

1: BACKGROUND

The Watersports Inclusion Games is an annual event which invites individuals of all abilities from the physical, sensory, intellectual and learning spectrums and those experiencing barriers accessing mainstream sport to participate in a wide range of watersport activities. It is organised by Irish Sailing in association with partner watersports national governing bodies and local watersports organisations, and funded by the Sport Ireland Dormant Account Sports Inclusion Funding. The Games were awarded 'Project of the Year' at the 2018 CARA National Inclusion Awards. (1)



In 2019, more than 285 individuals volunteered at the third annual Watersports Inclusion Games in Kinsale, a large increase from 160 volunteers in 2018. 79 of the 2019 volunteers took part in a pilot survey to assess the role of, and benefits for, volunteers who take part. (1)



The literature suggests there are benefits for volunteers in sport, inclusion, and inclusive sport. Reported benefits for volunteers in inclusive sport include health and wellbeing gains (2, 3), increased sense of community (2), and enhanced "disability confidence", which is defined as "positive attitudes, empathy and appropriate communication skills" in relation to people with disabilities (2, 4). However, there is limited evidence on any individual sports within inclusive sport, and only one article was found on volunteers in inclusive watersports (5). Research gaps that we have identified are the motivation, benefits and training of volunteers in inclusive watersports, and differences between groups of volunteers in terms of age, gender and experience, or between events of different sizes or in different sports.

It is critical to add to the knowledge base in inclusive sport. The evidence suggests convincing benefits for those who participate, and if these benefits are shown to extend to volunteers, it would not only promote volunteerism in this sector, but it would add urgency to the case for inclusion in sport for all.

3: METHODS

Literature review on volunteerism in watersports and inclusion was done using a PEO (Population, Exposure, Outcome) keyword search strategy. Medical and social science databases, occupational and sports medicine journals, and assorted grey literature were searched. Selected literature was then analysed to identify relevant themes and gaps.

Data was collected on SurveyMonkey as a pilot survey of 18 questions assessing the experience of volunteers at the Watersports Inclusion Games in 2019. The survey was written by a pilot team; Elizabeth Barrett, Johanne Murphy and Ayodhya Salgado, and included four multiple choice questions, four free-text response questions, seven Likert scale questions, and three yes/no/other questions. The survey was circulated to all volunteers three times after the event and received a sample of 79 responses. As an anonymous opt-in survey of non-vulnerable adults, the survey was deemed exempt from ethical approval by the Temple Street Children's University Hospital Ethics Committee.

Quantitative analysis was performed using SurveyMonkey tools and descriptive statistics in SPSS. Respondents' answers were compared by group using crosstabs in SPSS. Qualitative data from the four open-response answers: "Reasons you chose to volunteer at this event?", "What were the highlights of the experience at the Watersports Inclusion Games for you?", "Was there anything which caught you by surprise during the event?", and "Any other suggestions or comments on things that might improve the event going forward?", was initially analysed using SurveyMonkey to identify the most common words. Open responses were then thematically analysed according to Braun and Clarke, 2006 (6), which consisted of manual review and extraction of codes from each respondent's answer to each question, then quantitative analysis of codes to find themes and sub-themes. Where possible, this poster followed 'design for all' best practice for information boards using the Great Outdoors "Guide for Accessibility" (7).

4.2: RESULTS: Qualitative

REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING: n = 75							
THEME	Community: 51	Inclusion: 21	Background: 16	Personal benefit: 18	Other people: 15	Being charitable/giving back: 30	Event: 14
Sub-theme 1	Local - 16	Interest in inclusion generally - 14	Relevant experience - 13	Rewarding as a volunteer - 2	Family involvement - 5	Previous involvement - 3	Respect for the event - 11
Sub-theme 2	Club - 10	Sharing passion for watersports - 7	Previous involvement in the event - 3	Enjoyment - 11	Recommended by friend/colleague - 6	Respect for the event - 11	Respect for the event - 11
Sub-theme 3	Watersports - 25	Meeting new people - 4	Experience - 5	Meeting new people - 4	Meeting new people - 4	Meeting new people - 4	Meeting new people - 4

