspective, Silverberg's model includes four cause indicators: nature of work, quality of supervision, relationships with co-workers, and satisfaction of psychological functions. These indicators are believed to influence commitment through *eudamonic happiness*, a concept derived from Aristotelian eudemonism that focuses on personal expressiveness of the true self. In turn, commitment is postulated to influence organisational citizenship behaviour and retention. Thus, this model provides a framework within which to understand

organisational commitment in relation to other variables whilst at the same time allowing other potential conceptual additions to be added.

In short, research on the consequences of volunteer commitment has been limited. Most of this research focused on the issue of retention/turnover particularly, which is understandable given declining volunteer numbers in sport organisations. Although some links between organisational commitment and subsequent turnover have been found (e.g., Cuskelly & Boag, 2001) it has been noted that behaviour is situationally constrained for volunteers (Pearce, 1993). Some work has been conducted on the organisational commitment-performance link, particularly volunteer board member performance. This has generally shown similar results to research in paid-employee settings.

2.14.4 Targets of volunteer commitment. Despite a growing interest in the study of targets of commitment in paid-employee settings, limited work has been conducted on targets of volunteer commitment. An exception is research on job involvement, a variable that has been conceptualised as a commitment target (Cohen, 2003). In a sport context, commitment to a volunteering event, in this case the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, was researched by Green and Chalip (e.g., 2004). Green and Chalip were interested in examining the factors that maintain commitment to an event and argued that as volunteering is a leisure choice, rather than a work choice, these factors should be different from those that shape commitment to an employer. Green and Chalip noted that commitment "is thought to be grounded in the benefits that the volunteer expects from volunteering and the volunteer's confidence in his or her ability to mobilize the skills and the resources necessary to complete the assigned tasks competently" (p.52). As expected, volunteers' sense of commitment to the event developed as a function of

their experience of the event. Although final commitment derived partly from initial commitment, Green and Chalip found that commitment evolved over time. Finally, satisfaction with the event was a crucial precursor to commitment to the event.

With the exception of these studies, little is known about to which entities or behaviours volunteers are committed, what the antecedents of those commitments are, and what the potential consequences might be. Sport volunteers can be committed to many organisational targets. As discussed earlier in this chapter, these include, but are not limited to, the club (the organisation), the work team (the committee, other volunteers in the team), and the role undertaken (coach, administrator, official). Identifying and assessing suitable targets of work-related commitment would add to the understanding of the commitment of volunteers in the same way it has helped understand the complexities of commitment in paid-worker settings. Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model of commitment provides a useful framework for this research endeavour.

2.15 Section 4 Summary and Research Implications

The Australian sport and recreation sector is heavily reliant on volunteers for the everyday running, functioning, and ultimately success of their organisations. Although this sector has traditionally been one of the key recipients of volunteer efforts, recent developments, including changes in society in general and the sport sector specifically, are putting undue pressure on existing volunteers and these pressures are affecting volunteers' attitudes and behaviour. Volunteer retention and performance are two key organisational outcomes that sport organisations continue to need to address. Junior sport organisations, in particular, face the same challenges, but with the specific onus on

parents and guardians, as without the assistance of these individuals, the delivery of junior sport in Australia would be severely hindered (Kirk et al., 2007).

There are several typologies of voluntary associations and organisations. These include Babchuk and Gordon's (1962), Clark and Wilson's (1961), Etzioni's (1975), and Knoke and Prensky's (1984). Although not specifically developed for the sport context, these typologies help in the understanding of sport organisations and the organisational behaviour of their volunteers. Volunteer motivations are not always related to organisational typologies; that is, an individual may join, for example, an instrumental-productive organisation even if his or her primary motive is solidary, or social-based. Volunteer motives have until recently been poorly understood, however, Clary and Snyder (1999) have provided a functional model that can explain voluntary activity in the sport sector.

Doherty (2005) proposes a model of sport volunteer motivations which consists of three levels of motivations: core motives (help a cause), primary (personal needs and interests), and secondary motives (social, friendship, and personal development). It must be noted, however, that motivations change with the passing of time and are subject to organisational experiences. Commitment, unlike motivation, is a more enduring attitude that develops with the passing of time. Volunteering can be viewed as leisure (e.g., Stebbins, 2004) which can be classified as serious, casual, or project-based depending on the level of individual involvement and reasons for volunteering. Serious volunteers usually constitute the organisational core and are generally in control of resources in voluntary organisations (Pearce, 1993). Casual volunteers are usually in the periphery, lending assistance when required but with a much lesser involvement. These two types of volunteers may choose different roles within an organisation; for example, core

volunteers are generally found in board or committee roles, although there are no fixed rules. The type of volunteering engaged in may have different implications for their commitment.

Research on the organisational commitment of volunteers has been guided by the same concerns as that conducted on paid-employee settings, namely the need to tease out antecedent, correlate, and consequence variables. In contrast, however, research on volunteer populations has been comparatively limited. Although the findings on the whole mirror those of the commitment of paid workers, more research needs to be conducted to better understand the issues that are peculiar to volunteer settings.

The area of the dimensionality of the commitment of volunteers remains largely unexplored. The bulk of volunteer commitment research has employed Mowday et al.'s (1979) affective conceptualisation and measures, yet recent studies have shown that volunteers hold continuance and normative commitments to their organisations and that the strength of the link between each commitment and selected outcomes are different (e.g., Dawley et al., 2005; Preston & Brown, 2004). This finding may have important implications for the prediction of outcomes of interest, such as retention and performance. In addition, research on volunteer commitment has been concerned with commitment to the organisation as a whole, not to specific organisational targets. The area of the commitment of volunteers to specific organisational targets also remains unexplored. It is possible that volunteers hold commitments to targets such as the work group and, in the absence of an occupation, to their role within their respective organisations. The proposed research will provide answers to these questions and, in

doing so, extend our understanding of the nature of commitment in sport volunteering settings.

2.16 Problem Statement

The problem to be examined in this research is the nature of the commitment of volunteers in junior sport organisations. This research will also investigate the implications of this commitment for key outcomes, such as performance and volunteer turnover cognitions (specifically, intention to stand down from the volunteer role undertaken, intention to cease volunteering in the club or centre - in a sport context, the organisational unit is defined as the club or centre). As has been argued throughout Chapters 1 and 2, retention and performance have become issues of concern for contemporary voluntary sport organisations and consequently a central issue for research in sport management. This research will consist of three separate but interrelated studies each examining a different aspect.

The first study will explore the nature of the commitment of volunteers and identify similarities and amongst different types of volunteers (parents and non-parents, committee members, and volunteers in other roles). The second study will refine the research instruments and look at the relations of the various commitments to performance, intention to stand down from the volunteer role, and intention to cease volunteering for the centre. The third and final study will examine in more depth some of the findings of the previous two studies with a qualitative methodology that permits volunteers to identify their commitment experiences in more detail and richness.

The contribution of this research will be to extend and broaden the small but growing body of research on organisational commitment in volunteer sport contexts. It will examine the commitment of volunteers to two organisational targets (the volunteer

team and the volunteer role) and the implications of these commitments for the outcomes addressed earlier. A mixed-methods design will facilitate an in-depth understanding of the nature of these commitments but also of the experience of being committed from the point of view of the volunteers. Therefore, this research will advance theoretical and applied knowledge in sport management.

Chapter 3

Phase 1- Part 1: Dimensionality and Targets of Volunteer Commitment

3.0 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to present a study that sought to ascertain volunteer commitment by focusing on the dimensions and targets of that commitment. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section describes the methods and instrumentation developed to measure the targets and dimensions of commitment. The second section presents the statistical analyses conducted to test the commitment measures. Analyses conducted included reliability analyses of the new measures, intercorrelations amongst targets of commitment, and relationships between demographic and other background variables with the various commitments to assess construct distinctiveness. Finally, implications for the subsequent study are outlined.

3.1 Introduction

Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general commitment model posits that commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets. This binding force can be based on a mind-set of desire, perceived cost, and/or perceived obligation to pursue a course of action. Based on this model, the specific aim of this study is to explore the applicability of the commitment construct to the following targets: the organisation (for the purposes of this research, the organisational unit is the athletics club or centre), the team of volunteers, and the volunteer role, to thus provide the foundation for the subsequent studies.

To achieve this aim, measures of organisational commitment were adapted to reflect the volunteer situation more adequately as existing measures and scales have, in general, been developed for paid workers (Meyer & Allen, 1997, Meyer et al., 2002).

Scales to assess commitment to the volunteer team and the volunteer role were created. As discussed in Chapter 2, some work team commitment scales have been developed; however, as is the case with organisational commitment scales, work team commitment scales have been developed primarily for paid workers (e.g., Stinglhamber, Bentein, & Vandenberghe, 2002; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). Similarly, there are no adequate scales to assess commitment to a volunteer role. The aim of this is study is, therefore, to address the question of whether these commitments are distinctive and multidimensional in a sports volunteer context. To achieve this purpose, the new commitment scales will be tested for reliability. Intercorrelations between scales that are retained will be assessed for concept redundancy and, finally, the relationships between each of the commitment scales and background variables (such as age, gender, volunteer role) will be examined.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Sample and procedure. Participants for this study were recruited from Little Athletics centres in New South Wales (LAANSW). The decision to delimit the sample to participants from one sport only was made due to time management, practical, and financial concerns. Little Athletics centres provide modified track and field activities and competition for children aged between 3 and 15 years and is a popular organised sport of choice for Australian children, with more than 100,000 participants Australia-wide. The sport is organised and conducted along similar lines as other junior sports in Australia.

At the national level, Australian Little Athletics (the peak governing body or National Sporting Organisation) oversees the overall organisation and conduct of the sport. At a state level, the respective State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) oversee the

management and administration of the sport including its calendar of seasonal events. For example, LAANSW oversees the sport in NSW and Queensland Little Athletics Association (QLAA) oversees the sport in Queensland. At the regional or local level, centres or clubs operate as independent organisational units delivering the programs to the athletes. A volunteer committee, usually consisting primarily of athletes' parents, manages each centre and all activities are conducted and supervised by volunteers who fulfil the roles of coaches, officials, time-keepers, etc.. There are no paid staff at this local level.

Access to centres was negotiated directly with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LAANSW. The CEO agreed to grant the researcher permission to collect data during an upcoming association event, the Regional Championships (Region 3 – Metropolitan Sydney) during the 2004-2005 season. The Regional Championships presented a valuable opportunity for data collection as it is the largest LAANSW Championship (with the exception of the State Championships) and requires the work of several volunteers in various capacities. Ethical clearance to collect data at this event was sought and granted by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A).

Twenty seven centres (of a total of 199 NSW Little Athletics centres) were represented at this event. Event managers estimated volunteer attendance (including officials, assistants, coaches, administrators and others) to be 250 individuals. Prior to the start of the event, the event organisers made a public announcement informing attendants that a researcher investigating sport volunteers' attitudes would be requesting participation in a survey. After the announcement was made, the researcher approached potential respondents in the enclosures (tents had been erected for this purpose) of their

respective athletics centres and requested participation in the research. Individuals who agreed to participate were shown an explanatory letter with further details about the research, including details of ethical clearance, and were asked to complete the survey during the day and to return it by hand to the researcher (see Appendix A). One hundred and nine volunteers completed and returned surveys. This represented a response rate of about 44%.

The majority of the respondents were female (62 female- 57%, 47 male- 43%) Only one participant was aged under 25 years (0.9%), 10 participants were aged between 25 and 34 years (9.2%), 62 participants were aged between 35 and 44 years (56.9%), 28 participants were aged between 45 and 54 years (25.7%) and the remaining 8 participants (7.3%) were aged 55 and over. Nineteen participants (17.4%) did not have children or children who were currently enrolled in their respective centres. Of the remaining 90 participants, 28 (25.7%) had one child enrolled, 49 (45%) had two children enrolled, and 13 (11.9%) had three or more children enrolled. Nineteen participants (17.4%) had been volunteering for their club for only one season, 15 (13.8%) had been volunteering for two seasons, 10 (9.2%) had been volunteering for three seasons, and 65 (59.6%) had been volunteering for four or more seasons. Almost half of the participants (54- 49.5%) were committee members, of the remaining 50.5%, 28 were age marshalls (person designated to look after children of a particular age group) or assistant age marshalls (25.7%), 17 (15.6%) were coaches, and 10 (9.2%) were starters/timekeepers or fulfilled other general roles. A substantial majority (81- 74.3%) volunteered for another sport or another sport organisation.

3.2.2 Instrument development: commitment measures. As discussed in Chapter 2, Meyer and Allen’s (1997) organisational commitment scales were developed for use

with paid workers. As such, some of the terminology of the original scales is either inappropriate or not relevant for volunteers. In keeping with this conceptualisation of commitment, new items were adapted in such way as to keep the main terminology used in Meyer and Allen's organisational commitment scales. These organisational commitment scales have reliability (coefficient alpha) median values of .85, .79, and .73 for the affective, continuance, and normative scales respectively as reported by Meyer and Allen.

Centre: As the purpose of this research was to measure commitment to the athletics centre, the term *organisation* was replaced by *centre* and other items were similarly adapted. This strategy was parallel to that employed by Stephens et al. (2005) who modified Meyer and Allen's items to assess volunteer commitment to a chamber of commerce rather than an organisation.

Twelve items were re-written to measure affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the Little Athletics centre (the organisation). This commitment was defined as: a desire to belong to and a feeling of attachment to the centre, representing a mind-set of *desire*; a recognition that there are costs associated with leaving the centre, representing a mind-set of *perceived need*; and a sense of obligation to stay in and be loyal to the centre, representing a mind-set of *perceived obligation*. Five items assessed affective commitment (e.g., I feel emotionally attached to this centre.), four items assessed normative commitment (e.g., This centre deserves my loyalty.), and three items assessed continuance commitment (e.g., If I had not already put so much of myself into this centre, I might consider volunteering elsewhere.). The items included in the affective subscale assessed the underlying constructs of personal meaning, emotional attachment, sense of belonging, and attachment to the centre, constructs reflecting the

affective domain. The items in the normative subscale assessed the underlying constructs of feeling of obligation, duty to remain, sense of indebtedness, and loyalty. The items assessing continuance commitment tapped the issues of disruption to volunteering activities resulting from ceasing to be a volunteer for the centre, investment of effort in the centre, and difficulty in leaving the centre.

Items were also adapted or created to assess affective, continuance, and normative commitment to a team of volunteers and commitment to a volunteer role. Following Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), the affective, continuance, and normative items reflected the mind-sets of desire, perceived need, and perceived obligation to each target respectively.

Team: Items were written or adapted to assess commitment to the team of volunteers. Following from Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), this commitment was defined as a feeling of belonging to, enjoyment of working with, and respect for the team. Also measured was the recognition of the costs associated with leaving the team, a feeling of obligation, and loyalty to the team, consistent with existing conceptualisations of commitment to a work team (Stinglhamber et al., 2002). Four items assessed affective commitment (e.g., I enjoy working with this team of volunteers.), three items assessed continuance commitment (e.g., If I had not already put so much of myself into this centre, I might consider working with another team.), and three items assessed normative commitment (e.g., This team of volunteers deserves my loyalty.).

Role: Items to assess commitment to the volunteer role undertaken within the centre (e.g., committee member, official, coach, time-keeper) were written or adapted. Similar to occupational commitment (Meyer et al., 2003; Stinglhamber et al., 2002), this

commitment was defined as: being proud of being in the role, a feeling that the role had personal meaning, a recognition of the costs associated with leaving the role, and a feeling of obligation to remain in and fulfil that role. Four items assessed affective commitment (e.g., I enjoy discussing my volunteering role with other people.), three items assessed continuance commitment (e.g., If I had not already put so much of myself into this role I might consider another one.), and three items assessed normative commitment (e.g., I feel no obligation to remain in my current role with this centre.). Underlying constructs assessed include: personal meaning of the role and pride of being in the role in the affective domain; investment already made in the role and difficulty in leaving the role for the continuance domain; and feeling of obligation to remain in the role and duty to remain in the role.

Responses to all items were measured with a 5-point Likert- type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Some items were negatively worded and alternated with positive items to avoid response bias.

The resulting instrument was piloted with 21 volunteers of one Little Athletics centre. Redundant or unclear items were either modified or dropped. The final version of the instrument consisted of 38 items: six demographic and background information items, 12 organisational commitment items, ten commitment to the volunteer team items, and ten commitment to the role items. One aspect differed from Meyer and Allen’s (1997) continuance commitment conceptualisation. It was argued in Chapter 2 that there is disagreement over the dimensionality of continuance commitment, with some researchers suggesting there are at least two dimensions: perceived costs and lack of alternatives. Perceived costs refers to the awareness that there are costs resulting from abandoning a course of action (e.g., financial losses, contacts, and seniority upon

leaving the organisation); whereas lack of alternatives represents the perception that there are no other alternatives to pursue (e.g., believing that there are no other centres where one can serve as volunteer). Because these subcomponents are conceptually distinct (McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer et al., 2002), continuance commitment can be operationalised as perceived costs or perceived lack of alternatives exclusively. In the context of volunteering for a junior sport organisation, perceived costs appear to be more relevant to the situation volunteers may have to face. The piloting exercise confirmed this assumption. Lack of alternatives was not considered to be relevant here, as oversupply of volunteers in junior sport is not the norm (O'Keefe, K. personal communication, October 26, 2004).

3.2.3 Demographic and other background variables. Demographic information gathered included sex, age group, number of children currently enrolled in their respective centres, number of seasons as centre volunteer (as an indication of experience as centre volunteer), the main role undertaken in the centre, and whether the respondent volunteered for another sport or sport organisation. Six questions were asked in total. The full instrument appears in Appendix A.

3.2.4 Data preparation. The data were checked for errors and omissions and entered into SPSS Version 12 for *Window*s. Missing data were given a value that could not occur for the variable in question and excluded from the analyses. Items assessing affective commitment to the centre were labelled AO1 to AO5; continuance commitment to the centre, CO1 to CO3; and normative commitment to the centre, NO1 to NO4. Items assessing affective commitment to the team were labelled AT1 to AT4; continuance commitment to the team, CT1 to CT3; and normative commitment to the team, NT1 to NT3. Finally, items assessing affective commitment to the role were

labelled AR1 to AR4; continuance commitment to the role, CR1 to CR3; and normative commitment to the role, NR1 to NR3. Questions that had been reversed were recoded so that a higher score denoted a stronger commitment level (i.e., 1=lowest commitment and 5= highest commitment). Table 3.1 shows the coding of the background and demographic variables.

Table 3.1

Coding of Background and Demographic Variables

Variable	Code	Recode due to small sample sizes
Age	1= Less than 25 years	1= 34 years or less
	2= 25-34	2= 35 -44
	3= 35-44	3= 45-54
	4= 45-54	4= 55 years and over
	5= 55 and over	
Sex	0= Male	
	1= Female	
Children	1= None/ not applicable	0= None/not applicable
	2= One	1= One or more
	3= Two	
	4= Three or more	
Seasons as volunteer	1= One: this is the first season	
	2= Two seasons	
	3= Three seasons	
	4= Four seasons or more	
Main role	1= Committee Member	0= Committee member
	2= Age Marshall/ Assistant Age Marshall	1= Other role
	3= Starter/Time keeper/Other	
	4= Coach	
Other sport	0= Yes	
	1= No	

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Commitment dimensions and targets. Means and standard deviations were computed for affective, continuance, and normative organisational commitment; affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the team of volunteers; and affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the volunteer role. These appear in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Commitment Dimensions and Targets: Means, Standard Deviations, and Scale Reliabilities

Variable	Mean	SD	α (no. of items)
Organisational Commitment			
Affective	3.37	.66	0.78 (5)
Continuance	2.99	.70	0.50 (3)
Normative	3.49	.71	0.67 (4)
Team Commitment			
Affective	3.69	.46	0.70 (4)
Continuance	2.84	.60	0.50 (3)
Normative	3.60	.63	0.66 (3)
Role Commitment			
Affective	3.36	.58	0.85 (4)
Continuance	2.93	.58	0.59 (3)
Normative	3.50	.76	0.65 (3)

Note. N=109

3.3.2 Scale reliabilities. Table 3.2 shows that the subscales for affective commitment to the centre and affective commitment to the role had good reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha = 0.78 for the former and alpha = 0.85 for the latter). Affective commitment to the team had an alpha of 0.70, reaching the recommended level of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The normative commitment subscales were all just below 0.70 (0.67, 0.66, and 0.65 respectively) although considering the small number of items in each subscale this is not surprising. Most item-total correlations for each normative subscale however, reached the 0.3 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein. The continuance commitment subscales' reliabilities as well as the item-total correlations for each subscale were generally poor (alphas were all below 0.60 and item-total correlations below 0.3), suggesting that the items of these subscales do not measure aspects of the same construct (reliability analyses are presented in Appendix C).

Due to the poor reliabilities of both the continuance and normative subscales, these were dropped from all subsequent analyses which meant that the original question about the dimensionality of commitment could not be answered in this study.

3.3.3 Distinctiveness of constructs: intercorrelations of commitment targets. Factor analytical techniques are normally used to assess the distinctiveness of the commitment dimensions and targets (Cohen, 2003; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Factor analysis reduces a large number of variables to smaller sets of underlying factors, which summarise the information contained in those variables (Coakes, 2005). A number of assumptions are made before conducting such techniques: A minimum number of subjects per variable is required, as a rule of thumb, five subjects are required per variable according to Coakes. Other authors apply more stringent criteria. For example,

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest a minimum of 200 subjects for a fair analysis. This study with only 109 cases was not considered large enough for the use of factor analytical methods even after dropping the continuance and normative commitment items. Instead, an examination of the intercorrelations of the affective commitment targets was the preferred method to assess concept overlap.

Cohen (2003) suggests that correlations in the range of .6 and .8 might be indicative of concept redundancy. The intercorrelation between affective organisational commitment and affective team commitment was .55, the intercorrelation between affective organisational commitment and affective role commitment was .59, and finally, the intercorrelation between affective team commitment and affective role commitment was .53. Although these correlations were significant at the $p < .01$ level (two-tailed), they fell under .6. Thus, there is some evidence to support the notion of distinctive affective commitments in this setting.

3.3.4 Distinctiveness of constructs: relations with other variables. The examination of the relations of the commitment targets and other background variables (e.g., age, number of children enrolled in the centre, volunteer role) provides another method of assessing concept redundancy (Cohen, 2003). A series of t-tests and one one-way ANOVA (for the recoded age variable which had four categories) were conducted to assess the relations of each background variable to the various affective commitment scores. Commitment mean scores by variable appear in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Mean Commitment Scores, Standard Deviations by Background Variables

Variable	N	Commitment to the centre		Commitment to the Team		Commitment to the Role	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Age							
< 34	11	3.7	.39	3.8[a]	.38	3.7	.34
35 – 44	62	3.3	.54	3.6[b]	.46	3.2	.57
45 – 54	28	3.4	.42	3.8[c]	.37	3.4	.51
55 >	8	3.9	.78	4.3[a,b,c]	.30	4.0	.51
No. of Children							
None	19	3.3	.73	3.9[d]	.40	3.4	.76
One or more	90	3.4	.51	3.6[d]	.46	3.3	.53
Volunteer Role							
Committee member	54	3.4	.51	3.8	.40	3.5[e]	.53
Other	55	3.3	.54	3.6	.51	3.2[e]	.59

Note. Within a column, means with a common superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ using the mean comparison procedures described. Means without a superscript or that have no common superscript are not significantly different.

Table 3.3 shows that age is related to team commitment. Older volunteers (aged 55 and over) showed the highest commitment to their team (t= 2.75). Employing the Bonferroni post-hoc test, significant differences were found between commitment to the team for volunteers aged 55 and over and each of the other age categories. Table 3.3 also shows a significant difference by having children enrolled in the centre and team commitment. Volunteers with no children currently enrolled are more committed to their team of volunteers than volunteers with children currently involved (t=2.91). Significant effects by volunteer role undertaken and commitment to the role were also found. Committee members were more committed to their role than other volunteers (t=2.62). No significant effects were found for volunteering for another sport organisation or number of seasons as centre volunteer. Similarly, no significant findings were recorded by sex. The latter finding is consistent with findings in paid employee settings (Meyer & Allen, 2007), although gender differences have been found in qualitative research on commitment (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2000).

In brief, these results suggest that some volunteer characteristics (e.g., age, having children currently active or enrolled in the centre, and main role undertaken) are related to some of commitment targets assessed. These analyses, together with the examination of correlations amongst various affective commitments, provide an indication that there may be multiple affective targets of commitment (affective commitment to the centre, affective commitment to the volunteer team, and affective commitment to the volunteer role) in this context.

3.4 Discussion

This study set out to explore: the dimensionality the commitment of volunteers in junior sport organisations- Little Athletics centres, the distinctiveness of three

organisational targets of commitment (the centre, the team of volunteers, and the volunteer role undertaken in the centre), and the relations of these commitments to other variables (personal and work experience or background variables). In doing so, this study has also taken initial steps in the construction of commitment scales to assess multiple commitments in a sport volunteer context, thus extending the applicability of commitment research and theory from paid to volunteer settings.

The findings of this study suggest that volunteers hold commitments to targets other than the centre they serve (e.g., the team of volunteers and the volunteer role). Correlations amongst commitment targets all fell below the recommended coefficient of .6 (Cohen, 2003). Further, as suggested by Cohen, relations with other background variables also suggest that the constructs were distinct. Older volunteers and those with no children currently enrolled were significantly more committed to their team than younger volunteers. Committee members were significantly more committed to their role than volunteers in other roles.

Commitment to the volunteer team emerges as a construct worthy of further investigation. It was related to variables that were not related to organisational commitment (age and having children enrolled at the centre). This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown the suitability of team commitment as a focus of study (e.g. Baruch & Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002; Stinglhamber et al., 2002; Vandenberghe et al., 2004). This finding also seems to indicate that as Pearce (1993) suggests, the commitment to other individuals, the social aspect, is central to the volunteer experience.

It is not clear from this study why older volunteers are more committed to their teams than their younger counterparts. It is reasonable to speculate that older volunteers,

particularly above the age of 55, do not have children currently enrolled in the centre. This would enable these volunteers to spend more time and develop relationships with other volunteers. Interestingly, profiles of sport volunteers (e.g., Doherty, 2005) show that sport volunteers are younger than volunteers in general, with the average age of the sport volunteer being 38 years. As Doherty notes, those aged 45 and older are more likely to have children who have moved out of organised sport and consequently may be less likely to volunteer. It is perhaps the fact that these older volunteers are still serving their centres an indication of their strong commitment. It is also possible that age and experience as a volunteer interact to strengthen commitment to the team as no main effect was found for experience, in this case, number of seasons as volunteer.

The finding that volunteers without children are more committed to their team may relate to the age-related finding discussed above. Volunteers with children usually have had contact with the centre and the people in it even prior to becoming volunteers as discussed above, as parents normally volunteer after their child's first season at the centre. In addition, parents may have developed an attachment to the other volunteers and such attachment may have been influenced by their own child's. However, volunteers with no children currently enrolled may have had children enrolled in the past and their continuing work as centre volunteers may be a function of their prior attachments. Furthermore, these volunteers may share with other team members a commitment to the sport itself, and may be involved in the centre at the senior level as well. Conversely, volunteers with children currently enrolled may only volunteer because of their children's involvement at the present moment and may willingly move to another centre or sport if their child develops new preferences. Their volunteering for

a particular centre would be largely situational and unrelated to any feelings of being bound. The remaining studies of this research will investigate these assumptions.

Commitment to the role undertaken also shows promise as a commitment target of relevance to sport volunteer populations. The role undertaken may have implications for the feeling of being wanted and needed and the perceptions that own contributions are taken into account (Pearce, 1993). In this study, committee members were found to have stronger commitment to the role than volunteers in other roles. In Little Athletics centres, committee members make decisions regarding the running of various aspects of the centre. Committee or office bearer duties often require a higher level of involvement, duties, and tasks that have a broader scope (e.g., more responsibility, decision- making latitude), whilst other volunteer roles, even if clearly defined, are often fulfilled on an as-needed basis. As past research has not generally focused on commitment differences between volunteers in decision-making roles (such as committee members) and volunteers in other roles, this distinction is further examined in this research.

Questions concerning the dimensionality of either organisational commitment or the two other targets of commitment could not be answered in this study. This will require further examination in subsequent research. Continuance commitment, conceptualised here as perceived costs associated with abandoning a course of action relevant to each of the three targets could not be adequately assessed in this study due to the poor reliabilities (internal consistencies) obtained for all three continuance commitment subscales.

