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Organisational Resilience and Competitive Advantage of United Kingdom (UK) Autism

Charities: The Impact of Online Volunteering

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Abstract

The United Kingdom's (UK) exit of the European Union is looming and as such, there is political and financial uncertainty for the country. This means that the United Kingdom charities are having to prove that they run efficiently, to ensure that the trusts and foundations, individuals and corporations that donate to them understand that their financial investment is being spent effectively. With advances in technological and digital innovation, this research examines if the introduction of online volunteering is an efficient tool for charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage for major funding, talented volunteers and disadvantaged service users.

Online surveys and case studies (which included an element of netnography) were the research methods chosen for this study, using a purposive sample of 524 United Kingdom autism charities that are registered with the United Kingdom's three charity commissions (covering England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). There were 118 survey responses and 5 case studies that provided insight into volunteering programmes, which included both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as using both a positivist and interpretivist philosophy.

The results were surprising, due to the unexpected shortage of charities that had not yet taken up online volunteering programmes, however this does demonstrate a need for increased awareness of the efficiency benefits of hosting volunteers online rather than offline (face-to-face). Encouragingly, many charities were using online tools to deliver their volunteering programmes, even if their volunteering opportunities were all customer-facing. Again, the research suggested that there needed to be an increased awareness of the roles that online volunteers could perform, most obviously in support activities.

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Statement 1: This work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged within the text, giving explicit references. A full list of references is featured.

Statement 2: I hereby give consent for my work, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed:

Dated: 16 August 2019

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Definitions and Abbreviations

- HR: Human Resources¹
- IBM: International Business Machines
- NCVO: National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- UK: United Kingdom
- UWTSD: University of Wales Trinity Saint David

¹ The HR acronym is specific to the Human Resource business department or function, and not used when discussing employees and volunteers as a human resource for charities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Title

This report investigates the organisational resilience and competitive advantage of United Kingdom (UK) autism charities, through the provision of online volunteering opportunities.

1.2. Aims

United Kingdom charities are increasingly adopting online volunteering programmes and so the aim of this research was to investigate if online volunteering is an efficient tool for charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage, whilst saving their often-limited resources.

1.3. Objectives

The objectives were that by the end of the report, the researcher would firstly develop tools to increase organisational resilience and competitive advantage, secondly develop knowledge to better use their resources, and finally, improve online volunteer programmes, policies and procedures.

1.4. Key Question

Is online volunteering an efficient use of resources for United Kingdom autism charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage by firstly, creating and promoting online volunteering opportunities, and then secondly, by recruiting, retaining and rewarding online volunteers?

1.5. Hypotheses

There were three hypotheses for this report. Firstly, although volunteers are unpaid, there is still an impact on charity resources, however online volunteers have less of an impact than for offline (face-to-face) volunteers. Secondly, online volunteering creates organisational

resilience for the participating charities, strengthening their services for their autistic service users. Thirdly, online volunteering creates organisational resilience and competitive advantage of participating charities over their competitors.

1.6. Justification

When beginning this research, the researcher was the Chief Executive Officer of a registered United Kingdom charity, but has since been recruited onto the Board of Trustees. The charity has an online volunteering programme, rather than providing offline ‘face-to-face’ volunteering opportunities. The researcher also has a diagnosis of autism, and so aims to investigate if the provision of online volunteering is an efficient tool for United Kingdom autism charities to save their often-limited resources, whilst still creating organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

1.7. Business Problem

Due to the financial and political uncertainty surrounding the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, charities in the United Kingdom are facing an ever-increasing struggle to create and maintain funding streams for their primary and support activities, through one-off or regular donations from individuals, major grants from trusts and foundations, and then lastly, sponsorship from corporations. Therefore, these organisations often have limited resources, and yet still must meet targets set by their funding bodies to create organisational resilience to best serve their service users and wider society. Charities are also under pressure to gain competitive advantage over other similar charities for major funding, talented and skilled volunteers, and eligible service users. Therefore, providing an efficient volunteering programme is fundamental for charities to continue to create this organisational resilience and competitive advantage, but without the financial burden of salaries and wages. With the increase of technology and digital innovation, charities now have the tools to allow volunteers

to work from home (internet connection dependent), and it is this 'online volunteering' that the researcher wishes to investigate, in relation to efficiency.

This report compares online and offline volunteering programmes that are provided by United Kingdom autism charities, to evaluate if the provision of online volunteering is, in fact, an efficient tool for them to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage. This was done so that recommendations can be made to this sub-section of the charity sector, to increase their efficiency, and although the research is concentrating on autism charities specifically, the knowledge can be applied to all charities. Also, due to the very nature of the internet, the knowledge of the efficient implementation of United Kingdom online volunteering programmes could be applied to any international charity or non-profit organisation. This research is important for charities to continue to provide services to disadvantaged and vulnerable people with autism, they are having to prove themselves to be both efficient and effective when reporting to their funding bodies.

If the United Kingdom autism charities in question run inefficiently, this could lead to them no longer being financially viable, and so may have to close the charity; this would then have a negative social impact upon the availability of service provision for autistic people. The same goes for the charities' use of technological and digital innovation; if they do not utilise new technology, they may lose competitive advantage and so funders, skilled volunteers and eligible service users may end up using alternative charitable organisations. Therefore, the results and recommendations of this investigation into the implementation of online volunteering programmes is vital for United Kingdom autism charities to be organisationally resilient and survive.

Whilst on the subject of technology, consumer demand for digital innovation is key for autism charities, as social situations can be stressful for people with autism, and so service users with

this diagnosis may prefer online communication with volunteers, rather than face-to-face interaction.

Also, with increasing consumer demand for environmentally friendly services, the provision of online volunteering means that volunteers don't have to use transport to get to the charity offices and don't have to waste paper by printing documentation. Nevertheless, electricity will have to be used to power the internet-connected devices used to volunteer.

This research is important as there is a distinct lack of knowledge upon online volunteering, as it is a new phenomenon. The researcher is consequently motivated to provide a significant and original contribution to knowledge on this topic. This report will therefore focus on the following business functions: human resources, digital innovation, change management and strategic management. The report will not only cover the recruitment and retainment of online volunteers, but also how charities can create organisational resilience and competitive advantage through technology.

1.8. Outline for Research Methods

The research methods used were online surveys and case studies (using elements of netnography). Purposive selective sampling was used by inviting United Kingdom autism charities from public Charity Commission registers (for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). One specific charity, the National Autistic Society has many autonomous branches, and so treated each branch as a separate participant. The total number of invited participants was 524.

The researcher selected and invited survey respondents to be involved as a case study, by supplying internal documentation regarding their volunteering programmes. All participant charities are regulated by the United Kingdom Charity Commissions, and so their Annual Reports and Accounts are publicly accessible online. The researcher used netnography

techniques to analyse if their volunteering programmes are efficient. The survey method used an interpretivist philosophy, as it gained perspectives from the participants, and the case study method used a positivist philosophy, as it gained statistical evidence from the participants.

The timescale of the research was limited, and so from writing the proposal to the finalised report, the researcher has completed the report in 145 days. The researcher has conducted all research online, utilising the free University of Wales Trinity Saint David software, and so has not required financial investment.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Overview

This literature review has examined the charity sector and how it utilises volunteers to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage. The motives to volunteer have been explored, as well as how charities recruit, retain and reward volunteers. The impact that technological advances and digital disruption has had on organisations in general has been examined, including the increased provision of teleworking from home. This was then linked into how volunteers can now work from anywhere (even from the comfort of home), at any time, using any internet-connected device; this is commonly referred to as ‘online volunteering’, and forms the basis of this report. The literature review finishes with an investigation into charity efficiency and how online volunteering can provide organisational resilience and competitive advantage, without a cost to their often-limited resources.

The researcher has used secondary research sources from the host research organisation’s library catalogue (physical items and peer reviewed journals), Mendeley (online journal library), Swansea public library’s catalogue (online journals), YouTube and sector-specific data. References used include Porter’s Value Chain, the influential economist’s Pareto Efficiency model, and Armstrong’s Handbook of Human Resource Management. Examples were taken from a variety of not-for-profit services to compare against the charity sector, such as healthcare, the fire service and the Crown Prosecution Service.

2.2. Introduction

Famous physicist, Cox (2016), discusses Einstein’s theory of space and time, by declaring that earth moves uncompromisingly onwards through spacetime, and therefore, so must we. On a more local and economic context, organisations (both profit and non-profit making) must adopt

future trends and adapt to innovative digital solutions, as change is inevitable. This literature review will demonstrate how and why they must do this by considering each relevant concept.

2.3. Key Concepts

2.3.1. Charity

To begin, it is important to define what the charity sector (otherwise known as ‘non-profit’, ‘not-for-profit’ or ‘third’ sector) is, as it forms the basis of this report, and so the United Kingdom Government’s legislation (Charities Act 2011) defines a charity as “an institution which is established for charitable purposes only and falls to be subject to the control of the High Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction”, yet this is a very technical definition, and so the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2019a) acknowledged the legal definition of charities, but added that the organisations have to be exclusively for public benefit. Likewise, Pallotta (2013) presented a TEDx Talk emphasising the positive impact that the charity sector has on “changing the world for all those citizens most desperately in need” (17m 45s) and spoke of our generation’s legacy to take responsibility to “revisit, revise and reinvent humanity forever” (18m 01s). On the other hand, this positive stance is disputed by Livingstone (2013) who asserted the negativity that charity can bring in a capitalist society. With charities succeeding “only in a struggle that reproduces impoverishment and inequality. Charity reinforces our alienation: as the dispossessed, self-realisation and inherently, our own freedom, are denied to us” (p. 348).