Figure 7: free text responses to why respondents chose to volunteer at the event

HIGHLIGHTS: n = 77				
THEME	Personal Benefit: 29	Enjoyment of Watersports: 11	Interpersonal Interactions: 47	Enjoyment of the event: 56
Sub-theme 1	Enjoyment - 7	Taking part in watersports - 5	With participants - 29 (positive feedback = 10, interaction with participants = 13, sharing passion for watersports = 6)	Participant's enjoyment - 34
Sub-theme 2	Rewarding - 4	Sharing passion for watersports - 6	With everyone - 18 (meeting people - 13, teamwork - 5)	Personal enjoyment - 7
Sub-theme 3	Meeting people - 13	Meeting people - 13	Meeting people - 13	Everyone's enjoyment - 8
Sub-theme 4	Taking part in watersports - 5	Taking part in watersports - 5	Taking part in watersports - 5	Atmosphere - 7

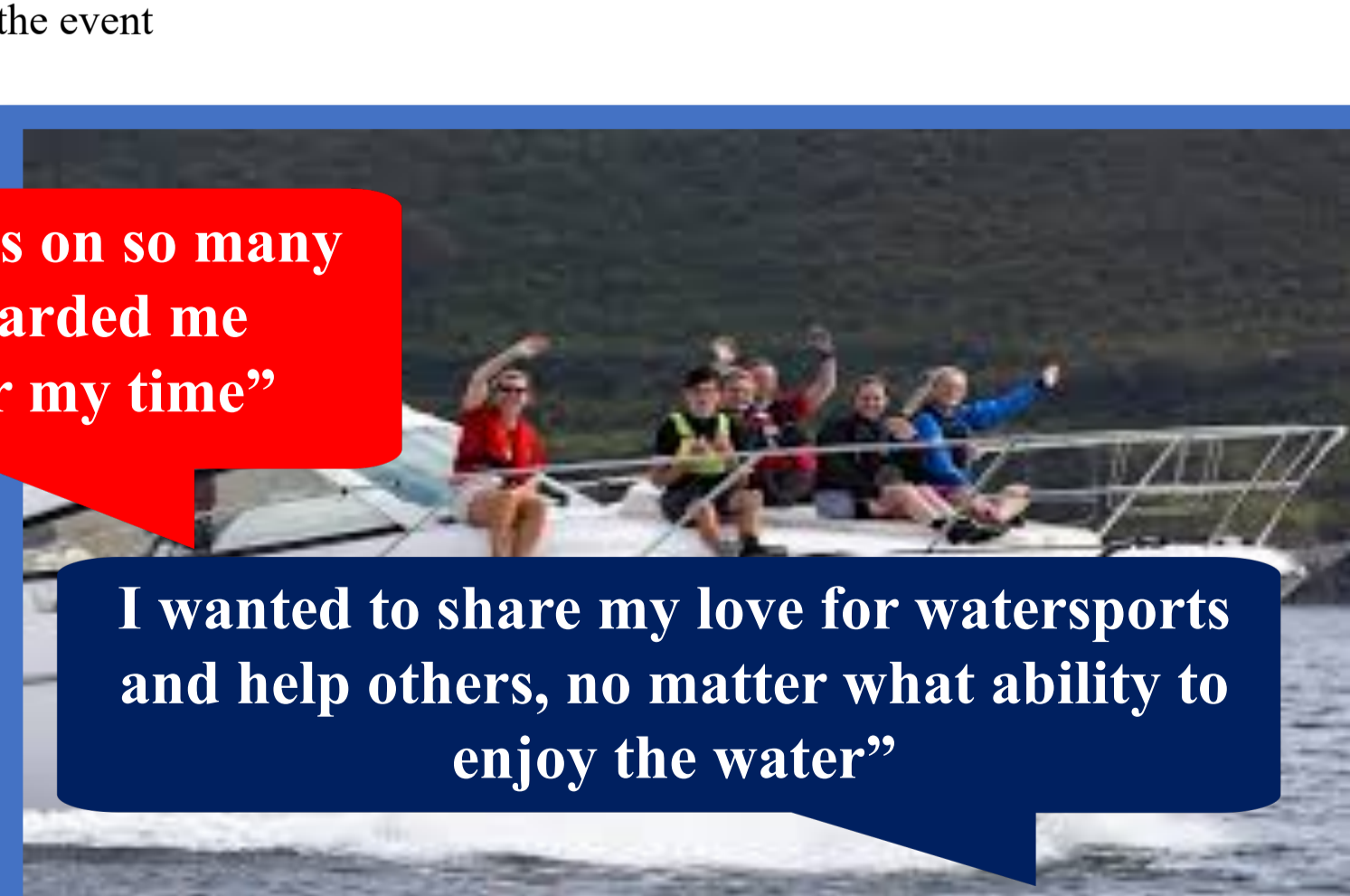
Figure 8: free text responses to respondents' highlights from the event