The question of the relevance of continuance commitment to volunteer populations is a matter of debate. It has been argued that an attitudinal (affective or

normative) conceptualisation may be more suited to unpaid workers. However, there are investments that stand to be lost upon abandoning a course of action. For example, although volunteers do not experience financial hardship on leaving their sport organisation (or their team or their role), investments such as role-specific knowledge, contacts, and prestige may be lost upon leaving each of these target entities. However, the perceptions of losses may vary from volunteer to volunteer and in a junior sport context where the overwhelming majority of volunteers are parents assisting their children, normative concerns may weigh more heavily than continuance concerns because parents are helping their own children. As Doherty (2005) notes, “a sense of obligation may be relatively more important to these volunteers” (p. 42). The normative commitment subscales were marginally better, all reaching alphas of over .60. However, they could not be used for subsequent analyses as they did not reach the .70 criterion.

These findings have important implications for the subsequent quantitative study (see Chapter 4). Although an understanding of the nature of sports volunteers’ affective, normative, and continuance commitment is still the aim of this research, the continuance dimension was dropped, whereas the items of all normative subscales were rewritten or refined. The question about the relevance of continuance commitment will be revisited in the qualitative phase of the research in Chapter 5.

3.4.1 Limitations of the study. The data for this study were collected during a regional championship. Although collecting data during one event provided advantages in terms of number of potential research respondents available in the same location, and ease of data collection, the sample of volunteers available may have been biased. In particular, given the nature and importance of the event, it was likely that the majority of volunteers present were highly experienced, perhaps more so than the average Little

Athletic centre volunteer. Consistent with this assumption, 69% of respondents in this study were experienced volunteers with at least three seasons in their respective centres, with one volunteer having served for 27 seasons in his centre.

The sample size (n = 109) limited the types of analyses that could be performed. For example, factor analytical techniques, commonly used to examine commitment dimensions and targets could not be used here. The study described in the next chapter will continue to explore the dimensionality of volunteer commitment and the distinctiveness of commitment targets.

3.5 Chapter Summary and Implications for Part 2

This study provides direction for the rest of this quantitative phase and subsequent research. It shows that investigating volunteer commitment dimensions, particularly the affective and normative dimensions, is important. Further, the investigation of volunteer commitment to targets other than the organisation, such as commitment to the volunteer work team, and commitment to the volunteer role, is also warranted.

This study also contributed to the development of a survey instrument. The three affective commitment subscales had adequate alphas (.78, .70, and .85 for commitment to the centre, commitment to the team, and commitment to the role, respectively) and can be used as modified in the next study. In the study described in the next chapter, the measures created are further refined. Further scale development continues, and validation with a new sample follows.

The qualitative phase (Phase 2—see Chapter 5) of this research will provide an opportunity to better understand the quantitative findings and to substantiate the assumptions made above. The qualitative phase will permit the exploration of issues

that have been raised by subgroups of interest (e.g., volunteers in certain roles, volunteers without children enrolled), and allow participants to offer their own perspective on the subject matter (Ritchie, 2004).

In conclusion, this study provided preliminary evidence that commitment is a construct that can be directed at more than one organisational target, in this case the volunteer team and the volunteer role. Despite some analytical limitations, commitments to these three targets appear to be distinctive and relate differently to background variables such as age, number of children enrolled in the centre, and main volunteer role. For example, older (over 55 years of age) volunteers and volunteers without children were more committed to their team of volunteers than younger volunteers, while committee members were more committed to their roles than volunteers in other roles. The remainder of the research will continue to explore the dimensionality and targets of commitment, as well as the relationships of these commitments to intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the centre, and performance.

Chapter 4

Phase 1 – Part 2: Dimensionality and Targets of Volunteer Commitment and the Prediction of Behavioural Outcomes

4.0 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and discuss the second study of the quantitative phase. The chapter consists of two main sections. The first section will describe the methodology and instrumentation used to measure the targets and dimensions of commitment and the commitment outcomes. The second section presents the statistical analyses conducted to test the structure, reliability, and validity of the commitment measures and the analyses conducted to predict the commitment outcomes. This section will also examine the relationships between background variables and the commitment targets in order to identify specific themes to be followed up in the qualitative phase. Finally, the implications for the second phase of the research will be outlined.

4.1 Introduction

The findings presented in Chapter 3 (quantitative study Part 1) suggest that volunteer commitment is a construct that can be directed at more than one target. Specifically, volunteers in Little Athletics centres have affective commitments to their centres (organisational commitment), to their team of volunteers, and to their volunteer role. Part 1 of the quantitative research provided direction for this quantitative study and showed that investigating volunteer commitment dimensions, particularly affective commitment, and volunteer commitment to targets other than the organisation, is warranted. Part 1 also served to validate the survey instrument created and set the scene for further development of appropriate scales.

The first purpose of the present study is to refine and to continue to develop the measures of the affective and normative dimensions of commitment to the centre, commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role. Normative measures will be developed as normative concerns appear to be suited to volunteer workers (as noted in Chapter 3). Specifically, it is expected that for each target, a two-component model including affective and normative factors will provide the best fit to the data. It is also expected that each of these components will be distinguishable across the targets assessed. Regardless of type of motivation, affective and normative commitments are key, distinguishable dimensions of volunteer commitment that can be incorporated into volunteer commitment conceptualisations (Dawley et al., 2005). Furthermore, as Meyer and Allen (1997) point out, minor modifications to affective and normative commitment scale items should continue to distinguish these dimensions. This assertion received support in Part 1 despite the analytical limitations. With regards to commitment to other organisational targets, the results presented in Chapter 3 indicate that volunteers are also exposed to other distinguishable organisational targets of psychological relevance, such as the team of volunteers and the volunteer role undertaken.

The second purpose of Part 2 is to examine the relationships of commitment targets with key behavioural outcomes: self-assessed performance, intention to stand down from the volunteer role, and intention to cease volunteering for the centre. As discussed in Chapter 2, research in paid settings suggests that commitment to specific organisational targets or foci may be better predictors of behavioural outcomes, such as intention to leave, than organisational commitment alone, and that commitment to specific targets may be better predictors of outcomes directly related to the target in

question. For example, following this reasoning, commitment to a volunteer role should be a better predictor of an outcome linked to that role, such as intending to continue in that role. This relationship has not been tested in volunteer settings as yet.

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Sample and procedure. Due to changes in circumstances, it was no longer possible to recruit participants from LAANSW. Instead, the researcher contacted the CEO of the Queensland Little Athletics Association (QLAA), the governing body of Little Athletics in Queensland, to request cooperation with the research. Because of privacy regulations, QLAA were unable to supply contact details for each centre and their volunteers. Instead, QLAA agreed to distribute a maximum of six survey packages to each of the 120 Little Athletics registered centres, for a total of 720 packages. Ethical clearance for this study was sought and granted by Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix B).

Packages consisted of the survey instrument, an explanatory cover letter, an additional sheet for participants to write their contact details if they agreed to participate in a subsequent study, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for return to the researcher (see Appendix B). Although individual centres or respondents could not be identified, questionnaires were coded (e.g., centre number 1, etc.) in order to ascertain how many responses were returned from each centre. The CEO included a follow-up message on behalf of the researcher in the association's newsletter which was sent to all centres six weeks after the original mail-out. Two hundred and fourteen surveys from 52 centres were returned, which represents a 29.7 % response rate, an acceptable rate considering the survey packages were not directly addressed to individual volunteers. Ten surveys had missing data or unclear responses; therefore only 204 surveys were

used for the final analyses. Table 4.1 shows the demographic and other characteristics of the participants.

Table 4.1

Demographic and Background Characteristics of Participants

Background variable	Value	N	Percentage of sample (rounded)
Age	30 or less	4	2
	31-40	84	41
	41-50	92	45
	51 or more	24	12
Sex	Females	145	71
	Males	59	29
Children enrolled	Yes	188	92
	No	16	8
Experience (seasons as volunteer)	First season	15	7
	2 to 4 seasons	102	50
	5 to 10 seasons	64	31
	11 seasons +	23	11
Main role	Committee	117	57
	Non-committee	87	43
Size of centre	Less than 100	84	41
	101-200	71	35
	201-300	41	20
	301 or more	8	4
Volunteer in another sport	Yes	132	65
	No	72	35

4.2.2 Instrument development: commitment targets. To develop and refine the new commitment measures the researcher revisited and adjusted the definitions of the six commitment constructs (comprised of 2 commitment dimensions [affective and normative commitment] x 3 commitment targets [athletic centre, volunteer team, and volunteer role]) as previously used in Part 1. Following from Part 1, affective commitment to the centre was defined as a desire to belong to and a feeling of emotional attachment to the centre. Normative commitment was defined as having a sense of obligation and loyalty to the centre and a feeling of indebtedness towards the centre. Affective commitment to the team of volunteers was defined as a feeling of belonging to, enjoyment of working with, pride in belonging to, attachment to one's own team over other teams, and respect for the team. Normative commitment was defined as a feeling of obligation and loyalty to the team of volunteers, and a feeling of personal obligation to continue to be a member of the volunteering team. Finally, affective commitment to the volunteer role was defined as being proud of being in that role, enthusiasm for the role, willingness to discuss the role with other people, and a feeling that the role had personal meaning to the volunteer. Normative commitment to this target was defined as a feeling of obligation and duty toward fulfilling the role and a feeling of unease if the role were to be abandoned.

For the purposes of this study, the affective organisational commitment scale items of Part 1 were retained as the 5-item scale had been found to have adequate reliability (alpha = .78). As outlined in Chapter 3, the items keep the main terminology used by Meyer and Allen (1997) (e.g. I feel emotionally attached to this organisation.), but reflected the situation of volunteers in this specific sport context (Little Athletics centres) more accurately. For example, the word *organisation* was replaced by *centre*

and other items were also adapted (e.g., *volunteering* for *working*). For affective commitment to the team, the four items used in Part 1 were retained and one more item (I feel proud to be a member of this team of volunteers.) was added, resulting in a total of five items (a similar item is used in Vandenberghe et al., 2004 for assessing work group commitment). The 4-item affective commitment to the role scale of Part 1 had an alpha of .85 and therefore was retained, while one of the Part 1 commitment to the role items was slightly modified for added clarity and the other three items were retained, resulting in a total of four items.

Items to assess normative commitment to each of the three targets were also created or adapted from those used in Part 1. The four items from the normative organisational commitment subscale used in Part 1 were retained and one new item (I would feel uneasy if I left this centre now) was added, resulting in a total of five items. For normative commitment to the team, the three items from the Part 1 subscale were retained and one more item was added (I would feel uneasy if I left this team of volunteers.). For normative commitment to the volunteer role, one item from Part 1 subscale was retained, one was slightly modified for clarity, and one new item was added (I would feel uneasy if I ceased to be a committee member/coach/age marshall/other role.). New normative items were adapted from Meyer et al.'s (1993) normative commitment scales. Details of the scale items for both Part 1 and Part 2 can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Instrument Items and Modifications for Part 1 and Part 2

Item Type	Question	Part	Modification
Organisational			
Affective			
This centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me.		1&2	None
I feel emotionally attached to this centre.		1&2	None
I think I could easily become as attached to another centre as I am to this one.		1&2	None
I enjoy discussing this centre with people outside it.		1&2	None
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this centre.		1	Reversed
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this centre.		2	
Normative			
I feel no obligation to remain as a volunteer with this centre.		1&2	None
Even if it were to my advantage I feel it would be wrong to leave this centre now.		1&2	None
I owe little to this centre.		1&2	None
This centre deserves my loyalty.		1&2	None
I would feel uneasy if I left this centre now.		2	New item
Team			
Affective			
I enjoy working with this team of volunteers.		1&2	None
I have a lot of respect for this team of volunteers.		1&2	None
I think I could easily become as attached to another team of volunteers as I am to this one.		1&2	None
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my team of volunteers.		1&2	None

Item Type	Question	Part	Modification
I feel proud to be a member of this team of volunteers.		2	New item
Normative			
I owe little to this team of volunteers.		1&2	None
This team of volunteers deserves my loyalty.		1	Reversed
This team of volunteers does not deserve my loyalty.		2	
I feel personally obliged to continue to work with this team of volunteers.		1&2	None
I would feel uneasy if I left this team of volunteers.		2	New item
Role			
Affective			
This role has a great deal of personal meaning to me.		1	Minor modification in 2
The role I fulfill in this centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me.		2	
I enjoy discussing my volunteering role with other people.		1&2	None
I feel proud to be a committee member/coach/ age marshall/ other role.		1&2	None
I am enthusiastic about my role.		1&2	None
Normative			
I feel no obligation to remain in my current role with this centre.		1&2	None
Even if it were to my advantage I feel it would be wrong to leave my role at this centre now.		1	Modified and reversed in 2
I feel it would be fine to step down from my role at this centre if doing so were to my		2	
I would be letting others down if I quit my role.		1&2	None
I would feel uneasy if I ceased to be a committee member/ coach/ age marshall/ other role.		2	New item

Responses to all commitment items were measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Some items were negatively worded and alternated with positive items to avoid response bias.

4.2.3 Instrument development: Performance, intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the centre. For the purposes of this study volunteer performance was defined as self-assessed performance on a number of criteria pertaining to the main volunteer role undertaken in the centre. There are no formal guidelines as to how the performance of volunteers in Little Athletics centres should be assessed (O'Keefe, K., personal communication, October 26, 2004). Although some centres assess overall centre performance, it is not common practice to provide an assessment of individual volunteer performance or effort invested. Hoye (2007) points out that in some studies with volunteers (e.g., Stephens et al., 2004) measures of board involvement have been used as proxies for the evaluation of board member performance. Involvement is determined by levels of effort and participation; extent of involvement can be assessed by examining attendance at meetings, time spent fulfilling designated duties and involvement in volunteer events. Preston and Brown (2004) used five self-report measures for board member involvement specifically. The present research will also use involvement measures as well as other self-report measures of performance.

In order to address volunteer performance, a two-pronged approach was used. First, the researcher reviewed past research on volunteer performance (e.g., Dawley et al., 2005) and selected criteria that were suitable for the assessment of volunteer work within a junior sport club or centre, such as a Little Athletics centre. Three criteria were taken from Dawley et al. and rewritten to reflect the performance behaviours required

for a volunteer in this context. These criteria included: attendance (either at events or meetings as required by the volunteer role), time spent fulfilling volunteer responsibilities as required by the volunteer's main role, and involvement in centre activities or events. Second, the researcher interviewed five centre administrators in senior positions, one President, two Vice-Presidents, one Secretary, and one Registrar, to establish whether these performance criteria were considered relevant and useful in this context and also to gather further suggestions for additional performance criteria. As a result of these interviews, four more criteria were identified: role specific knowledge for the main volunteer role only; general service provided to the centre's athletes and their families; knowledge of centre's mission, goals, activities, and general functioning; and knowledge of other centre volunteers' roles and areas of responsibility.

Performance was assessed using a Likert-type 5 –point scale ranging from 1 = *must improve* to 5 = *outstanding*. These data were further submitted to a principal components analysis with varimax rotation. Results indicated a two-factor solution with strong loadings (.68 and above) of items on either factor 1 or 2 and eigenvalues less than 1 for the remaining factors. Both factors accounted for 74% of the variance. Factor one comprised performance criteria relating to time and involvement in the centre and was labeled *time-involvement*. Factor two comprised performance criteria relating to knowledge and service provided, and was labeled *knowledge*. Thus, the seven performance items were combined to create two performance scores: *Time –involvement* comprised items "Time spent fulfilling volunteer responsibilities", "Involvement in centre activities or events", and "Attendance at activities or events". *Knowledge* comprised items "Role specific knowledge", "Knowledge of centre's mission, goals, activities, and general functioning", "Knowledge of other centre volunteers' roles and

areas of responsibility”, and “General service provided to the centre’s athletes and their families”.

Finally, intention to stand down from the volunteer role by the end of the current season and intention to cease volunteering for the centre, also by the end of the current season, were assessed with one item each: “I have informed the committee of my intention to stand down from my volunteer role at the end of this season” and “I have informed the committee of my intention to cease volunteering for this centre at the end of this season”. Answers were given as a “Yes” or a “No”. These items satisfactorily assess withdrawal intentions in this context, as volunteers are normally requested to state their intentions during the course of the competition season.

4.2.4 Demographic and other background variables. Items assessing demographic and other background variables were also included in the survey instrument. Following from Part 1, items assessed respondent sex, age, number of children enrolled in the centre, seasons as volunteer (a measure of volunteer experience), main role undertaken, and whether respondent volunteered in another sport. Some response categories were adjusted following participant feedback (for example, age categories and seasons as volunteer). An additional item assessing size of centre, as measured by the number of athletes enrolled, was added.

The final survey instrument consisted of 43 items: Seven demographic and background items, ten organisational commitment items, nine commitment to the team items, eight commitment to the role items, seven self-assessed performance items, and two items assessing withdrawal intentions. Of these, one item assessed intention to stand down from the volunteer role undertaken and the other assessed intention to cease volunteering for the centre. This instrument was piloted for the purposes of clarity with

12 volunteers representing two Little Athletics centres in Townsville. Volunteers were given a copy of the instrument and asked to comment on clarity of the wording. This exercise was completed individually and anonymously. Responses to individual items were not recorded.

4.2.5 Data preparation. The data were entered into a SPSS version 14 package for *Windows* and checked for errors and omissions. Of the 214 surveys received, 10 were unusable due to missing data or unclear responses as stated earlier. The remaining 204 surveys had no missing values in any of the specified variables and were therefore used for all subsequent analyses. Variables were defined and labeled in the following way: Items assessing affective commitment to the centre were labeled AO1 to AO5; normative commitment to the centre, NO1 to NO5; affective commitment to the team, AT1 to AT5; normative commitment to the team, NT1 to NT4; affective commitment to the role, AR1 to AR4, and normative commitment to the role, AR1to AR4. Reversed items were recoded so that a higher value denoted stronger commitment (i.e., 1 = lowest commitment; 5 = strongest commitment). Performance variables were labeled PERF1 to PERF7 with a higher value denoting better performance (i.e., 1= lowest, and 5= highest), and withdrawal intentions were labeled QT1 (for intention to stand down from the volunteer role) and QT2 (for intention to cease volunteering for the centre). A value of 0 was assigned to the “Yes” responses and a value of 1 was assigned to the “No” responses. The coding of background and demographic variables is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Coding of Background and Demographic Variables

Variable	Code	Recode due to small sample sizes
Age	1= Less than 30 years	
	2= 31-40	
	3= 41-50	
	4= 51 and over	
Sex	0= Male	
	1= Female	
Children	1= None/ I don't have any children enrolled at this centre	0= None
	2= One	1 = One or more
	3= Two or more	Removed
Size	1 = Less than 100 athletes	
	2 = Between 101 and 200 athletes	
	3 = Between 201 and 300 athletes	
	4 = More than 300 athletes	
Seasons as volunteer	1= One: this is the first season	
	2= Two to four seasons	
	3= Five to 10 seasons	
	4= Eleven seasons or more	
Main role	1= Committee Member	0= Committee member
	2= Age Marshall/ Assistant Age Marshall	1= Other role
	3= Starter/Time-Keeper/Other	Removed
	4= Coach	Removed
Other sport	0= Yes	
	1= No	

Table 4.3 shows that number of children and main role were recoded due to small sample sizes. The full instrument appears in Appendix B.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Analysis of commitment dimensions and targets. The analysis of the item data of the questionnaire pertaining to dimensions and targets of commitment was undertaken in two stages. In the first stage, Partial Least Squares Regression (PLS) modelling was used to evaluate the proposed structure of the scales, using SmartPLS 2.0 (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005). Secondly, the scales identified from this analysis were evaluated for internal reliability using Statistica 6.0 (StatSoft Inc., 2001).

PLS modelling is a relatively new technique in the social sciences although it has an extensive history of use in the physical sciences. It is an approach that is recommended for model building aspects of research though it can also be used in confirmatory modelling approaches. Its main strengths over covariate approaches are twofold. First, the analysis makes no strong assumptions about the scale or distribution of the data. It is possible to achieve good models with any level of measurement and the data can be a mix of nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio scales (Abdi, 2003; Chin, 1995). Second, the sample size for PLS modelling can be quite small (200 or so) particularly in comparison to sample sizes required in covariate modelling. Chin (1997) recommends that the sample size in PLS modelling should be at least 10 times the number of variables loading on the largest latent factor in the model. This study met this threshold.

The approach in PLS modelling is similar to that in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in that the measurement (manifest) variables are specified to load on to underlying latent variables (factors). To some extent such common issues in

regression analysis, such as multicollinearity, are evaluated within principal components and partial regression measurement models. Multicollinearity (see Appendix C for inter-correlations between study variables) was not found to be a problem with this data set as the key variables were not highly correlated. Tolerance values fell between .359 and .647, and Variance Inflation Factors fell between 1.70 and 2.18, all of which are within acceptable parameters (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2006).

The analysis commonly proceeds in two stages. The first involves the assessment of the measurement model which produces measures for evaluating the relationships between the manifest variables and their latent factors. The second produces measures for evaluating the model of relationships between the latent factors.

As the analysis for this study focused on the development of a measure of commitment, rather than the modelling of commitment per se, the analysis reported used only the assessment of the measurement model to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of the items and hypothesised latent factors (for further description of this approach see Gefen and Straub (2005)).

4.3.2 Measurement models. The questionnaire was constructed to assess three targets of commitment. These were organisational commitment or commitment to the centre, commitment to the team of volunteers, and commitment to the volunteer role. Each of these targets was evaluated on two dimensions of affective and normative commitment. Each aspect of commitment was modelled separately but the underlying measurement model was the same. The models are presented in Figures 4.1 through 4.3.

From Figure 4.1, it can be seen that the latent construct of organisational commitment was modelled as a second-order factor to two reflective[2] latent constructs of affective organisational (AO) and normative organisational (NO). Each of these, in turn, was modelled on the basis of five reflective manifest variables comprised of the specific item questions. The same structure for the measurement model was used for commitment to the team (AT and NT) and commitment to the volunteer role (AR and NR) as can be seen in Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3, respectively; with the one difference being that there were only four manifest variables loading on the normative team construct and the affective and normative role constructs.

[2] A reflective relationship between variables and constructs is one where the reflective items are modelled as tapping some aspect of a higher order concept. This is in contrast to a formative relationship where variables are modelled as leading to the overall scores in the latent construct.

