This article reports on an exploratory study examining the take-up of professional volunteer management and its impact on the volunteer experience, using case studies from the museums and heritage sector. It presents a method for measuring the level of professional management procedures and analysing where and why measures might have been introduced. This measurement tool, the Volunteer Management Orientation Score (VMOS), identifies the key influences on organisations' decisions to implement professional volunteer management. These influences were found to be external pressures (including trade union involvement), health and safety regulations and the availability of resources. While the take-up of professional procedures varied considerably, the level of VMOS at the organisations in the study was found to have no negative impact on the volunteer experience.

The impact of professional volunteer management on the volunteer experience: an exploratory investigation using the Volunteer Management Orientation Score (VMOS)

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This article examines the reasons why organisations are professionalising their volunteer workforces and the impact this has on the volunteers. It then proposes a method of measuring the take-up of professional management procedures.

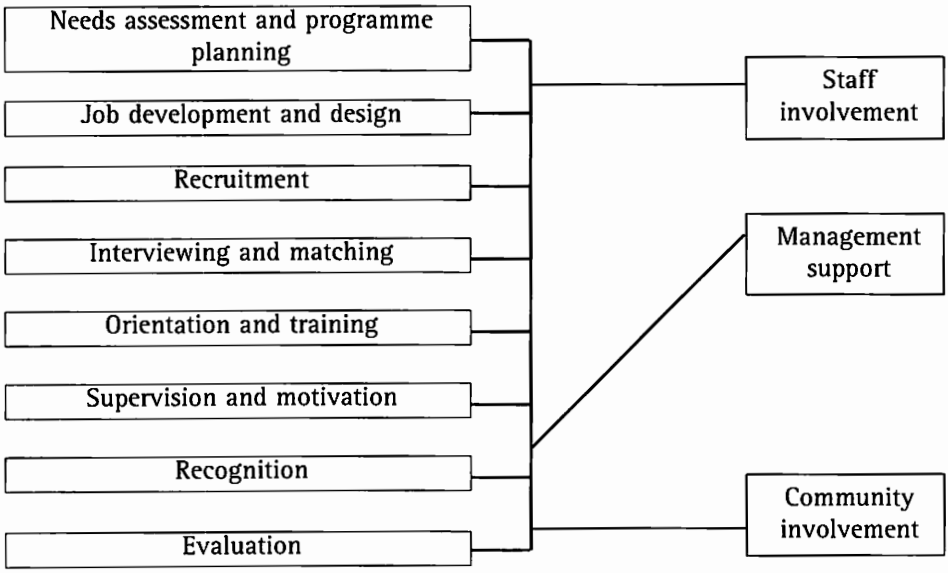
Over the past decade and a half, as a response to the 'contract culture', the voluntary sector in the UK has introduced the professional approach to volunteer management of US and Canadian organisations (Hedley and Davis Smith, 1994). This culture has

required organisations, voluntary or otherwise, to be more accountable for public funds, and at the same time commentators have called for better management of volunteers (Davis Smith, 1996). A number of practical UK guides to volunteer management have subsequently emerged (for example, McCurley and Lynch, 1998; Bowgett, Dickie and Restall, 2002). The models recommended by these guides generally involve a less formal approach than that used in the US and Canada, specifically advocating against treating volunteers as paid staff (Davis Smith, 1996). One reason for this is to minimise legal challenges.

In addition, in the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering volunteers themselves called for their time to be better managed; the most commonly reported drawback of volunteering is 'things could be better organised' (Davis Smith, 1998). It is also clear that the professional approach does offer benefits to volunteers as well as managers and organisations: for example, by recommending the payment of out-of-pocket expenses.