SURPRISING ASPECTS: n = 68					
THEME	Nothing: 26	Level of Enjoyment: 15	Size of Event: 13	Organisation: 18	Participants: 11
Sub-theme 1	Personal enjoyment - 8	Number of volunteers - 3	Well organised - 8	Enjoyment - 3	Enjoyment - 3
Sub-theme 2	Enjoyment of participants - 3	Number of participants - 4	Aspects they would have changed - 8	Attitude - 3	Attitude - 3
Sub-theme 3	Great weather - 4	Number of attendees - 6	Amount of organisation required - 2	Difficulties faced by participants - 5	Difficulties faced by participants - 5

Figure 9: free text responses to any aspects of the event that were surprising to respondents

COMMENTS: n = 46				
THEME	Organisational Changes: 24	Availability of Information: 10	Praise for the Event: 22	Future of the Event: 9
Sub-theme 1	Information/briefings - 7	At event - 7	Great event - 14	Want to be more involved - 5
Sub-theme 2	Organisation of volunteers - 6	Publicity before event - 3	Well organised - 8	More local events - 4
Sub-theme 3	Organisation of food - 7	Organisation of food - 7	Organisation of food - 7	Organisation of food - 7
Sub-theme 4	General organisation - 4	General organisation - 4	General organisation - 4	General organisation - 4

Figure 10: free text responses to any other comments from respondents on the event



6: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those involved in the organisation of the Watersports Inclusion Games including Irish Sailing, Canoeing Ireland, Rowing Ireland, Cork Local Sports Partnership, Kinsale Yacht Club Sailability, Kinsale Outdoor Education Centre, Irish Wakeboard and Waterski Federation, Surf 2 Heal, Spinal Injuries Ireland and Sailing into Wellness, Waterabilities and Wet Mongrel Adventures. I would also like to thank the pilot survey team who collected the data, and any of the volunteers who responded to the survey. I want to extend a special thank you to Elizabeth Barrett and Johanne Murphy for their encouragement, expertise and support. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the generous scholarship awarded by the Health Research Board for the completion of this project. This poster has also been presented as part of the UCD Student Summer Research Awards, 2020.