Figure 4.1. Proposed model for organisational commitment

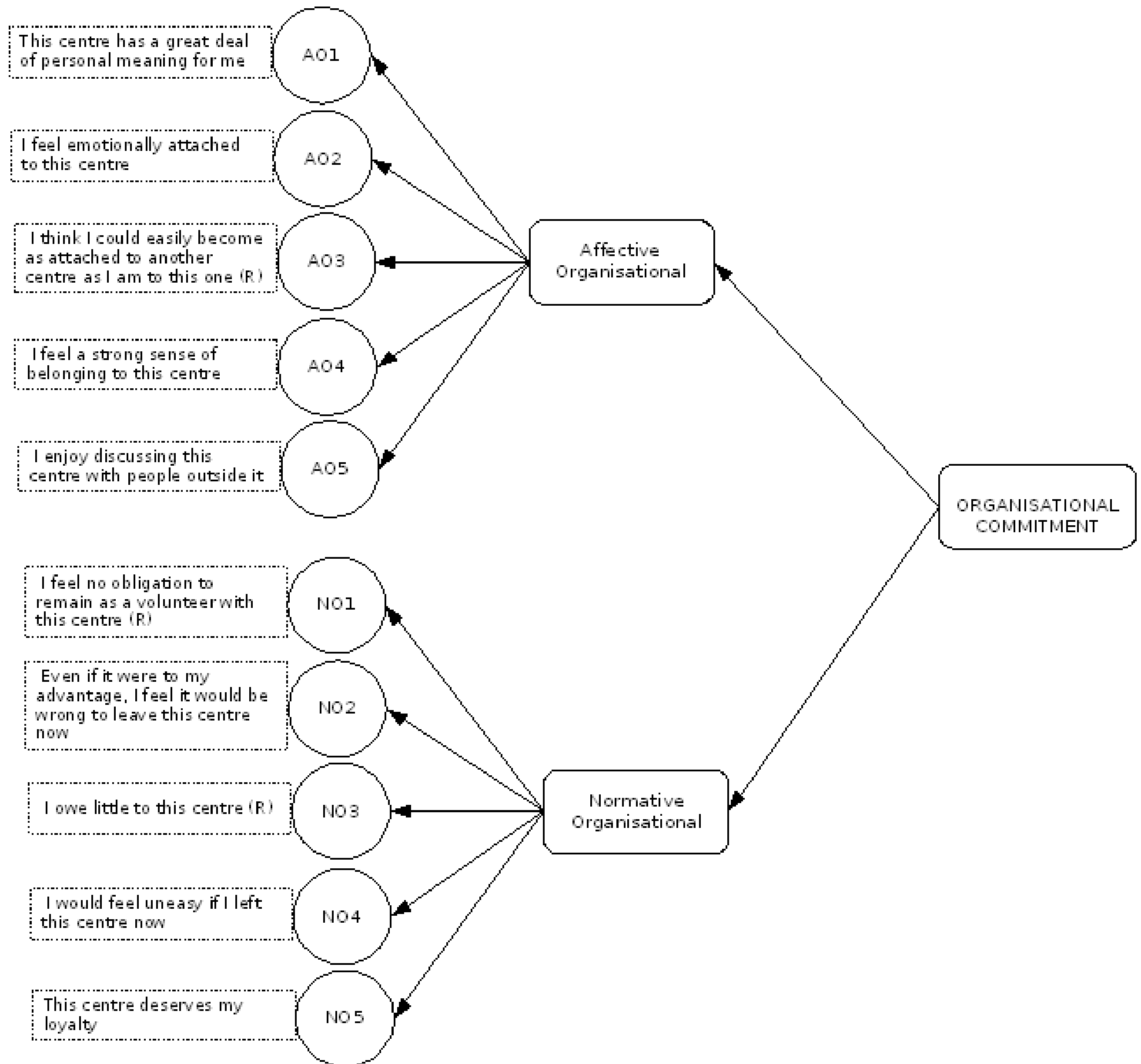


Figure 4.2. Proposed model for team commitment

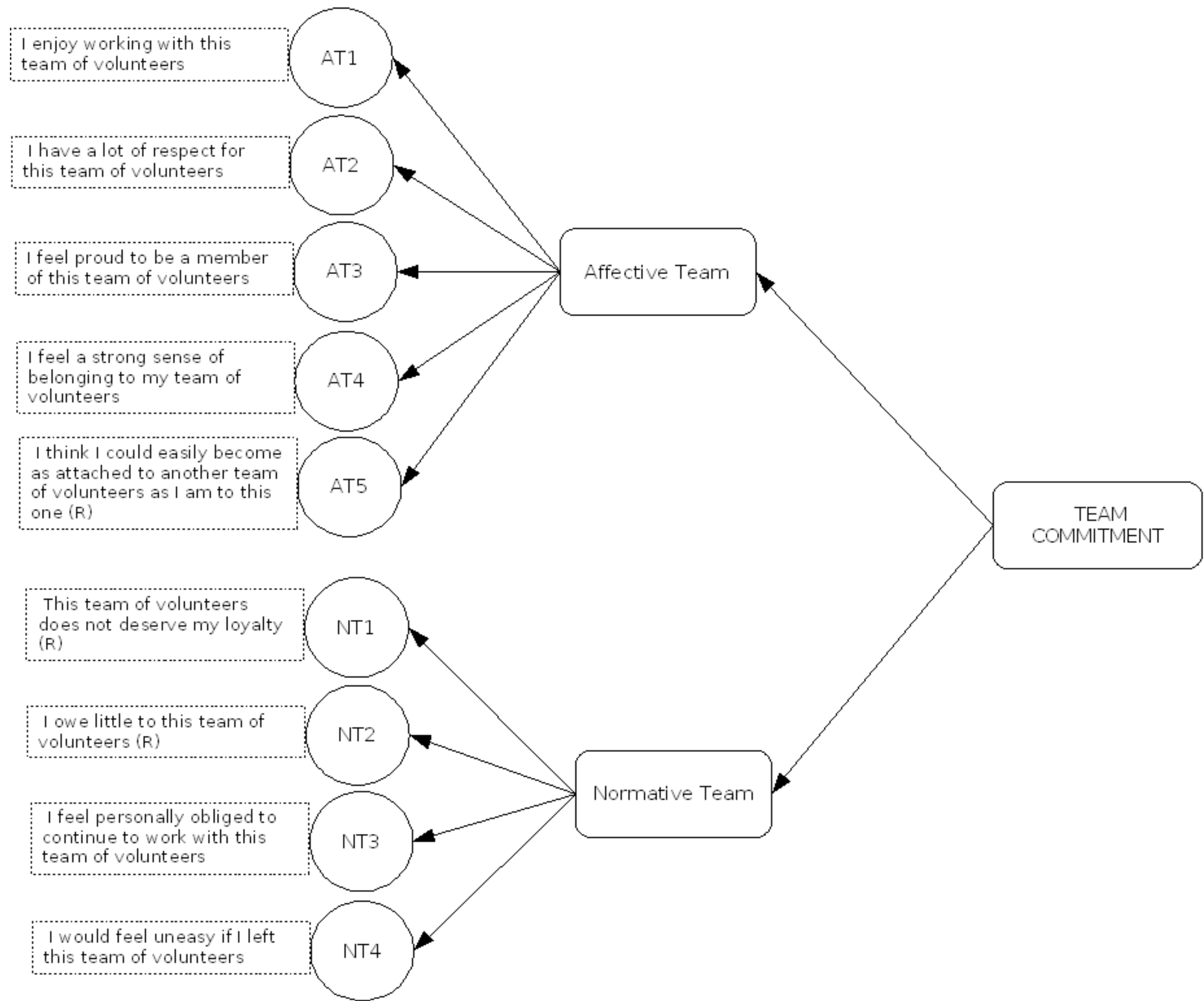
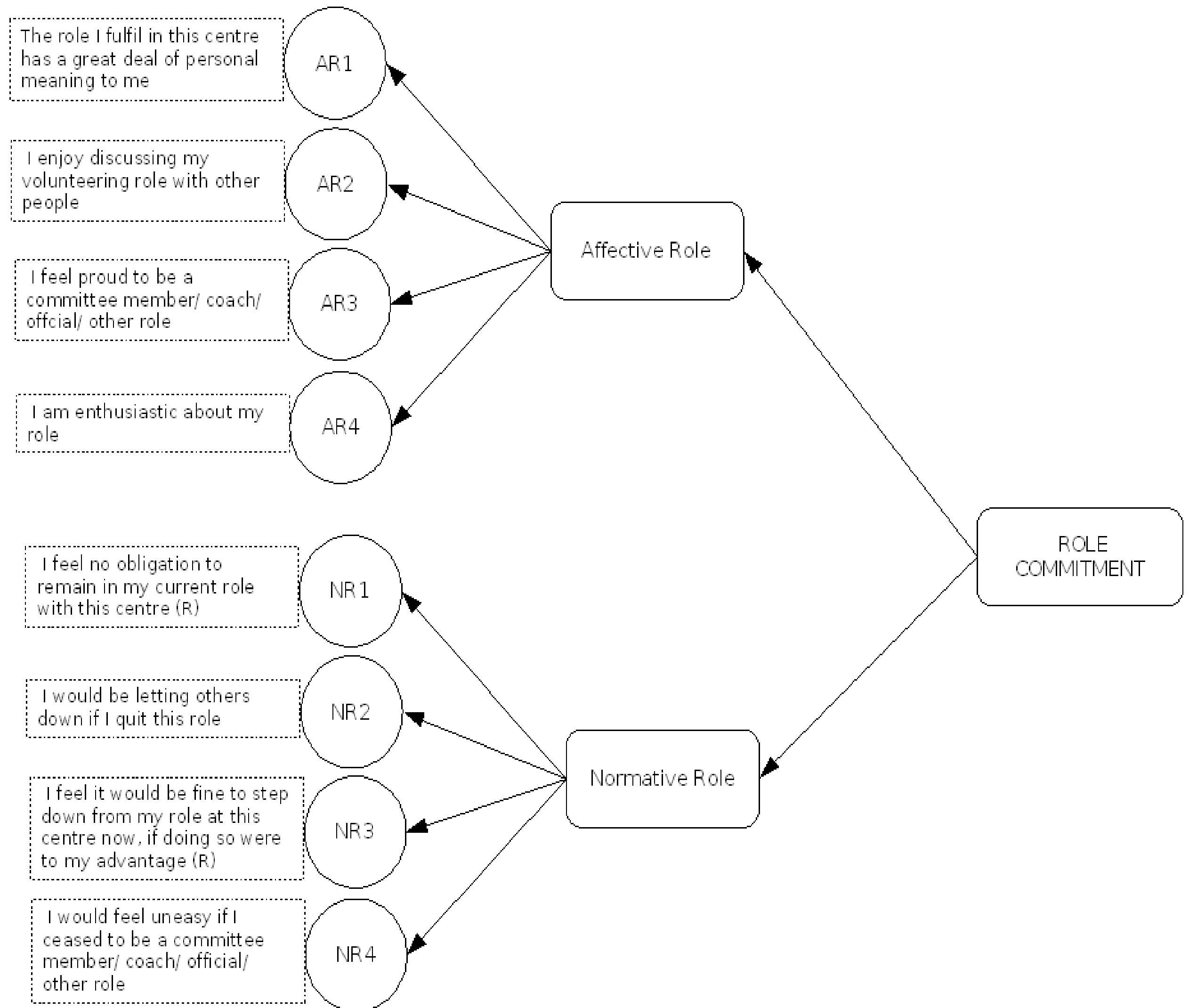


Figure 4.3. Proposed model for role commitment



4.3.3 Convergent validity. Convergent validity is established in PLS modelling by examining the item loadings on the latent constructs. If the items are contributing significantly to the measurement of the underlying latent construct it would be expected that the loadings would be of a reasonable size (>0.70, though there are no established criteria for this) and significant. PLS utilises a bootstrap approach to evaluating the significance of estimates. In this section, and the subsequent one, all reporting of significance is based on a bootstrap re-sampling procedure using a sample size of around 200. The loadings of the items on the latent constructs are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 highlights that all of the items loaded significantly on their respective constructs. Most had relatively high loadings though a number of items were lower than 0.70. Very few fell below this. One item (AT5) did not load as strongly both on the affective construct (0.28) and on the overall commitment to the team construct (0.27) and was consequently dropped from any further analyses. Two items for organisational commitment (AO3 & NO1) loaded comparatively poorly (0.46-0.49 and 0.38-0.48 respectively) but were retained for further analyses as they were still significant in their loadings.

Table 4.4

Item Loadings on Latent Constructs

	Affective Organisation	Normative Organisation	Organisational Commitment		Affective Team	Normative Team	Team Commitment		Affective Role	Normative Role	Role Commitment
AO1	0.83*		0.75*	AT1	0.87*		0.82*	AR1	0.82*		0.74*
AO2	0.84*		0.81*	AT2	0.88*		0.82*	AR2	0.73*		0.64*
AO3	0.49*		0.46*	AT3	0.91*		0.86*	AR3	0.85*		0.76*
AO4	0.87*		0.81*	AT4	0.86*		0.85*	AR4	0.83*		0.69*
AO5	0.69*		0.66*	AT5	0.28**		0.27**	NR1		0.69*	0.54*
NO1		0.48*	0.38*	NT1		0.84	0.79*	NR2		0.70*	0.51*
NO2		0.71*	0.61*	NT2		0.80	0.69*	NR3		0.68*	0.44*
NO3		0.61*	0.55*	NT3		0.54	0.41*	NR4		0.75*	0.65*
NO4		0.74*	0.66*	NT4		0.57	0.49*				
NO5		0.79*	0.76*								

Note. * = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .05$

The affective constructs achieved higher median loadings than the normative constructs and this could indicate that the affective items were more consistently responded to than the normative items. Loading on the second-order constructs were slightly lower than on the affective and normative constructs but were still acceptably high overall.

In general terms, this analysis demonstrated that the items identified as loading on to particular latent constructs were correctly specified. Each item appeared to be making some meaningful contribution to the hypothesised construct and, in most instances, the loadings were substantial which indicated that each individual item accounted for a substantial amount of the variance in the latent construct scores.

*4.3.4 Discriminant validity***.** In PLS, the discriminant validity of the model is based on an examination of the correlations between the latent factor scores and the manifest variables. To achieve discriminant validity no item should correlate more significantly with another construct other than its specified latent construct. There are no well established criteria for the difference between correlations but Gefen and Straub (2005) recommend that the variable-construct correlation should be an order of magnitude above all other correlations of that variable with the other constructs. For example, if a variable-construct pair correlated at 0.70, Gefen and Straub recommend that all the other correlations of that variable with the other constructs should be 0.60 and below.

The correlation between the questionnaire items and the latent factor scores is shown in Table 4.5. Item-construct correlations which exceed the Gefen and Straub (2005) recommendation of one order of magnitude difference are marked in bold-

type. Item-construct correlations that met the Gefen and Straub recommended level, but not to a great degree, are marked with an underscore.

It can be seen from this table that the items loading on commitment to the role were well differentiated from the other latent constructs. These items in general loaded two to three orders of magnitude on the expected construct above the loadings with the other constructs. Of note with the commitment to the role scale was the clear differentiation of the affective construct from the normative construct and the lack of cross loading of role items across these constructs. At the same time, both groups of items correlated well with the second-order factor of commitment to the role.

Table 4.5

Intercorrelation Between Items and Latent Construct Scores

		Affective			Normative			Total Commitment		
	Items	Org.	Team	Role	Org.	Team	Role	Org.	Team	Role
Organisational commitment	AO1	**0.83**	0.55	0.61	0.51	0.47	0.28	**0.75**	0.56	0.56
	AO2	**0.84**	0.54	0.59	0.63	0.55	0.37	**0.81**	0.59	0.59
	AO3	0.49	0.29	0.22	0.34	0.26	0.15	0.46	0.30	0.23
	AO4	**0.87**	0.71	0.66	0.59	0.56	0.33	**0.81**	0.71	0.62
	AO5	0.69	0.62	0.53	0.51	0.43	0.24	0.66	0.60	0.49
	NO1	0.25	0.18	0.21	0.48	0.35	0.38	0.38	0.26	0.34
	NO2	0.46	0.34	0.34	**0.71**	0.39	0.48	**0.61**	0.39	0.48
	NO3	0.43	0.38	0.39	0.61	0.60	0.32	0.55	0.50	0.44
	NO4	0.50	0.42	0.35	**0.74**	0.52	0.47	**0.66**	0.50	0.48
	NO5	0.56	0.56	0.52	**0.79**	0.61	0.44	**0.76**	0.63	0.58
Team Commitment	AT1	0.56	**0.87**	0.45	0.42	0.59	0.19	0.54	**0.82**	0.41
	AT2	0.54	**0.88**	0.49	0.46	0.56	0.16	0.55	**0.82**	0.42
	AT3	0.66	**0.91**	0.60	0.54	0.61	0.25	0.66	**0.86**	0.54

	Items	Affective Org.	Affective Team	Affective Role	Normative Org.	Normative Team	Normative Role	Total Commitment Org.	Total Commitment Team	Total Commitment Role
Team commitment	AT4	0.77	**0.86**	0.64	0.61	0.65	0.34	0.76	**0.85**	0.61
	AT5	0.32	0.28	0.10	0.22	0.21	0.05	0.29	0.27	0.10
	NT1	0.48	0.66	0.39	0.56	**0.84**	0.31	0.56	**0.79**	0.43
	NT2	0.47	0.54	0.37	0.50	**0.80**	0.29	0.52	**0.69**	0.40
	NT3	0.36	0.28	0.26	0.51	0.54	0.43	0.46	0.41	0.41
	NT4	0.45	0.37	0.34	0.57	0.57	0.48	0.54	0.49	0.48
Role commitment	AR1	0.60	0.47	**0.82**	0.46	0.39	0.34	0.58	0.48	**0.74**
	AR2	0.52	0.47	**0.73**	0.46	0.37	0.27	0.53	0.47	**0.64**
	AR3	0.67	0.59	**0.85**	0.51	0.46	0.35	0.65	0.58	**0.76**
	AR4	0.51	0.46	**0.83**	0.36	0.35	0.25	0.48	0.45	**0.69**
	NR1	0.30	0.23	0.28	0.53	0.44	**0.69**	0.44	0.34	**0.54**
	NR2	0.25	0.14	0.22	0.40	0.33	**0.70**	0.34	0.24	**0.53**
	NR3	0.26	0.08	0.13	0.41	0.27	**0.68**	0.35	0.16	**0.44**
	NR4	0.25	0.26	0.39	0.40	0.35	**0.75**	0.35	0.32	**0.65**

Note. **Bold:** Significantly different. Underline: Marginally different

The items loading on the organisational commitment constructs were not as clear. Three items in the normative construct had excellent discrimination as did three items in the affective construct. One item in each of the normative (NO1) and affective (AO3) constructs had marginal validity, and one item in each (AO5 & NO3) showed equally high correlations with other constructs apart from the target construct. The same relationships were evident with the second-order construct of organisational **c**ommitment except that NO1 showed equal levels of correlation with the other second-order constructs of team and role.

Of the items loading on the commitment to the team construct four of the affective items and two of the normative items had good discrimination. The one affective item (AT5) and the two normative items (NT3 & NT4) proved to be inadequate for discrimination. The same three items were poor discriminative indicators on the second- order construct of commitment to the team. From this analysis it was decided to drop all those items with poor discriminative capacity from the reliability analyses. The items that were ultimately evaluated for reliability are shown in Table 4.6. From this it can be seen that the organisational commitment scale consisted of four affective items (AO1, AO2, AO3, & AO4) and four normative items (NO1, NO2, NO4, & NO5). The commitment to the team scale consisted of four affective items (AT1, AT2, AT3, & AT4) and two normative items (NT1 & NT2). The commitment to the role scale consisted of the original eight affective and normative items.

Table 4.6

Reliability Analysis of the Full Scale and Subscale Items

Commitment target	Code	Item	Item-total correlation	Squared multiple R	Reliability if item deleted	Scale reliability
Organisational commitment	AO1	This centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me	0.67	0.50	0.66	0.77
	AO2	I feel emotionally attached to this centre	0.62	0.51	0.68	
	AO3	I think I could easily become as attached to another centre as I am to this one (R)	0.36	0.15	0.84	
	AO4	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this centre	0.70	0.56	0.65	
	AO5	I enjoy discussing this centre with people outside it	-	-	-	
	NO1	I feel no obligation to remain as a volunteer with this centre (R)	0.22	0.06	0.72	0.63
	NO2	Even if it were to my advantage, I feel it would be wrong to leave this centre now	0.45	0.80	0.52	
	NO3	I owe little to this centre (R)	-	-	-	
	NO4	I would feel uneasy if I left this centre now	0.51	0.33	0.48	
	NO5	This centre deserves my loyalty	0.52	0.29	0.50	
Team Commitment	AT1	I enjoy working with this team of volunteers	0.77	0.59	0.88	0.90
	AT2	I have a lot of respect for this team of volunteers	0.78	0.69	0.87	
	AT3	I feel proud to be a member of this team of volunteers	0.85	0.75	0.85	

Commitment target	Code	Item	Item-total correlation	Squared multiple R	Reliability if deleted	Scale reliability
Team	AT4	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my team of volunteers	0.75	0.59	0.89	
Commitment	AT5	I think I could easily become as attached to another team of volunteers as I am to this one (R)	-	-		
	NT1	This team of volunteers does not deserve my loyalty (R)	0.57	0.46	0.34	0.61
	NT2	I owe little to this team of volunteers (R)	0.54	0.46	0.33	
	NT3	I feel personally obliged to continue to work with this team of volunteers	-	-	-	
	NT4	I would feel uneasy if I left this team of volunteers	-	-	-	
Role	AR1	The role I fulfill in this centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me	0.65	0.44	0.77	0.82
Commitment	AR2	I enjoy discussing my volunteering role with other people	0.55	0.31	0.81	
	AR3	I feel proud to be a committee member/coach/official/other role	0.70	0.49	0.75	
	AR4	I am enthusiastic about my role	0.68	0.48	0.75	
	NR1	I feel no obligation to remain in my current role with this centre (R)	0.42	0.18	0.61	0.66
	NR2	I would be letting others down if I quit this role	0.44	0.20	0.60	
	NR3	I feel it would be fine to step down from my role at this centre now, if doing so were to my advantage	0.47	0.22	0.58	
	NR4	I would feel uneasy if I ceased to be a committee member/coach/official/other role	0.44	0.21	0.60	

Note. Shaded items not included in the analysis

4.3.5 Reliability. The reliability of the remaining items was evaluated using StatSoft Inc. (2001) Statistica 6.0. The summary of the results of these analyses are shown in Table 4.6. For the sake of clarity, all of the items are included in the table but those items not utilised in the evaluation of reliability are highlighted in grey. The statistic reported is Cronbach's alpha and the evaluation relates to the internal reliability of the scales.

The reliability of the total scale (22 items) was .91 and the organisational commitment, the commitment to the team, and the commitment to the role subscales were .82, .89, and .76, respectively. At the level of the affective and normative subscales the affective commitment subscales were generally more reliable than the normative commitment subscales. All of the affective commitment scales, for all three targets, had alphas greater than .70 which indicated that they would be adequate research measures. This was particularly the case for affective team commitment and affective role commitment where alphas were greater than .80. The alpha for affective organisational commitment increased to .84 with elimination of item AO3 indicating that scores on this subscale would also have adequate reliability.

The normative commitment subscales all had alphas below .70, although only marginally, which suggested that scores from these scales would need to be dealt with cautiously. However, on the organisational commitment scale the normative item NO1 was inadequate and its elimination lifted the coefficient from .63 to .72. Consequently, the scores on this normative subscale could be considered relatively stable. Items that were finally included in each scale and sub-scale are shown in Table 4.7. Descriptive statistics for all scales, subscales, and performance items appear in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7

Items Finally Included in the Commitment Scales and Subscales

Commitment target	Code	Item	Number of items
Organisational Commitment	AO1	This centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	4 items
	AO2	I feel emotionally attached to this centre.	
	AO3	I think I could easily become as attached to another centre as I am to this one. (R)	
	AO4	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this centre.	
	NO1	I feel no obligation to remain as a volunteer with this centre. (R)	4 items
	NO2	Even if it were to my advantage I feel it would be wrong to leave this centre now.	
	NO4	I would feel uneasy if I left this centre now.	
	NO5	This centre deserves my loyalty	
Team Commitment	AT1	I enjoy working with this team of volunteers.	4 items
	AT2	I have a lot of respect for this team of volunteers.	
	AT3	I feel proud to be a member of this team of volunteers.	
	AT4	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my team of volunteers.	
	NT1	This team of volunteers does not deserve my loyalty. (R)	2 items
	NT2	I owe little to this team of volunteers. (R)	

Commitment target	Code	Item	Number of items
Role Commitment	AR1	The role I fulfill in this centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	4 items
	AR2	I enjoy discussing my volunteering role with other people.	
	AR3	I feel proud to be a committee member/coach/ age marshall/ other role.	
	AR4	I am enthusiastic about my role.	
	NR1	I feel no obligation to remain in my current role with this centre. (R)	4 items
	NR2	I would be letting others down if I quit my role.	
	NR3	I feel it would be fine to step down from my role at this centre if doing so were to my advantage. (R)	
	NR4	I would feel uneasy if I ceased to be a committee member/ coach/ age marshall/ other role.	

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics: Means and Standard Deviations for all Commitment Scales, Subscales, and for Performance Measures

Commitment Scales/Subscales	Mean	Standard Deviation
Affective Organisational Commitment	3.89	.77
Normative Organisational Commitment	3.70	.76
Total Organisational Commitment	3.80	.69
Affective Team Commitment	4.12	.67
Normative Team Commitment	3.95	.84
Total Team Commitment	4.06	.66
Affective Role Commitment	4.03	.62
Normative Role Commitment	3.64	.68
Total Role Commitment	3.83	.54
Time-involvement (performance)	3.97	.72
Knowledge (performance)	3.70	.75

Note. N = 204

The second purpose of Part 2 was the examination of the relationships between the targets of commitment and three behavioural outcomes: self-assessed performance, intention to stand down from the volunteer role, and intention to cease volunteering for the centre. These relationships will be examined in turn. For these analyses composite measures of commitment to each target (comprising the affective and normative dimensions) will be used. As previously stated, although the affective subscales were generally reliable, the normative subscales all had alphas below .70 and, consequently, further analyses using these subscales would have to be dealt with cautiously. By using a composite measure, where each commitment target scale had reliabilities of .82 (organisational), .89 (team) and .76 (role) this problem can be avoided. Further, as the specific research aim in this instance was to assess the contribution of commitment targets to the prediction of outcomes, rather than to evaluate target dimensionality, the use of composite measures is appropriate. The fact that the dimensions were not used as separate subscales is revisited in the limitations section of this chapter.

4.3.6 Relationships between targets of commitment and self-assessed performance. Multiple regression is a statistical analysis that is used to predict an individual's score on one variable on the basis of their scores on other variables (Brace et al, 2006). Several assumptions underpin the selection of multiple regression as a statistical tool: first, the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables should be linear; second, the criterion variable should be measured on an interval or ratio scale; third, the predictor variables should be measured on an interval/ratio scale (in order to include nominal predictor variables, such as sex, it becomes necessary to use dichotomous variables which

should be dummy coded as, for example, 1 for female and 0 for male); fourth, a large number of observations are required, as a rule of thumb, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest the number of predictors plus the number 104; and fifth, care should be taken when choosing predictor variables as multicollinearity may cause problems when drawing inferences about the contribution of each variable to the overall model. All five assumptions were satisfied.

Stepwise regression analyses were conducted to assess the relationships between the three targets of commitment and self-reported performance (*time-involvement* and *knowledge*). The stepwise method was chosen over other methods (e.g., hierarchical) as it usually results in the most parsimonious model (Brace et al., 2006). Tables 4.9 and 4.10 show the results of these analyses with *time-involvement* and *knowledge*, respectively, as criterion variables and commitment targets (organisational commitment, commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role) as predictor variables.

Table 4.9

Predicting Time-Involvement from Commitment Targets: Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variable	B	SE B	β
Commitment to the role	.58	.09	.43***

***$p<.0005$

A significant model emerged for time-involvement: F (1, 202) = 45.84, $p<.0005$. The model explained 18% of the variance (adjusted R^2 = .18). Table 4.9 provides

information for the predictor variable included in the model. Organisational commitment (t=1.90, n.s.) and commitment to the team (t=1.23, n.s.) were not significant predictors.

Table 4.10

Predicting Knowledge from Commitment Targets: Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variable	B	SE B	β
Organisational commitment	.53	.07	.48***

****p*<.0005

A significant model also emerged for knowledge: *F* (2, 201) = 61.51, $p<.0005$. The model explained 23 % of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = .23$). Table 4.10 provides information or the predictor variable included in the model. Commitment to the team (t=.31, n.s.) and commitment to the role (t=1.07, n.s.) were not significant predictors.

In order to examine the contribution of background variables to the prediction of time-involvement and knowledge, two further stepwise regression analyses including sex, age, experience as centre volunteer, centre size, having children currently enrolled, main volunteer role undertaken, and volunteering in another sport, were conducted. The results appear in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 respectively.

Table 4.11

Predicting Time-Involvement from Commitment Targets and Background Variables: Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variable	B	SE B	β
Commitment to the role	.32	.06	.35***
Seasons as volunteer (experience)	.45	.08	.34***

****p*<.0005

Table 4.11 shows that, using the stepwise method, a significant model emerged: F (2,201) = 42.56, $p < .0005$. The model explained 29% of the variance (Adjusted R^2 =.29). Information for the predictor variables that are included in the model also appears in Table 4.11. The inclusion of seasons as volunteer, or experience, into the model resulted in an additional 10% of the variance being explained (R^2 change = .10). The contribution of the other variables (Organisational commitment, t=.67; commitment to the team, t=1.32; age, t=.54; sex, t=2.07; main role, t=.88; child enrolled, t=1.50; centre size, t=.83; and volunteer for another sport, t=1.10) was not statistically significant.

Table 4.12 shows that a significant model also emerged for knowledge performance: F (2,201) = 47.85, p<. 0005. The model explained 32% of the variance (Adjusted R^2 =.32). Information for the predictor variables that are included in the model also appears in Table 4.12. The inclusion of seasons as volunteer, or experience, into the model resulted in an additional 9% of the variance being explained (R^2 change = .09). The contribution of the other variables (Commitment to the role, t=1.79; commitment to the

team, t=.06; age, t=.98; sex, t=1.47; main role, t=1.12; child enrolled, t=.83; centre size, t=.57; and volunteer for another sport, t=.73) was not statistically significant.

Table 4.12

Predicting Knowledge from Commitment Targets and Background Variables: Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variable	B	SE B	β
Organisational commitment	.41	.07	.37***
Seasons as volunteer (experience)	.30	.06	.32***

***p<.0005

In sum, commitment to the role is the single best predictor of time-involvement whilst organisational commitment is the single best predictor of knowledge. When background variables are taken into account, experience, as measured by number of seasons as centre volunteer, emerges as a significant additional predictor for both types of performance.

4.3.7 Relationships between targets of commitment and intention to stand down from the volunteer role and intention to cease volunteering for the centre. Of the 204 respondents, 65 (31.9%) stated their intention to stand down from their main volunteer role by the end of the current season and 35 (53.8%) of these also stated their intention to cease to be centre volunteers. The remaining respondents, 139 (68.1%) did not intend to stand down from their volunteer role.

Of the 204 respondents, 39 (19.1 %) stated their intention to cease volunteering for the centre by the end of the season (that is, to cease to be a volunteer for the centre in any capacity). Of these, however, 4 (2.9%) did not intend to stand down from their volunteer role which means that their intention is to continue volunteering in their respective role of coach or committee member, but for another centre, club, or sport. The remaining respondents, 165 (80.1%) did not intend to cease volunteering for their respective centres. Table 4.13 shows *role stayers*, *role leavers*, *stayers* and *leavers* mean commitments to each target.

Table 4.13

Mean Commitment Scores and Standard Deviations for Role Stayers, Role Leavers, Stayers, and Leavers

	N	Commitment to the centre		Commitment to the team		Commitment to the role	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Role stayers	139	3.86	.68	4.15	.62	3.93	.53
Role leavers	65	3.65	.69	3.87	.70	3.63	.52
Stayers	165	3.86	.68	4.16	.60	3.89	.53
Leavers	39	3.54	.67	3.63	.73	3.59	.50

Two separate logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine the contribution of the targets of commitment to the intention to stand down from the volunteer role and the intention to cease volunteering for the centre. Logistic regression is a procedure that computes the log odds that a particular outcome will occur (Brace et al., 2006). For the purposes of this research, logistic regression was used to compute the odds that a particular volunteer would either intend to leave their volunteer role and their athletics centre. Two further logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine the contribution of the targets of commitment together with background variables (sex, age, experience as centre volunteer, centre size, having children currently enrolled, main volunteer role undertaken, and volunteering in another sport) to the intention to stand down from the volunteer role and to the intention to cease volunteering for the athletics centre.

Table 4.14 presents the results of the logistic regression analysis conducted with intention to stand down from the volunteer role as dependent variable and commitment targets, commitment to the centre, commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role as predictor variables. The full model significantly predicted intention to stand down from the volunteer role (omnibus chi-square = 17.18, df= 3, *p.* <.005). The model accounted for between 8 % (Cox & Snell R Square =.08) and 11 % (Nagelkerke R Square =.11) of the variance in intention to stand down from the role, though with only 18.5 % of those volunteers intending to stand down from their role (the *role leavers*) successfully predicted. For those volunteers intending to stay in their role (the *role stayers*), 95.7% of predictions were accurate. Overall, 71.1 % of predictions were accurate. Table 4.14 gives coefficients and the Wald statistic and associated degrees of freedom for the

predictor variable. Only commitment to the role reliably predicted intention to stand down from the volunteer role. Organisational commitment (Wald statistic = 2.27) and commitment to the team (Wald statistic = 2.92) were non-significant.