In agreement with this, Staples (2018) also took a negative view of the charity sector by finding it difficult to define as it “seldom neatly conforms to its definition as the contrary of development and empowerment” (p. 150). Also, Staples criticised the sector for marketing it’s vulnerable and disadvantaged service users for funding by requiring “disabled people to use their bodies as marketable commodities, presenting themselves as helpless even when they are

not.” This highly unflattering citation is relevant to this report, as the research will be examining United Kingdom charities that support people with a disability (in this case, autism), to see if they can create organisational resilience and competitive advantage over other similar charities (with the aim of recruiting major funders, skilled volunteers and eligible service users), through the provision of online volunteering.

2.3.2. Volunteering

Unlike profit-making organisations, charities are comprised of two types of human resources; employees and volunteers. It is the volunteers that this report is based upon and so the United Kingdom’s National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2019b) defined volunteering as a freely chosen, unpaid venture, involving the individual providing a positive social or environmental impact. Using the Value Chain framework by Porter (2004; Appendix A: Porter’s Value Chain Framework (Harvard Business School, 2019)), volunteers provide their time and talents to primary (user-facing) and support (core) charity activities on an unpaid basis. Miller (2005, p. 447) created a model to define the characteristics of volunteering, which include such elements as:

- “The behaviours performed must be voluntary... without bonds of obligation”
- “Volunteer services must be delivered over an extended period of time”
- “The decision to volunteer is based entirely on the person’s own goals and without expectation of material compensation”

On the contrary to Miller’s point about volunteering over an extended period, the United Kingdom has such a diverse and dynamic charity sector, that some volunteering opportunities may only be a one-off project and could potentially last as little as an hour. Of course, the more someone volunteers, the larger the impact that the individual has, but this dissertation will examine how online volunteering can be an efficient tool for charities to provide, whilst still

creating organisational resilience to optimally serve their service users and have competitive advantage over their competitors. The researcher has proposed to sample autism charities, and so Janus and Misiorek (2018) studied the motivations of volunteers that aided people with disabilities on World Youth Day and found that they “were driven by altruistic motives, the aim of which was to improve the situation of the persons with disabilities and enable them to participate ... The rewarding factor for them was, first and foremost, doing good” (p. 1009).

In agreement with the above, Hudson (2009) added that motives can also be defined as philanthropic. While this may be true, Hudson also emphasised that the motives may not always be selfless, using the example of a celebrity briefly donating their time for recognition or an unemployed person to gain skills and experience to increase their employability.

In contrast of using volunteering as a mode of gaining employability, some individuals who are already employed, may volunteer through their employer’s Corporate Social Responsibility schemes. Knox (2018) suggests that corporate motivations for offering such volunteering opportunities to their employees are an increase in “loyalty and skill level that are reportedly improved” (p. 1), as well as a tool to “reciprocate altruistically to society’s benefit” (p. 1). Conversely, there is ongoing scepticism by some, who just see Corporate Social Responsibility as a marketing publicity stunt to look good and may therefore actually create an atmosphere of distrust with their customers (Kim, 2019).

Regardless of individual or corporate motives, all volunteers can create organisational resilience for their charity. There are many such examples of volunteering roles, such as mentoring vulnerable young people, painting a local community centre, and raising funds or awareness for cancer charities. With these examples in mind, the topic of volunteering seems unquestionably innocent and uncontroversial on the surface, yet in contrast, some researchers have controversially likened it to a modern-day version of slavery (HR Dept, 2017). In the

researcher's opinion, this comparison to slavery is unconvincing and inflammatory, as by the very definition provided earlier by National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2019b), volunteers perform their roles on a freely chosen basis. However, this is just a blog post from an organisation that looks out for the rights of workers (paid or unpaid.)

Referring again to Livingstone (2013), who explained that due to the United Kingdom's free market system and the Conservative government, volunteers are being left open to "the potential for manipulation and exploitation" (p. 352). Although volunteers are not paid, it does not mean that they are a free resource for the charity sector. Back in the 1990s, Berman (1998) had contended that they "require considerable recruitment, training and development" (p. 187), but even 20+ years later, this has not changed. With Vizesfar et al. (2019) found that volunteers "should be selected and trained appropriately" (p. 176). This emphasis on recruitment and training means that although volunteers are unpaid, they still have an impact on charities in other ways, which is what this report will investigate. Due to this lack of salary or wage, volunteer motivations are very different to that of paid workers. HR Dept (2017) explained that workers are driven by a mix of motivations. Some are passionate about the organisational goals and want to make a difference. Others see it as a chance to learn new skills and gain valuable experience. They even suggested that there may even be some workers who simply enjoy the social atmosphere.

Correspondingly, Mastromatteo and Russo (2017) studied volunteer motivations and found that they are comprised of "feelings of empathy, compassion, and reciprocity" (p. 136), but is not completely altruistic, as there is also "the desire to be publicly praised and acclaimed, maybe to gain social status" (p. 136). Mastromatteo and Russo also commented that many volunteers are compelled to help to adhere to social and religious norms, and so their volunteering may not be as voluntary as it seems. The UK Civil Society Almanac (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2019c) investigated such things as volunteer motivations.

They found that the most popular reasons to volunteer were: wanting to improve things, the cause was important, they had the spare time to do it and wanting to meet new people.

Consequently, the Office for National Statistics (2017) studied the popularity of volunteering from 2000 to 2015, and found that it had increased, nevertheless, despite this, the average time spent volunteering per day has fallen. This is interesting, as this may equate to volunteering becoming more efficient, through digital innovation, and therefore further justification for this proposed research. They also reported that between 2014 and 2015, the financial value of volunteering fell from £22.8billion to £22.6billion, which they reasoned was due to a fall in total hours volunteered; this again raises the question of whether that was due to increased efficiency, through technological and digital innovation.

2.3.3. Technological and Digital Disruption

Regarding technological and digital innovation, Morgan (2019) spoke of a fourth industrial revolution being led by big tech companies “Artificial Intelligence is used every day, by everybody with a smartphone, and CEOs² and CFOs³ are going to have to change their approach. The way they managed over the last 100 years is no longer fit for purpose” (3m 30s). Agreeing, Porter (2004) believed that technological change is a driver of competition; charities have had to introduce digital innovation into their volunteering programmes’ policies and procedures, in order to create competitive advantage in the sector, to attract and recruit the most talented and dedicated volunteers, who can use their own devices to perform their roles. Although competitiveness is valid across all sectors, Merchant and Van der Stede (2012) affirmed that the non-profit organisations do not have “quantitative bottom-line performance indicators” (p. 742) like profit-making organisations, consequently, charities must concentrate

² Chief Executive Officers

³ Chief Financial Officers

on practicing organisational resilience and competitive advantage, in order to become a market leader, in front of their competition.

In the same way, Young (2007) suggested a social and technological paradigm shift, that leaves businesses to suffer if they don't adapt. Discussing how technology is impacting business, and how there is an emerging pressure on organisations to create new relationships with their people, which, in this case, can be related to charities and their volunteers. Using the example of 'Generation Y' (or 'Millennials', as they are now commonly referred to), Young defined them as having an unprecedented freedom, and discussed how it is now key for organisations to understand how to sustainably motivate and engage with them through technology; online volunteering is therefore a prime example of this.

To prove how there is demand for this, the Office for National Statistics (2017) found that in 2015, 16 to 24 year olds (also known as 'Generation Y' or 'Millennials') were the age group that volunteered the most and for the longest time, is relevant as they will be the age group that has the most up-to-date digital skills through their education, which enables them to confidently volunteer, using the most innovative technology. As mentioned in the Introduction, Porter (2004) developed a Value Chain framework and found that technology was pervasively embodied into every stage of it, within both the primary and support activities. A benefit of such technology in the workplace, is the ability to work remotely.

2.3.4. Online Volunteering

Technological innovation first impacted the flexibility of the workplace back in the 1990s; although a dated article, Smith and McWilliams (1998) explained how teleworking technology was introduced to allow employers, back then, to become more accommodating "to meet both their own business goals and their employees' needs" (p. 5) by allowing their employees to work remotely, from the comfort of home. This flexibility allows collaboration of employees

“who are physically located halfway across the country or halfway across the world, working in different time zones” (p. 10). Consequently, teleworking comes with a less invasive management style, and so Smith and McWilliams stated that employers will need to concentrate less on quantity of output and instead “develop ways of assessing quality” (p. 45).

Much more recently, Chung and Lippe (2018) allege that it is likely to become the norm to work remotely. Deloitte (2019) explains that the Millennial and Generation Z age groups would prefer to work from home. For this longitudinal study, Deloitte interviewed 16,425 young people, from across the world, over an eight-year period ([Appendix B: Global Millennial Survey Sample \(Deloitte, 2019\)](#)), and so such a large sample size means that it is a reliable snapshot of young people’s opinion of work. In criticism, Deloitte are a multi-national market-lead with a large recruitment intake and may have a bias to promote flexible working to encourage any talented participants to consider applying for jobs with them.

Armstrong (2017) suggested that the option for homeworking is still as functional and flexible as ever, by providing the real range of job titles that can now be conducted from home, with the advantages of reduced overheads for the employer. Other advantages include increased employee satisfaction (Wadhawan, 2019), diversity and operational effectiveness (Faragher, 2019), and easier recruitment methods, better retention, space saving, and better accessibility for disabled staff (Simmons, 1996). Although an older article, Simmons’ points are still pertinent, as he also highlighted relevant drawbacks, such as increased training needs, potential technical difficulties, difficult of management, risk of poor quality of work and potential insurance problems. This can all be related to charities, as they are businesses too, just like any other, but perhaps with different income streams and non-profitable objectives.