2: OBJECTIVES

- The objectives of this project are to:
1. Determine the current knowledge on volunteerism in sport, inclusive sport, and inclusive watersports
 2. Identify the characteristics, motivations, and benefits for volunteers at the Watersports Inclusion Games through both quantitative and qualitative analysis of pilot survey data
 3. Examine the pilot survey data in the context of current knowledge in the watersports inclusion space

4.1: RESULTS: Quantitative

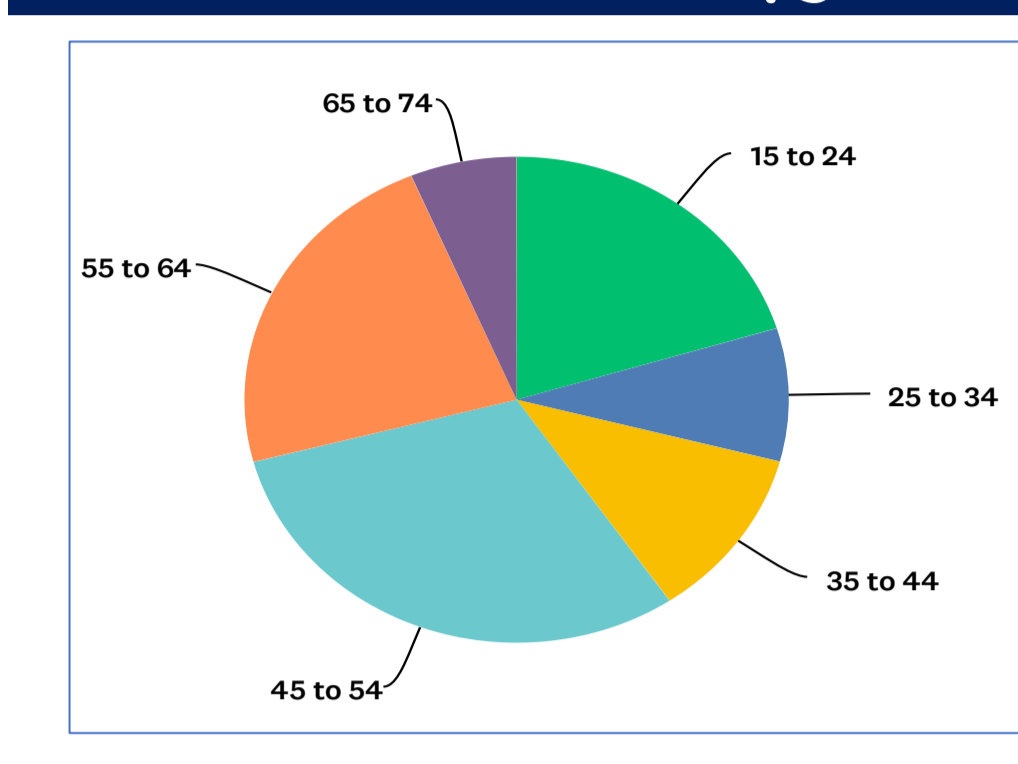


Figure 1: multiple choice responses for age ranges of volunteers

- a. Demographics of Volunteers**
- The vast majority of respondents were local to Cork with small groups or individuals from other counties.
 - There was a diverse age range of volunteers from 15-74, with relatively even distribution between age groups. The modal age group was 45-54.

- b. Experience of Volunteers**
- 80% of respondents reported either "some" or "lots" of prior volunteering experience.
 - Most respondents were volunteering at the Watersports Inclusion Games for the first time in 2019, but many had other prior volunteering experience, including 'Sailability' inclusive sailing programmes in their local clubs.
 - 81% of respondents felt they had sufficient training/information.