An example of a UK professional volunteer management approach is McCurley and Lynch's Volunteer Management Process, replicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: McCurley and Lynch's volunteer management process (1998, page 19)



McCurley and Lynch follow the US model, which largely seeks to replicate personnel practices with a volunteer workforce (Cunningham, 1999), and include job design, interviewing volunteers, training and supervising volunteers once recruited, and evaluating both the programme and the volunteers' work. Their model emphasises that paid staff are involved in the whole process and that management support is essential throughout. The professional approach includes a paid or unpaid volunteer co-ordinator, volunteer agreements, keeping records of training and experience, and developing a volunteer policy. These characteristics mirror good practice in managing paid employees (Cunningham, 1999).

The take-up of professional management procedures across the UK voluntary sector has varied. In 1998 four out of five organisations were found to have a volunteer co-ordinator, while 85 per cent had a written volunteer policy (Institute for Volunteering Research, 1998). However, the reasons for introducing specific elements of a professional approach and the impact these might have on the volunteers themselves has been little researched.

The volunteer experience

The literature on the volunteer experience has developed along two paradigms for viewing volunteers: the economic model and the leisure model. The economic model analyses volunteers as filling the gaps in provision between the private and public sectors. The policy importance of volunteers is their contribution to the economy. This means that it is justifiable to measure the 'work' of volunteers and compare it with the economic contribution of workers in other sectors of the economy. This approach was taken in the Sports Council research 'Valuing Volunteers' (Gratton *et al*, 1998). Thus the economic model considers volunteers as unpaid workers. From the economic view, professional volunteer management is only common sense.

In contrast, the leisure model considers the act of volunteering to constitute a leisure experience. This approach has its origins in the UK with Bishop and Hoggett's study of voluntary leisure groups (Bishop and Hoggett, 1985), but the premise has been developed further by other researchers (Henderson, 1984; Stebbins, 1992). Leisure researchers divide all the time in the day into four categories: paid work, work-related time (such as travel to work), obligated time (such as washing,

sleep) and unobligated time. Leisure researchers argue that both leisure and volunteering feature in the fourth category (Henderson, 1984). If volunteering is a leisure activity, rather than unpaid work, then it would be expected that volunteers may be hostile to efforts to introduce procedures that treat them more like unpaid employees.

This research is an exploratory study, examining case studies from the museums and heritage sector, in which volunteers outnumber paid staff by two to one (Creigh-Tyte and Thomas, 2001). Although volunteering has long been seen as a means of entry into the profession, studies conducted by the British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM, 1998) and the National Trust for England and Wales (National Trust, 1998) both reveal a large proportion of older, retired volunteers. The BAFM found that 66 per cent of volunteers were aged over 60, while only 5 per cent saw it as 'a qualification step leading to salaried employment in the heritage field'. The National Trust for England and Wales found that 82 per cent of its volunteers were retired, with 56 per cent aged over 60 years; only 21 per cent stated that volunteering might provide a route to full-time employment. Thus, the majority of volunteers are unlikely to be seeking work experience. If so, why are they offering their services for free?

Museum managers have long maintained that 'interest in subject' is the main reason for volunteers offering their services (Holmes, 1999), while the most commonly reported reason given by volunteer respondents to the BAFM and National Trust surveys was 'wanting to do something I would enjoy'. So perhaps museum volunteers are more likely to be seeking a leisure experience from their volunteering.

Museum volunteers are typically older, retired individuals, who are more likely to be seeking enjoyable leisure activities than work experience from their volunteering (Smith, 2002). Thus, the museums sector provides a useful case for a study examining the impact of professional management procedures on the volunteer experience.

Professional volunteer management within the museums and heritage sector

The move to a more professional approach to volunteer management mirrors moves towards professionalisation within the UK museums sector. This is illustrated by the way in which the Museums Association, the professional body for museum workers, has changed to

an associateship qualification based on continuous professional development rather than examination. Increasing competition for both funding and visitors, coupled with the requirements of funding bodies for museums and heritage organisations to demonstrate competent management practice, has had its impact on volunteer management. The National Lottery, introduced in 1994, has also induced museums and heritage visitor attractions to pay more attention to volunteers within their workforce when making applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, as volunteer hours can be counted for matched funding.