This flexibility in working from home for paid employees, has been adopted by the charity sector by providing volunteering from home (internet connection dependent), or indeed, as

Smith and McWilliams (1998) stated above, anywhere in the world. This is what is referred to as 'online volunteering' and this forms the foundation of this report. It is also commonly known as 'cyber', 'digital', 'remote' or 'virtual' volunteering. A search of literature suggests that charities are increasingly offering online volunteering opportunities to engage with a wider pool of potential volunteers via the internet. The United Nations (2019) and the Prince's Trust (2018) are two example charitable organisations that now provide online volunteering, which allows individuals to donate their time and talents from anywhere in the world, from any internet-connected device, at any time. Online volunteering is very similar to flexible working for employees; the distinction being that remote (paid) workers for profit-making organisations may flexibly work between their home and the office; meeting with clients and fellow employees on a face-to-face basis. Whereas online volunteers may never physically visit the charity's offices, nor ever meet the service users or colleagues (fellow volunteers or paid staff) on a face-to-face basis. Mari (2019) studied the recent digital transformation United Kingdom's non-profit Crown Prosecution Service, which included the ability for remote working "to increase internal efficiency" (p. 9), with "the outcome of digital change, so far, has been largely positive, both in terms of productivity and security" (p. 9).

Wolf and Goldkind (2016) also studied the use of technology when delivering social services and were concerned that it could have a negative impact on the organisation's creation of social value by losing human moments. This is especially relevant to this report, as the researcher will be specifically investigating if online volunteering is an efficient a tool for autism charities to create organisational resilience, as well as competitive advantage. Westlake (2012, as cited in Wolf and Goldkind, 2016) stated that although the introduction of technology may increase the methods of communication, we no longer participate in a "connected society" (p. 100). Also, Useem (2017) studied International Business Machines' (IBM) work culture and found that remote working decreased efficiency, noting distance being the main barrier to effective

communication and collaboration. Stating that the context by which “communications technology offer[s] the fastest, cheapest, and highest bandwidth connection is - for the moment, anyway - still the office” (p. 26).

The most popular activities that online volunteers do was studied by Murray and Harrison (2005, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012). Reporting that, as they expected, most of the activities were related to the use of IT, for example, website maintenance and creating social media content. Alternatively, they also found that generic charity activities were also becoming popular with online volunteers, such as research, fundraising, and most importantly, direct service delivery. Accordingly, Cravens (2006, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012) argued that it was in fact a common myth that online volunteers only participated in technology-related tasks.

2.3.4.1. Online Tools for Volunteer Recruitment

It is not only the volunteer activities that have been digitally disrupted in the charity sector, but also the recruitment of volunteers too. Rochester et al. (2012) affirmed that charities have quickly adopted new technology to attract and recruit new volunteers, to empower people to participate in volunteering “on a virtual basis” (p. 112). For example, charities are now able to advertise volunteering opportunities and recruit volunteers through websites that are similar to the widely used job sites, for paid work. The industry-lead for this is Do It (2019), who describe themselves as the United Kingdom’s primary digital volunteering service. Evolving from a simple volunteering opportunity listing site for charities, into an online social platform for volunteers. Reach Volunteering (2019) is another example of a popular site that lists volunteer opportunities. Promoting a four stage process for volunteer recruitment:

1. Join: “Join our community and create a great profile to make the most of our service” (para. 1).

2. Explore: “Search for volunteer opportunities, trustees or volunteers, and make contact” (para. 2).
3. Find a Match: “Are you a good fit? Talk it through and find your match” (para. 3).
4. Make a Difference: “93% of charities say their Reach volunteer makes them more effective” (para. 4).

As part of the recruitment process, and by United Kingdom law, some volunteers will need to have a background check conducted, if they are dealing directly with children and vulnerable adults (or their personal data). This can be done in the United Kingdom via the Disclosure and Barring Service, using a paper application conducted by the charity and posted to a checking agency, or there are many outsourcing websites that allow the volunteer to process their own application online, which is a much more efficient process for the charity. The Society for HR Management (2004, as cited in Levashina et al., 2017) reported that 49% of organisations outsourced their background security checks. Klass, McClendon and Gainey (1999, 2001, as cited in Levashina et al., 2017) listed many reasons for using outsourced online background checking, including “reducing time and cost by providing economies of scale” (p. 131), which means the volunteer is then able to start creating social value at the charity sooner.

2.3.4.2. Online Tools for Volunteer Retention

Once volunteers have been checked and recruited, it is then the charities’ responsibility to retain those volunteers. Hudson (2009) asserts that there is a large capacity for increasing efficiency and efficacy, by developing their volunteers to become more versatile and capable individuals in society. Hudson then emphasised that without investment in volunteers, charities would create a high turnover and therefore achieve much less with their already limited resources, making them very inefficient and unappealing organisations to volunteer for.

Garrity (2012) took this further and investigated what it took to retain volunteers through the (not-for-profit) fire service and found that through the provision of in-house training and development, the volunteers remain motivated. This in-house training that could be conducted on an online training platform, may be cheaper than outsourcing to a face-to-face training provider, but may initially require more staff time in its design; the outcomes will be a more engaged and knowledgeable volunteer workforce, calling it a “win-win situation for all concerned” (p. 12).

2.3.4.3. Online Tools for Volunteer Reward

Furthermore, in relation to volunteer retainment, charities often recognise and reward volunteers for their achievements in creating organisational resilience and competitive advantage. Phillips and Phillips (2010) investigated this and found that although volunteers cannot receive a financial reward, they can provide symbolic rewards instead, such as “thank you letters, prizes, publicity, appreciation dinners, and attendance at a conference” (p. 12). The researcher realises that even volunteer rewards have now been digitally disrupted, as in a Volunteer Management blog post by Johnson (2013), new digital rewards were suggested such as hosting webinars (with regular guest speakers, or allowing the volunteers themselves to host webinars; both providing insight to their work and the cause of the charity) and publicly promoting and acknowledging the social impact of the individual volunteers through case studies on the charity website, demonstrating “how the world has improved because of volunteer efforts” (s. ‘Reinforce Purpose’, para. 1).

As aforementioned, this report will utilise Porter’s (2004) Value Chain model to evaluate if and how online volunteering can assist charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage through their primary and support activities, whilst saving and reallocating their resources elsewhere in the charity. The Audit Commission (2007, as cited in

Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) conducted a 'Heart and Minds' report about the charity sector's effective contribution to health and social care, and avowed that further value can be created when a service is delivered by the kindness of volunteers, rather than paid staff.

2.3.5. Business Efficiency

A key component of this research will be the investigation of how efficient the provision of online volunteering is for charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

Although the following set of articles are written from 1993 to 2005, they are still relevant and applicable today. Williams and Giardina (1993) studied efficiency within the not-for-profit public sector and found that using a cost-benefit analysis, public bodies can make more informed decisions regarding "the deployment of scarce resources which will affect the welfare of those individuals in the community to which the public body is accountable" (p. 65). Similarly, Mitton (2004, as cited in Philips, 2005) also studied efficiency within the not-for-profit health sector and defined efficiency as "maximising well-being at the least cost to society" (p. 8).

Referring back to Simmons' (1996) albeit-dated article, it can be seen that, regardless of sector, efficiency is usually calculated by "production quantity divided by labour time" (p. 36), but this does not consider such business expenses as office space rent, utilities and other general business costs; these expenses can, of course, be reduced if the employee (or in this case, the volunteer) works remotely. These individuals will then require less travel expenses and less management time to conduct their job role, and therefore changes the efficiency calculation to "total production divided by total activity" (p. 37). Likewise, and for the purpose of increasing flexibility and efficiency, Stredwick and Ellis (2005) asserted how organisations can utilise technology to "change work routines, shorten processes and relocate operations" (p. 97), but

they also claimed that these changes must be checked for suitability for both the organisation and the individual employee or volunteer, and should not just be done for the sake of efficiency and productivity.

More recently, due to charities commonly having low financial, physical or even time resources, managers in such organisations must constantly increase their efficiency to ensure a high reputation amongst its competitors. Jarvis (2019) discussed speed as not necessarily being about working faster, but finding the best way to do something, using “new and efficient methods” (p. 18), such as providing online volunteering. All charities that are sampled in this research are registered with the United Kingdom charity regulators; either the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, or the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. By regulation, they must each publicly release their annual progress and social impact reports and financial accounts each year. With this increased pressure for charities to demonstrate efficiency, Merchant and Van der Stede (2012) defended that there has been an increase in interest and scrutiny by the general public, yet they believed that this public data should “supplement the traditional input-focused measures (such as expenditures, staffing levels) with results-oriented measures (such as output, quality, timeliness), and in doing, to improve governmental efficiency and effectiveness by increasing public managers’ accountability” (p. 743).

In agreement, Rochester et al. (2012) found that even volunteering programmes are not immune from having to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness as such programmes “increasingly has to go beyond assertions that it is ‘a good thing’ to demonstrate why it is worth investing in” (p. 161) This is, therefore, what this research aims to prove, specifically for online volunteering programmes, by United Kingdom autism charities, to make efficient use of their often low resources to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

Even as far back as in the 1980s and 1990s, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government conducted 'efficiency scrutiny' of the charity sector, which was studied at the time by both Brown and Jackson (1990) and the Home Office (1990, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012). They both positively emphasised the practical value that volunteering brought to the United Kingdom, as an efficient way to provide services demanded by society. Moving into the 2000s, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (2007, as cited in Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) studied "the concepts of efficiency, economy, effectiveness equity of provision and efficacy" (p. 15) of charities in Wales, and found that these factors are a common language for trusts, foundations and commissioners of the charity sector, when deciding which charities to provide financial investment to.

Significantly, Knapp (1990, as cited in Kendall, 2003) stated (and re-iterated the previous point) that although volunteers are unpaid, their involvement does come at an "administrative, organisation and congestion" (p. 108) cost to organisations, and so charities need to ensure that these do not outweigh the benefits of their participation, regardless if it is online or offline. With the results of this report, charities will be able to take the recommendations to implement a more efficient online volunteering programme, than their current offline or 'face-to-face' volunteering provision, which will increase their likelihood of gaining funding from the above trusts, foundations and commissioners of the charity sector.