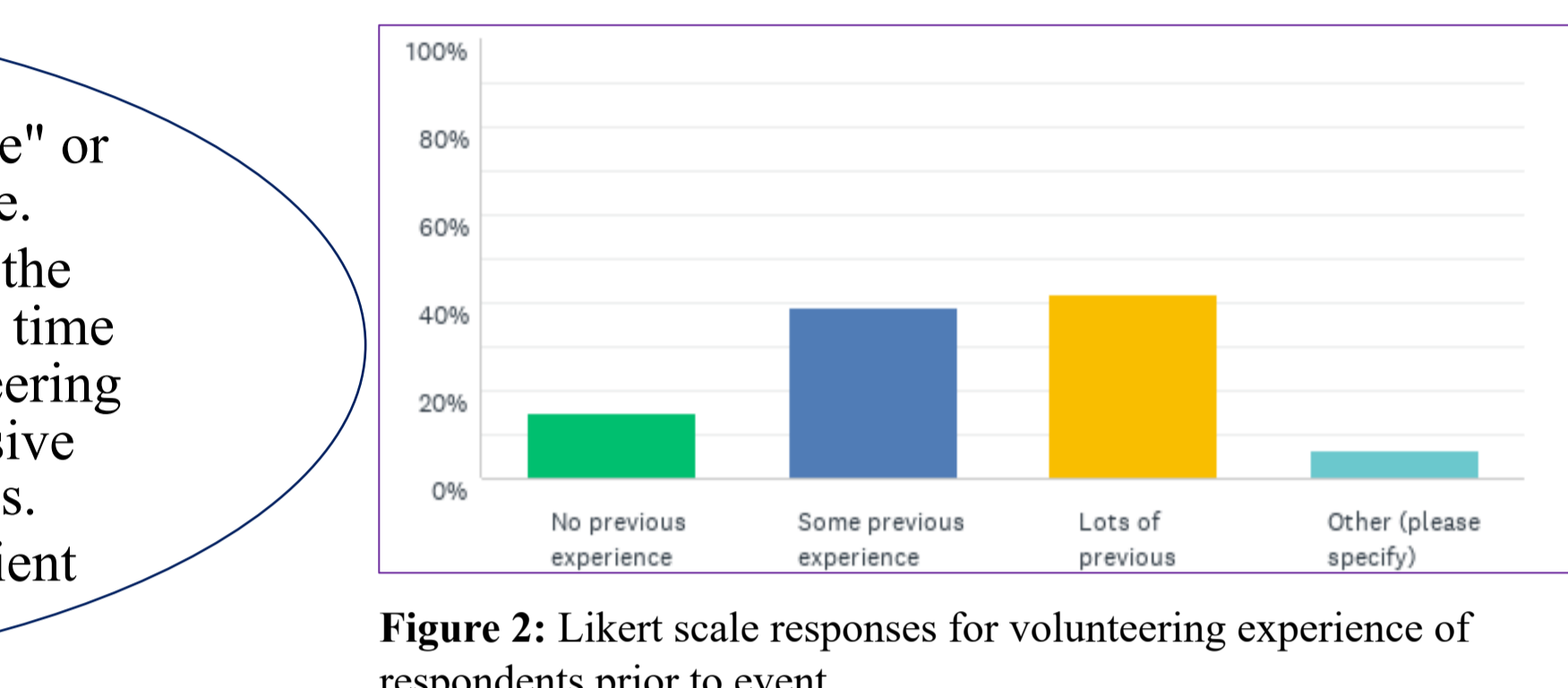


Figure 2: Likert scale responses for volunteering experience of respondents prior to event

- c. Role of Volunteers**
- Volunteers took on a wide array of roles both on and off the water during the event. Diverse volunteering roles allowed both those with and without watersports or inclusion experience to contribute to the event.