The assimilation of good practice procedures within UK museums and heritage visitor attractions also owes much to the advent of Museum Registration, which sets standards for museums to achieve before they can be eligible for certain funds. The Museums and Galleries Commission introduced it in 1988 as a minimum standards scheme that measures museum performance against professional standards (Babbidge and Ewles, 2000). When introduced, Museum Registration was one of the first sector-wide quality initiatives for public sector organisations. Registration is voluntary, but to qualify for certain sources of funding a museum must be registered. Registration requirements include management plans for both the collections and the museum.

In summary, the introduction of professional volunteer management procedures within the museums and heritage sector is largely due to a series of internal and external pressures, which reflect the impact of the 'contract culture' and the need to apply for external funding.

The introduction of a more structured professional approach to volunteer management in museums and heritage attractions has met with a mixed response. This mirrors doubts in the wider voluntary sector as to whether US models of management are appropriate for volunteers elsewhere (Meijs and Hoogstad, 2001). Such models are based on the economic paradigm of viewing the contribution of volunteers as meeting the needs gap between the public and private sectors. There are clear advantages for both managers and volunteers, with better training and supervision. Volunteers would know to whom they should report with problems or questions, and their contribution would be properly acknowledged. Managers gain by being able to develop a trained workforce that is committed and reliable. Yet, as noted above,

volunteering in the heritage sector is also a leisure activity, with a large proportion of socially motivated, retired volunteers.

In her study of retired volunteers in museums in south-west England, when examining the difficulties of introducing the professional model, Kate Osborne suggested that managers might have to choose between happy and effective volunteers. In response to a query about volunteer agreements, one volunteer respondent stated:

It destroys the sense of freedom, doesn't it? (Osborne, 1999:175)

By contrast, the volunteer managers across the wider voluntary sector interviewed by Pat Gay felt that the impact of professionalisation on the volunteers themselves was minimal, as managers could protect them from increased bureaucratisation by adopting a particular style of management (Gay, 2000). The managers in Gay's study believed that professional volunteer management can be friendly and approachable.

Respondents to the National Trust survey gave a mixed response. Although, in common with volunteers in other sectors, the most common drawback of volunteering they reported was that their activities could be better organised by the National Trust, nearly half of them also felt that there was too much bureaucracy (National Trust, 1998).

So the impact of professional volunteer management on the volunteers is unclear. This article reports on research using qualitative methods to measure the level of professional management in an organisation, to identify which professional procedures have been introduced and why, and to assess the impact this has had on the experience of the volunteers.

Method

The research focuses on the heritage sector, using six case studies, all museums and heritage visitor attractions in England and Wales. Fieldwork was carried out during one visitor season, which typically runs from Easter to October. The case study organisations were from the public and voluntary sectors and all of them involved both voluntary and paid staff. As only six case studies were used, it was not possible to ensure that they were fully representative of the range of organisations in the heritage sector that involve volunteers. The sector is extremely diverse, with no accepted definition or boundaries, and volunteers are involved right across it – nine out of ten heritage

organisations report that they have volunteers (BAFM, 1997; Holmes, 1999).

So six cases were chosen that address this diversity to some degree: a preserved steam railway, an historic ship, a national museum, an open-air museum and two historic properties. One of the latter is administered by the National Trust for England and Wales, a registered charity that involves upwards of 35,000 volunteers each year, and the other is run by English Heritage, the government's official advisory body on conservation of the historic environment.

Since case studies were chosen from across England and Wales, geographical diversity was also sought. The size of the volunteer group varied as well, from fewer than thirty at the historic ship and the National Trust property to over 500 at the preserved steam railway. Yin recommends choosing a sample size of between six and ten case studies in a multi-case study, as this enables the researcher to make theoretical generalisations (Yin, 1994).