Poister et al. (2015) investigated the measuring of performance in non-profit organisations and raised the issue that although charitable organisations are expected to report on such things as performance, effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, service quality, customer satisfaction and cost-effectiveness, they often do not have the resources, training or technical assistance to measure such factors, which ironically, impedes their efficiency. Agreeing, Fox (2002) examined the reallocation of resources (including the human resource of volunteers) to increase efficiency, but warned that such a re-organisation could negatively affect the overall social

welfare of the service users, and so this proposed research will investigate if the provision of online volunteering opportunities increases efficiency, without negatively impacting the social outcomes of the autistic service users.

In contrast, Martin (2019) wrote that “an excessive focus on efficiency can produce startlingly negative effects” (para. 4), due to an increased-specialism and unsustainable practices. Hudson (2009) therefore suggests an alternative way to look at efficiency, by not only examining the best use of resources, but also the creation of management capacity; in summary, the freeing up of time and resources to be reallocated to other areas of the charity to further create organisational resilience and competitive advantage. This pressure to compete for funders, volunteers, and service users will make charities realise methods to increase their productivity and efficiency, by achieving (or even surpassing) their desired social value and market positioning, using fewer resources. To continue on from this, Philips (2005) introduced the social economic theory of Pareto Efficiency, whereby, in order for charities to establish their priorities for their service users by applying allocative efficiency to delegate and utilise their (human) resources: “Efficiency exists when it is impossible to make one person better off without at the same time making someone else worse off” (p. 8).

This is relevant for this research, as a charity that introduces online volunteering for their benefit of efficiency, should not negatively impact that of the service user. Similarly, Williams and Giardina (1993) also discussed ‘Pareto Efficiency’, albeit back in the 1990s, and found that it is advantageous for economists to avoid gaining individual qualitative experiences from individual service users, and instead only request “each person’s own judgement as to whether he or she is better off or worse off (or, on balance, the same as before)” (p. 66) as a result of the service provided. Due to capacity, the researcher will only be examining the number of service users impacted (a quantitative approach, via the individual charities’ progress reports), rather than their perceptions of the charity’s impact upon them (a qualitative approach), in order

to establish efficiency of the resources used by online and offline volunteers. Philips (2005) suggested that when investigating an organisation's efficiency, there should be a cost-measurement, which is the "quantification of the resources used [by] providing the particular service" (p. 45). To consider what these costs could be categorised as, the Institute for Volunteering Research (2004, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012) suggested the following 'cost' or 'capital' categories: (a) economic, (b) physical, (c) human, (d) social, and (e) cultural. The researcher has therefore chosen to examine human capital, in the form of volunteers, to investigate the efficiency of autism charities in the United Kingdom.

2.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review has defined charities and volunteering, whilst also looking at how digital innovation has disrupted flexible working, allowing for volunteers to be able to conduct their roles online, from anywhere, at any time, using any internet connected device. This review has also looked at how volunteers are being digitally recruited and retained within charitable organisations. Conversely, the main emphasis of this review has been upon how organisations can improve their efficiency to create organisational resilience, without negatively impacting their resources, and therefore creating competitive advantage. It has also been shown that efficiency scrutiny is not a new premise for charities, as it has been the case for nearly three decades now, and so the following research will fill a gap in the current knowledge and examine if the provision of online volunteering is an efficient tool for autistic charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Hypothesis

This report sought to prove that online volunteering is an efficient tool for United Kingdom autism charities to create value. The hypothesis is that online volunteering does increase efficiency of support activities, so that charities can continue to create a positive social impact.

3.2. Method Types

For this report's primary research, the researcher chose online surveys and case studies; such mixed method research was studied by Venkatesh et al. (2013) who found that although "diversity in research methods is considered a major strength ... with respect to understanding and explaining complex organisational and social phenomena" (pp. 21-22). The advantages and disadvantages of both research types are examined below. It is also worth noting that the researcher used a sequential structure by firstly inviting the full sample to participate in the online survey, and then from those that provided responses, selected five to invite to become case studies to gain further insight. Interviews were rejected as they would not provide any further relevant perspectives or objective data, beyond the two chosen methods.

3.2.1. Surveys

Surveys were chosen as it allowed the researcher to fully plan and structure questions that would provide concise and relevant information regarding the subject area. Also, the researcher only used self-administered online surveys, for ease of design, sharing (via email and social media) and data analysis. It also increased the likelihood of response by the charities, as it was quick and simple to complete and submit; making it efficient for both parties (participant and researcher). The advantage of using surveys is the consistency and cleanliness of data for ease of analysis. The online customising tool of conditional branching is explored by Easterby-Smith et al. (2013), whereby relevant questions can be asked, dependent on previous answers

given; this provides a more engaging survey for the participant and more insightful answers for the researcher to analyse. A disadvantage is that the participants may have got “questionnaire fatigue” (Denscombe, 2014, p. 172), whereby they can lose enthusiasm for the research and exit participation amidst the data collection. Likely to be the case for busy charity professionals who are at full working capacity, even though the end recommendations of this research will hopefully improve their efficiency in the longer term.

3.2.2. Case Studies (Netnography)

From those participant charities that responded to the survey, a judgemental sample was used to invite participants to become case studies by gaining access to their charity’s volunteering policies and procedures. This was to examine what resources they (efficiently) use to provide their online and/or offline volunteering programmes. As the sample charities were all registered with their relevant United Kingdom region’s Charity Commission, their publicly available annual reports and financial accounts were also examined. This collection and collation of documents used a selective type of netnography, which Kozinets (2015) defines as a “set of related data collection, analysis ... [and] research practices” (p. 79), whereby the data is already publicly available online. All this information was used to build up a picture of how efficient the sampled charities are using their resources, through the provision of online volunteering, to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage. Advantages of case studies include that they provide objective and accurate data for the researcher, particularly around the “contemporary events” (Ruzzene, 2011, p. 294) of the organisation, for example, their current volunteering programme’s policies and procedures. Disadvantages of case studies include that there is a chance that participating charities may allow for “equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the directions of the findings and conclusions” (Yin, 2009, p. 14); the researcher therefore practiced rigor when communicating with the charity, as they could have easily overwhelmed the researcher with unnecessary documents.

3.3. Data Types

Along with using a mixed method approach, the researcher also collected multiple data types. Each of these are explained below:

3.3.1. Quantitative

The British Library (2019) defined quantitative research as producing hard facts, which means that a subject can be analysed in terms of numbers. An example given by the British Library is through the survey methodology, used in this report. With the Library claiming that businesses use surveys to garner large datasets to make informed guesses, rather than relying on asking a small sample group of people. McNeill and Chapman (2005) found that quantitative research is “more reliable than other methods because they are normally organized in standardized and systematic ways” (p. 16), and this is favourable to the researcher, and so quantitative data was also used in both selected research methods.

3.3.2. Qualitative

Curry (2015) defined qualitative research as useful for studying “phenomenon that perhaps can’t have a number assigned to it” (2m 28s) and so it is “a strategy for the systematic collection, organisation and interpretation of textual information” (4m 5s). Suggesting that it is relevant to the experiences of their volunteer programme efficiency, by charity professionals. Therefore, this type of research was used within both research methods of this report.

3.3.3. Exploratory

Exploratory data was collected from the research, as the survey had open-ended questions to gain qualitative perceptions and ideas from the participant charities. Brewer (2007, p. 14) proclaimed exploratory research “may be undertaken when insufficient is known about a particular problem” (p. 14) which is relevant to the new phenomenon of online volunteering. Brewer also emphasised that case studies are also relevant for this as “the focus of an

exploratory study is therefore on gaining more information and insights about a subject” (p. 14).

3.3.4. Descriptive

Descriptive data is commonly quantitative and structured, and so was collected from multiple choice questions in the survey for this research. Cameron (2011) defended such descriptive business data as doing “no more than provide a description of some aspect of management ... classic observations”(p. 130). It is therefore very objective and useful for the researcher to understand which resources the charity utilizes for their volunteer programme provision.

3.3.5. Causal

Causal data is quantitative, but has variables; in this report, the constant is the type of charity (autism), and the variable is the type of volunteering programme (online, offline or both). Armstrong (2017) found that through the analysis of causal data, “the numerous, subtle and often hidden interconnections between the factors influencing cause and effect” (p. 60). Therefore, the researcher demonstrated how the provision of online volunteering causes charities to reduce the impact on their resources.

3.4. Boundaries

The boundaries for this research were based upon three parameters. Firstly, geographical location: only charities based in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were invited to participate. Secondly, sector: the charity sector is so vast that only autism charities were invited to participate. The third boundary is age: due to safeguarding regulations and ethical consent, participants from the charities will have to be aged 18+. A recent Disclosure and Barring Service check has been conducted in case the researcher inadvertently comes into communication with a charity employee that is aged 16 or 17, or a vulnerable autistic service user. The researcher aimed to keep such interactions to an absolute minimum.

3.5. Research Tools

The researcher accessed online research tools provided by the host research organisation, such as Microsoft Forms (to design online surveys and collect data), Microsoft Outlook (to communicate with charities to collate documents for case studies), Internet Explorer or Google Chrome (to promote the survey through social media and to access the publicly released charity documents from the relevant country's Charity Commission), International Business Machines' Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) (for quantitative data analysis), and finally, Microsoft Word (for qualitative data analysis and report write-up). These choices were justified by being user friendly, up-to-date, and available without financial cost to the researcher. Microsoft Forms is supplied on the university's cloud-based server, and so it was the most secure option for data security as Microsoft (2018) have confirmed that it is compliant within the new General Data Protection Regulations. The researcher could not ensure such confidentiality from any alternative online survey providers, such as Survey Monkey and Google Forms.