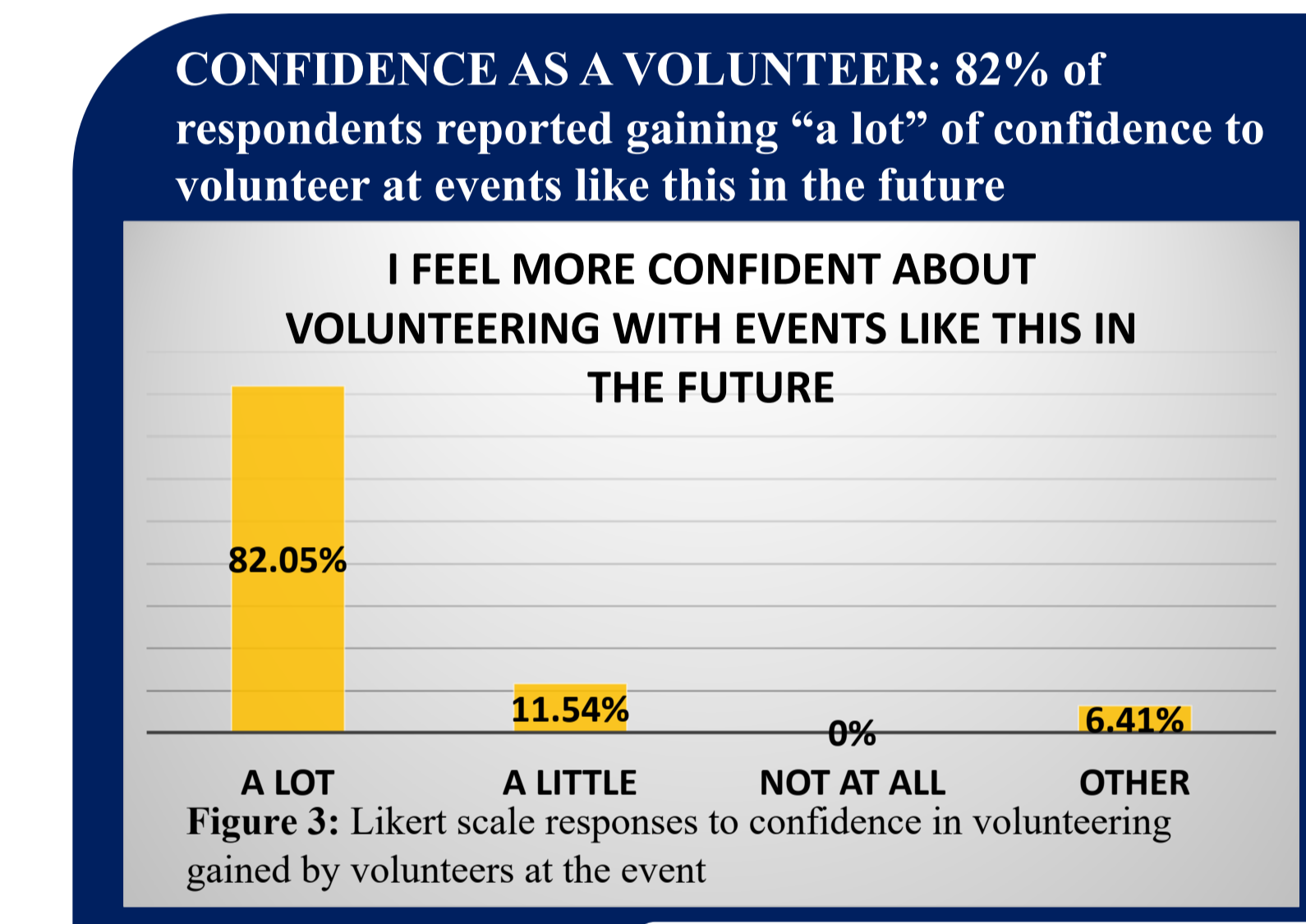


Figure 3: Likert scale responses to confidence in volunteering gained by volunteers at the event