Volunteer managers (if a different person from the overall manager of the organisation) at each attraction were interviewed and asked detailed questions about the volunteer programme and the management of volunteers at their organisation. Their responses were triangulated with volunteer interviews and documentary evidence (such as volunteer policies) where available. Volunteers were not only questioned about the volunteer programme they were participating in, but also about why they had initially offered their services and why they continued to volunteer, in order to gauge the meaning of their volunteering. Demographic data were also collected. The volunteers were sampled randomly at each organisation and interviewed while they were engaged on their shift or during a tea break. The nature of volunteering meant that it would have been inappropriate to expect volunteers to have given any additional time, such as staying on beyond the end of their shift, for the purposes of this study.

Across the six case studies, 117 volunteers were interviewed. The volunteer respondents conformed to the characteristics of volunteers across the heritage sector as noted above, in that they were predominantly older: 73 per cent were aged 55 or over and 77 per cent were retired. The volunteers were also typically highly educated and had worked in professional or managerial roles before their

retirement. This is a notable characteristic of volunteers both within museums and across the wider voluntary sector.

Using McCurley and Lynch's model for volunteer management, a scoring system was devised to identify where professional volunteer management procedures might have been introduced or not. Thus, each case study was scored according to how far they conform to the *professional volunteer management* model. This gave them a Volunteer Management Orientation Score (VMOS). The categories used were:

- Needs assessment and programme planning
- Job development and design
- Recruitment
- Interviewing and matching
- Orientation and training
- Supervision and motivation
- Recognition
- Evaluation (with community involvement)

The scoring system consisted of a simple Yes = 2, No = 0 and Some = 1. To illustrate its application, a case study with a VMOS of 0 uses no professional management procedures, while an organisation scoring 18 (or more) conforms entirely to the professional management model. A VMOS of between 8 and 12 means that some professional management procedures are used. Thus, a score of less than 8 would suggest that professional management has not been applied at that organisation, while a score of 13-17 would suggest that a substantial number of professional management procedures had been introduced. These scores were subdivided into very low = 4 or lower; low = 5-8; medium = 9-12; high = 13-17; and very high = 18 or above. The very low and very high scores are clearly extremes. Additional points were awarded for either of the following: each member of staff (paid or voluntary) with specific responsibility for volunteers; adherence to health and safety regulations, which the British Association of Friends of Museums found was lacking in museums (BAFM, 1998).

The scoring system is acknowledged to be a crude form of measurement, but it was not the actual VMOS awarded to each case study that was of interest. Rather, the scoring system allowed the adoption of specific management procedures to be investigated, by breaking down the volunteer programme against a checklist. At this stage, all procedures are given the same weighting. Thus, the VMOS scoring system provides a tool for analysing the volunteer programme at each of the attractions.

The scoring system is presented in Table 1, which demonstrates how the VMOS for the steam railway was calculated.

Table 1: Management profile at the preserved steam railway

Background to programme	Volunteers started the railway by getting together to preserve it after the Beeching cuts.	
Volunteer co-ordinator	There is a voluntary Volunteer Co-ordinator who has an assistant, also voluntary. One point is awarded for each co-ordinator.	2
Health and safety	New volunteers must become members of the railway, for insurance purposes. They must sign up to the health and safety requirements and have a copy of the railway rulebook, an extensive manual covering every eventuality.	2
Job development and design	There are clear job descriptions for anyone involved in the operation of the railway.	2
Recruitment	Mostly volunteers offer their services. Names and addresses of volunteers are retained.	1
Interviewing and matching	Potential volunteers are interviewed, asked for references and have to pass exams for operational work.	2
Orientation and training	Training is taken seriously because of the health and safety regulations governing a working railway. However, this varies, as training can take 8-10 years for a part-time volunteer engine driver, whereas someone working on the ticket desk may only receive 'on the job' training. Eighty-four per cent of respondents had received some form of training. Training records are held for volunteers involved in operating the trains.	2
Supervision and motivation	Volunteers involved in operating the railway are strictly supervised and a hierarchy exists, with the guard in charge on the trains and the stationmaster at the stations.	2
Recognition	Volunteers receive expenses at some events, and free travel passes for the train when on duty.	1
Evaluation	Operational staff must pass regular exams. Occasional visitor surveys. Unsolicited letters from visitors.	2

The scoring system presented in Table 1 shows that one point was awarded for having a volunteer co-ordinator and a further point for having an assistant co-ordinator; one point was awarded for the membership policy, including insurance, and one point for the welcome pack for new volunteers; two points were given for job descriptions; no points were given for the reactive recruitment procedures, whereby volunteers typically offer their services; and so on. The preserved steam railway has a VMOS of 16, which is high.