3.6. Research Design

3.6.1. Survey

The questions of the survey took the key theme from Volunteer Scotland's (2015) Volunteer Management Model of the 'Organisation Needs Life Cycle' ([Appendix C](#): Volunteer Management Model (Volunteer Scotland, 2015)), whereby organisations create and promote a volunteer opportunity, then recruit, train and supervise volunteer(s) into that opportunity. The questions were designed from references in the literature review ([Appendix D](#): Question and Theory Matrix) and used a branching technique to keep the questions relevant for the participant ([Appendix E](#): Survey Branching Flowchart). Due to the branching, and depending on the answers provided, the participant only had to answer between four and 17 questions.

The questions included a combination of free text, multiple choice and Likert scale answers (a screenshot of the final design of the survey can be viewed in [Appendix F: Screenshot of Final Survey Briefing Design](#)).

3.6.2. Case Study

Charities were selected from the survey respondents and invited by email to participate as a case study. Access to their volunteer policies and processes were requested. The amount of relevant documentation provided was at the discretion of the charity, without any pressure given by the researcher. The researcher briefed the participants about the confidentiality and anonymity for the individual and the charity. Other documents were sourced from the relevant United Kingdom region's Charity Commission, which will include the charity's Annual Reports and Accounts.

3.7. Validity (Piloting)

As recommended by Donald (2018), the survey was piloted with a test group of participants to gain feedback about the survey's design, specifically regarding the wording of questions, appropriate optional answers and length of survey. Donald stated that such preparatory studies "inform key concerns including intervention delivery, contextual factors, and implementation" (p. 65). Therefore, the researcher used a purposive sample for the pilot study, including two non-profit organisations that support people with autism to mirror the sample of the actual research: firstly, 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder Employment Support' and secondly, the 'University of Wales Trinity Saint David Student Services'. The purpose of the pilot will be to improve efficiency, yet the researcher is aware that by using the research organisation's in-house service as a pilot sample, that there may be some bias, but an emphasis will be placed on providing honest feedback about the survey experience; the answers will not be analysed anyway, and will be deleted before any suggested amendments are made.

3.8. Repeatability

Feldman (2015) found that “businesses worldwide rely a statistical data analysis to discover and innovate, however if the data analysis is not done correctly the results can be misleading or even completely wrong” (17s). Therefore, the researcher had ensured that the research is repeatable, and that the questions asked were not leading the participants in any way. The case study element of this research had ‘internal validity’ and so the University of the West of England (2019)⁴ were alarmed by the level of certainty that observed effects are the result of the cause, rather than any influential variables. Interestingly, the research was also externally valid in the real world of industry, outside of their controlled contexts, as it can be applied to any charity, anywhere.

3.9. Reliability

Muijs (2011) explained that with all research, there is some measurement error, and so the reliability of research refers to how free the data is of that error:

“An item may be worded in a way that can lead to confusion, or it may be too difficult, leading to guessing. Even more random elements can intervene: the mood of the [participant] when taking the test, the temperature in the room, and so on” (pp. 62-63).

Unreliability of data is a concern as it can taint the trustworthiness of the data and conclusions. To ensure reliability of this research, the researcher requested that the individual participants actually manage their charity’s volunteers, as part of their job description, as they have the most in depth knowledge needed for the study.

3.10. Representativeness

Data regarding which region the charity is based and what services they deliver was collected and analysed to ensure that there was representative cross sample of all autism charities.

⁴ Site now inactive.

3.11. Risks

The risks of both research methods were considered ([Appendix G: Risk Assessment](#)). The risks considered were: data being accessed by unauthorised people, the researcher spending too long at a computer, and participant distress from releasing internal organisational information.

3.12. Data Analysis

3.12.1. Quantitative

International Business Machines' Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for the quantitative analysis, whereas qualitative data was analysed using matrixes and word clouds. Financial information was sourced through the netnography of Charity Commission documents which Sayer (2002) described as providing "information about the past performance of an organisation and its overall financial health. We can therefore gather information about the viability of an organisation and how well it is managed" (p. 105). In agreement with Sayer, the researcher investigated how well managed their resources are, to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage. Sayer did provide caution when analysing this information as there is no context to the numbers provided, however, the researcher used a holistic approach by also gaining a qualitative context through the survey and charity reports.

Using International Business Machines' Statistical Package for Social Sciences, the researcher conducted chi-square tests to determine Pearson (or 'p') values, which determines if certain results are statistically significant. International Business Machines (2019) describes the Pearson goodness-of-fit chi-square statistical test as being used to test a null hypothesis, that the model adequately fits the data. If the p-value is less than 0.05, then the results are classed as statistically significant.

3.12.2. Qualitative

Content analysis was used when scrutinising the qualitative responses in the survey and the case studies. Kozinets (2015) described the analysis of netnography as using “all manner of computational elements to mine, extract, pre-code, classify and visualise data in the quest for culturally flavoured, anthropologically informed big data insights” (p. 198). The researcher used Microsoft Word to collate the qualitative results into matrixes, and then used a ‘text mining’ technique to analyse the data. Elsevier (2015) defined this technique: “It filters large amounts of research and extracts the relevant information you need” (27s), which the researcher then chose to display and analyse as word clouds, to clearly identify and easily demonstrate the most popular phrases to the reader.

3.13. Research Philosophy

3.13.1. The Interpretivism – Positivism Paradigm

This research comprised of a combination of both the positivism and interpretivism paradigm. Collis and Hussey (2009) defined interpretivism as “the belief that social reality is not objective but highly subjective because it shaped by our perceptions” (p. 57). This philosophy was used for the survey, as the researcher examined the perceived use of resources that it takes deliver their volunteering programme. In comparison, Collis and Hussey (2009) also defined positivism as “the belief that reality is independent of us” (p. 56). This logical and fact based philosophy was used for the case studies, as the researcher examined such documentation as policies, reports and accounts to establish what the impact of providing volunteering opportunities has had on resources and on the creation of organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

3.13.2. Deductive

Through the literature review, and through logical common sense, the researcher was aware of how a business can increase their efficiency through utilising online tools and therefore used a deductive philosophy to prove this. There was also an exploratory element to this, as the researcher wished to investigate if the adoption of digital innovation has influenced the delivery of their social value/impact and therefore, competitive advantage over other incumbent charities.

3.14. Sampling and Recruitment of Participants

For this research, a purposive sample was used; Barratt et al. (2014) defined this sampling type as relying “on the researchers situated knowledge of the field and rapport with members of targeted networks” (p. 5). This is relevant as the researcher has working and personal experience of the charity sector and so the sample was taken from charity registers downloaded from the various United Kingdom Charity Commission agencies. The British Library (2019) refers to this type of sample as ‘cross-sectional’ as it is an observation of one particular variable, which in this case is the delivery of a volunteer programme. This data is then collected from the target market using a representative sample, which, in this case, are United Kingdom autism charities. The registers were filtered for organisations including the words: ‘Autism’ ‘Autistic’ and ‘Asperger’. After completing the audit of the registers, there were 524 autism charities in the United Kingdom (109 of them were regional hubs of the National Autistic Society), to which all were invited to participate.

Charities were incentivised to participate by firstly offering them access to the finalised report, and secondly, by creating and sharing a website where the resulting recommendations of the research will be displayed in an easy to read format for the charities to adopt.

As it is an online survey, the email invitation (with a hyperlink to the survey) could have been easily shared by participants to other charities in an innocent attempt to gain more participants for the research – this is known as a ‘snowball’ or ‘networking’ sample. A disadvantage of this is that the researcher then loses control of who is being invited to participate, which risks involvement of irrelevant participants or duplicated data from the same organisation. It was therefore requested to not share the link with anyone outside of their organisation. Participants were also recruited via Twitter and LinkedIn. Email invitations to be involved as a case study were sent to selected organisations that responded to the survey, as they already have engagement with the research ([Appendix H](#): Invitation Templates).

3.14.1. Participation Targets

With a purposive sample size of 524 United Kingdom autism charities (inclusive of the 109 National Autistic Society subsidiaries), and with an average online survey response rate of six to 15% (as investigated by Manfreda et al., 2008), the researcher estimated a response rate of 31 to 79 respondents but was hoping for 100+. The researcher aimed for five case studies, however there is a lack of literature regarding average participation rates for this method type.

3.15. Restrictions and Considerations

If this report were a longitudinal study of the efficiency of volunteering programmes over time, it would have to include the charities’ digital transformation period to examine how efficient the charity was before and after the introduction of online volunteering. Due to the limited time available (see the project’s Gantt chart in [Appendix I](#): Gantt Chart), a comparison was used across charities that provide online and/or offline volunteering opportunities. This research was also constricted by the following financial budget.

Table 1: Research Project Budget

Resource	Cost	Notes
Hardware	£0	Free use through host research organisation
Software	£0	Free use through host research organisation
Transport	£0	Research conducted online, so no travel
Stationery	£0	Research conducted online, so no stationery
Total	£0	

The research was conducted online, and so charities that still operate a more paper based system, may not have checked their emails or even have a social media presence to be aware of their invitation to participate in the research. Ironically, involvement in this research and the consequent report would be especially relevant for them, to increase their efficiency through digital innovation.

3.16. Ethics

The researcher submitted an Ethics Form, in line with the policy of the host research organisation. This was approved, ready for the research methods to be designed. The National Centre for Research Methods (2012) discussed research ethics for qualitative research and emphasised the issues of consent, confidentiality and anonymity. These were covered by briefing each participant for consent and codifying the participating charity names within the report for confidentiality and anonymity. The National Centre for Research Methods also raised the following concern: “If somebody is telling you things that are quite personal, and perhaps, quite distressing, you need to think about what would happen if other people, perhaps, could identify who they are” (2m 4s). This is relevant for this report, as a charity may have admitted major inefficiencies or misconducts within their volunteering programme that may put the organisation into disrepute. Vandekerckhove (2018) defined this as “whistleblowing” (p. 15), and used the Wikileaks website as a prime example. Cameron (2011) agreed and stated: “Pressure should not be exerted to gain participation or access to information” (p. 462). The

researcher took this into consideration when inviting charities to participate, especially in the case studies, which required more personable communication.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Within this section, the researcher sequentially analysed the results of the online surveys and then the case studies, as both methods were linked using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This section ends with a summary of how the researcher has met the objectives of the report.