Table 4.14

Predicting Intention to Stand Down from the Volunteer Role

Variable	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Commitment to the role	1.26	.44	8.29	3.52***

***p<.0005

Table 4.15 presents the results of the logistic regression conducted with intention to stand down from the volunteer role as dependent variable, commitment targets, and background variables (sex, age, experience as centre volunteer, centre size, having children currently enrolled, main volunteer role undertaken, and volunteering in another sport) as predictor variables. As shown, of all background variables only main role (that is, being a committee member) is a significant predictor of intention to stand down from the volunteer role. The full model significantly predicted this outcome (omnibus chi-square = 29.62, df= 2, p. <.0005). The model accounted for between 14 % (Cox & Snell R Square =.14) and 19% (Nagelkerke R Square = .19) of the variance in intention to stand down from the role, though with only 29.2 % of those volunteers intending to stand down, the *role leavers*, successfully predicted. For those volunteers intending to stay in their role, the *role stayers*, 90.6 % of predictions were accurate. Overall, 74.5 % of predictions were accurate. In sum, being a committee member was, together with commitment to the volunteer role, a

significant predictor of intention to stand down from the volunteer role. All other variables (organisational commitment, Wald = .98; commitment to the team, Wald = 2.70; age, Wald = .006; sex, Wald = 3.27; experience as centre volunteer, Wald = .29; centre size, Wald = .27; having children currently enrolled, Wald = .58; and volunteering in another sport, Wald = .69) were non significant.

Table 4.15

Predicting Intention to Stand Down from the Volunteer Role (with Background Variables)

Variable	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Commitment to the role	1.43	.34	17.74	4.19***
Main role	1.39	.38	13.4	4.01***

***p<.0005

Table 4.16 presents the results of the logistic regression analysis conducted with intention to cease volunteering for the centre as dependent variable and commitment targets (commitment to the centre, commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role) as predictor variables. The full model significantly predicted intention to cease volunteering for the centre (omnibus chi-square = 23.40, df = 3, *p*.<.0005). The model accounted for between 11% (Cox & Snell R Square =.11) and 17% (Nagelkerke R Square =.17) of the variance in intention to cease volunteering for the centre, though with only 18% of those volunteers intending to cease volunteering (the *leavers*) successfully predicted. For those volunteers intending to stay in their centres (the *stayers*), 98.2% of predictions were accurate. Overall, 82.8% of predictions were accurate. Table 4.16 gives

coefficients and the Wald statistic and associated degrees of freedom for the predictor variable. This shows that only commitment to the team of volunteers reliably predicted intention to cease volunteering in the centre. Organisational commitment (Wald statistic = 1.86) and commitment to the role (Wald statistic =3.15) were non-significant.

Table 4.16

Predicting Intention to Cease Volunteering for the Centre

Variable	B	SE	Wald	Exp(B)
Commitment to the team	1.29	.37	11.93	3.61

Background variables (sex, age, experience as centre volunteer, centre size, having children currently enrolled, main volunteer role undertaken, and volunteering in another sport) were included in the logistic regression model to predict intention to cease volunteering in the centre. None of the background variables (organisational commitment, Wald = .95; commitment to the role, Wald = 3.42; age, Wald = .11; sex, Wald = .26; experience as centre volunteer, Wald = .11; centre size, Wald = .34; having children currently enrolled, Wald = .1.22; and volunteering in another sport, Wald = 2.16) were found to be significant predictors.

In brief, as previously found, only commitment to the team of volunteers was a significant predictor of intention to cease volunteering for the centre.

4.3.8 Targets of commitment and background variables. The following analyses provide further information on subgroup differences in commitment. Unlike in Part 1

(reported in Chapter 3) where background variables were included to assess construct distinctiveness, background variables were included here to illustrate differences in commitment between subgroups of volunteers (e.g., parents and non-parents) and to set the scene for the development of themes for the subsequent qualitative phase. The other key difference between Part 1 and Part 2 is that Part 1 explored subgroup differences with respect to affective commitment to all targets, whilst Part 2 uses a composite measure of commitment to each target (comprising affective and normative dimensions of commitment). Like Part 1, a series of t-tests and two one-way ANOVAs (one for seasons as volunteer, and one for centre size) were conducted to assess subgroup differences in commitment strength. Commitment mean scores by background variables are shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Mean Commitment Scores and Standard Deviations by Background Variables

Variable	N	Commitment to the centre		Commitment to the team		Commitment to the role	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
No. of children							
None	16	4.21[a]	.62	4.21	.59	4.11[a]	.50
One or more	188	3.76[a]	.68	4.05	.66	3.81[a]	.54
Volunteer role							
Committee member	117	3.94[b]	.63	4.16[a]	.63	3.93[b]	.52
Other role	87	3.60[b]	.72	3.93[a]	.68	3.71[b]	.54
Seasons as volunteer							
First	15	3.46[c,e]	.67	3.98	.61	3.50[c,e]	.50
Two to four	102	3.61[d,f]	.62	3.70	.62	3.77[f]	.53
Five to ten	64	4.0[e,f]	.72	4.19	.73	3.91[e]	.52
Eleven or more	23	4.23[c,d]	.48	4.19	.60	4.11[c,d,f]	.51

Note. Within a column, means with a common superscript are significantly different at the $p<.05$ level using the mean comparison procedures described. Means without a superscript or that have no common superscript are not significantly different.

Number of children enrolled. Table 4.17 shows a significant difference by having children currently enrolled in the centre and two of the three targets of commitment. Commitment to the centre was stronger for volunteers with no children (mean = 4.21) than for volunteers with children (mean = 3.76). The mean difference was .45 and the 95% confidence interval for the estimated population mean difference was between .099 and .80. The effect size was d = .69. An independent t-test showed that the difference was significant (t= 2.535, df 202).

Commitment to the volunteer role was also stronger for volunteers with no children (mean = 4.11) than for volunteers with children enrolled in the centre (mean = 3.81). The mean difference was .3 and the 95% confidence interval for the estimated population mean difference was between .02 and .57. The effect size was d = .58. An independent t-test showed that the difference was significant (t= 2.143, df 202).

However, no significant differences were found for commitment to the team of volunteers. This finding is in contrast to that of Part 1 where volunteers with no children had a stronger commitment to their team of volunteers, but not to the other two targets, than those with children. However, only affective commitment measures were used in Part 1 as stated earlier.

Main volunteer role. Table 4.17 also shows that there was a significant difference in commitment to all three targets by volunteer main role. It can be seen that committee members had a stronger commitment to all three targets than volunteers in other roles.

Commitment to the centre was stronger for committee members (mean = 3.94) than for other volunteers (mean = 3.60). The mean difference was .34 and the 95% confidence

interval for the estimated population mean difference was between .09 and .79. The effect size was d = .5. An independent t-test showed that the difference was significant (t = 3.582, df 202).

Commitment to the team of volunteers was also stronger for committee members (mean = 4.16) than for other volunteers (mean = 3.93). The mean difference was .24 and the 95% confidence interval for the estimated population mean difference was between .05 and .41 The effect size was d = .36. An independent t-test showed that the difference was significant (t = 2.494, df 202).

Finally, commitment to the volunteer role was stronger for committee members (mean = 3.93) than for other volunteers (mean = 3.71). The mean difference was .22 and the 95% confidence interval for the estimated population mean difference was between .07 and .37. The effect size was d = .42. An independent t-test showed that the difference between conditions was significant (t = 2.973, df 202).

This finding partially supports that of Part 1, where committee members were found to have a stronger commitment to their role than volunteers in other roles. In Part 1, however, there were no significant differences between committee members and volunteers in other roles for commitment to the centre and commitment to the team. Once again, it must pointed out that only affective commitment to each target was measured in Part 1, whereas a composite measure was used in Part 2.

Seasons as volunteer (Experience). Employing the Bonferroni post-hoc test, significant differences were found between commitment to the centre for volunteers who had served for five to ten seasons and volunteers who had served for one season and

between those who had served for five to ten seasons and those who had served for two to four seasons. Likewise, there were significant differences between volunteers who had served for eleven or more seasons and those who had served for one season and between those who had served for eleven or more seasons and those who had served two to four seasons. No significant differences were found between volunteers who had served for one season and volunteers who had served two to four seasons, nor were there any differences between volunteers who had served for five to ten seasons and those who had served for eleven or more seasons. For commitment to the role, employing the Bonferroni post-hoc test, significant differences were found between those who had volunteered for one season and those who had volunteered for five to ten seasons, and between those who had volunteered for one season and those who had volunteered for eleven seasons or more. Volunteers who had served their centres for two to four seasons only significantly differed from those who had volunteered for eleven seasons or more. Finally, volunteers who had served their centres for eleven seasons or more had a significantly higher commitment to the role than those who had served between two and four seasons and those who had served only one season.

In brief, a significant increase in commitment to the centre is evident after the fourth season. For commitment to the role, a significant increase in commitment is evident after eleven seasons as centre volunteer. There were no significant differences in commitment to the team due to experience as centre volunteer.

Other variables. There were no significant differences in commitment for all the other variables: age, sex, centre size, and volunteering for another sport or sport organisation.

4.4 Discussion

Junior community-based sport organisations, such as Little Athletics centres, are undergoing significant changes, such as declining volunteer numbers and increasingly stringent governance laws. These are having an impact on volunteers' attitudes and behaviour. Understanding the nature of volunteer commitment can assist such organisations in their efforts to improve volunteer management practices, specifically those aimed at enhancing volunteer performance, role specific retention, and organisational retention. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the nature of commitment and its implications for organisational behaviour in a junior sport context.

Specifically, the contributions of this study include: the assessment of the affective and normative components of commitment across three targets of relevance to volunteers in Little Athletics centres. The targets include: the organisation, which in this context is the Little Athletics centre; the team of volunteers; and the volunteer role. Evidence showed that within and across each target, the two components could be distinguished. The contribution that each target made to the prediction of intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the centre, and self-assessed performance was also assessed with a composite measure of the affective and normative dimensions. Differences between subgroups of volunteers with regards to the strength of their commitments were also found. Some of these findings were consistent with those of Part 1. For example, in

both studies committee members were found to be more committed to their role than non-committee members.

In brief, like the commitment of paid workers, volunteer commitment has at least two dimensions; that is, an affective dimension based on a mind-set of *desire*, and a normative dimension based on a mind-set of *perceived obligation*, which can be directed at more than one organisational target, in this case the organisation as a whole, the volunteer role, and the volunteer work group or team. Finally, it was shown that these targets contribute uniquely to the prediction of three outcomes: self-assessed performance, intention to stand down from a volunteer role, and intention to cease volunteering for the centre.

4.4.1 Dimensionality and targets of volunteer commitment. Although the analyses for the dimensionality of commitment across the three targets under investigation provide support for the existence of two dimensions, in general the affective items had higher mean loadings than the normative items on their respective constructs. However, with the exception of one item (I think I could easily become as attached to another team as I am to this one.), each item appeared to make a contribution to their respective construct.

A key implication of the existence of two dimensions of volunteer commitment is the link between each dimension and outcomes of relevance. Research with paid workers shows that the consequences of each mind-set are different; for example, in the case of organisational commitment, the stronger the commitment, the stronger the intention to stay with the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 2000). It is expected, however, that affectively committed individuals may engage in extra-role behaviours that may enhance outcomes such as attendance and performance; whereas, those motivated primarily by normative

commitment will not have the same enthusiasm and involvement with their organisations and may even feel resentful about performing certain duties according to Allen & Meyer. In sum, although stronger commitment of any nature should be linked to positive outcomes, the implications of each mind-set can be quite different (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). This implication could not be explored in this study as commitment dimensions were not used as separate subscales for each target. Further scale validation will enable the use of affective and normative scales separately. However, the relative contribution of each commitment dimension to specific outcomes is explored in the next phase of this research.

This study also shows that, like their paid counterparts, volunteers have distinctive commitments to other organisational targets. In brief, based on the mind-sets of *desire* and *perceived obligation* identified by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) the commitment construct can be applied to a volunteer work team and a volunteer role in a junior sport context.

4.4.2 Targets of commitment and behavioural outcomes. Previous research on the contribution of targets of commitment to the prediction of behavioural outcomes shows that commitment to other organisational targets (e.g., occupational commitment) is more relevant to a behavioural outcome of relevance to that target (e.g., leaving the occupation or intention to leave the occupation) than organisational commitment alone (Meyer et al., 1993). Also, commitment to other organisational targets can have incremental value for predicting both intention to quit and actual turnover (Stinglhamber et al., 2002). In sport contexts, it seems reasonable to suggest that a commitment to a specific role, such as the coaching role, would be more relevant to the prediction of a role-related outcome (for example, continuing to be a coach, or attending coaching courses) than commitment to the organisation as a whole. Consistent with this assumption, Turner and Chelladurai (2005)

found that occupational commitment was more relevant to the prediction of intention to continue in the occupation than organisational commitment, whilst organisational commitment was more relevant to the prediction of the intention to remain in the organisation.

The results of this study suggest that a similar process occurs with volunteers. Commitment to the role was the best predictor of intention to stand down from the role, whilst organisational commitment (in this study, commitment to the centre) was not a significant predictor of this outcome. This result suggests that the volunteer role is a more salient entity to volunteers when deciding whether to stand down from a given role. In contrast, because the centre has less relevance, commitment to this target may not play a significant part in the volunteer's decision to remain in the role. As such, volunteers who are committed to their role will be more likely to continue in that role, even if their commitment to the centre is not high, because that role could be fulfilled in another centre. Conversely, if volunteers' commitment to their role is low even in the presence of a strong commitment to the centre, then they will be more inclined to stand down from that role.

Commitment to the role was the only significant predictor of intention to stand down from the role. The main role held was also a significant predictor of the possibility to stand down. Specifically, the results of this study showed that being a committee member was related to an increase in the likelihood of intending to stand down from the volunteer role.

Commitment to the team was the only predictor of intention to cease volunteering in the centre. This finding could be due to the fact that commitment to the people in the organisation, rather than commitment to the goals and objectives of the organisation, is

more salient to volunteers when deciding whether they wish to remain volunteering for a particular organisation. For example, a volunteer may, in principle, become attached to any junior sport organisation that provides a similar service to his or her child. However, if a bond with the other volunteers in the organisation does not develop, then the volunteer may switch their allegiance to another organisation. At best, the volunteer may allow their child to continue to belong to that organisation, but decide to refrain from volunteering there.

In brief, when outcomes concern intention to leave either the volunteering role or the centre, organisational commitment was not a significant predictor of this intention. Instead, commitment to the volunteering role and commitment to the team of volunteers were significant predictors of each outcome respectively.

Despite these findings these results should be interpreted with caution. The models discussed were good at predicting those volunteers who did not intend to stand down from their role or from their centre, but not as successful in predicting those volunteers who intend to stand down. In other words, although commitment to all targets was found to be weaker for those who reported their intention to leave their role or their centres, mean commitments were still above the mid-point scale value for these volunteers (the *role leavers* and the *leavers*). In addition, although commitment to the role and commitment to the volunteer team were significant predictors for each outcome, these commitments accounted for only 11% and 17% of the variance respectively. Other variables such as situational constraints or changes in circumstances, such as less available time, moving home, child ceasing enrolment at the centre, may play a key role in the volunteers' decision to stand down from a role or to cease volunteering for a junior sport organisation. Clearly,

commitment is important but it is not the only variable affecting volunteer behaviour in junior sport organisations.

Although the commitment-turnover/ withdrawal cognitions link is a central concern for organisational commitment researchers, it is important to note that the implications of any given target of commitment do go beyond simply staying versus leaving a target (Salancik, 1977; Stinglhamber et al., 2002). For many years organisational commitment researchers, including those who have studied volunteer populations, appear to have been more preoccupied with turnover and retention than with any other organisational outcome.

To address this gap in the volunteer commitment literature, this study also explored the link between commitment and two performance indicators: performance relating to time spent performing volunteer duties, including attendance and involvement at required activities or events, and time spent fulfilling volunteer duties; and performance relating to knowledge required to perform volunteer functions and general service provided. The results of this study showed that commitment to the volunteer role was the only significant predictor of time-related performance, accounting for 18% of the variance. There is no previous research specifically looking at this link, so this link would need further examination.

With respect to knowledge-related performance, organisational commitment was the only significant predictor, accounting for 23 % of the variance. This could be due to the fact that when tasks require knowledge of organisational aspects, the organisation's goals, objectives, and aims are more salient to volunteers. In brief, this study found that there were two aspects to volunteer performance, each of which was related to a different target of commitment.

Despite these findings, it must be pointed out that experience as a centre volunteer, measured by number of seasons as volunteer, was also a significant predictor of both types of performance. As such, performance, as defined in this study, is not simply a function of commitment to a given target but also of the experience that a volunteer has in performing the job.

4.4.3 Limitations of the study. There are limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. Although the subscales relating to affective components of commitment across the specific areas had good reliability and could be used meaningfully as subscale scores, the subscales relating to the normative components of commitment across the specific targets were less reliable and would need to be interpreted cautiously if they were used as independent subscale scores. As such, affective and normative items were pooled together to create one composite commitment measure to each target. This meant that dimensions of commitment could not be used as separate predictors of behavioural outcomes. Therefore no further elaboration about the relative role of each commitment dimension to a given outcome (such as intention to leave the centre) can be made at this stage. Another key implication of using a composite measure of commitment is that this limits the extent to which the results of Part 1 and Part 2 can be compared. This is noted again later in Chapter 6. For example, differences between subgroups of volunteers with respect to their commitment that were found in one study, but not the other, may be due to the fact that a different instrument was used for each study (an affective measure for Part 1 and an affective-normative measure for Part 2). Another limitation centres on the use of performance measures. As highlighted in section 4.2.3, individual performance is not commonly assessed in Little Athletics centres. As there are no agreed upon performance

criteria, measures of involvement that have been used as proxies for performance in other studies (e.g., Stephens et al., 2004) were adapted to this volunteer sample and used in this study. Additional performance criteria were identified through interviews with senior centre administrators. These criteria related to knowledge of various aspects of the volunteer role or the centre. To the extent that these criteria reflect tangible outcomes of importance to the effective management of a junior sport club or centre, then it can be argued that these measures may reflect an aspect of performance. Further research, however, needs to be conducted to clarify what "performance" means in this context.

4.5 Chapter Summary and Implications for Phase 2

This study showed that volunteers in Little Athletics centres have multiple distinctive commitments, specifically to their sport organisations (athletic centres), the volunteer team, and the volunteer role undertaken. These commitments also have an affective and a normative component. This study showed that commitment to targets other than the organisation are significant predictors of behavioural outcomes such as intention to stand down from the volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering in the centre, and self-assessed performance. Together with Part 1, Part 2 adds to the increasing body of research on volunteer commitment and provides further support for the premise that individuals in both paid and non-paid contexts, develop multiple organisational attachments (Cohen, 2003; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) and that these attachments have implications for behaviour.

Part 2 also identified some differences in the strength of the various commitment targets amongst certain volunteer subgroups. These differences were partially consistent with the findings of Part 1. For example, committee members were found to have a stronger

commitment to all three targets than volunteers in other roles. Volunteers with no children, or without children currently enrolled in the centre, were found to have stronger commitment to their centres and to their volunteer roles than volunteers with children currently enrolled in that centre. Finally, commitment to the centre and commitment to the role were stronger for more experienced volunteers, with a significant increase after about five seasons of volunteer experience. These findings will be further investigated in depth in Phase 2 of this research which will be covered in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Phase 2: What Does Commitment Mean to Volunteers?

Qualitatively Explaining the Findings

5.0 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the qualitative phase of the research. After a brief introduction, the chapter will present the methodology, including the sample selection, the main data collection materials, the methods and the procedures. Following sections will cover the data treatment, the analyses, the findings, and the implications of the study.

5.1 Introduction

Taken together, the findings of the quantitative phase suggest that volunteer commitment is a multidimensional construct that can be directed at more than one target. Specifically, volunteers in Little Athletics centres have distinctive affective and normative commitments to their centres (organisational commitment), to their team of volunteers, and to their volunteer role. Both studies also showed some significant differences in commitment strength amongst various volunteer subgroups: volunteers with no children were found to have stronger commitment to the team (see Chapter 3), and were found to have a stronger commitment to their centres and to their roles (see Chapter 4) than volunteers with children; committee members were found to have stronger commitment to their roles (see Chapter 3) and a stronger commitment to each of the three targets than volunteers in other roles (see Chapter 4); an age effect was found in the first quantitative study, with older volunteers (aged over 55 years) significantly more committed to their team than their younger counterparts; and finally, in the second quantitative study a

significant increase in commitment to the centre after the fourth season as centre volunteer was found. For commitment to the role, a significant increase in commitment occurred after eleven seasons as a centre volunteer. There were no significant differences in commitment to the team due to experience as centre volunteer. In other words, the strength of the attachment to the team of volunteers remained relatively constant across time.

The analysis of the relations of commitment targets with behavioural outcomes assessed indicated that commitment to the centre was the only predictor of *knowledge* performance, whilst commitment to the role was the only predictor of *time-involvement* performance. Commitment to the role was the only predictor of intention to stand down from the role, while commitment to the team was the only predictor of intention to cease volunteering for the centre. Additionally, experience as centre volunteer was also a significant predictor of both types of performance, with more experienced volunteers reporting higher self-assessed performance scores.

The purpose of this phase of the study is to explain and explore some of these quantitative findings in more depth and detail with a qualitative methodology. As stated in previous chapters, the qualitative enquiry will serve to explain the previous findings and allow volunteers to have a "voice" about their commitment.

The present study constitutes the second and final phase of a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. The qualitative data generated help explain or build upon the initial quantitative results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006). With this design, specific findings that merit additional explanation, such as statistical differences between subgroups of participants of the quantitative phase, are identified. This choice of themes, based on major themes and significant results (of Part 2), enhance the validity of the qualitative phase in a

mixed-methods design according to Creswell and Plano-Clark. The key themes to be followed up include:

1. Volunteers' views or experiences of different types of commitment, such as affective, normative, and continuance commitment;
2. Volunteers' views or experiences of various targets of commitment, in particular to their organisations (centres or clubs), their team of volunteers, and their roles;
3. Implications of commitment for issues such as intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering, and performance;
4. Volunteers' views on differences in commitment between volunteer parents and volunteer non-parents;
5. Volunteers' views on differences in commitment between committee members and volunteers in other roles; and
6. Volunteers' views on increasing commitment with increasing experience.

The first two themes arise from the first research question, "What is the nature of the commitment of volunteers in community-based junior sport organisations?" The next theme arises from the second research question, "What are the implications of volunteers' commitment for volunteer organisational behaviour?", and the remaining three themes address the findings of Part 2 that require further explanation. All themes address the final research question: "How do volunteers themselves conceptualise their commitment?"

Throughout this chapter the issues of reliability and validity will also be addressed. In qualitative research reliability and validity have different meanings to those given in quantitative research. Reliability is often referred to as confirmability, consistency, or dependability, terms which denote the durability of the research findings (Lewis & Ritchie,

2004). Validity is referred to as transferability or credibility. As Lewis and Ritchie state, validity is assessed by asking the following question, "are we accurately reflecting the phenomena under study as perceived by the study population?" (p. 274). Assessments of reliability and validity need to be conducted at various stages in the research process (sampling, data collection, and data analysis) and therefore these will be addressed in the appropriate sections.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Sampling and selection of participants. The sampling procedure for a follow-up qualitative study must be grounded on the key purposes of the design itself (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006). The key purposes of the sequential explanatory design are to identify what results from the quantitative phase will be followed up in the qualitative phase and to select a sample that can explain the quantitative results. According to Creswell and Plano-Clark, a follow-up explanatory enquiry should consist of a smaller sample of the same individuals who participated in the earlier quantitative phase, or of individuals who can help explain significant results. These steps eliminate the threats to the validity of the data collection procedures for this type of design. With this as a main consideration, the researcher used a two-pronged approach for the selection of participants for the present study.

As an initial step, all available details (names, addresses, e-mails addresses, and telephone numbers) of participants from the Part 2 study who had agreed to be contacted again for a follow-up study, were compiled. A total of 26 participants, that is 13% of individuals who participated in Part 2, provided contact details on their respective surveys. Of these, five could not be contacted or selected for participation in this phase due to

geographical constraints. The remaining 21 participants were contacted via a telephone call and asked whether they would be willing to participate in focus group discussions as a follow-up to their involvement in the second quantitative study. Seventeen of these participants agreed to participate in the present study. In total, these individuals represented three different Little Athletics centres.

As a second step in the recruitment procedure, and to gather more participants who could explain the results of the previous study, the researcher contacted other junior sport organisations. Sport and Recreation Queensland (SRQ) Northern Region assisted the researcher by sending an e-mail message requesting participation in this study to over 100 sport clubs, organisations, and associations that manage junior sport (see Appendix D). A total of 17 volunteers from four junior sports (Soccer, Water Polo, Disability Sport, and Surf Life Saving) contacted the researcher by the set deadline and stated their willingness to participate. Thus, the final number of participants was 34, which represented about 17% of the total number of participants in Part 2. This phase of the research was conducted between September 2006 and February 2007.

5.2.2 Characteristics of the sample. Table 5.1 shows the key characteristics of the Phase 1 (Part 2) and Phase 2 samples. It can be seen that the background characteristics of the participants of Phase 2 were similar to those of the participants of Part 2, including age range, gender, number of own children enrolled, experience as volunteers, main volunteer role undertaken, size of centre/club, and whether they volunteered for another sport. The key difference was that, unlike Phase 1 where all participants were volunteers for Little Athletics centres, half of the participants in Phase 2 were volunteers for Little Athletics centres and the remaining represented various other junior sports.

Table 5.1

Characteristics of Participants in Phase 1 (Part 2) and Phase 2

		Phase 1 (Part 2) N = 204		Phase 2 N= 34	
Background variable		N	Percentage of sample (rounded)	N	Percentage of sample (rounded)
Age	30 or less	4	2	2	6
	31-40	84	41	14	41
	41-50	92	45	15	44
	51 or more	24	12	3	9
Sex	Females	145	71	23	68
	Males	59	29	11	32
Children enrolled	Yes	188	92	29	85
	No	16	8	5	15
Experience (seasons as volunteer)	First season	15	7	3	9
	2 to 4 seasons	102	50	16	47
	5 to 10 seasons	64	31	10	29
	11 seasons +	23	11	5	15

		Phase 1 (Part 2) N = 204		Phase 2 N= 34	
Main role	Committee	117	57	18	53
	Non-committee	87	43	16	47
Size of club/centre	Less than 100	84	41	13	39
	101-200	71	35	12	35
	201-300	41	20	7	20
	301 or more	8	4	2	6
Volunteer in another sport	Yes	132	65	20	59
	No	72	35	14	41
Sport*	Little Athletics	204	100	17	50
	Surf Life Saving	0	0	7	20
	Junior Soccer	0	0	6	18
	Water Polo	0	0	3	9
	Disability sport	0	0	1	3

Note. *Sport of main volunteer involvement. Some of these volunteers were involved in more than one junior sport.

5.2.3 Data collection materials. The data collection method for this study consisted of focus group discussions. The level of structure required was relatively loose because it was considered difficult to anticipate the dialogue that would be generated by group discussion. As Arthur and Nazroo (2004) note, "focus group data collection is less structured than in-depth interviewing, in part because it is harder to impose a structure on a group discussion but mainly because a key feature of focus groups is that data emerge through interaction with the group" (p. 211). Arthur and Nazroo go on to add "the way in which topics are explored will derive very much from how the group responds to what has already been said" (p.111). This notwithstanding, the focus groups in this study needed to be structured around certain topics which followed on from the quantitative studies and thus the researcher decided to play a more active role in steering the discussion to specific issues that need to be addressed; for example, the meaning of *affective* and *normative* commitment and the relevance of targets of commitment for junior sport volunteers.

In order to guide the discussion, a topic-guide was created. Its purpose was to enhance the consistency of the data collection process and it served as an interview agenda (Arthur & Nazroo, 2004). The full topic guide appears in Appendix E. The topic guide included the themes selected to be followed up in this phase of the inquiry, as stated in the introduction to this chapter, and was kept brief as recommended by Arthur and Nazroo. Thus, more in-depth data collection could be encouraged in a manner which was not overly structured, but at the same time allowing opportunities for all participants to portray their experiences. Items or probes were worded as issues to be explored/explained rather than questions to be asked. This procedure encouraged active interviewing and aided the researcher's responsiveness to the actual wording or language used by participants.

The topic guide was piloted with an initial group of four Little Athletics volunteers and the researcher's supervisors. This exercise was successful and only minor modifications to the wording and order of topics as well as to give an indication of the time required for each focus group discussion. The topics matched the key themes identified earlier:

1. Commitment dimensions (nature of commitment);
2. Commitment targets;
3. Differences in commitment between committee members and volunteers in other roles;
4. Differences in commitment between volunteers with no children and volunteers with children;
5. Volunteers' views on increasing commitment with increasing experience; and
6. Implications of commitment for intention to cease volunteering, intention to stand down from a role, and performance.