In order to examine how professional volunteer management affected the volunteer experience, it was important to identify volunteers' reasons for volunteering and thus what their experience meant to them. The interviews with volunteers were analysed using content analysis. The key words were derived from previous research on the experience of volunteering, but were also allowed to emerge from the volunteers' responses. For example, volunteer managers cited 'subject interest' as the main motive for their volunteers (Holmes, 1999). This was therefore included in the content dictionary. Straightforward content analysis was employed, with the number of citations of each key word or concept simply being counted – which means that the numbers representing each key word in Tables 4 and 5 refer to the number of responses and not the number of respondents, as respondents could give more than one reason. There was no ranking order among the key words. The content dictionary is presented alphabetically below.

Table 2: Content dictionary

- Be active in retirement
- Belongingness; involved; identify; team
- Career
- Challenge; new experiences
- Colleagues; like-minded people
- Feeling comfortable in surroundings
- Commitment
- Enhancement of self-image
- Enjoyment; recreation
- Learning; developing new skills
- Satisfaction
- Self-development
- Social opportunities
- Subject interest
- Value; doing something worthwhile
- Work; work experience

Table 3: Volunteer Management Orientation Score for each case study

Case study	VMOS	Sector
National museum	18 - very high	Public
Steam railway	16 - high	Voluntary
English Heritage Property	13 - high	Public
Historic ship	10 - medium	Voluntary
Open air museum	10 - medium	Voluntary
National Trust property	9 - medium	Voluntary

Discussion

Table 3 shows the VMOS for each of the case studies. The national museum gained a very high score, the steam railway and the English Heritage property gained high scores and the other case studies gained average scores. None of them had a low score. It is worth noting that the National Trust case study probably registered the lowest score as it was a small property with fewer than 30 volunteers, who organised themselves as an almost entirely separate body from the property. They did not follow the National Trust policy on volunteering; if they had done so, they may well have gained a different score.

Analysis of the volunteer programmes revealed two significant reasons for introducing professional volunteer management: health and safety requirements and the involvement of trade unions. The two public sector case studies, the English Heritage property and the national museum, were both required to negotiate the role of volunteers with trade union representatives. This led to the adoption of certain professional procedures, such as clear job descriptions for all the volunteers. Secondly, the requirements of health and safety legislation meant that at other case studies, particularly the national museum and the preserved railway, professional procedures such as training programmes with examinations and volunteer handbooks had been introduced. This is evident in Table 1, where the categories of job design, interviewing and matching, training and supervision all gained a maximum score of 2.

These case studies suggest that the adoption of professional volunteer management is largely due to external requirements, rather than to internal pressure for change. On the other hand, certain barriers prevent organisations from adopting professional volunteer management.

For example, the open-air museum had employed a consultant to address the problems with volunteer recruitment they were facing. The consultant produced a training and development plan for the museum, which included the recommendation to employ a paid volunteer co-ordinator. However, the museum did not have the resources available to do this. This shows how professional volunteer management does require sufficient resources (Bowgett, Dickie and Restall, 2002).

Professional volunteer management and the volunteer experience

As noted above, there is a high proportion of retired volunteers both within the sample and across the heritage sector (Davis Smith and Chambers, 1997; BAFM, 1998; Holmes, 2001). This suggests that these volunteers are most likely to be seeking leisure opportunities rather than work experience. Table 4 reports on the content analysis of volunteers' initial reasons for volunteering, which supports the leisure premise.