4.1. Survey Data

4.1.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The feedback gained from the pilot survey was very positive, with only some basic changes to the terminology. Feedback included:

- “Easy to use and flowed well/made sense”
- “Very clear language”
- “Good length”
- “Maybe too many options”

The suggested amendments from each of the pilot participants were made before launching the survey to the proposed sample. An example response from the actual survey can be seen in [Appendix J](#): Sample Survey Response.

4.1.1.1. Representative Samples

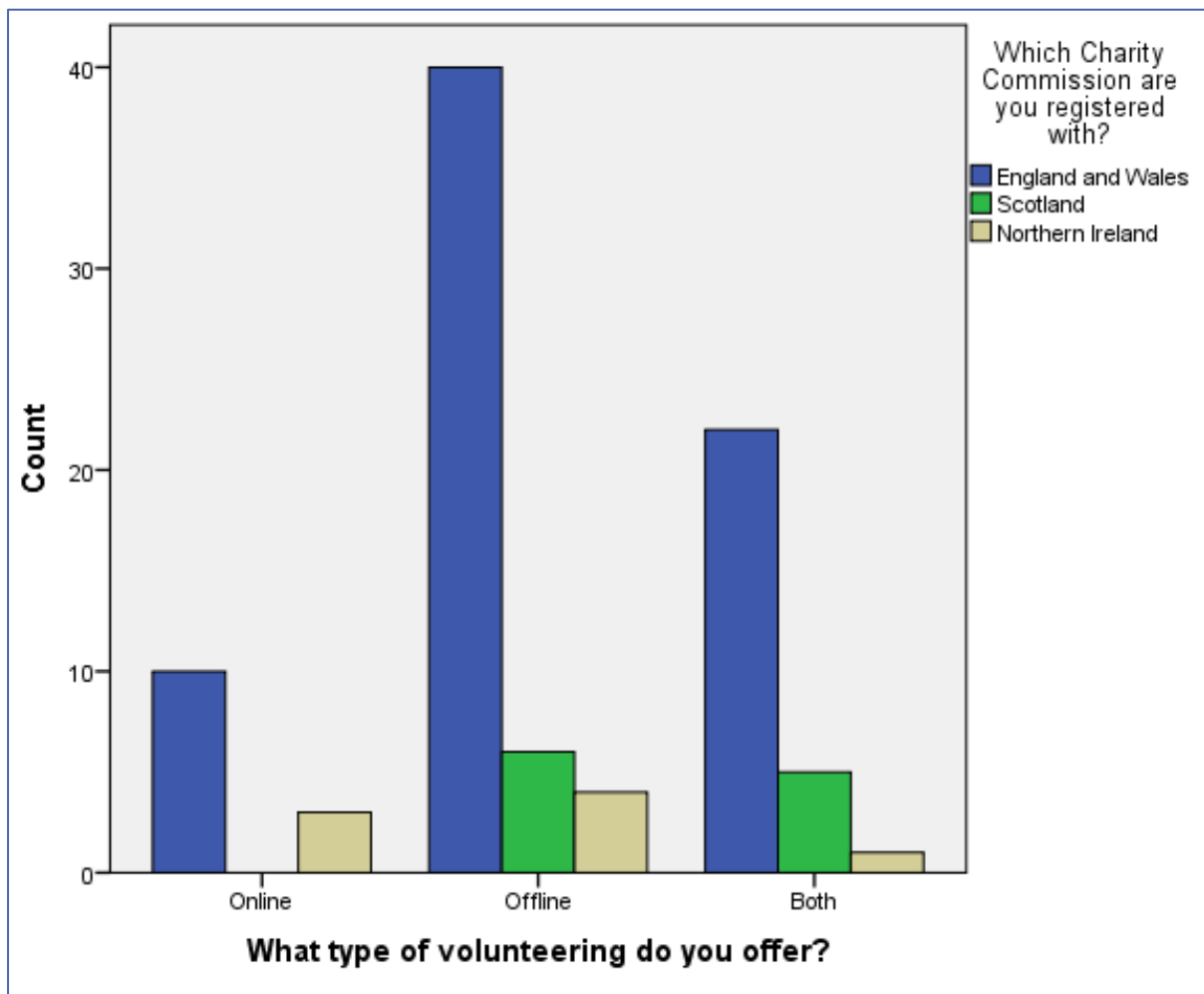
The researcher has conducted analysis to demonstrate a representative sample of, firstly, differing volunteer programmes (online and/or offline), secondly, United Kingdom regions, and finally, differing service delivery.

4.1.1.1.1. Across the Regions

The researcher has conducted a chi-square test ([Appendix K](#): Quantitative Survey Results) to validate that there was a statistically significant amount of charities from each of the three

United Kingdom Charity Commission regions (England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), whilst also showing that each region had equal representation of volunteering programmes (online and/or offline). 91 of the 118 participating charities delivered a volunteering programme, and so 27 participating charities were not included in the chi-square tests. This test calculated a p-value of 0.179, which means that there isn't a significant difference between the regions. The researcher has therefore been successful in gaining a true geographical cross section of the United Kingdom. Online-only volunteering programmes by autism charities registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, are the only 'case' which lacks representation within this survey. In contrast, there is a large representation of offline-only volunteering programmes by autism charities registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Figure 1: United Kingdom Regions against each Volunteering Programme Type

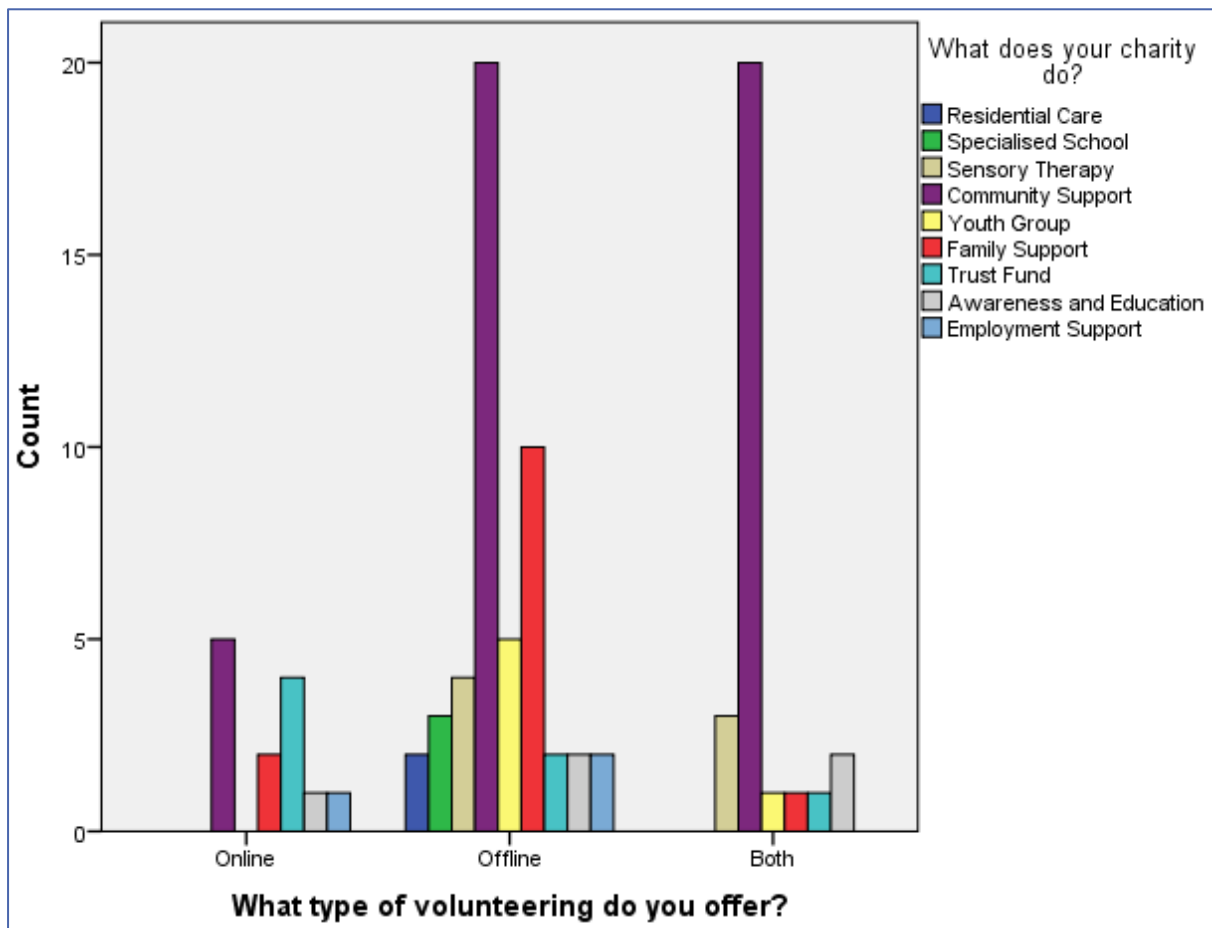


4.1.1.1.2. Across Charity Types

In order to demonstrate a representative sample, the researcher has also conducted a chi-square test ([Appendix K: Quantitative Survey Results](#)) to validate if there was a statistically significant amount of charity types, whilst also showing that each type had equal representation across the volunteering programme types (online and/or offline). 91 of the 118 participating charities provide a volunteering programme, and so 27 participating charities were not included. This test calculated a p-value of 0.035, which means that there is a significant difference between the charity types, as can be seen in the bar chart. United Kingdom autism charities providing ‘community support’ are significantly over represented in this study, followed by ‘family

support’. Whereas there is no representation of ‘youth groups’ that provide an online volunteering programme.