5.2.4 Allocation to focus groups. All individuals who had agreed to participate in this phase were contacted by the researcher in the days prior to the intended focus group sessions to confirm availability and to arrange suitable locations, dates, and times for the sessions.

For the majority of participants the preferred locations were their respective club houses or an area near the training or competition ground for the participants' specific sport, settings where they felt comfortable and at ease. Five participants agreed to go to a place designated by the researcher. This consideration determined the allocation of participants to groups and the group sizes as can be seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Focus Groups Size, Sport Represented, and Location/Dates of Sessions

Focus group	Size (number of participants)	Location	Date	Junior sport represented
1.	5	Clubhouse	October 2006	Little athletics
2.	5	Clubhouse	January 2007	Little athletics
3.	7	Clubhouse	February 2007	Little athletics
4.	4	Clubhouse	October 2006	Soccer
5.	4	Clubhouse	December 2006	Water polo
6.	5	James Cook University	September 2006	Soccer Disability sport Surf life saving
7.	4	Clubhouse	January 2007	Surf life saving

5.2.5 Data collection procedures. All participants were contacted a few days prior to their scheduled focus group interviews and given a full explanation of the procedures. On the day of the interviews and upon arrival at the respective venues, the researcher

greeted the participants and proceeded to explain the nature of the research. Following this explanation, the researcher provided participants with an informed consent form describing the aims of the research and the nature of the data collection procedures and data handling and storage (Appendix F).

When the interviews took place in a clubhouse or other designated place selected by the club in question, the researcher arrived half an hour prior to the scheduled start time, met with a club representative, greeted the participants as they arrived, and then proceeded as described above. The researcher verbally explained the purpose of the study and provided participants with the opportunity to ask questions prior to commencement of the sessions.

Permission to take digital audio recordings of interviews was requested and granted by all participants in every group. Once consent was obtained from all participants, the sessions began. Discussions lasted between 35 and 50 minutes, with discussions in larger groups generally taking longer. After each interview concluded, the researcher thanked participants once more for their cooperation and debriefed them fully.

5.2.6 Analyses. Digital recordings for all focus group discussions were downloaded into digital audio files for *Windows*. Whenever possible, the recordings were transcribed within two or three days of each respective focus group discussion. Each focus group transcript included details of each discussion session: date, location, time and duration of the discussion, number of participants, and sport(s) represented. Transcripts contained a coded form of the participants' name (Female 1, Male 1, and so on). Names of clubs, centres, associations and all other identifying details were removed.

The analyses were conducted following a procedure known as the *Analysis Method Framework* as suggested by Ritchie, Spencer, and O'Connor (2004). The process of analysis requires two key steps: managing the data and making sense of the evidence through participants' accounts. The framework is extensively used by qualitative researchers and is suitable for the qualitative phase of a mixed-methods design. It is described by Ritchie et al. as "a matrix based analytic method which facilitates rigorous and transparent data management such that all the stages involved in the 'analytical hierarchy' can be systematically conducted" (p. 220). The analytic hierarchy consists of three stages that allow the researcher to move back and forth without losing sight of the raw data. The stages consist of data management, the stage where the raw data are reviewed, labelled, sorted, and synthesised; descriptive accounts, the stage where the researcher draws on the ordered data to identify dimensions, teases out the diversity of phenomena, and develops typologies; and explanatory accounts, where the researcher builds explanations based on overall associations or linkages.

During the data management stage initial themes were identified. These themes led to the development of an index with subthemes grouped under eight main substantive headings. To facilitate this process, the main headings followed the order of the key topics of the topic guide with the addition of another heading for demographic and other background information. For example, background details were gathered first, followed by participants' accounts on the nature of commitment, and so on. Once the original index was created it was applied to the raw data and refined further until a final index, complex enough to capture the data but practical enough to be manageable, was achieved. The main topics of the original index appear below. The full index appears in Appendix G.

1. Background details.

2. Nature of commitment.

3. Targets of commitment.

4. Commitment differences between committee members and volunteers in other roles.

5. Commitment differences between parents and non-parents.

6. Increasing commitment with increasing experience.

7. Implications for intention to cease volunteering and for intention to stand down from a role.

8. Implications for performance.

The thematic index was then applied to the raw data using a process called indexing. Indexing shows which theme is referred to within specific sections of the data (Ritchie et al., 2004). Table 5.3 illustrates the assignment of index categories to a section of data corresponding to one of the focus groups. It can be seen that when the content of the account is complex, more than one key theme is applied; conversely, when a single or less complex issue is discussed, only one or two index categories are used. Another aspect to note is that, although the key issues were discussed separately during the focus groups (for example, participants were asked questions about dimensions of commitment, followed by questions about targets of commitment, followed by questions about differences between volunteer subgroups and so on, as per the interview guide), on occasion there are references or allusions to topics that were covered beforehand or were covered subsequently.

Table 5.3

Labelling the Data: Extract of Application of the Index from Focus Group 1

Participants' accounts	Index category
Female 1: There are volunteers who are committed in both those ways.	2.4
Personally, I feel a responsibility to contribute to any situation where child/children are participating in a voluntarily run event whether it is sport or	2.2
art or social. For me it is a "duty" or "responsibility" more than "emotional attachment" or a social outlet.	2.2 2.1
Male 1: Yes, I agree with you, that there are at least two ways of being	2.4
committed. But I think you are also committed to other aspects of the club, in	3.4
my case as a coach, I am committed to my coaching, to me that comes first.	3.3
Other parents will just commit to whatever, as long as it benefits their child.	3.4

The final step consisted of sorting the data, a process is called thematic charting (Ritchie et al., 2004). Effective thematic charting reduces data but also retains participants' key words or terminology, keeps interpretation to a minimum, and does not dismiss material that appears irrelevant at first sight. Table 5.4 shows one of the thematic charts. This chart corresponds to topic four in the index. As can be seen, the index subheadings have been refined further to cover the full spectrum of explanations participants gave for the finding that committee members were more committed than volunteers in other roles. Separate thematic charts were created for each of the seven focus groups, a procedure called whole group analysis. It offers the advantage of allowing the group to be the focus of

Table 5.4

Example of Thematic Chart: Differences in Commitment Between Committee Members and Volunteers in Other Roles

4.1 Nature of role or job	4.2 Justification for choice of role	4.3 Unrelated to role, related to nature of involvement	4.4 Unrelated to role, related to number of roles held	4.5 Other reasons	4.6 Notes/comments
As committee members we get a deeper view of everything in the club, we really care about the club. Other roles, generally, don't need this. *Committee member, little athletics*	Maybe committee members say they are more committed because they are committee members. *General helper, soccer*	Committee members say they are more committed, but I think coaches can be as committed. It's not to do with your roles, but with your involvement. I take my coaching seriously. *Coach, soccer*	I am not so sure they are more committed because they are committee members, but, at least in Little Athletics, to do with the fact that committee members also have to wear other hats- do other roles. *Coach, little athletics*	Because committee members are, generally, demented fanatics who see their clubs before anything else. *Team manager, soccer*	Committee members believed to be highly committed because of the nature of their jobs, the amount of work, time and dedication required or because of a perception that they are highly knowledgeable and dedicated. Other volunteers may see this involvement in a negative light.

4.1 Nature of role or job	4.2 Justification for choice of role	4.3 Unrelated to role, related to nature of involvement	4.4 Unrelated to role, related to number of roles held	4.5 Other reasons	4.6 Notes/comments
I agree with you, our roles are more demanding and require more dedication and commitment. *Committee member, little athletics*	Got to justify it to yourself, otherwise why are you a committee member and not a one-off helper? *Committee member, water polo*	I am an official and I am as committed as any President or Secretary. I don't think it's about being a committee member, but with how serious you are about your job. *Official, surf life saving*	Too right, I do lots of jobs around the club, I believe I am committed because I do all these things, not because I am or was a committee member. *General helper, little athletics*	Exactly, anyone mad enough to put their hand up to do committee stuff must be mega-committed. *General helper, soccer*	Certain roles are perceived as more demanding. However, for some, it is the level and extent of involvement, rather than the role as such, that is seen as related to commitment. Less involved volunteers perceive more involved volunteers as excessively committed.

analysis, whilst also allowing the balance of group interactions and individual contributions to be noted. Further examples of thematic charts appear in Appendix H.

After the data management stage was completed, the content within each key theme was investigated further in order to identify dimensions and to tease out the diversity of phenomena. The following steps were undertaken to conduct this descriptive process: detection of content and dimensions of each key theme or phenomenon (nature/dimensions of commitment, targets of commitment, and so on); categorisation, which consisted of further refinement of categories; and classification, in which categories are allocated to more interpretive classes at a deeper level of abstraction (as suggested by Ritchie et al., 2004). An example of the process is provided in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Application of Framework for Descriptive Analysis

Column A Data charted	Column B Dimensions identified	Column C Categorisation
"They are probably more committed because their roles are more demanding, because they are in charge of all the decision-making and running of the club."	Committee roles are more demanding. Committee members are in charge of decision-making and functioning of the club.	Demanding nature of committee roles. Committee members in charge of club.
"As a committee member your role demands you put in more time, effort."	Role requires more time/effort.	Committee roles have more time/effort requirements.
"It's always the same people. Over and over they pick these roles because they are ultra-committed."	Same people choose to be committee members. Over and over, very high level of commitment leads to choice of committee roles.	Same people in same roles. Very high commitment binds them to committee roles. Unchanging situation.
"As committee members we get a deeper view of everything in the club, we really care about the club. Other roles, generally, don't need this."	Deeper view of the club. Caring about the club Other roles do not require this.	Knowledge of club/organisation. Caring about club/organisation. Other roles not requiring this knowledge or caring for the club/organisation.

Once all the data for all focus groups were investigated and described, a number of categories were identified (as shown in column C).

The final step in the descriptive process consisted of the construction of typologies. Typologies are forms of classification which serve to describe and explain how the social world is segmented (Ritchie et al., 2004). A full description of the typologies constructed will be presented in the next section.

The final stage of analysis consisted in the development of explanatory accounts, which is a higher stage of analysis consisting of finding patterns of association within the data. For the purposes of this study, explanatory accounts were developed by cross-linking findings of all main topics covered. For example, the identification of clashes between different types of volunteers emerged by cross-linking the findings on the nature and extent of volunteer involvement and the perceptions of own and other volunteers' commitment and behaviour. Explanatory accounts also often lead to a consideration of the wider applications of the evidence found (Ritchie et al., 2004). In the context of this research, explanatory accounts helped to relate the findings to previous theory and research.

5.3 Findings

5.3.1 Descriptive and explanatory accounts.

Main reasons for initial and current volunteer involvement

In Chapter 2 it was noted that individuals become volunteers for a variety of reasons, which are likely to vary from person to person, and which do not necessarily match the goals of the organisation (Pearce, 1993). The findings of this study indicate having a child involved was the key reason for initial involvement for the majority of parent volunteers, a primary motive according to Doherty's (2005) model. The second most

cited reason for initial involvement was a feeling of obligation, a belief that someone had to do the job; this constitutes a secondary motive, according to Doherty's model. Very few parents, including those with a previous involvement with the sport or with the club, stated that helping the club, the centre, or the sport as their main initial reason (a core motive according to Doherty's model). Volunteers in surf life saving were more likely than volunteers in other sports to report initial involvement due to a family tradition.

Conversely, non-parents were more likely to cite prior involvement or experience in the sport, wanting to put something back into the sport, as the main reason for their initial involvement. Helping the children and developing their own skills were also important considerations. A feeling of obligation was a less prevalent reason.

Participants were asked whether they considered themselves core or casual volunteers. Just over a third of participants (14) considered themselves core volunteers, defined in terms of extent and nature of involvement with the organisation. Nine parents and all five non-parents considered themselves core volunteers and considered their sport volunteering a serious and leisure pursuit.

Consistent with Doherty (2005) and Pearce (1993), volunteer motivations change with time and, in the participants' own accounts, according to the volunteering experience. However, very few volunteers reported an initial involvement as for themselves which with time, turns into remaining involved for the organisation as Doherty had suggested. The most prevalent reason for remaining involved was social, including making friends, fun and enjoyment, and wanting to belong to a social group. Half of all parents gave these as current reasons for involvement, whilst the remaining parents continued to mention that helping their child was their key motivation. Furthermore, the latter reported that regardless

of how many friendships they made and how much enjoyment they derived from the volunteering activities, once their child or children ceased their involvement with the sport, they too intended to cease volunteering. As an exception, parents who were core volunteers or had a previous involvement with the club or sport did not intend to cease volunteering even after their own child or children ceased to be involved. With respect to the non-parents (all of whom were core volunteers), fewer changes in motivations were reported: helping the cause remained the key motivation, followed by development of skills, and social motives. Unlike initial motivations, a feeling of obligation to the club or the sport was also mentioned.

Nature of commitment

The first question of this research centred on the nature of commitment, specifically whether commitment consisted of an affective and a normative dimension and possibly also a continuance dimension. The first quantitative study could only assess an affective dimension of commitment; the second quantitative study extended the measures to two dimensions of commitment--affective and normative. Continuance commitment was not measured in either study.

Most participants described commitment as a feeling or a state of mind, a view consistent with attitudinal frameworks of commitment (e.g., Mowday et al., 1982). There was widespread consensus within and between groups that there was an affective and a normative dimension to commitment and that the combination of commitments fluctuated with time. However, participants differed in the way they described their own and other volunteers' affective and normative commitments.

Committee members and other core volunteers were more likely to describe their affective commitment with terms and phrases such as “belongingness”, “being part of something important” (particularly surf life saving volunteers). Conversely, non-committee members and casual volunteers described their commitment as enjoying the experience of helping, about having fun, and, for parents, as part of the parenting role. Some of these views are:

> I belong to this club, I feel I am part of something important and meaningful. *(Male, non-parent, surf life saving)*
>
> I am committed because I like helping and being with other like-minded people and being with my kids. Helping here is part of my role as a mother. *(Female, parent, soccer)*

There was widespread agreement that normative commitment was a necessary component of volunteering, in particular the feeling of obligation. Volunteers with children, particularly those without a previous involvement or knowledge of the club or the sport, were more likely to mention feelings of guilt or the perception that nobody else would volunteer if they did not do so themselves, as central to their normative commitment. Furthermore, these volunteers stated that they felt an obligation to contribute to the sporting development or education of their own child or children, rather than an obligation to the club or the sport. Volunteers without children or with a prior involvement in the sport or club, on the other hand, regarded normative commitment as an obligation or a duty to put something back into the sport or club.

A prevalent view was that commitment was a combination of both dimensions of commitment that this combination fluctuated over time and depended on the volunteer

experience. In most cases, however, volunteers gradually developed feelings of emotional attachment or belongingness to their respective clubs or centres despite an initial normative commitment. Although participants generally reported an increasing level of commitment with the passing of time, temporary declines in the commitment often followed from specific negative experiences. As one volunteer put it:

> Last year was awful. There were certain club members, officials and committee mainly who made me feel inadequate. I just felt angry and my commitment disappeared. The parents were just sent outside the box and only the top kids were taken seriously and allowed to compete. Despite all this, I carried on, and now things are far better. *(Female, parent, soccer)*

Participants in all focus groups believed that most other volunteers and non-volunteers in their respective centres or clubs had a combination of both commitments. They said that this combination was desirable, as both affective and normative commitments were considered essential for the act of volunteering in junior sport. In general, volunteers agreed that non-volunteers lacked organisational commitment and that some volunteers, particularly very experienced, long-serving volunteers could have too much commitment.

Two volunteers reported that they only felt normative commitment even after several seasons of volunteering. Despite this, these volunteers believed they were highly committed in a normative manner. One of these volunteers said of his commitment:

> I never felt an emotional attachment to the centre, I do not feel that way at all. I find this committee a bit of a cliquey bunch. So there is no emotional attachment, but I am still committed, because it’s my duty to help. *(Male, parent, little athletics)*

When asked about other types of commitment to their clubs or centres, about a third of volunteers identified a continuance/calculative dimension (perceived costs). These participants had specialist knowledge and stated they wanted to progress in their respective volunteer jobs or careers. Other volunteers agreed that, although they did not feel that way, a career aspect was more prevalent amongst volunteers who worked with athletes at competitive elite or national levels not at grassroots or junior levels. Volunteers who reported continuance commitment seemed aware that they had made side-bets (Becker, 1960) and that their careers as volunteers would suffer by discontinuing their line of activity. For example, coaches and officials often described commitment in behavioural terms. They recognised, however, that their commitment was primarily a feeling or an attitude, these participants alluded to past behaviours and how these bound them to their organisations (Salancik, 1977).

A small number of casual volunteers, particularly those with no prior experience in the sport, were more likely to believe that career volunteering was a negative aspect of volunteering. Some had very strong feelings against career volunteering as seen below:

> There are some people who are committed to their volunteer careers and see helping at a kids' club as a stepping stone. They have an agenda with their particular roles and they want to have some senior role within their sport, even if they don't get paid. I don't know whether they want power or what. They want to feel important, it is all rather pathetic. *(Male, parent, little athletics*)

Other prevalent meanings of commitment included "putting yourself out", "doing what is required and more", and "caring about other volunteers, the parents and the

children". Some of these meanings were similar to those reported by Singh and Vinnicombe (2000) in their qualitative study of managers' organisational commitment.

Few differences amongst participants who volunteered for different sports emerged. However, surf life saving volunteers were more likely to believe that the nature of the sport itself fostered feelings of commitment. Surf life saving is, in addition to a sport, a widely-respected community service activity. This may explain why more surf life saving volunteers than volunteers in other sports mentioned feelings of pride as an aspect of their organisational commitment.

Targets of commitment

With regards to targets of volunteer commitment, Phase 1 of the research indicated that volunteers could distinguish amongst different commitment targets, specifically commitment to the centre, commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role. This phase of the research helped explain whether these targets were relevant to the volunteer experience and, if so, the nature and extent of the commitment to these targets.

There was widespread agreement that sport volunteers could become committed to various organisational constituencies, including the team of volunteers, the volunteer role or occupation, and others, such as the act of volunteering, the sport itself, and the children. Furthermore, participants generally agreed that the three targets studied in Phase 1 of this research were clearly distinguishable. Volunteers who disagreed with this distinction belonged to very small clubs where all tasks were shared among everyone who offered to help. In their view, size of club and size of volunteer pool explained why the distinction amongst targets of commitment was not meaningful. In the second quantitative study,

however, there were no significant differences in commitment to different targets due to the size of the centre.

Commitment to the role was perceived as very salient, particularly with the passing of time. Participants believed that, with increasing role-specific experience, competence and self-confidence would also increase, which in turn would result in a stronger commitment to the role undertaken. Committee members felt that this was crucial in fostering commitment to a committee position.

On a few occasions there were gender differences regarding participants' views on commitment to specific roles. A group of women believed that volunteers should take on any role as needed by the club and that volunteers should not become committed to specific roles, but instead that volunteers should become committed to helping the club or the children or other people in whatever way was needed. This finding is consistent with Thompson's (1999) construction of the woman's role in sport as that of a support person, akin to a domestic role. Conversely, some male coaches and officials, expressed the view that the volunteer role undertaken was an important consideration and that commitment to the role should take precedence over commitment to the club.

Fewer volunteers addressed commitment to the volunteer work group or team, but for those who did, this commitment was central to their experience. This target of commitment was particularly prevalent among new volunteers (those with less than two seasons of experience), parents, and volunteers with no prior experience in the sport. A handful of committee members agreed that this target of commitment was essential for committee cohesiveness. Others, like the participant below, believed that commitment to the people, not the club or centre, was more meaningful to the volunteering experience:

> I am more committed to the people in the club. The club really has no meaning without its members. I can't think of the club as an organisation, that's too removed for me, I'd say I'm committed to the people, volunteers or non-volunteers. *(Female, parent, little athletics)*

It was harder to tease out dimensionality of commitment targets from participants' accounts, although a number of core volunteers alluded to an affective, a continuance, and a normative commitment to their roles. As one committee member put it:

> You can be committed to your role because you absolutely love it, like me, but also because you know that you have a duty to fulfil it, particularly when there's a shortage of people putting their hands up to be committee member. *(Female, non-parent, surf life saving)*

The dimensionality of team commitment was not so clear cut. Very few volunteers talked about the nature of this target of commitment. However, their accounts highlighted the importance attached to the social nature of the volunteering experience. The account below provides an example of how this target of commitment was perceived:

> If you are committed to the other volunteers, this means that you feel part of the family. At the same time you don't want to let them down, so I'd say both types of commitment go together when it comes to commitment to the people you volunteer with. *(Female, parent, surf life saving)*

Participants were also asked whether they could distinguish other targets of commitment. The most prevalent response was the children, the children's sporting development, the children's enjoyment, or to another entity or behaviour relating to the children. Other targets included, the sport itself and, more rarely, other stakeholders such as

sponsors. Participants did not elaborate on these other targets of commitment. The quote below illustrates the salience of commitment to the children:

> As parents our commitment is to our kids. Clubs, other adults, and roles all come second. The moment my kids decide to quit all other commitments go out of the window. *(Female, parent, soccer)*

Finally, a few participants, particularly those in small clubs and holding several roles, recognised that there could be a conflict of commitments (Cohen, 2003). A participant expressed it in the following words:

> When you wear as many hats as I do, sometimes there's a conflict of interests. I remember many times when committee directives had consequences for my role as a coach. Sometimes I felt I could not do both roles. *(Male, parent, soccer)*

Commitment differences between committee members and volunteers in other roles

A significant finding of Phase 1 was that the commitment of volunteers whose main or only role was committee member was stronger than the commitment of volunteers in other roles. Statistically significant differences were found between the commitment of committee members and the commitment of non-committee members to the volunteer team (Part 1) and to the centre and to the volunteer role (Part 2). In brief, committee members' organisational commitment, commitment to the volunteer team, and commitment to the volunteer role were significantly stronger than non-committee members' commitment.

Participants in Phase 2, in particular committee members, attributed this finding to the fact that willingness to hold a committee position reflected utmost dedication to, interest in, and knowledge about the club and the sport, all of which ultimately lead to a stronger commitment. Volunteers who did not hold committee positions generally agreed with the

views of committee members. Non-committee members who had at some point held committee positions acknowledged that commitment was a function of the role held. Other volunteers, however, disagreed with this view. Long-serving coaches and officials were more likely to state that their commitment was just as strong, if not stronger, than that of committee members and that was the nature of their involvement with the sport or club that influenced their commitment.

> I am an official and I am as committed as any President or Secretary. It's to do with how serious you are about your job. *(Male, non-parent, surf life saving)*

Other participants, mainly non-committee members, were of the view that committee members perceived themselves to be more committed as a justification for their choice of a more demanding role.

Participants who had never held a committee position and casual volunteers in general also agreed that committee members had a stronger commitment. A small number of non-committee members portrayed committee members' commitment in negative terms as illustrated by this account:

> Committee members are, generally, demented fanatics who see their clubs before anything else. That's why they are more committed. *(Female, parent, soccer)*

Finally, some participants believed that a stronger commitment was not necessarily linked with a particular role, such as being committee member. In their view, volunteers with more than one role, whatever the role, had a stronger commitment. The undertaking of more than one role was perceived as linked to stronger commitment. As one participant noted:

> I believe I am committed because I do all these things, not because I am a committee member. *(Male, parent, Little Athletics)*

Commitment differences between non-parents and parents

Another significant finding in both parts of Phase 1 was that the commitment of volunteers without children, or without children currently involved in volunteers' respective Little Athletics centres, was stronger than the commitment of volunteers with children currently involved. In Phase 1, statistically significant differences were found between non-parents' and parents' commitment to all three targets (see Chapters 3 and 4).

The dominant view of participants in Phase 2 was that this finding was not surprising. Parent volunteers explained this difference in commitment due to personal reasons for involvement. In other words, if volunteers do not a have a child involved but are involved in junior sport nonetheless, then they are perceived as being highly committed either to the sport or the club. The accounts of non-parents were similar. Non-parents believed their stronger commitment was related to their interest in the sport or a previous involvement with the centre or club. This view is exemplified in the account below:

> If you don't have kids then you are making the effort for yourself. You do it for your own sake, for your own reasons. Parents are more likely to help during one-off events when their kids are participating, than to volunteer for committees or for a fixed position like officiating. For those more involved positions, people who don't have kids are easier to come by because they are truly into it. *(Female, non-parent, disability sport)*

Parents were more likely to attribute the stronger commitment of non-parents to the non-parents' situation, a perceived less complicated lifestyle, which, in the eyes of busy

parents, afforded non-parents more time for leisure pursuits like volunteering. In general, parents believed that volunteer non-parents were older (over 55 years old) or younger (less than 25 years old). Some of these views are expressed below:

> I don't have the time to become committed. I have three little ones in this club. I can't be expected to join committees in addition to washing the kids' gear and driving them round and paying their enrolment fees. I barely get to see them compete. Compare that to those who don't have kids: there's the younger volunteers who were ex-athletes, and the older people who are retired and this is their hobby. *(Female, parent, Little Athletics)*

> I'm not surprised non-parents are more committed. When you have kids, your kids are the most important thing. Once your kids are gone, if you are interested it's far easier to do more. *(Female, parent, surf life saving)*

A small number of participants who were not parents viewed the commitment of the latter as essential to the survival and structure of junior sport. Others, however, viewed it negatively and even believed it had detrimental effects to both the sport and the other volunteers. It is important to note that some of the accounts reflect not only on parent vs. non-parent differences, but also on the conflicts between core and casual volunteers:

> There are so many fanatics and old-timers whose whole life is the sport, particularly those without kids involved. They do everything verbally and ad-hoc. Ironically we need people like that, because under the current structure of Little Athletics the whole thing would collapse. *(Female, parent, little athletics)*

> Every club has some of these fanatics who have been there forever. You need them because they know everything and make things work. But they are an annoyance to

parents. Not so much to parents who are experienced, but to new parents. They so much love to lecture you with their commitment, they put us off. *(Female, parent, soccer)*

Similarly, non-parents voiced their misgivings about volunteer parents:

> I wish they would become more involved, more committed. Some people help properly, others just muck about and all they do is chat, chat, chat. *(Male, non-parent, soccer)*

Increasing commitment with increasing experience

The data from Part 2 showed that more experienced volunteers had a stronger commitment to the centre, particularly after four or five seasons of experience as centre volunteers. A similar pattern was evident with commitment to the role. Commitment to the team of volunteers did not differ significantly with experience.

Volunteers, regardless of role, level of involvement, and experience consistently reported that commitment increased as a function of gaining experience and confidence, particularly for specialised roles. Other participants believed that with the passing of time, volunteering could become a part of a lifestyle and that this led to an increase in commitment. A recurrent theme was that commitment fluctuated according to volunteering experiences as reported earlier. The general consensus was that commitment could increase as well as decrease, but that the general trend with the passing of time, was that commitment increased. Some of these views appear below:

> I'd say it does go up because you get more experience and you gain more confidence. If you accept there will be days when things go wrong, but you stick to it anyway, then the trend is up. *(Female, parent, soccer)*

> Volunteering becomes a part of who you are, a part of your lifestyle, and that makes you more committed. Your commitment goes in ebbs and flows, there are good and bad seasons, but in general, the trend is up. *(Male, non-parent, surf life saving)*

Implications for intention to cease volunteering, for intention to stand down from a role, and for performance

The final topic for explanation concerned the implications of commitment for outcomes such as intention to cease volunteering for the club/centre, intention to stand down from a volunteer role, and performance. This investigation served to answer the second main research question: What are the implications of commitment for volunteer organisational behaviour? In the second quantitative study it was found that organisational commitment was related to performance relating to knowledge; commitment to the role was related to performance relating to time and involvement, and to intention to stand down from the volunteer role; and commitment to the team of volunteers was related to intention to cease volunteering for the club/centre.

The topic of intention to cease volunteering and actual ceasing to volunteer altogether was, in all groups, recurrent throughout the group discussion. The central issue that volunteers noted was that commitment was needed, but it was not sufficient to retain an individual either in a club or in a particular role. Not surprisingly, volunteers mentioned lack of time, moving away, having done a fair share for the club, wanting to watch their children compete, and children no longer participating in the sport as the key reasons for standing down, particularly for parent volunteers and casual volunteers.

Core volunteers were more likely to mention career-related determinants such as retirement, taking a break, allowing someone else to gain experience, the fact that rules

were increasingly strict and complicated, feeling fed-up and unappreciated, as well as time-related concerns. A widespread view was that, given those reasons for intending to stand down, commitment could remain high, although probably not as high as it had been before. Participants believed that if a volunteer had weak commitment or a lack of commitment, then this would inevitably lead to standing down because there would be no obvious reason for volunteering. Core volunteers, who arguably have some continuance commitment, reported being more likely to change clubs or roles rather than altogether abandoning volunteering.