Table 4: Volunteers' reasons for initially volunteering

	Pursue interest	Social opps	Help/do something	Local	Keep active in retirement	Work	Enjoyment/ recreation
National museum	17	4	5		2		1
Steam railway	16	3	1		2		
EH property	14	3		7	5		
Historic ship	7		1	2		4	
NT property	8	1				2	
Open air museum	2		3			1	
TOTAL	67	11	10	9	9	7	1

EH = English Heritage; NT = National Trust

Table 4 shows that there were only seven citations of work experience or work-like motives as a prompt to volunteer, while there were 67 citations of 'pursue interest', 11 citations of 'social opportunities' and ten for 'do something worthwhile'. These frequencies of citation are further illustrated by the comments made by volunteers:

I've always had a love of history and the year before I retired they were advertising for volunteers. I thought it would be nice (volunteer, English Heritage property).

A lifelong love of all things railway and a wish to get more involved (volunteer, national museum).

Interest in railways, best steam railway in the country and company (volunteer, steam railway).

Yet if professional volunteer management procedures have had any impact on the volunteers' experience, then their reasons for continuing to volunteer must be examined. In other words, have the professional volunteer management procedures altered the volunteers' experience from being leisure-like to something more reminiscent of paid work? The content analysis on volunteers' reasons for continuing to volunteer is presented in Table 5 (overleaf), where a greater number of reasons for volunteering were cited.

Table 5: Why volunteers continue to offer their services

	Social opportunities	Enjoyment/ recreation	Work	Help/do something worthwhile	Belonging	Interest	Satisfaction	Learning new skills	Challenge	Comfortable	Keep active in retire-	Commitment	Self-development
National museum	7	8	4	2	2	3		8	4	1	1		1
Steam railway	8	3	3	6	1		5			1			
EH property	23	7	3		2			1	1	2	4	4	
Historic ship	9	4			2	2	4						
NT property	4	2	1	4	2	2							
Open air museum	1	3	2		1	4			1	1		3	
TOTAL	52	27	13	12	11	11	10	9	7	7	5	3	1

Table 5 shows an increase in the number of work-related citations, to a total of 13. This is a slightly higher number than the citations for 'interest, satisfaction', [sense of] 'belonging' and 'do something worthwhile'. The role of work experience has increased. However, 'enjoyment' and 'social opportunities' all have significantly more citations – 27 and 52 respectively. The fact that the number of citations for 'social opportunities' has increased is indicative of the volunteers developing relationships with fellow volunteers, paid staff and even visitors during the course of their voluntary activities. The citations for social opportunities and colleagues are illustrated by the volunteers' comments:

There's a nice lot of people here. No one's been coerced, everyone's come forward and it's lovely to see someone surprised and pleased about it (volunteer, National Trust property).

I enjoy meeting the different people. It's something different, I can't put my finger on it (volunteer, English Heritage property).

[It's a] *social occasion with other blokes* (volunteer, historic ship).

So can volunteering as a leisure experience be reconciled with the adoption of professional management techniques? It appears so. An examination of volunteers' responses in Tables 4 and 5 reveals no particular pattern among the number of work-related citations by volunteers and the VMOS of the individual case study. For example, the historic ship gained a VMOS of 10, an average score, but has the highest number of work experience seekers in Table 4. There were, however, no citations of work in Table 5. In Table 5 there is a hint that there may be a relationship between a high VMOS and the number of citations of work-related motives. There were four citations of work-related motives at the national museum, which had a VMOS of 18, and three at the steam railway, which had a VMOS of 16. However, these results are contradicted by the three citations at the English Heritage property, which only just gained a high score, with a VMOS of 13, and the two citations at the open-air museum, with a VMOS of 10. Thus, it seems that there is no clear relationship between a high VMOS and the volunteer experience.