Figure 2: Charity Types against each Volunteering Programme Type



4.1.1.1.3. Date ranges of the introduction of online volunteering programmes

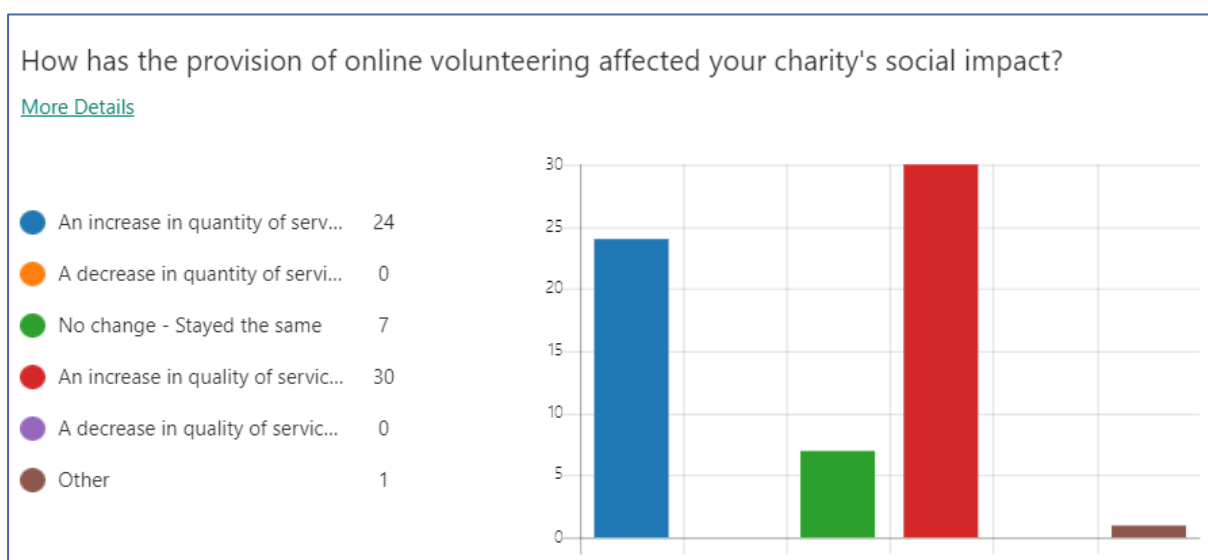
There were only 41 participating charities that provided online volunteering programmes (either solely online volunteering, or as a combination with offline), and so by examining the dates such programmes were established, the researcher has deduced that it is still a very new phenomenon which charities are still establishing ([Appendix K: Quantitative Survey Results](#)). The earliest date was July 2010 and the latest being very recent (April 2019). Using the mean average type, July 2017 was the most popular time to establish an online volunteering programme for United Kingdom Autism Charities. The researcher has consulted the National

Council for Voluntary Organisations (2017) website for reasons why this period was so popular to establish an online volunteering programme and it lists possible reasons as a new Civil Society Minister being appointed and a new ad-hoc Lords Committee on civil engagement and citizenship being set up that month. All these recent dates mean that charities will still be establishing their online volunteering programmes to deliver organisational resilience and competitive advantage, and so this report will provide them with further assistance at a vital time in their programme development.

4.1.1.2. The impact of online volunteering programmes

This question provided participants with the option of selecting multiple responses, and so through descriptive analysis, it is obvious that online volunteering programs have had a positive impact upon the quantity (24 charities) and quality (30 charities) of the service provided. Only seven participating charities described zero impact upon services and no charities described a negative impact of online volunteering, which is encouraging.

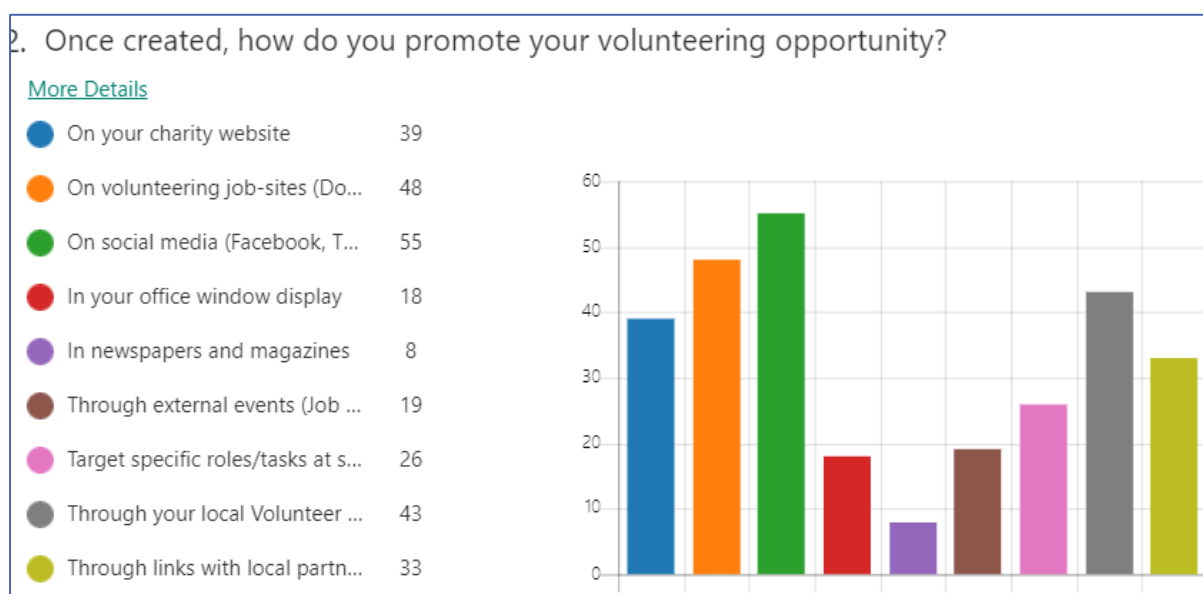
Figure 3: The Social Impact of Online Volunteering has upon the Charity



4.1.1.3. How charities promote their volunteering opportunities

This was another question that allowed participants to select multiple responses. Social media was the most popular method of promoting volunteering opportunities, with 55 charities selecting it. In contrast, printed media (such as newspapers and magazines) was the least popular option, which really demonstrates a sign of the times. In fact, three out for the top five are online tools such as volunteering job sites and their own charity websites.

Figure 4: The Popular Methods of Promoting Volunteering Opportunities

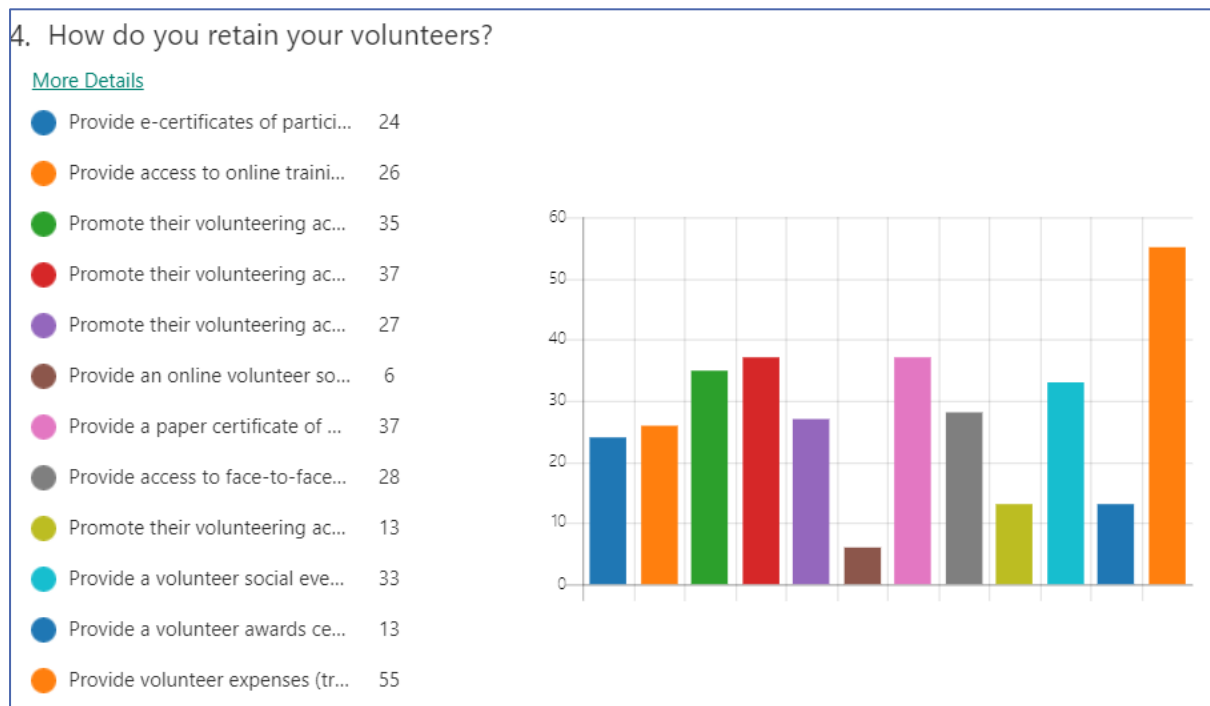


4.1.1.4. How each volunteering programme type conducts their Disclosure and Barring Service checks

89 of the 118 participating charities provided information about their Disclosure and Barring Service checking methods, and from the chi-square test ([Appendix K: Quantitative Survey Results](#)), the p-value was calculated as 0.011. This means that there is a statistically significant number of participating charities that conduct their Disclosure and Barring Service checks online, rather than in person via a paper application.

4.1.1.5. How charities retain their volunteers

Figure 5: Popular Ways that Volunteers are Retained



By far, the most popular method of retaining volunteers is through providing volunteer expenses (for such things as travel and sustenance), with 55 charities selecting it. The next most popular methods (selected by 37 charities) of retaining volunteers were equally to promote their achievements on social media, and to provide them with a paper certificate of participation (comparatively, only 24 charities provide e-certificates instead). The least popular way to retain volunteers was to host online volunteer social events (via Skype, for example). Six charities do offer this, and so it is possible.