Finally, there was a general agreement that commitment to the team of volunteers was an important consideration closely related to intention to cease volunteering in the centre. Participants in all groups highlighted the importance of social relationships and getting along with others in shaping their intentions to continue volunteering. This consideration, however, was less important for core volunteers who did not work in groups; for example, coaches. The importance that volunteers place on social relations and networks is consistent with the finding that social motives for volunteering strengthen with the passing of time (Pearce, 1993).

Performance was an issue perceived as irrelevant to many casual volunteers, who expressed their resistance to being evaluated at all. In their view performing a voluntary role was all that mattered. However, core volunteers considered performance an important aspect of their work as the following account from a treasurer illustrates:

> It is important for us to perform well, particularly in this day and age of litigation. We need people who know what they are doing. Just because we don't get paid it

> doesn't mean we can get sloppy. We could get sued and we could lose everything we always fought for in our sport. *(Female, parent, Little Athletics)*

In explaining the links between commitment and performance a consistent view was that organisational commitment was related to knowledge as tasks required knowledge of and a commitment to the organisation, its mission, and its goals. Participants could not explain why organisational commitment was not related to performance relating to time and involvement. Participants, however, believed a commitment to the role could be linked to this type of performance, particularly if the given role required time investment and attendance at training or events. This was the view of those in coaching, officiating, and committee members. Finally, a consistent theme amongst participants was that with increased experience came improved performance, as confidence and competence also increased.

Other issues of importance to volunteers

Other recurrent issues addressed by the participants include:

1) The importance of the volunteer experience; specifically the need to feel valued and appreciated regardless of degree of involvement and the quality of outputs, in contributing to motivation, satisfaction, and commitment. This was the widespread view of participants regardless of experience, role, or extent of involvement. As one participant put it:

> I do enjoy volunteering. But if clubs want to ensure people join in and remain involved, they have to acknowledge the contribution we make, however small. We don't need certificates or prizes, just to hear "Thank you, your work is appreciated". That's what makes you satisfied and committed. *(Female, parent, Little Athletics)*

2) The clashes of cultures; specifically the differences between core and casual volunteers. Stebbins (2004) classification of leisure into serious, casual, and project-based was applicable to the level of involvement of participants in this study. For example, participants acknowledged that their involvement as volunteers could vary according to their circumstances and interests, with some preferring to help at specific events or for specific projects (such as a grant submission). Others preferred to lend a hand when required whilst others preferred the structure and predictability of certain positions. Some of these views are expressed below:

> To me, volunteering is about helping at events, like Carnivals, to ensure things go smoothly, not only for my children but for the club. I am not interested in a fixed position or further involvement. *(Male, parent, little athletics)*

> I am more comfortable with a specific job or role. This year I am the Officer for Officials and I know exactly what I have to do. *(Female, parent, little athletics)*

Conflicts between different types of volunteers and non-volunteers (Nichols et al., 2005) emerged throughout the group discussions. Both casual and core volunteers expressed their unhappiness with non-volunteers, particularly with parents who never helped or who did not take an interest. In one participant's words:

> What I would really want to know is why there are people who drop their kids, plonk themselves on a comfy chair and read the paper throughout the training session, invariably ignoring our requests for help. *(Male, parent, little athletics)*

Clashes of cultures were also evident between core and casual volunteers. For example, core volunteers expressed their unhappiness at the perceived lack of involvement

of casual volunteers, whilst casual volunteers generally perceived core volunteers as dogmatic, cliquey, and overly committed. As one casual volunteer noted:

> These people are too committed. That is bad. Clubs cannot progress or move forward with people who are not prepared to change and to let others lead. *(Male, parent, soccer)*

In sum, despite the various motivations, perceptions of other volunteers, and conflicts, participants in Phase 2 reported being satisfied to very satisfied with their volunteering experience and declared that they would be willing to continue to volunteer for as long as it was possible or for the entire duration of their child or children's involvement.

5.3.2 Typologies. As a final step in the descriptive analysis, a typology was created to capture how volunteers differed in terms of their commitment. Typologies are usually multidimensional classifications. This means that they are systematically created by combining at least two dimensions to achieve a more elaborate picture of a characteristic (Ritchie et al., 2004). The characteristic here is the type of volunteer. The other key aspect of typologies is that individuals can only be assigned to one category, thereby "'dividing' or 'sectoring' the social world" (Ritchie et al., p. 244).

The researcher took into account two key dimensions in the development of a volunteer typology. The first was strength of participants' commitment to each of the three organisational targets. For example, volunteers whose primary target of commitment is the volunteer team, are more socially oriented and less concerned about the role undertaken or the organisation. Volunteers whose primary target of commitment is the volunteer role are more task-oriented and less concerned about the team of volunteers and the organisation.

The second dimension taken into account was participants' status as core or casual volunteers. This dimension is based on a predefined typology, either being a core or a casual volunteer, and its use is acceptable at the analytical stage of research (Ritchie et al., 2004). Once both dimensions are taken into account, a volunteer is further classified as, for example, socially-oriented core volunteer or socially-oriented casual volunteer. The extent of volunteers' affective, normative, and continuance commitments could also be applied. In the example socially-oriented casual volunteers, their commitment could be further subdivided into primarily affective or primarily normative.

This development process led to the construction of four main categories that were tested by looking at individual cases across the sample. The validity of these categories was established by having a second rater independently assess the classification process and the choice of dimensions. The final four categories established were labeled: *mums and dads*, *specialists*, *über- volunteers-team oriented*, and *über –volunteers-task-oriented*.

The primary motivation for volunteering for the *mums and dads* is that they have a child in the club. Their initial commitment is normative, which later develops into affective commitment. Their key targets of commitment are: their child or children, as mums and dads see themselves as parents performing a child-minding role; and the other volunteers. They are drawn to the social aspect of volunteering and usually avoid committee roles or serious roles. They like helping on an as needed basis and may not have any knowledge of the sport or the club.

The primary motivation of the *specialists* is that they have a child in the club (if they are parents) or because of previous involvement in the club or the sport. Their key target of commitment is their specific role as coach, official, or other. Although highly

proficient in their roles, they avoid committee positions. They may have been a committee member in the past, but now prefer to help on an as needed basis, such as during an event.

The primary motivation of the *über -volunteers task-oriented* is their history of involvement with the club or the sport. This involvement may have started as an athlete, coach, or even as an athlete's parent, although the latter is much less likely. They are affectively and normatively committed and also feel continuance commitment. They are usually a committee member or hold a role that is considered necessary for the survival of the club. These volunteers perceive themselves as hardworking and perceive other volunteers and non-volunteers as uncommitted and even incompetent. Their attitudes and behaviour are consistent with Pearce's (1993) description of martyred leaders.

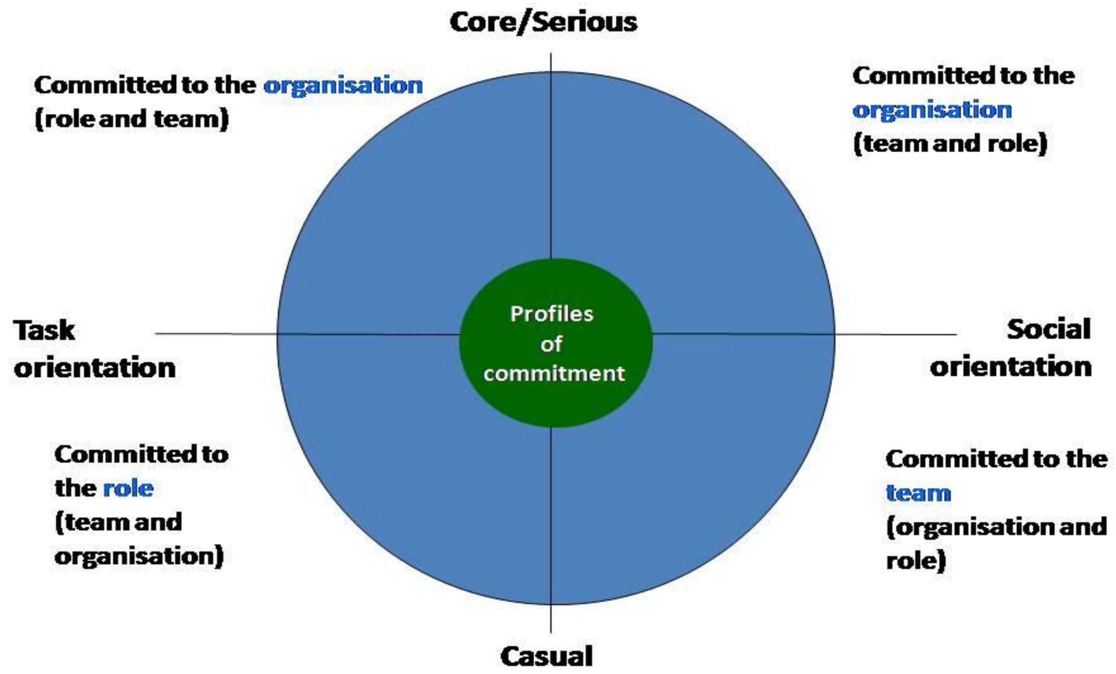
The *über-volunteer team-oriented* shares similarities with the über-volunteers task-oriented because they take their volunteering seriously and feel affective, normative, and continuance commitment. This volunteer, however, is more socially oriented, highly committed to the other volunteers, and perceived by other volunteers and non volunteers alike as friendlier.

Figure 5.1 maps out the typology and its categories. The horizontal axis divides volunteers into core/serious and casual. The vertical axis divides volunteers into those who are task or role oriented and those who are socially oriented. Core volunteers who are task oriented comprise most of the über-volunteers task-oriented. Their key commitment is to their organisations, followed by a commitment to their role and their team. Core volunteers who have a social orientation include the über-volunteers team-oriented. Although they are also primarily committed to their respective organisations, they are more committed to their team than to their roles. Casual volunteers can also have a task or a social orientation. Task-

oriented casual volunteers include the specialists. They are primarily committed to a role, which they specialise in, but do not volunteer in a systematic fashion; that is, they do not see themselves as core or serious volunteers. Their secondary focuses of commitment are the team and the organisation. Socially oriented casual volunteers include the mums and dads. These volunteers enjoy the social aspects of volunteering and are primarily committed to the team. Their secondary focuses of commitment are the organisation and the role undertaken.

Although this typology and classification provide a useful framework for the understanding of volunteer commitment in junior sport organisations, it must be noted that these classifications are fluid. Volunteers' changing motivations and situation mean that transitions between categories may occur throughout the volunteering experience and over time.

Figure 5.1. Representation of volunteer typologies based on commitment profiles



5.4 Discussion

The purpose of Phase 2 was to explore in more depth and detail volunteers' own views on their commitment. The main topics explained and explored were: the nature of volunteer commitment; commitment targets; differences in commitment between committee members and non-committee members; differences in commitment between parents and non-parents; the development of commitment over time; and the implications of commitment for intention to stand down from a role, to cease volunteering for the club or centre, and for performance. Issues such as motivations for volunteering and the extent and nature of volunteer involvement were also examined. In brief, this phase of the research provided additional answers for the first two research questions and answered the third research question.

The findings of this phase showed that participants were able to shed light on most of these issues. There was general agreement amongst participants within and across groups for the explanations given for the findings of Part 2. In brief, participants agreed with the affective-normative distinction of organisational commitment. Continuance commitment (perceived costs) was only perceived as relevant by a smaller group of volunteers, those who considered themselves core volunteers. This finding is consistent with a view of volunteering as serious leisure (Stebbins, 2004) where the volunteer is aware of sacrifices made on discontinuing a line of activity even if, unlike paid workers, there is no remuneration.

Participants also recognised that commitment could be directed at organisational targets other than a club or a centre as a whole. These targets included the volunteer team and the volunteer role. Other targets of commitment, such as the children, and the sport,

were also identified but not explored in depth. Commitment to the role was more salient to core volunteers irrespective of role, whereas casual volunteers did not generally feel an attachment to a particular role, preferring to help on an as needed basis and avoiding demanding roles, such as committee positions. Commitment to the team was more salient to committee members and casual volunteers, but less central to coaches.

There was general agreement that commitment to the role could be of an affective and/or a normative nature, and possibly of a continuance nature, but only for the serious, core or career volunteers; however the dimensionality of team commitment was less clear-cut. The above provide preliminary indications that Meyer and Allen's (1997) and Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) models can be extended to sports volunteers, but more work needs to be conducted to ascertain the dimensionality of commitment and the relevance of its targets.

Participants were able to explain the differences in commitment between subgroups of volunteers identified in Phase 1. The stronger commitment of committee members was attributed to various reasons, the most prevalent of which was that the nature and demands of committee roles required a stronger commitment. The stronger commitment of volunteers without children was attributed to the fact that these volunteers offer their help for their own personal reasons, likes, and preferences, rather than because they have a child or children in the club. Volunteers without children were also found to have been involved in their respective clubs or sports as athletes, whilst many parent volunteers had no previous involvement in the club or sport.

There was widespread agreement that more experienced volunteers felt stronger commitment. Participants believed that commitment increased with the passing of time, and

that this upward trend survived the ups and downs of the volunteering experience. This provides further evidence that volunteers in sport value the volunteer experience (Cuskelly et al., 2002/2003; Green & Chalip, 2004) and strong arguments for promoting an effective management of this experience.

Commitment was perceived as being linked to outcomes such as intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the centre, and performance. Despite this, commitment was not seen as a major contributor to the final decision to stand down from a role or from the club or centre, unless it was extremely low or non-existent. Parents were more likely to decide to stand down due to personal concerns, such as work circumstances or lack of time, or, most importantly, their child or children ceased their participation in the sport or club. Non-parents were also more likely to stand down due to personal concerns, such as lack of time and inconvenient schedules, and also for reasons such as burnout, wanting to do something else, and retirement. Taken together, these findings are consistent with previous research on sport volunteer turnover intentions and volunteer turnover as reported by Doherty (2005). The importance of volunteers' attitudes and personal situation in determining turnover are also consistent with research in other volunteer organisations (e.g., Miller, Powell, & Seltzer, 1990).

Other issues that emerged during the group discussions included: satisfaction and motivation, different types of leisure, culture clashes, non-volunteers behaviour, and the interrelationship of these with commitment and organisational outcomes. In brief, volunteers were generally satisfied with their volunteer experiences but at the same time acknowledged that their motivations fluctuated with the passing of time (Pearce, 1993). The existence of different types of leisure, such as core and casual leisure (Stebbins, 2004) also

clearly emerged as a key factor, where participants identified themselves as either core or casual volunteers. The existence of a clash of cultures, similar to the one addressed by Nichols et al., (2005), was a prevalent theme throughout the discussions. Volunteers expressed their perceptions and even animosity towards different types of volunteers (for example core vs. casual), particularly towards non-volunteers. One interesting finding in this respect was that casual volunteers felt that many core volunteers could be too committed and that this over commitment led to negative consequences for both the organisation and other volunteers. This finding presents a challenge for future research in the organisational behaviour of volunteers where commitment has been widely regarded as a positive attitude.

5. 4.1 Limitations of the study. There are some limitations of this Phase that must be noted. First, participants particularly those who also participated in Part 2, were likely to include very committed volunteers. Second, for most groups, the participants were very homogeneous, which meant that most groups consisted of volunteers who already knew each other and worked together in the same club or centre, and this may have influenced their accounts. Specifically, participants would have been careful not to express very strong feelings about each other or other fellow volunteers not present. Despite this, a variety of opinions, reasons, and explanations for different phenomena were canvassed, which means that this was not a serious limitation of the study. Finally, and common to all focus group research, some participants were more dominant than others. However, this limitation was lessened through careful moderating of the discussion where the researcher ensured that the views of all participants were duly canvassed.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this phase of the research was to explain and explore some of the findings emerging in the first phase of the research, specifically the findings of Part 2. In doing so, this phase provided further answers to the first two research questions: “What is the nature of volunteer commitment in community-based junior sport organisations?” and “What are the implications of volunteers’ commitment for volunteer organisational behaviour?” This phase also answered the third research question: “How do volunteers themselves conceptualise their commitment?” Together with the two studies in Phase 1, this study contributes to a further and richer understanding of the nature and implications of the commitment of volunteers in community-based sport organisations. The next and final chapter will draw together the findings of the research as a whole, the research implications, and offer suggestions for future research.

Chapter 6

General Discussion and Conclusion

6.0 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together the findings from the research studies conducted and to relate these findings to the original aims of the research. This chapter also addresses the theoretical and applied implications of the research, its limitations and contributions, and offers suggestions for future research.

6.1 Purpose of the Research

Junior community-based sport organisations are undergoing significant changes that make the process of administration and delivery of services more demanding and complex, and increasingly time-consuming. These changes are having an impact on volunteers' attitudes and behaviour. Understanding the nature of volunteer commitment can assist such organisations in their efforts to improve volunteer management practices; specifically, practices aimed at enhancing volunteer performance, role-specific retention, and organisational retention. However, despite progress in the understanding of organisational and other workplace commitments, there are still important gaps concerning the nature and impact of commitment, particularly in volunteer-staffed contexts. The purpose of this research is to fill some of these gaps by addressing the following questions:

1. What is the nature of volunteer commitment in community-based junior sport organisations?
2. What are the implications of volunteer commitment for volunteer organisational behaviour?
3. How do volunteers themselves conceptualise their commitment?

This chapter begins with an overview of how each of these three research questions was addressed. This overview is followed by a more detailed discussion of specific research topics that emerged from these questions.

6.1.1 What is the nature of volunteer commitment in community-based junior sport organisations? To answer this question, the researcher drew on Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment framework and Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model of commitment. Prior to the present research, Meyer and Allen's framework had been extended to volunteer workers in a variety of non-profit organisations with some success (e.g., Cuskelly et al., 1999; Dawley et al., 2005, Preston & Brown, 2004, Stephens et al., 2004). Other researchers, such as Grube and Piliavin (2000), also extended this framework to volunteers, but only for the affective dimension, which still left questions about the applicability of continuance and normative commitment to volunteers.

Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model has not, to date, been applied to volunteer-staffed contexts. This model was chosen because, unlike other frameworks and models, including Meyer and Allen's (1997) and Mowday et al.'s (1982), it provides guidelines to identify and assess commitment to organisational targets in addition to the organisation as a whole. This model also offers the advantage of proposing that predictions of specific outcomes will be more accurate if these match commitment to the target in question. For example, commitment to a role should be the best predictor of intention to stand down from that role, because the commitment target is relevant to the course of action in question.

This research found that Meyer and Allen's and Meyer and Herscovitch's models provided a suitable framework for understanding the nature of volunteer commitment. All

three studies showed that volunteers hold affective commitment to their sport organisations, to their volunteer team, and to their volunteer roles. Normative commitment emerged as a distinctive commitment dimension in the second quantitative study (see Chapter 4), and as a meaningful and central dimension of volunteers' attachments to each of the three targets in Phase 2 (see Chapter 5). With respect to continuance commitment, there were strong indications from volunteers' accounts in Phase 2 that this type of commitment is relevant to volunteers in key roles or career/core volunteers. In sum, this research has provided additional evidence that the nature of volunteer commitment is multidimensional.

6.1.2 What are the implications of volunteer commitment for volunteer organisational behaviour? There are various possible implications, or organisational outcomes, of volunteer commitment for organisational behaviour in sport organisations. The most researched of these implications surround volunteer retention and volunteer turnover intentions (withdrawal intentions). Researchers such as Cuskelly and Boag (2001) investigated these issues in a sport context and found that organisational commitment is a predictor of volunteer turnover. Given the current need to retain volunteers to ensure the survival of community-based sport, turnover intentions were assessed in the present research.

In addition, two other key outcomes were identified. Over the course of preliminary discussions between the researcher and various administrators, coaches, and officials in junior sport, role-specific retention emerged as an issue of concern. For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that parents are generally reluctant to remain in and serve as committee members or in other administrative roles, whilst many clubs report difficulties in recruiting

and retaining volunteers in roles such as coaching (Wilson, 2003), officiating/marshalling, and other specialist roles.

The final outcome that emerged as worthy of research was volunteer performance. Although performance is not easy to define in voluntary organisations characterised by uncertainty and unclear expectations (Pearce, 1993), performance is a topic that deserves attention given the current climate demanding greater professionalism and accountability for volunteers' actions at all levels of sport, from the grassroots to the national level.

The second quantitative study found that each of the commitment targets studied was related to at least one of the three outcomes assessed (for each commitment target a composite measure of affective and normative commitment was used as noted in Chapter 4). Specifically, organisational commitment was related to: performance pertaining to knowledge of the organisation's functioning, labelled as *knowledge* for the purposes of this research; commitment to the role was related to performance pertaining to time involved in performing tasks, labelled *time-involvement*; and to intention to stand down from the volunteer role. Commitment to the team of volunteers was related to the intention to cease volunteering for the centre. These relationships were further explored in the qualitative phase where participants provided explanations for the earlier results.

6.1.3 How do volunteers themselves conceptualise their commitment? This question was addressed in the qualitative phase of this research (see Chapter 5). Although qualitative methodologies are becoming more commonplace in sport management as a discipline, they have been rarely employed in organisational commitment research in both paid and in volunteer settings. Mixed-methods designs are even less prevalent. This is a regrettable

omission as both qualitative and mixed-methodologies can often tap into complexities that quantitative methods alone cannot (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006).

Participants agreed that commitment had two components, both an affective and a normative one, and that they experienced a combination of both. This combination fluctuated depending on the volunteering experience. The widespread view was that commitment was initially predominantly normative ("I feel an obligation to help this club"), but with the passing of time it becomes affective ("I enjoy helping this club"). Continuance commitment was considered relevant only for core volunteers. Participants generally agreed that commitment could be directed at targets such as the volunteer team and the volunteer role. The latter was particularly important to core volunteers in roles such as coaching, officiating, and some committee roles because of the significance they attached to their roles as careers. Participants agreed that committee members had a stronger commitment than volunteers in other roles because the nature and responsibility of the role required a stronger commitment. Participants also believed that volunteers without children would be more committed than volunteer parents because the former were willing to help due to a personal interest in the club or the sport.

Conversely, parents were perceived as volunteering to help in order to facilitate their own child or children's participation first and foremost. With respect to the implications of commitment, participants believed that commitment was necessary to continue volunteering, but that commitment alone was not enough. In other words, committed volunteers were perceived as likely to continue volunteering but could also cease to do so if there were changes in their circumstances (for example, having less free time, children leaving the sport, or wanting to give someone else the opportunity to

volunteer). Good performance was perceived as linked to commitment, although experience on the job was considered to be an essential contributor to this outcome.

The following sections examine the major research topics and research findings in more detail. These topics include: the nature of organisational commitment, commitment targets, intention to stand down from a volunteer role, intention to cease volunteering for the centre, and performance.

6.2 Organisational Commitment

6.2.1 Attitudinal and behavioural commitment. In Chapter 2 it was argued that there are two key views on organisational commitment: the attitudinal view, which construes commitment as an attachment that an individual develops for his or her organisation; and the behavioural view, which states that commitment rests on the perceived importance of the costs associated with discontinuing a line of activity, such as ceasing to be a volunteer for a sport organisation.

In volunteer settings an attitudinal view of commitment may be more appropriate (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Pearce, 1993) due to the uncertain, behaviourally weak environments in which voluntary organisations operate. This research provided support for an attitudinal approach to commitment. Volunteers were found to hold attitudes that bind them to their organisations. Moreover, during the course of the focus group interviews, volunteers defined their commitment as a state of mind, including feeling an identification with the organisation and its values.

In the qualitative phase, however, only core volunteers indicated that perceived costs were of concern to their situation. Participants believed they would only be aware of perceived costs if they worked in organisations such as those at state or national level, or if

they were core volunteers who worked at elite level (such as experienced coaches, officials, and administrators). In other words, a behavioural view of commitment may be applicable in elite settings, but the data from this research suggests that perceived costs are not central for volunteers involved in junior community-based sport at the grassroots level or for those involved on a casual basis.

6.2.2 Relations with background variables. While both quantitative studies examined the relationship between background variables and commitment, each study used different measures: the first study used a measure of affective commitment to each target, whereas the second study used a combined affective and normative measure. In the first quantitative study there were no significant relationships with the background variables assessed. In the second quantitative study, however, committee members were found to be more committed to their organisations than volunteers in other roles. Similarly, volunteers with no children had a stronger organisational commitment than volunteer parents. Finally, experience as centre volunteer was also related to organisational commitment with a marked increase after four seasons as centre volunteer. In exploring these findings in more depth during the qualitative phase, participants suggested that volunteers with no children had more time for leisure pursuits as: they were free from childminding obligations; were likely to be older (or younger) than the typical volunteer parent; had a strong interest in the sport or club which would lead them to choose committee roles over others; and finally, were more likely to be core, experienced volunteers with a high degree of commitment. Volunteers with more experience had stronger commitment to their organisations and to their roles. Participants in Phase 2 attributed this fact to an increase in competence and confidence over time, ultimately leading to an increased commitment.

6.3 Targets of Commitment

6.3.1 Commitment to the volunteer team. Although commitment to a work group or team has received some research attention in paid settings (e.g., Cohen, 2003), it has not been directly addressed amongst volunteers. Despite this, Pearce (1993) highlighted that service-related motives and goal-oriented motives may lose their appeal with the passing of time. This means that commitment to the people in the organisation may instead become the central focus. In sport contexts, social attachments were also found to become central to the volunteer experience with the passing of time (Nichols & King, 1998), which provides a further indication that this target of commitment may be worthy of study.

In the first quantitative study differences in commitment to the volunteer team in relation to age were found (see Chapter 3). Specifically, volunteers 55 years and over were found to have a stronger commitment to their volunteer team than younger volunteers. Volunteers without children also showed a stronger commitment to this target. However, age and being a parent were unrelated to commitment to the team in the second quantitative study, whereas committee members showed a stronger commitment to this target (see Chapter 4). As noted earlier, different measures were used in both studies: affective commitment to all targets was used in the first quantitative study, whereas a composite measure of affective and normative commitment to each target were used in the second quantitative study. This may account for the different findings in each study of the quantitative phase. Participants in the qualitative study noted that older volunteers are more likely not to have children involved and consequently these volunteers would be more likely to spend time volunteering because of personal, rather than family, reasons and preferences, which may explain their stronger commitment. Commitment to the team was

unrelated to all other background variables in both quantitative studies, although it was the only predictor of intention to cease volunteering for the centre.

With respect to the dimensionality of team commitment, it appears from all three studies that there is a clear affective dimension which encompasses feelings of pride, respect for the team, and a sense of belonging to the team. A normative dimension which includes a sense of loyalty and a feeling of obligation to the team emerged in the second quantitative study. There was no clear evidence for a continuance dimension to this target.

6.3.2 Commitment to the volunteer role. Commitment to the role can be compared to commitment to an occupation in paid settings. Although not all volunteer roles are clearly delineated, certain volunteer roles have specific duties, responsibilities, and require specialist skills (e.g., coaching, officiating, other technical roles, and some administrative or committee roles). Commitment to the role was chosen as a target of investigation due to the fact that previous research showed that volunteer role identity (when a role becomes part of the sense of self of an individual) was a significant predictor of outcomes such as intention to leave the organisation (Grube & Piliavin, 2000).

The results of the first quantitative study indicated that committee members were more committed to their roles than other volunteers. Similarly, in the second quantitative study, committee members were also found to have a stronger commitment (once again, the first study used measures of affective commitment only, whereas the second study used a measure that combined both affective and normative commitments). The data of the second study also showed that volunteers with no children also had a stronger commitment to their role than volunteers with children. Data collected in Phase 2 served to explain these findings further: participants believed that willingness to serve in a committee position,

which is generally perceived as more demanding, led to a stronger commitment. Once more, volunteers with no children were perceived as having more time in their hands or a personal interest in the club or the sport itself, which would explain their stronger commitment. Significant increases in commitment to this target were also evident with increasing experience as a centre volunteer. Participants in Phase 2 explained increasing commitment in terms of gaining experience, knowledge, and confidence.