Does this mean that it is acceptable for managers to treat volunteers as unpaid workers, as it has no impact on their experience? Or could it be the result of the personal

characteristics of the individuals who volunteer? For example, the volunteers within the sample have typically been well-educated people who have worked all their lives and may therefore appreciate the organisation's need to manage itself effectively, including its volunteers, regardless of the motives of individuals. What is clear is that volunteers, both within heritage organisations and across the wider voluntary sector, are increasingly being managed according to professional volunteer management methods, and that this appears to have no significant impact on the motivation of the volunteers. Their managers may consider the volunteers to be fulfilling a service delivery function and the volunteers may consider themselves to be engaged in a leisure activity, but these do not seem to be irreconcilable viewpoints.

Do these results support the assertions of the volunteer managers in Gay's study that they can protect volunteers from the impact of professional management procedures? Since one of the key reasons for a high VMOS at the steam railway and a very high VMOS at the national museum was the training requirement for the volunteers, including examinations, this seems unlikely.

In one case study there was evidence of conflict between managers and volunteers. This was at the National Trust property, which had a VMOS of 9. On one occasion, the volunteer group had nominated the property for a local award, but no one had arrived to show the assessors around and the custodian took on this role. The custodian, however, was not happy about this imposition. This demonstrates a lack of communication between the entirely voluntary volunteer group and the managers at National Trust property. Could this also be a sign that a low VMOS is detrimental to the smooth workings of the organisation? Since the other cases scored higher VMOS, it is difficult to explore this question further; moreover, the evidence, based on one case, is limited. Yet volunteers themselves have reported that they would like their time to be better organised (National Trust, 1998). Further research may be able to examine whether a low VMOS may be more of a potential source of conflict than a high VMOS.

The different influences contributing to, and outcomes generated by, the VMOS of an organisation are mapped in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Influence diagram for the influences and outcomes of VMOS