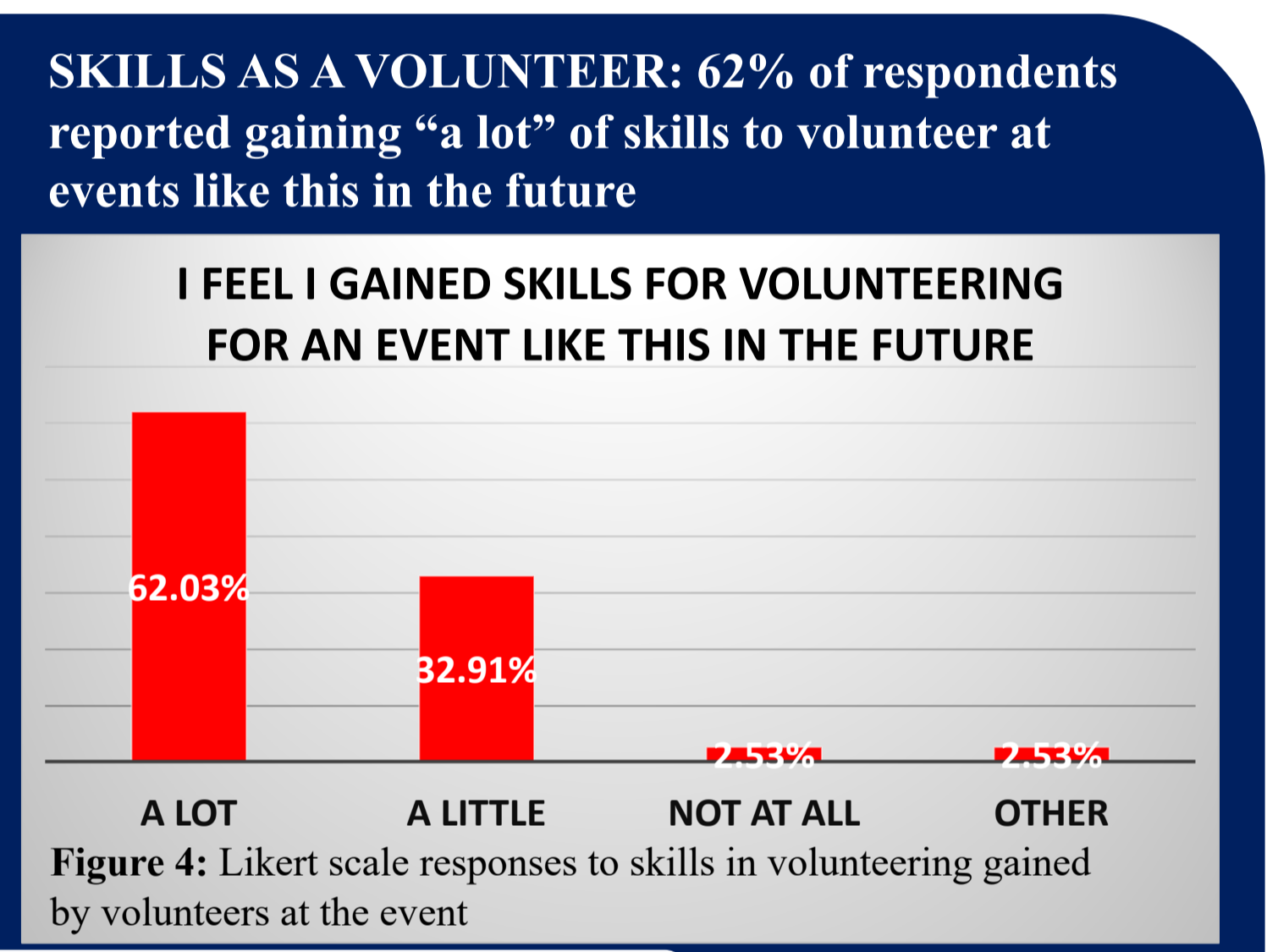
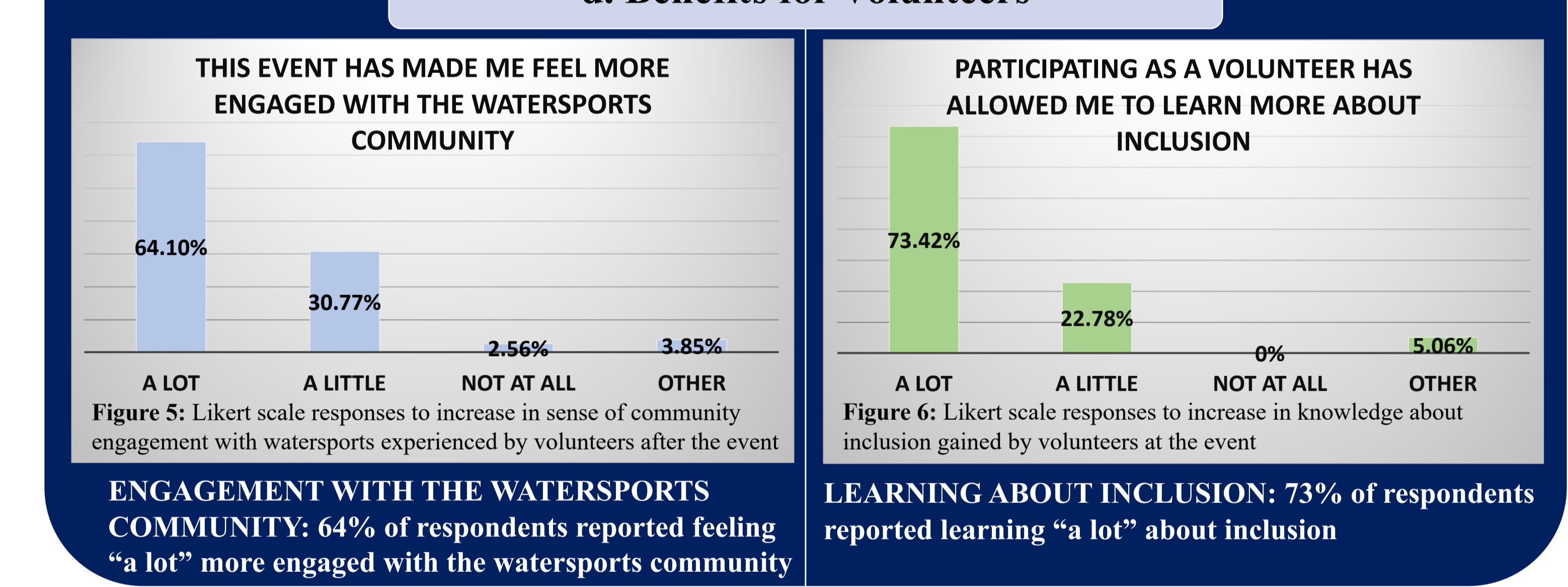