The dimensionality of commitment to the role was more clear-cut than the dimensionality of commitment to the team. The results of the second quantitative study indicated that volunteers had affective and normative commitments to their roles. The former included feelings of pride, enthusiasm, and personal meaning. The latter included feelings of obligation to remain in the role, feeling uneasy from stepping down from the role, and a feeling of letting others down by stepping down from the role. Phase 2 discussions also indicated that commitment to the role comprised those two dimensions, particularly for core volunteers in clearly defined roles. Participants who were core volunteers also recognised there was a continuance dimension to their roles, particularly for those who wanted to pursue a career as coaches or officials at higher levels of competition. Finally, commitment to the role was the only predictor of two outcomes: intention to stand down from the volunteer role and *time-involvement*, an aspect of performance.

6.4 Behavioural Outcomes

6.4.1 Intention to stand down from the volunteer role. This outcome refers to a volunteer's intention to cease performing in a particular role, whilst still continuing to serve as a club or centre volunteer, but in another capacity. In sport organisations where there is a need to fulfill certain roles, this withdrawal intention could present problems. Following

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), commitment to the role should be the best predictor of intention to stand down from a volunteer role as there is target-outcome relevance. Consistent with this assumption, data from the second quantitative study showed that commitment to the role was the only predictor of intention to stand down from a volunteer role (see Chapter 4). The model accounted for a relatively small proportion of variance (between 8% and 11%) and it was more successful at predicting those volunteers who did not intend to stand down than at predicting those who actually intended to stand down from their roles.

In other words, although commitment to the role was lower for the *role-leavers*, that is, those intending to stand down from their roles, it was, nonetheless, relatively high. Being a committee member added a modest increase in the likelihood of intending to stand down from a role. In Phase 2, participants talked about burnout and situational factors, such as having less time available or wanting to give someone else the opportunity to try that particular role, as key factors in deciding whether to continue in a given role. In sum, as discussed in Chapter 4, commitment is an important consideration, but not the only variable affecting volunteer behaviour. Intention to leave a role was reported by nearly 32% of participants in the second quantitative study (see Chapter 4), which provides an indication that role-specific retention is a serious problem in junior sport organisations.

6.4.2 Intention to cease volunteering for the centre. This outcome refers to a volunteer's intention to cease volunteering for their current centre or sport organisation and, together with actual turnover, is one of the key concerns of most sport organisations depending on volunteers for survival. In the second quantitative study, over 19% of participants reported an intention to cease volunteering for their centres. Whilst figures for

actual turnover were not gathered in this study, it can be reasonably inferred given the relationship between intentions and behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) that a comparable percentage of volunteers would in fact cease to volunteer. Actual turnover figures of 30% for volunteer sport administrators have been reported by Cuskelly (1995) and are considered to be high enough to be problematic.

No specific predictions were made concerning the best predictor or predictors of intention to cease volunteering. The data from the second quantitative study showed that commitment to the team was the only predictor of intention to cease volunteering for the centre. The model accounted for a moderate amount of variance, between 11% and 17%. Further, and similar to the model that predicted intention to stand down from a volunteer role, it was more successful at predicting those volunteers who did not intend to cease volunteering than at predicting those who actually intended to cease volunteering. In other words, although commitment to the team was lower for the *leavers*, that is, those intending to cease volunteering for their centres, it was still relatively high.

Similar to the reasons given for intending to leave a specific role, participants in Phase 2 talked about situational factors shaping their decision to cease volunteering. These reasons included: their own child or children ceasing their involvement with the organisation, having less time available, simply being tired of volunteering, and wanting to watch their child or children participate rather than being busy helping (see Doherty, 2005). Participants also mentioned the importance of having good social relationships and getting along with other volunteers, which may account for the fact that commitment to the team may play a role in the decision to cease volunteering. In sum, although commitment plays a part in the decision to cease volunteering the data from Part 2 suggests that, predicting

whether a volunteer will cease to do so based on commitment levels alone may not be more accurate than what could be predicted by chance alone, as Cuskelly (1995) points out.

6.4.3 Performance. Performance is an organisational outcome that is receiving an increasing amount of attention in voluntary-staffed settings (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003; Hoye, 2007; Paull, 1998, 2000; Preston & Brown, 2004) particularly for volunteers on boards. Much less is known about the performance of volunteers who are not on boards or committees, in particular volunteers in grassroots, junior sport organisations. One of the problems inherent in assessing volunteer performance is the fact that conducting performance evaluations in such organisations is difficult, partly because there are no mechanisms in place or adequate evaluation criteria (Hoye, 2007). Other problems would include the fact that roles and responsibilities are usually not clearly delineated making the evaluation task even more cumbersome. Furthermore, as the data from Phase 2 illustrated, there appears to be a general resistance on the part of volunteers to agree to have their performance assessed.

Organisational commitment has been found to be a modest predictor of performance in paid settings. The variations in findings could be accounted by different performance criteria or performance assessment methods used. For the purposes of this research, performance criteria were developed based on previously established criteria for volunteers (drawn from Dawley et al., 2005) and from interviews with Little Athletics centre administrators. As reported in Chapter 4 performance was self-assessed with a 7-item instrument which yielded a two-factor solution: *time-involvement* and *knowledge*. The data from the second quantitative study showed that commitment to the role was the only predictor of *time-involvement* accounting for 18% of the variance. Participants in the

qualitative phase believed this could be due to specific role requirements demanding time and attendance at certain events, although they could not shed any light as to why organisational commitment in particular did not seem to be related to this outcome.

The finding that experience as centre volunteer added a significant amount of variance to the prediction was not surprising given the recurrent theme that with experience, competence and confidence would also increase. A link between experience, or length of time serving in an organisation, and performance was also found by Hoye (2007), Preston and Brown (2004), and Stephens et al. (2004). The performance-experience link found in the second quantitative study must, however, be treated with caution as more experienced volunteers may have reported a higher level of performance simply because they had been working for longer, as a form of rationalisation and justification. Further, various measures of performance have been used with volunteers, including measures of involvement as proxy measures of performance (see Hoye, 2007). This means that comparisons across studies have to be interpreted with caution.

The data also showed that organisational commitment was the only predictor of *knowledge* accounting for 23% of the variance. This result could be explained by the fact that when tasks require knowledge of organisational aspects, organisational goals and objectives are more salient to volunteers. In a similar fashion to *time-involvement*, experience as a centre volunteer added significant variance to the prediction. As noted above, this finding has to be treated with caution as the same rationalisation processes may have taken place.

6.5 Implications

6.5.1 Implications for commitment theory and research. Research on the organisational commitment of volunteers has been guided by the same concerns as research conducted on paid-employee settings, specifically teasing out commitment antecedents, correlates, and consequences. However, research on volunteer populations has been comparatively limited. Although the findings on the whole mirror those of the commitment of paid workers, more research needs to be conducted to better understand the issues that are peculiar to volunteer settings, including community-based sport organisations. This research has contributed to this effort by examining the nature and implications of volunteer commitment and, from a methodological viewpoint, by employing a mixed-methods design which provided a deeper understanding of volunteer commitment.

The area of the dimensionality of the commitment of volunteers continues to be largely unexplored. The preponderance of volunteer commitment research has employed Mowday et al.'s (1982) conceptualisation and measures, which are primarily affective, and have been subject to harsh criticism (Benkhoff, 1997). However, recent studies in volunteer and other non-profit organisations (e.g., Dawley, et al., 2005; Preston & Brown, 2004; Stephens et al., 2004) show that volunteers may hold continuance and normative commitments to their organisations. This research also shows that normative commitment is a distinguishable form of commitment to volunteers and that it is particularly strong in the early stages of volunteering; particularly in the first year according to the data gathered in Phase 2. In addition, this research found that volunteers can also develop normative commitments to their team of volunteers and to their volunteer roles, which suggests that commitment to these targets may also be multidimensional. It is still unclear whether, in a

volunteer context, continuance commitment has two subcomponents ('perceived costs' and 'lack of alternatives' as discussed in Chapter 2) and whether all volunteers develop this type of commitment at all. The data from the qualitative phase indicate that it is primarily core volunteers who may be aware of the perceived costs associated with ceasing to volunteer, whilst also aware of the perceived costs associated with ceasing to perform a particular role, such as coaching, officiating, or other specialised role (see Chapter 5).

The area of the commitment of volunteers to multiple organisational targets still remains largely unexplored. There are various organisational targets to which volunteers can be committed. This research has shown that commitment to the volunteer team and commitment to the volunteer role are distinguishable commitments, that are meaningful to volunteers in a junior sport context, and that have various implications for volunteer behaviour. There may be other targets of relevance in a volunteer context (e.g., the sport, the act of volunteering). The dimensionality of commitments to multiple organisational targets should also continue to be addressed

Taken together these findings have important implications for sport volunteer commitment theory and for the prediction of outcomes, such as retention and performance.

6.5.2 Implications for practice. Research on volunteer commitment can assist sport organisations on a practical level. For example, it can educate volunteer coordinators or managers about the importance of considering key organisational aims as precisely as possible (e.g., retention in the club, retention in a particular role, volunteer team performance, and so forth) and then to match these aims to the actions required to achieve them. It may be necessary, depending on the case, to focus efforts on increasing (or even decreasing) commitment to the organisation as a whole or to specific targets (such as the

work team or the role). A club with a dearth of coaches may enhance coaches' commitment to the coaching role by providing incentives for coaches to continue (e.g., encouraging cohesiveness amongst coaches may promote affective commitment, whilst focusing on the need to have coaches for the future generation of players/athletes may promote normative commitment as a sense of obligation may be fostered).

A better understanding of the nature of commitment and its consequences can inform sport managers as to what type of commitment to foster. Do sport managers want to increase affective commitment (highlighting belongingness, identification, goal congruence) or normative commitment (the sense of obligation to the organisation and its aims)? As the data from this research clearly illustrate, fostering the latter is commonplace in appeals for volunteer retention in junior clubs where parental involvement is essential for effective functioning. "Without your help, the club will be unable to provide services for your children" is a commonplace and usually an effective normative cry as it fosters a feeling of guilt and obligation on the part of many parents with children involved in a sport club.

Effective as these appeals may be, particularly in the initial stages of volunteer recruitment, this feeling of obligation will most likely be regarded with resentment and unhappiness on the part of the parents as this research has illustrated. Instead, a more desirable appeal may be to highlight the positive social aspects of the volunteering experience and the importance of the contributions made by volunteers in different roles. An understanding of the nature of commitment also provides guidelines concerning the development of volunteering policies to achieve desired outcomes. In this respect, if the wrong type of commitment is fostered (for example, increasing continuance commitment

by providing material rewards), organisational performance may decline as volunteers only exert effort conditional upon further rewards.

The different expectations, motivations, and attitudes of core and casual volunteers must be taken into account by volunteer managers or coordinators. The culture clashes identified in this research must be eliminated or at least reduced to enable harmony and productivity in these organisations. As the data from the qualitative phase indicate, many "would-be" volunteers do not volunteer because they don't feel welcome, particularly by serious or career volunteers. Likewise, casual volunteers want their contributions to be acknowledged and respected by both core volunteers and non-volunteers and want to have the freedom to not get more involved. Other casual volunteers want to get more involved but feel resistance on the part of core volunteers (Pearce, 1993). Finally, core volunteers often feel that they have to do all the work and feel pressure to continue volunteering indefinitely for the sake of the club or the sport.

6. 6 Suggestions for Future Research

There a several suggestions for future research. These suggestions focus on the needs of junior sport organisations specifically, but may also apply to other voluntary sport organisations.

1. There is a need to continue to examine the nature of volunteer commitment. This would entail the refinement of the measures developed in Phase 1 of this research. Although Mowday et al.'s (1982) OCQ and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scales have been adapted to volunteer populations (e.g., community welfare volunteers, fundraising workers, and sports administrators) questions about the nature of commitment still remain, particularly regarding the continuance and normative dimensions.

For example, there are indications that continuance commitment (in particular perceived costs) may be applicable to at least some volunteers. Data from Phase 2 indicate that normative commitment is particularly salient in the early stages of volunteering. An awareness of the nature of psychological contracts (e.g., Rousseau, 1989) may also be useful in understanding volunteers' normative commitments and other related attitudes. In Chapter 2 it was argued that the nature of the psychological contract (a series of beliefs held by individuals and organisations about their reciprocal obligations) may lead to the development of normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Research on the nature of volunteers' psychological contracts and their implications is already being conducted by, for example, Liao-Troth (2001) and in community-based sport organisations by Taylor, Darcy, Hoye, and Cuskelly (2006). The study of the link between volunteers' psychological contracts and the development of normative commitment would be a productive area for future research.

2. This research has also shown that commitment to organisational targets, such as the volunteer team and the volunteer role, are also worthy of further exploration. Identifying and assessing suitable targets of commitment would add to the understanding of the commitment of volunteers in the same way it has helped understand the complexities of commitment in paid-worker settings.

Qualitative methods assist in the identification of targets that are salient to volunteers in various sport contexts. In particular, this endeavour should be undertaken together with the identification of outcomes of relevance to each target, consistent with Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) model. It may be the case, as this research found, that organisational commitment is not the most salient target of commitment to volunteers,

particularly given the diversity of motivations and attachments that drive volunteers once they join an organisation. The targets identified in this research may not be as relevant or as distinct in every sport context. For example, commitment to a role may only have utility if an individual has a clearly defined role. In sport organisations where volunteers "wear many hats" volunteers may not develop a bond to a particular role, but rather to the organisation as a whole or to other volunteers as more salient targets of commitment. In junior sport organisations where many of the volunteers are the parents of the athletes, commitment to the children's athletic development, for example, may be a key target to explore.

3. Future research on volunteer commitment should continue to employ qualitative and mixed-methods designs. As this research highlighted, mixed-methods designs have much to offer to the study of targets of commitment. The findings of Phase 2 indicate that volunteers were able to explain the results of the quantitative phase of this research with their own words, providing more depth and insight than what was achieved with the quantitative methodologies alone. In addition, issues that could not be explored quantitatively were followed-up in the qualitative phase. These issues included differences in commitment between volunteer subgroups, as well as issues that were not directly measured, such as satisfaction, perception of other volunteers' commitment, and clashes between core, casual volunteers, and non-volunteers.

Other applications of mixed-methods designs include instrument development with a sequential exploratory design. This would consist of a qualitative phase to identify the relevant targets and to form the basis of the instrument, followed by the development of the instrument in the second, quantitative phase (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006).

4. Researchers should continue their efforts to assess outcomes in addition to intention to remain and the retention of volunteers. This research has shown that role-specific retention is an issue similar to, but not the same as, general organisational retention. The demands and requirements of specific volunteer roles can be quite different from one another and it may be the case that volunteers just cease to do so because they do not identify and develop an attachment to the role they are performing. In this respect, clearly defined roles, with specific obligations, duties, and expectations are needed; particularly in junior sport organisations. Another outcome that deserves further research is volunteer performance, specifically how it should be defined and assessed in volunteer contexts. Research on the link between commitment and volunteer performance cannot be integrated until a clearer conceptualisation of volunteer performance is achieved.

5. The qualitative enquiry allowed for the construction of a sport volunteer typology based on various emerging dimensions and themes. This typology requires further study, but provides a useful platform for the future understanding of how commitment is shaped and its influence on volunteer behaviour. This typology could perhaps be tested quantitatively. For example, are 'mums and dads' more strongly committed to the volunteer team as the typology suggested? Are 'über-volunteers task-oriented' more committed to their roles than to their fellow volunteers? Another suggestion would be to develop similar typologies for volunteers in other sport organisations (organisations with adult athletes exclusively, or with athletes of all ages) to understand whether volunteers can be classified as a function of their various commitments.

6. Finally, there is a need to develop models of volunteer behaviour that take into account variables other than commitment. As one participant in Phase 2 put it:

“Commitment is necessary, but it is not enough.” In this respect, models that incorporate other volunteer attitudes and variables that influence them, such as the preliminary model of the satisfaction and commitment of sport volunteers proposed by Doherty (2005), provide a sound platform for future research.

The following suggestions for future research arise from issues emerging from this research rather than those that were directly addressed by it:

1. There is a pressing need to understand why individuals, particularly the parents of participating children, do not volunteer in junior sport. Researchers and organisations alike are aware of existing barriers to volunteering, such as time constraints and the increasing demands placed upon volunteers; however, issues such as why so many parents do not even lend occasional help need to be addressed.

2. Research addressing the motives and commitment of core and casual volunteers need to be conducted. Doherty (2005) highlighted this as an issue requiring further exploration, but here the emphasis is on focusing on junior sport organisations in particular. For example, why do some parents become core volunteers and continue volunteering even when their own children cease their involvement, whilst others shy away from any involvement?

6.7 Contributions of the Research

This research makes a number of contributions to theory and practice on the topic of volunteer commitment in community-based sport organisations. This topic had almost exclusively been addressed with quantitative methods. The research, however, used an innovative sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Quantitative methods are useful to answer questions about the extent of commitment and how it relates statistically to other

variables. In this respect, Phase 1 of this research answered these questions and in doing so extended the body of knowledge on sport volunteer commitment and its implications for organisational behaviour.

For example, this research found that various forms of commitment are related to outcomes such as turnover intentions and performance. Qualitative methods provide a different kind of evidence that, together with quantitative research, inform and influence volunteer policy and practice in a more powerful way than one method in isolation (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2006). Phase 2 of this research served to explain the results of the earlier phase and, additionally, allowed the researcher to understand the nature and implications of volunteer commitment in more depth. In particular, this phase provided much needed answers to the question "How do volunteers themselves conceptualise their commitment?"

Although research on volunteer commitment is an emerging area, there is still a need to draw from theory that has been developed to understand the commitment of paid workers both in sport and other work contexts. This research therefore extended existing theory whilst at the same time acknowledging the differences between paid workers and volunteers.

From a practical viewpoint, this research can assist community-based sport organisations, particularly junior centres or clubs. As discussed in Chapter 1, both sport organisations and government bodies recognised a need to understand the motivations and attitudes of volunteers. An understanding of organisational and other commitments can benefit these organisations, in particular their volunteer managers, coordinators, or sports administrators. Depending on the organisation's particular circumstances, efforts can be

made to improve retention, performance, or other desired outcomes by focusing on fostering commitment to the right targets and types of commitment.

6.8 Conclusion

This thesis opened with the following quote: “Volunteers aren’t paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”

Despite this sentiment many volunteers, particularly core and long-serving volunteers, feel overburdened and unappreciated. Of greatest concern, volunteers who once had “ownership” of their organisations are increasingly “disempowered and frequently relegated to the role of foot soldier” (Cuskelly, 2004, p. 62). Research shows that commitment can fluctuate according to evaluation of the volunteer experience (Cuskelly et al. 2003; Green & Chalip, 2004); hence, the importance to actively manage the volunteer experience by volunteer managers or coordinators. This should take into account the volunteer’s perception of environmental changes that play an important role in their motivation and commitment.

An ongoing theme in this thesis has been the recognition that the community-based sport sector faces not only a decline in volunteer human resources but also increasing pressures to perform to more stringent standards due to trends towards professionalisation and the imposition of managerialism. These changes are altering the relationship between volunteers and their organisations. It can no longer be assumed that volunteers are committed by virtue of just being volunteers. There is a pressing need for sport managers or coordinators in community-based sport to understand that the nature of the relationship between volunteers and their organisations is quite complex and that it is undergoing

dramatic change. Commitment is recognised as having positive links to desired outcomes and will continue to be a lively and fertile area for research.

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Appendix A

Phase 1 - Part 1 Questionnaire and Ethics Clearance

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Research Supervisor
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Senior Lecturer

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Queensland 9726, Australia

February 2005

ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTEERING QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Little Athletics Volunteer,

I am a doctoral student at Griffith University. I am also a committee member of South Eastern Little Athletics Centre (SELAC) in Sydney.

Little Athletics centres rely on their volunteers for the efficient running of activities on and off season. I am studying the attitudes towards volunteering amongst the volunteers at Little Athletics Centres across NSW. This research will help in understanding what issues are important to you as a Little Athletics volunteer and to help improve the experience of volunteering.

I would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to answer the following questionnaire. You are asked to complete it by yourself with no assistance or input from others and return it to me. Completion should take no more than 5-10 minutes. Participants for this study have been selected from centres in Region 3. Volunteers who may take part include: committee members; age marshalls; time-keepers, coaches and general helpers.

You are not required to identify yourself on the questionnaire. Your participation is anonymous and neither you nor your centre will be identifiable in any publication or report arising from this research. All data collected will be treated as confidential and your responses will be combined with those of other participants to generate an overall picture of volunteering for Little Athletics (e.g. 55% of Little Athletics volunteers have been volunteers for more than 2 years).

This research is endorsed by LAANSW CEO Ms. Kerry O'Keefe.

If you have further questions about this letter, the questionnaire, or the research in general, please feel free to contact me on 0438 206770, or by e-mail terry.engelberg@student.griffith.edu.au. A summary of the outcomes of this research can be obtained upon request.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research, you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus, Griffith University on 07 3875 5585 or e-mail research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Kind regards,

Terry Engelberg-Moston

Statement of your consent

Participation in this research is voluntary. By answering and returning this questionnaire you will be deemed to have consented to participate. Please detach the cover sheet (the preceding page) and retain it for your later reference.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Terry Engelberg-Moston

Part 1: About You

1. What is your age? (Tick one)

( ) Less than 25
( ) 25-34
( ) 35-44
( ) 45-54
( ) 55 and over

2. Are you?

( ) Male
( ) Female

3. How many of your children are currently enrolled at this Little Athletics centre? (Tick one)

( ) None/not applicable
( ) One
( ) Two
( ) Three or more

4. How many seasons have you been a volunteer for this centre? (Tick one)

( ) One (this is the first season)
( ) Two seasons (including this one)
( ) Three seasons (including this one)
( ) Four seasons or more (including this one)

5. What is your **main** current volunteer role? (Tick one)

( ) Committee member
( ) Age Marshall/ Assistant Age Marshall
( ) Starter/Time keeper/Other
( ) Coach

6. Do you currently volunteer for another **sport/sporting** organisation? (Tick one)

( ) Yes
( ) No

The following questions involve responding to a series of statements on a five point rating scale, where the five numbers correspond to the following responses.

1 strongly disagree
2 disagree
3 neither agree nor disagree
4 agree
5 strongly agree

Please answer by circling the answer that best describes your opinion.

Part 2: About your Little Athletics Centre

Your **little athletics centre** refers to the centre as a whole, including the activities, the children, their families, as well as other volunteers.

About your Little Athletics Centre		strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree
7	This centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5
8	I feel no obligation to remain as a volunteer with this centre	1	2	3	4	5
9	Even if it were to my advantage, I feel it would be wrong to leave this centre now	1	2	3	4	5
10	I owe little to this centre	1	2	3	4	5
11	I feel emotionally attached to this centre	1	2	3	4	5
12	I think I could easily become as attached to another centre as I am to this one	1	2	3	4	5
13	It would be hard for me to leave this centre right now	1	2	3	4	5
14	Too much of volunteering activities would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave this centre right now	1	2	3	4	5
15	I enjoy discussing this centre with people outside it	1	2	3	4	5
16	If I had not already put so much of myself into this centre, I might consider volunteering elsewhere	1	2	3	4	5
17	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this centre	1	2	3	4	5
18	This centre deserves my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: About your team of volunteers
Your **team of volunteers** refers to the other volunteers at your centre (such as the committee, age marshalls and so on).

About your team of volunteers		strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree
19	I enjoy working with this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
20	I have a lot of respect for this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
21	It would be easy for me to leave this team of volunteers right now	1	2	3	4	5
22	Too much of my volunteering activities would be disrupted if I left this team of volunteers now	1	2	3	4	5
23	If I had not already put so much of myself into this team of volunteers, I might consider working with another team	1	2	3	4	5
24	I think I could easily become as attached to another team of volunteers as I am to this one.	1	2	3	4	5
25	This team of volunteers deserves my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
26	I owe little to this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
27	I feel like a strong sense of belonging to my team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
28	I feel personally obliged to continue to work with this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4: About your volunteering role

Your **role** refers to your general role within the centre, such as committee member or age marshall. If you are a committee member you may answer these questions about how you feel about your specific role.

About your volunteering role		strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree
29	I feel no obligation to remain in my current role with this centre	1	2	3	4	5
30	This role has a great deal of personal meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5
31	If I had not already put so much of myself into this role, I might consider another one	1	2	3	4	5
32	I enjoy discussing my volunteering role with other people	1	2	3	4	5
33	Even if it were to my advantage, I feel it would be wrong to leave my role at this centre now	1	2	3	4	5
34	It would be easy for me to leave this role right now	1	2	3	4	5
35	I feel proud to be a committee member/coach/age marshall/other role	1	2	3	4	5
36	Too much of my volunteering activities would be disrupted if I quit my volunteering role	1	2	3	4	5
37	I would be letting others down if I quit my role	1	2	3	4	5
38	I am enthusiastic about my role	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

11-Feb-2005

Dear Ms. Engelberg

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the conditional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "A pilot study of attitudes to volunteering in a sporting organisation" (GU Ref No: EPS/19/04/HREC).

This is to confirm receipt of the remaining required information, assurances or amendments to this protocol.

A request for extension via email is fine. Please advise us when you would like to extend this clearance through to.

Consequently, I reconfirm my earlier advice that you are authorised to immediately commence this research on this basis.

The standard conditions of approval attached to our previous correspondence about this protocol continue to apply.

Regards

Gary Allen
Manager, Research Ethics
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Griffith University
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Appendix B

Phase 1 - Part 2 Questionnaire and Ethics Clearance

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Professional Studies
Research Supervisor
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Senior Lecturer

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September 2005

ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTEERING QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Little Athletics Volunteer,

I am a doctoral student at Griffith University researching little athletics volunteers' attitudes to aspects of volunteering.

Little Athletics centres rely on their volunteers for the efficient running of activities on and off season. This research will help in understanding what issues are important to you as a volunteer and to help improve the experience of volunteering.

I would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to answer the following questionnaire. You are asked to complete it by yourself with no assistance or input from others and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed reply-paid envelope. Completion should take no more than 5-10 minutes. Participants for this study have been selected from all little athletics centres in QLD. Volunteers who may take part include: committee members; officials, coaches, or anyone who helps in a voluntary capacity.

You are not required to identify yourself on the questionnaire. Your participation is anonymous and neither you nor your centre/club will be identifiable in any publication or report arising from this research. All data collected will be treated as confidential and your responses will be combined with those of other participants to generate an overall picture of volunteering (e.g. 55% of volunteers have been volunteers for more than 2 years).

If you have further questions about this letter, the questionnaire, or the research in general, please feel free to contact me on 0438 206770, on (07) 4728 5401, or by e-mail terry.engelberg@student.griffith.edu.au. A summary of the outcomes of this research can be obtained upon request.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research, you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus, Griffith University on 07 3875 5585 or e-mail research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Kind regards,

T. Engelberg

Terry Engelberg-Moston

Statement of your consent

Participation in this research is voluntary. By answering and returning this questionnaire you will be deemed to have consented to participate. Please detach the cover sheet (the preceding page) and retain it for your later reference.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Terry Engelberg-Moston

Part 1: About You (Tick only one answer per question unless otherwise stated)

1. What is your age?

( ) Less than 30
( ) 31-40
( ) 41-50
( ) 51 and over

2. Are you?

( ) Male
( ) Female

3. Do you have any children are currently enrolled at this Little Athletics centre, and, if so, how many? (Tick one)

( ) None: I do not have any children enrolled at this centre
( ) One
( ) Two or more

4. What is the size of your centre (number of registered athletes)?

( ) Less than 100 athletes
( ) Between 101 and 200 athletes
( ) Between 201 and 300 athletes
( ) More than 300 athletes

5. How many seasons have you been a volunteer for this centre?

( ) One (this is the first season)
( ) Two to four seasons (including this one)
( ) Five to ten seasons (including this one)
( ) Eleven seasons or more (including this one)

6. Currently, what is your **main** volunteer role? (If more than one, rank in order of importance to you, for example, 1, 2, 3)

( ) Committee member
( ) Age Marshall/ Assistant Age Marshall
( ) Starter/Time keeper/Other
( ) Coach

7. Do you currently volunteer for another **sport/sporting** organisation? (Tick one)

( ) Yes
( ) No

The following questions involve responding to a series of statements on a five point rating scale, where the five numbers correspond to the following responses.

1 strongly disagree
2 disagree
3 neither agree nor disagree
4 agree
5 strongly agree

Please answer by circling the answer that best describes your opinion.

Part 2: About your Little Athletics Centre

Your **little athletics centre** refers to the centre as a whole, including the activities, the children, their families, as well as other volunteers.