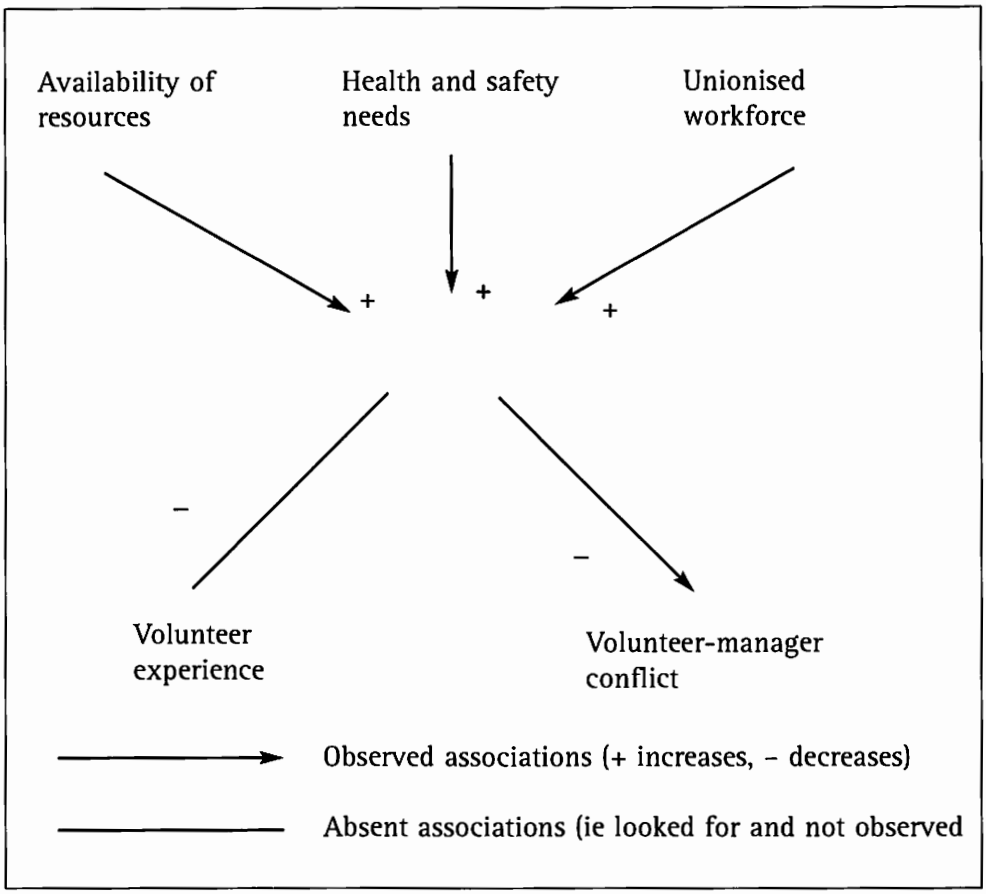


Figure 2 shows that the key influences on introducing professional volunteer management procedures and gaining a high VMOS were health and safety regulations, a unionised paid workforce and sufficient resources. In contrast, conflict between managers and volunteers seems to have an inverse relationship to the level of VMOS. The relationship between the type of volunteer experience and level of VMOS remains unclear – it is neither negative nor positive.

Conclusions

This study was based on a model of professional volunteer management presented by McCurley and Lynch (1998). It devised a scoring system for identifying whether professional procedures have been adopted by an

organisation and where there may be gaps. This scoring system generates a Volunteer Management Orientation Score (VMOS), which provides a simple means of assessing the level of professional volunteer management at an organisation.

The scoring system is open-ended – there is no top score – but a VMOS of 18 is very high, while a VMOS of between nine and 12 is average. In the current climate, where there are pressures to adopt professional volunteer management procedures, a low VMOS would be unusual. Even the National Trust property, which seemed to adopt a very relaxed attitude towards the volunteers, gained a VMOS of nine. The VMOS scoring system serves as both a useful analytical tool and a means for management development. As an analytical tool, it enables the researcher to identify the reasons for gaining a high VMOS using the breakdown of procedures – for example, at the steam railway, where health and safety legislation required a strict approach. For managers, the VMOS shows where there are gaps in the management process and provides a means for benchmarking across organisations to enable improvements in management practice.

In addition, the use of the VMOS system in this research identified key reasons why organisations have adopted professional volunteer management. This was found to be mostly due to external pressures. In the cases studied here, both trade union negotiations and health and safety regulations have led to organisations gaining a high VMOS. Moreover, professional volunteer management is highly resource-intensive, which explains why external pressures are so influential in its adoption.

The VMOS scoring system is at present only a crude measure. There is no weighting between the different categories, which may need to be done to render the method more meaningful.

The key question addressed in this article was the impact of professional volunteer management on the volunteers' experience, which has been largely ignored by empirical research. This is in spite of concerns about the impact of professional volunteer management on the nature of volunteering. In this study, this impact was investigated by examining volunteers' reasons for volunteering and what their experiences meant to them, on the supposition that a high VMOS at an organisation would result in a work-like experience for the volunteers,

rather than a leisure experience. For this purpose, this study investigated a sample of largely retired volunteers, who are unlikely to be work experience seekers. However, the interviews with volunteers provided no evidence that professional volunteer management altered the nature of volunteering to make it more like work, and therefore they did not demonstrate any negative impact of the volunteer experience.

However, the reasons why this is so are unclear. Could it be that the influences leading to the adoption of professional procedures, such as health and safety rules, can be clearly seen by the volunteers as being outside the control of organisations? Or could it be that, as the volunteers included in this study tended to come from managerial backgrounds, they appreciated the need for a structured approach to management? This phenomenon demands further investigation. In particular, the relationship between professional volunteer management and the nature of volunteering needs to be examined within a wider range of organisations. For example, within an all-volunteer context there is no trade union presence, which removes one of the key influences from Figure 2. In addition, organisations with a low VMOS need to be sought, in order to investigate whether this does have a negative influence on the volunteer experience. The conclusions from this study can only be tentative, given its limitations, but they provide a springboard for further research.

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