Figure 4: Likert scale responses to skills in volunteering gained by volunteers at the event



- d. Benefits for Volunteers**
- This event has made me feel more engaged with the watersports community
 - Participating as a volunteer has allowed me to learn more about inclusion

- e. Perceived Benefits for Participants**
- Volunteers' responses to these four questions were compared by group according to both level of experience and age range. There was a significant difference between volunteers of different experience regarding how much they learned about inclusion, as those with lots of volunteering experience reported learning the most about inclusion. There was no other significant difference in benefits noted between groups of volunteers.
 - 97% of respondents said they would recommend the event to others as a volunteer. On average, respondents rated a likelihood of 91% that they would volunteer at the event again.

5: CONCLUSIONS

This is the first project which specifically examines the benefits for volunteers in inclusive watersports in Ireland and thus fills an important gap in the literature regarding inclusive sport. Significant numbers of people volunteered for this event and it was, in general, a very positive experience for volunteers. This project demonstrates that volunteerism can enrich the life of the volunteer. Volunteers at the Watersports Inclusion Games identified multiple benefits to taking part in the event, and these mirror previously recorded benefits from prior studies on volunteers in sport and inclusion.

Volunteerism is a vital component of disability inclusion in sport, and many inclusive sport programmes rely heavily on volunteers to function. Not only are volunteers essential to the operation of inclusive sport, but volunteerism also has compelling benefits for the volunteers themselves, and for their wellbeing. Volunteerism is a powerful force for good, not just in the promotion of wider inclusion in sport, but also in society. Offering more opportunities for volunteerism benefits individuals, organisations, and communities alike.

7: REFERENCES

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