About your Little Athletics Centre		**strongly disagree**	**disagree**	**neither**	**agree**	**strongly agree**
8	This centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5
9	I feel no obligation to remain as a volunteer with this centre	1	2	3	4	5
10	Even if it were to my advantage, I feel it would be wrong to leave this centre now	1	2	3	4	5
11	I owe little to this centre	1	2	3	4	5
12	I feel emotionally attached to this centre	1	2	3	4	5
13	I think I could easily become as attached to another centre as I am to this one	1	2	3	4	5
14	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this centre	1	2	3	4	5
15	I would feel uneasy if I left this centre now	1	2	3	4	5
16	I enjoy discussing this centre with people outside it	1	2	3	4	5
17	This centre deserves my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: About your team of volunteers

Your **team of volunteers** refers to the other volunteers at your centre (such as the committee, age marshals, and so on).

About your team of volunteers		strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree
18	I enjoy working with this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
19	This team of volunteers does not deserve my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
20	I have a lot of respect for this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
21	I feel proud to be a member of this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
22	I owe little to this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
23	I feel personally obliged to continue to work with this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
24	I feel like a strong sense of belonging to my team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
25	I would feel uneasy if I left this team of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
26	I think I could easily become as attached to another team of volunteers as I am to this one	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4: About your volunteering role
Your **role** refers to your general role within the centre, such as committee member or age marshall. If you are a committee member you may answer these questions about how you feel about your specific role.

About your volunteering role		**strongly disagree**	**disagree**	**neither**	**agree**	**strongly agree**
27	The role I fulfil in this centre has a great deal of personal meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5
28	I feel no obligation to remain in my current role with this centre	1	2	3	4	5
29	I would be letting others down if I quit this role	1	2	3	4	5
30	I enjoy discussing my volunteering role with other people	1	2	3	4	5
31	I feel it would be fine to step down from my role at this centre now if doing so were to my advantage	1	2	3	4	5
32	I feel proud to be a committee member/coach/age marshall/other role	1	2	3	4	5
33	I would feel uneasy if I ceased to be a committee member/coach/age marshall/other role	1	2	3	4	5
34	I am enthusiastic about my role	1	2	3	4	5

Part 5: About your performance as a little athletics volunteer

The following questions refer to how you evaluate your current performance as a volunteer for your centre. Please note that the response categories are different for this section. Please circle the number that best describes your position or feeling about each statement.

About your performance as a volunteer		Must improve	Improving would be desirable	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
35	Time spent fulfilling volunteer responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
36	Involvement in centre activities or events	1	2	3	4	5
37	Attendance at activities or events	1	2	3	4	5
38	Role-specific knowledge (for your **main role** only)	1	2	3	4	5
39	Knowledge of centre's mission, goals, activities, and general functioning	1	2	3	4	5
40	Knowledge of other centre volunteers' roles and areas of responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
41	General service provided to centre's little athletes and their families	1	2	3	4	5

Part 6: About your intention to stand down from your role/cease volunteering for your centre

42. I have informed the committee of my intention to stand down from my volunteer role at the end of this season.

( ) Yes
( ) No

43. I have informed the committee of my intention to cease volunteering for this centre at the end of this season.

( ) Yes
( ) No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION

STUDY OF SPORT VOLUNTEERS

Terry Engelberg-Moston

If you are interested in participating in a follow-up study, please write your details below. Detach this sheet from the main questionnaire and put inside the stamped addressed envelope. I will contact you at a later date to give you details.
Participation in the follow-up study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

E-MAIL:

TELEPHONE NUMBER(S):

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

29-Sep-2005

Dear Ms. Engelberg

I write further to your application for a variation to your approved protocol "A pilot study of attitudes to volunteering in a sporting organisation" (GU Ref No: EPS/19/04/HREC). This request has been considered by the Chair.

The Chair resolved to approve the requested variation:

Requested a variation to the recruitment procedures and participant pool - centres affiliated with the Queensland Little Athletics Associate (rather than the NSW Association) will be approached, with the initial contact to be distributed by the Association and responses sent directly back to the research team.

This decision is subject to ratification at the next meeting of the HREC. However, you are authorised to immediately commence the revised project on this basis. I will only contact you again about this matter if the HREC raises any additional questions or comments about this variation.

Regards

Gary Allen
Manager, Research Ethics
Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus
Griffith University
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Appendix C

Reliability Analyses for Part 1 and for Part 2, Factor Analyses for Part 2 (Commitment Scales), and Intercorrelations of Study Variables for Part 2

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Cronbach alpha: .78

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AO1	14.3670	7.049	.698	.630
AO2	14.5413	7.306	.520	.690
AO3	14.9266	7.495	.338	.775
AO4	14.3670	8.179	.499	.703
AO5	14.3486	7.100	.550	.678

Cronbach alpha: .50

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
CO1	5.5000	2.295	.247	.349
CO2	6.2500	1.768	.439	.156
CO3	6.2083	2.988	.186	.484

Cronbach alpha: .67

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
NO1	10.6574	4.825	.346	.502
NO2	10.5556	5.502	.366	.562
NO3	10.3796	4.649	.432	.421
NO4	10.2685	5.787	.380	.485

TEAM COMMITMENT

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Cronbach alpha: .70

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AT1	8.0367	1.813	.582	.454
AT2	8.0459	1.822	.404	.639
AT3	8.4862	1.345	.466	.594
AT4	8.5567	1.456	.489	.562

Cronbach alpha: .50

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
CT1	5.2500	2.126	.202	.290
CT2	5.8438	2.323	.129	.230
CT3	5.9271	1.816	.102	.208

Cronbach alpha: .66

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
NT1	7.5963	1.928	.345	.593
NT2	6.9633	2.350	.388	.302
NT3	7.0734	1.828	.382	.592

ROLE COMMITMENT

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Cronbach alpha: .85

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AR1	10.9633	5.517	.456	.815
AR2	10.6514	4.470	.640	.671
AR3	10.4771	5.048	.533	.641
AR4	10.5138	4.604	.664	.563

Cronbach alpha: .59

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
CR1	5.8660	2.492	.241	.438
CR2	5.4124	1.641	.155	.150
CR3	6.2887	1.520	.245	.193

Cronbach alpha: .65

	Mean if	Var. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
NR1	7.2752	2.646	.384	.639
NR2	7.1101	2.395	.496	.469
NR3	6.6422	3.084	.490	.510

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Eigenvalues (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components

	Eigenvalue	% Total	Cumulative	Cumulative
1	4.358018	43.58018	4.358018	43.58018
2	1.159632	11.59632	5.517650	55.17650

Factor Loadings (Unrotated) (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are > .700000)

	Factor	Factor
AO1	-0.751126	0.111358
NO1	-0.377560	-0.734756
NO2	-0.610579	0.210865
NO3	-0.548640	-0.524897
AO2	-0.813180	0.089427
AO3	-0.459919	-0.374746
AO4	-0.812281	0.040652
NO4	-0.651615	0.160766
AO5	-0.664753	0.295146
NO5	-0.760512	0.156020
Expl.Var	4.358018	1.159632
Prp.Totl	0.435802	0.115963

Factor Loadings (Varimax normalized) (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are > .700000)

	Factor	Factor
AO1	0.720999	0.238225
NO1	0.006916	0.826057
NO2	0.640194	0.086155
NO3	0.254080	0.715518
AO2	0.766568	0.285713
AO3	0.242337	0.541510
AO4	0.743836	0.328877
NO4	0.654325	0.149354
AO5	0.726475	0.035227
NO5	0.749462	0.202552
Expl.Var	3.711540	1.806110
Prp.Totl	0.371154	0.180611

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Summary for scale: Mean=36.9461 Std.Dv.=6.18452 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .830137 Standardized alpha: .846806 Average inter-item corr.: .365626

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AO1	32.89216	31.45896	5.608829	0.624494	0.806127
NO1	33.50000	31.99510	5.656421	0.323888	0.840427
NO2	33.29412	31.35467	5.599524	0.492744	0.817357
NO3	33.44118	30.91321	5.559965	0.477042	0.819869
AO2	33.27941	29.92683	5.470542	0.697574	0.796975
AO3	33.78922	31.81341	5.640338	0.382693	0.830927
AO4	33.00000	30.76471	5.546594	0.700004	0.799290
NO4	33.39216	31.20896	5.586498	0.537174	0.812761
AO5	32.88235	33.08420	5.751886	0.513238	0.816752
NO5	33.04412	31.59119	5.620604	0.643800	0.805303

Summary for scale: Mean=18.8873 Std.Dv.=3.35752 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .782809 Standardized alpha: .801443 Average inter-item corr.: .462162

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AO1	14.83333	7.364379	2.713739	0.688815	0.702411
AO2	15.22059	7.015066	2.648597	0.657928	0.707262
AO3	15.73039	7.745940	2.783153	0.339678	0.836916
AO4	14.94118	7.192618	2.681906	0.727856	0.689161
AO5	14.82353	8.527681	2.920219	0.487572	0.765304

Summary for scale: Mean=18.0588 Std.Dv.=3.44792 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .676025 Standardized alpha: .695113 Average inter-item corr.: .318646

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
NO1	14.61275	7.962779	2.821840	0.334432	0.680188
NO2	14.40686	8.231522	2.869063	0.433241	0.623605
NO3	14.55392	7.894152	2.809653	0.430748	0.625320
NO4	14.50490	8.191154	2.862019	0.476443	0.605838
NO5	14.15686	8.642061	2.939738	0.537099	0.595115

Summary for scale: Mean=26.8382 Std.Dv.=4.59152 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .858333 Standardized alpha: .862735 Average inter-item corr.: .480088

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AO1	22.78431	15.92407	3.990497	0.647340	0.835532
NO2	23.18627	15.65158	3.956207	0.527372	0.855451
AO2	23.17157	14.77939	3.844397	0.727220	0.822797
AO4	22.89216	15.56680	3.945479	0.702217	0.827924
NO4	23.28431	15.59564	3.949131	0.570373	0.847470
AO5	22.77451	16.90994	4.112170	0.570341	0.846264
NO5	22.93627	16.01064	4.001330	0.671115	0.832959

TEAM COMMITMENT

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Eigenvalues (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components

	Eigenvalue	% Total	Cumulative	Cumulative
1	4.389448	48.77164	4.389448	48.77164
2	1.286305	14.29228	5.675753	63.06392

Factor Loadings (Unrotated) (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are > .700000)

	Factor	Factor
AT1	0.830930	-0.204536
NT1	0.783398	-0.203630
AT2	0.826858	-0.265757
AT3	0.867100	-0.090664
NT2	0.685552	-0.238403
NT3	0.400842	0.721174
AT4	0.847274	0.125726
NT4	0.475072	0.678124
AT5	0.274795	0.267526
Expl.Var	4.389448	1.286305
Prp.Totl	0.487716	0.142923

Factor Loadings (Varimax normalized) (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are > .700000)

	Factor	Factor
AT1	0.839777	0.164483
NT1	0.796286	0.145283
AT2	0.861870	0.107242
AT3	0.824618	0.282996
NT2	0.722189	0.072532
NT3	0.059790	0.822916
AT4	0.715493	0.470903
NT4	0.145247	0.815138
AT5	0.136548	0.358381
Expl.Var	3.838915	1.836838
Prp.Totl	0.426546	0.204093

TEAM COMMITMENT

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Summary for scale: Mean=34.3578 Std.Dv.=5.20273 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .826638 Standardized alpha: .849865 Average inter-item corr.: .412506

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AT1	30.17647	21.91984	4.681863	0.689101	0.796034
NT1	30.21078	21.43106	4.629369	0.666354	0.795261
AT2	30.16667	22.05065	4.695812	0.670238	0.797903
AT3	30.18627	21.21040	4.605475	0.730929	0.789375
NT2	30.59804	20.74039	4.554162	0.538822	0.808979
NT3	30.72549	22.65014	4.759216	0.365997	0.829264
AT4	30.44118	20.34458	4.510497	0.758328	0.782754
NT4	30.90196	21.89235	4.678926	0.415854	0.824852
AT5	31.45588	23.45394	4.842927	0.223125	0.851145

Summary for scale: Mean=18.8873 Std.Dv.=3.35752 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .782809 Standardized alpha: .801443 Average inter-item corr.: .462162

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AO1	14.83333	7.364379	2.713739	0.688815	0.702411
AO2	15.22059	7.015066	2.648597	0.657928	0.707262
AO3	15.73039	7.745940	2.783153	0.339678	0.836916
AO4	14.94118	7.192618	2.681906	0.727856	0.689161
AO5	14.82353	8.527681	2.920219	0.487572	0.765304

Summary for scale: Mean=14.9951 Std.Dv.=2.68456 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .647208 Standardized alpha: .657829 Average inter-item corr.: .342368

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
NT1	10.84804	4.726907	2.174145	0.529021	0.527377
NT2	11.23529	4.219147	2.054056	0.436629	0.573520
NT3	11.36275	4.623318	2.150190	0.390853	0.603932
NT4	11.53922	4.464148	2.112853	0.381950	0.613451

Summary for scale: Mean=24.3676 Std.Dv.=3.96625 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .892908 Standardized alpha: .902933 Average inter-item corr.: .619343

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AT1	20.18627	11.52413	3.394720	0.764282	0.868798
NT1	20.22059	11.17193	3.342443	0.729509	0.871753
AT2	20.17647	11.50807	3.392355	0.771830	0.867869
AT3	20.19608	11.08900	3.330016	0.782793	0.864176
NT2	20.60784	10.47366	3.236304	0.607667	0.901320
AT4	20.45098	10.85544	3.294760	0.720475	0.873141

ROLE COMMITMENT

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Eigenvalues (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components

	Eigenvalue	% Total	Cumulative	Cumulative
1	3.202713	40.03391	3.202713	40.03391
2	1.475668	18.44585	4.678381	58.47976

Factor Loadings (Unrotated) (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are > .700000)

	Factor	Factor
AR1	-0.762226	-0.269008
NR1	-0.510345	0.458602
NR2	-0.473987	0.519315
AR2	-0.666325	-0.292814
NR3	-0.390491	0.676014
AR3	-0.787825	-0.292956
NR4	-0.621339	0.327099
AR4	-0.730347	-0.433298
Expl.Var	3.202713	1.475668
Prp.Totl	0.400339	0.184459

Factor Loadings (Varimax normalized) (item-data.sta) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are > .700000)

	Factor	Factor
AR1	0.784883	0.193164
NR1	0.175170	0.663388
NR2	0.111468	0.694209
AR2	0.717754	0.120655
NR3	-0.044298	0.779432
AR3	0.819424	0.187181
NR4	0.340108	0.614314
AR4	0.848344	0.038307
Expl.Var	2.683100	1.995281
Prp.Totl	0.335388	0.249410

ROLE COMMITMENT

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Summary for scale: Mean=30.6765 Std.Dv.=4.31211 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .764131 Standardized alpha: .776212 Average inter-item corr.: .311743

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AR1	26.73529	14.31228	3.783158	0.561091	0.722502
NR1	27.11275	14.29611	3.781020	0.427204	0.747153
NR2	26.71078	14.90165	3.860265	0.395077	0.751377
AR2	26.79902	15.11157	3.887360	0.464805	0.739426
NR3	27.21569	14.87505	3.856818	0.336794	0.765216
AR3	26.49020	14.77932	3.844388	0.589483	0.722463
NR4	27.12255	13.94086	3.733747	0.511128	0.729995
AR4	26.54902	14.93387	3.864437	0.495165	0.734629

Summary for scale: Mean=16.1324 Std.Dv.=2.49672 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .820370 Standardized alpha: .822276 Average inter-item corr.: .539582

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
AR1	12.19118	3.507569	1.872851	0.650267	0.771441
AR2	12.25490	3.915417	1.978741	0.552329	0.814734
AR3	11.94608	3.776504	1.943323	0.696228	0.752505
AR4	12.00490	3.593113	1.895551	0.683180	0.754800

Summary for scale: Mean=14.5441 Std.Dv.=2.73511 Valid N:204 (item-data.sta) Cronbach alpha: .662520 Standardized alpha: .663147 Average inter-item corr.: .330269

	Mean if	Var. if	StDv. if	Itm-Totl	Alpha if
NR1	10.98039	4.646674	2.155615	0.420894	0.610919
NR2	10.57843	4.841887	2.200429	0.443445	0.596025
NR3	11.08333	4.448938	2.109251	0.466778	0.578864
NR4	10.99020	4.695982	2.167022	0.442775	0.595570

Intercorrelations Between Study Variables for Part 2

Correlations	Total aff org	Total norm org	Total aff team	Total norm team	Total norm role	Total aff role	Perf Time	Perf Knowl	Sex	Role	Other sport	Child	Size	Quit Centre	Quit Role
Total normative org	0.62**														
Total affective team	0.58**	0.53**													
Total norm team	0.5**	0.41**	0.59**												
Total norm role	0.37**	0.48**	0.26**	0.32**											
Total affective role	0.6**	0.49**	0.62**	0.41**	0.36**										
Perf Time	0.43**	0.27**	0.32**	0.2**	0.29**	0.42**									
Perf Knowl	0.5**	0.37**	0.32**	0.25**	0.35**	0.36**	0.58**								
Sex	0.06	0.11	0.05	-0.01	0.08	0.12	0.15*	0.11							
Role	-0.18**	-0.26**	-0.2**	-0.09	-0.2**	-0.13	-0.17*	-0.19**	-0.06						
Other sport	-0.03	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.06	-0.06	0.01	-0.06	0.02	-0.01					
Child	-0.2**	-0.12**	-0.08	-0.03	-0.12	-0.12	-0.21**	-0.27**	0.1	-0.01	0.06				
Size	0.17*	0.15*	0.23**	0.17*	0.03	0.17*	0.12	0.19**	-0.17**	0.04	-0.01	-0.11			
Quit Centre	0.21**	0.11	0.29**	0.3**	0.12	0.26**	0.12	0	-0.04	0.04	0.1	0	0.07		
Quit Role	0.16*	0.1	0.17*	0.21**	0.12	0.3	0.11	0.03	-0.11	0.21	0.04	-0.04	0.13	0.6	
Age	0.06	0.1	0.09	0	0.08	0.11	0.05	0.08	-0.32	-0.1	-0.09	-0.24	0.18**	0.04	0.03

* P<.05 ** p<.01

Appendix D

Invitation to Sport Clubs, Associations and Community-based Sporting Organisations to Participate in Focus Groups (Circulated by Sport and Recreation Queensland via E-mail) and Ethics Clearance

AN INVITATION TO SPORTS CLUBS, ASSOCIATION AND COMMUNITY BASED SPORTING ORGANISATIONS.

IF YOU ARE A COACH, OFFICIAL, REFEREE, MANAGER, COMMITTEE MEMBER OR HELPER IN A VOLUNTEER CAPACITY WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We are conducting research on volunteering in junior sport, specifically volunteer motivations and commitment, and would like to invite you to participate in focus group discussion sessions about your experience of volunteering. Your participation will add to our understanding of volunteering, which is core to the survival of community sport organisations.

Sessions will be conducted in the early evening at **James Cook University** (Douglas Campus, School of Psychology- Free parking available) and will last approximately 1 hour.

Light refreshments will be provided

If you are interested in participating, or for more information, please contact the principal researcher (Ms. Terry Engelberg-Moston) on 4728 5401 or 0438 206770, Terry.EngelbergMoston@jcu.edu.au by Friday September 22nd 2006.

Please note:

- Participants should be over 18.
- Participation is entirely voluntary. Participants and their clubs will not be identified in any publication/report arising from this research.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this research

Researchers:

Ms. Terry Engelberg-Moston (PhD candidate, Griffith University)
Dr. James Skinner (Research Supervisor)
Dr. Dwight Zakus (Research Supervisor)

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

07-Sep-2006

Dear Ms. Engelberg

I write further to your application for a variation to your approved protocol "A pilot study of attitudes to volunteering in a sporting organisation" (GU Ref No: EPS/19/04/HREC). This request has been considered by the Chair.

The Chair resolved to approve the requested variation:
Request for variation in the form of:-

(i) re-activation of the protocol;

(ii) an extension of approval to 31 March 2007;

(iii) focus group interviews to be conducted to gather further open-ended data;

(iv) expansion of recruitment for participants to be recruited from community-based sporting clubs in the Townsville area.

Approval is granted subject to the provision of a copy of the invitation that will be circulated to potential participants in the clubs.

This decision is subject to ratification at the next meeting of the HREC. However, you are authorised to immediately commence the revised project on this basis. I will only contact you again about this matter if the HREC raises any additional questions or comments about this variation.

Regards

Gary Allen

Manager, Research Ethics

Office for Research, Bray Centre, Nathan Campus

Griffith University

ph: 3875 5585

fax: 3875 7994

email: g.allen@griffith.edu.au

Appendix E

Phase 2 - Topic Guide for Focus Group Discussions

Topic Guide for Focus Groups

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Introduce self/project
- Discussion group rules/housekeeping
- Participants to introduce themselves. Ask participants for background details (same background details as Part 2, i.e., age, sport of main involvement, seasons as volunteer, number of own children enrolled in centre/club, main volunteer role/other roles, whether they volunteer for another sporting organisation).

2. Reasons for Volunteering

- Main reasons for initial and current involvement as volunteer in centre/club.
- Extent and nature of current involvement.

(Ensure all participants answer the above points)

3. Commitment (45-50 minutes)

Talk about the meaning of commitment based on what was identified by talking to volunteers in previous study.

- Explain that volunteers talked about two (sometimes three) types of commitment. The first one represented an emotional or affective bond to their clubs/centres, a feeling of belongingness to their clubs. These volunteers volunteered and remained in their clubs because they **wanted to.**
- Second type of commitment represented a bond based on a feeling obligation or loyalty to the club. These volunteers volunteered and remained because they felt they **ought to.**
- Third type of commitment based on need to remain volunteering because of losses associated with ceasing to volunteer. These volunteers volunteered and remained because they felt they **needed to.**

Issues to explore: Do you agree with these meanings of commitment? If so, how do you see your commitment fitting into these categories? Do volunteers have a combination of commitments? If not, how do you define your own commitment?

Explain that in previous study with volunteers I also found that volunteers could feel commitment towards not just the centre/club, its goals and objectives, but also towards the other volunteers in the club (the people), and to their specific role, for example, as coaches, officials, or committee members.

Explore: Do you feel you are also committed to these various aspects/people of your club? If so, how?

- Tell participants about finding that committee members were more committed to centre/club and role than volunteers in other roles. **Ask for explanation for this finding.**
- Tell participants about finding that non-parents were more committed to centre/club and role than volunteers with children enrolled. **Ask for explanation for this finding.**
- Tell participants about finding that the longer the involvement as volunteer, the stronger the commitment. **Ask for explanation for this finding.**

4. Outcomes of commitment

- Tell participants about finding that commitment to the role is related to intention to stand down from role. **Ask for explanation for this finding.**
- Tell participants about finding that commitment to the team is related to intention to cease volunteering for the centre. **Ask for explanation for this finding.** Ask about what factors they believe contribute to intention to stand down from a volunteer role.
- Tell participants about finding that commitment to the centre and commitment to the role were related to performance. **Ask for explanation for this finding.** Ask about what factors they believe contribute to performance.

4. Other issues

- Open-ended. Canvas view of volunteer experience.

Appendix F

Consent Form for Participation in Focus Group Discussions

Griffith UNIVERSITY

School of Education and Professional Studies
Research Supervisor
Dr James Skinner
Senior Lecturer

Telephone +61 (0)7 5552 8645
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j.skinner@griffith.edu.au
http://www.gu.edu.au

Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University
PMB 50, Gold Coast Mail Centre
Queensland 9726, Australia

Consent form for participants to be interviewed as part of the research project titled:

Commitment of volunteers in junior sport

Principal Researcher: Terry Engelberg-Moston (PhD Candidate)

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me and I understand what is required of me. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by the researcher as part of a focus group.
- allow the interview to be audiotaped.

- I understand that my name and identifying details will be changed and access to the original tapes and transcripts restricted to the researcher and the researcher's supervisor/s to protect my identity from being made public. The transcripts and recordings will be stored in a locked-up cupboard in the researcher's office.

- I understand that I will be offered a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

- I understand that the information I provide cannot be used except for this project.

Name:

Signature: **Date:**

Appendix G

Full Thematic Index for Phase 2

1. Background details

1.1 Age and sex

1.2 Sport of main volunteer involvement

1.3 Seasons as volunteer in current centre/club

1.4 Number of children currently enrolled in centre club

1.5 Main volunteer role/other roles fulfilled

1.6 Volunteering for another sport organisation

1.7 Main reason/s for initial and current involvement

1.8 Extent of current involvement

1.9 Other information

2. Nature of commitment

2.1 Affective commitment

2.2 Normative commitment

2.3 Continuance commitment

2.4 Combination of commitments

2.5 Development of commitment

2.6 Other issues

3. Targets of commitment

3.1 Commitment to the centre or club

3.2 Commitment to the volunteer team

3.3 Commitment to the volunteer role

3.4 Other commitments

3.5 Combination of commitments

3.6 Other issues

4. Commitment differences between committee members and volunteers in other roles

4.1 Nature of role

4.2 Number of roles

4.3 Justification for choice of role

4.4 Unrelated to role but related to number of roles held

4.5 Unrelated to role but related to nature or extent of involvement

4.6 Other issues

5. Commitment differences between non-parents and parents

5.1 Own interests and preferences

5.2 Personal situation of parents

5.3 Personal situation of non-parents

5.4 Other issues

6. Increasing commitment with increasing experience

6.1 Increasing confidence with experience

6.2 Increasing competence with experience

6.3 Justification for volunteering for so long

6.4 Other issues

7. Implications for intention to cease volunteering and for intention to stand down from a role

7.1 Commitment as a factor

7.2 Other factors: personal

7.3 Other factors: situational

7.4 Other factors: various

7.5 Other issues

8. Implications for performance

8.1 Commitment as a factor

8.1 Other factors: experience

8.3 Other issues

Appendix H

Examples of Thematic Charts

Example of Thematic Chart for Topic 2: Nature of Commitment

2.1 Affective commitment	2.2 Normative commitment	2.3 Continuance commitment	2.4 Combination of commitments	2.5 Development of commitment	2.6 Notes/comments
I belong to this club, I feel I am part of something important and meaningful. To me that's commitment. *Official, Surf Lifesaving*	I never felt an emotional attachment to the centre. But I am still committed because it is my duty to help. *Coach, Little Athletics*	There are some people who are committed to their volunteering careers and see helping at a kids' club as a stepping stone. *General helper, Little Athletics*	I'd say most volunteers have a combination of those two commitments and that these change over time. For most parents, you start with a feeling of obligation, then you learn to like what you are doing. *General helper, Soccer*	Volunteering becomes a part of who you are, a part of your lifestyle, and that makes you more committed. Your commitment goes in ebbs and flows, there are good and bad seasons. *Official, Surf Life Saving)*	Recognition of two types of commitment (affective and normative) that combine and that fluctuate over time. Recognition of continuance commitment for some volunteers (volunteering seen as a career for those volunteers).

Example of Thematic Chart for Topic 3: Targets of Commitment

3.1 Commitment to the centre or club	3.2 Commitment to the volunteer team	3.3 Commitment to the volunteer role	3.4 Other commitments	3.5 Combination of commitments	3.6 Other issues	3.7 Notes/comments
I am committed to my club, it means a lot to me. Committee member, Surf Life Saving	I am more committed to the people in the club. The club has no meaning without its members. *Committee member, Little Athletics*	You can be committed to your role because you absolutely love it. *Official, Surf Life Saving*	As parents our commitment is to our kids. *General helper, Soccer*	You can definitely become committed to each of those three things. *Coach, Soccer*	When you wear as many hats as I do, sometimes there's a conflict of interests. *Committee member, Soccer*	Participants distinguish targets of commitment and identify other targets.

Example of Thematic Chart for Topic 5: Commitment Differences Between Non-parents and Parents

5.1 Own interests and preferences	5.2 Personal situation of parents	5.3 Personal situation of non-parents	5.4 Other issues	5.5 Notes/comments
This is not surprising. If you don't have kids you do it for your own sake, for your own reasons. *Coach, Disability Sport*	I don't have time to become committed. I can't be expected to join committees in addition to washing the kids' gear. *General helper, Little Athletics*	Once your kids are gone, if you are interested it's far easier to do more. *General helper, Surf Life Saving*	There are so many fanatics and old-timers whose whole life is the sport, particularly those without kids involved. *General helper, Little Athletics*	Finding that non-parents are more committed is not surprising. Parents perceived as being too busy to become committed. Non-parents are perceived as being interested in volunteering for their own reasons, and because it is easier for them to volunteer.