4.1.1.6. Resources used to deliver volunteering programmes

4.1.1.6.1. Human

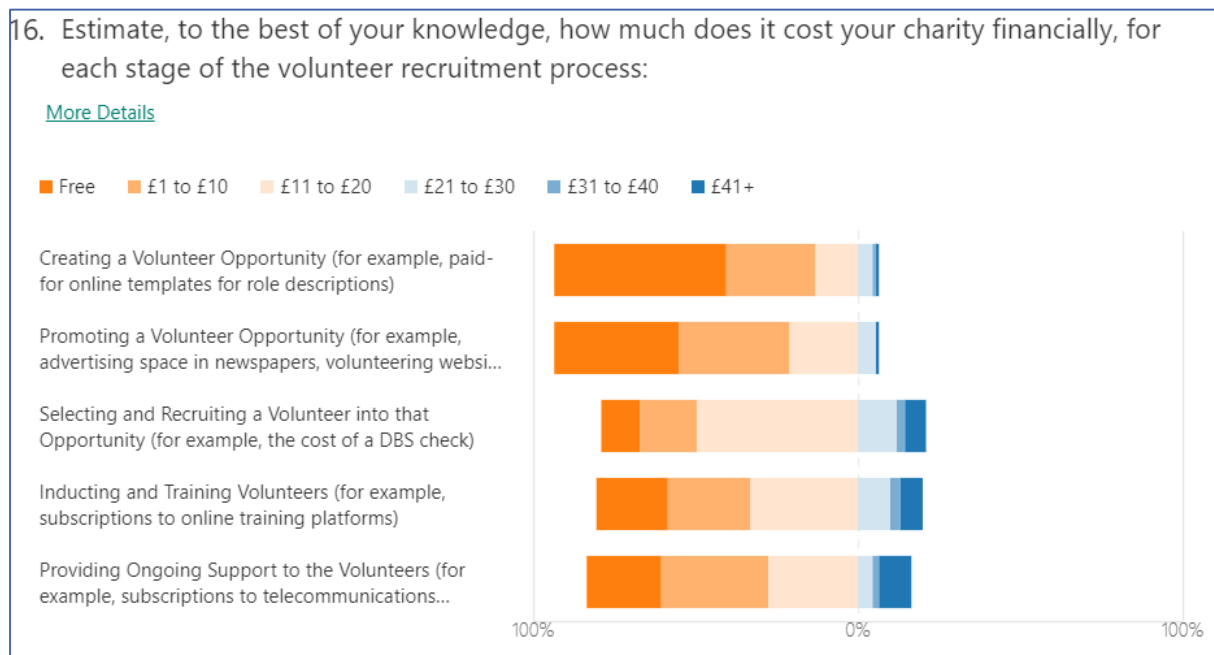
Figure 6: Human Resources used for each Stage of the Volunteer Programme



From the analysis, the researcher can see that volunteer programmes are managed efficiently, in terms of the human resources dedicated to each stage of the volunteer recruitment journey, however it is evident that the shortlisting, interviewing and recruitment of volunteers is the most labour intensive process.

4.1.1.6.2. Financial

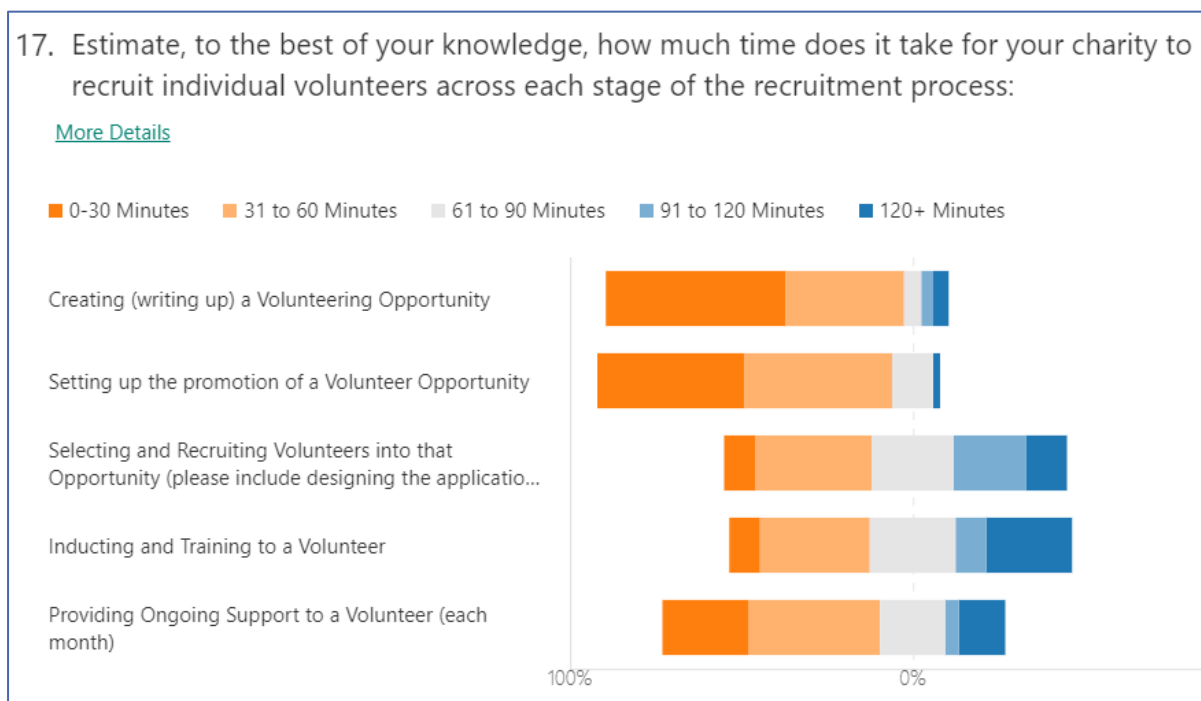
Figure 7: Financial Resources used for each Stage of the Volunteer Programme



Both the creation and promotion of volunteering opportunities are very efficiently run in terms of financial resources, with most charities paying anywhere from free to £10 on these processes. Later in the report, it is demonstrated that social media was the most popular method of (free) promotion. However, the costliest processes are the recruitment, training and support of the volunteer, with some charities spending £41+ on each stage and on each volunteer.

4.1.1.6.3. Time

Figure 8: Time used for each Stage of the Volunteer Programme



Like the previous two resource types, the creation and promotion of volunteer opportunities are the least resource-heavy processes in terms of time for charities. The two elements that take up the most time (often 120+ minutes) is the recruitment and training of the volunteers.

4.1.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

4.1.2.1. Barriers to Providing Online Volunteering

Questions five, nine, and 11 of the survey were similar, however were on different branches of the survey. These questions all centred around asking what their barriers were to not consider delivering an online volunteering programme ([Appendix L: Matrices of Qualitative Results](#)). By tallying each of the statements regarding human resources, financial resources, time and other barriers, the researcher was able to see that human resources were the most popular reason to not consider introducing online volunteering programmes, whereas interestingly, cost was the smallest of all the barriers.

4.1.2.1.1. Human Resources

Many of the respondents mentioned that they were unable to provide online volunteering as their volunteers deal directly (face-to-face) with service users, or are too old to grasp IT. However, they did not seem to realise that online volunteering can be introduced within core/support activities, as seen in [Appendix A: Porter's Value Chain Framework \(Harvard Business School, 2019\)](#). Another point that was raised was the difficulty in comprehending the recruitment, training and management of online volunteers. Some charities did not see the need for volunteers, as the organisations are managed by paid staff.

4.1.2.1.2. Financial Resources

There weren't too many comments about finances, however there was a predictable concern about the organisations have limited or no budgets to design and deliver an online volunteering programme. One respondent mentioned that it would be impossible for them to budget for an expansion from a very local volunteering programme to a national or even international one, through the internet.

4.1.2.1.3. Time (as a Resource)

One organisation mentioned about the commitment level of volunteers, which the researcher interpreted as being a potential time related problem for the charity. It is indeed a common concern for charities, regarding the time investment they provide in recruiting and managing (online and offline) volunteers that could leave at any moment. The other common factor of time being a barrier, is that charities have very little time as a resource anyway and starting an online volunteering programme would take time that they don't have to set up.

School, 2019)), such as in human resource departments, for example. There was some hope though, as some charities said they will consider online volunteering in the future, but they just need to free up some of their resources first.

4.2. Case Study (including Netnography)

The case studies are codified for anonymity; however, the researcher has chosen them based on a representative sample, firstly from across each of the United Kingdom geographic regions, secondly, the type of volunteering programme they offer (online, offline or both), and thirdly, across the charity types based upon which services they deliver. Please note that although information has been included from their charity websites and from their profile on the charity commission of their region, their citations will not be included in the [References](#), due to the ethical reason of confidentiality.

4.2.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

4.2.1.1. Charity 1

Table 2: Summary of Recent Financial Accounts and Social Impact (Charity 1)

Financial Year	Income	Spending	Difference	Social Impact
2017-2018	£2,529,763.00	£2,616,835.00	-£87,072.00	33
2016-2017	£2,464,724.00	£2,515,050.00	-£50,326.00	33
2015-2016	£2,418,456.00	£2,403,256.00	£15,200.00	33
2014-2015	£2,323,545.00	£2,233,749.00	£89,796.00	33
2013-2014	£2,364,483.00	£2,443,939.00	-£79,456.00	33

By accessing the charity's public accounts on their Charity Commission website, the researcher has analysed their financial resources over the past five years, it can be seen that for all but one year, they have spent more than they have incoming, and so this is a real concern as they are unable to save anything for a reserve fund. The researcher has also read their Trustee Annual Reports and found that they have had the same social impact for the last five years, and suspects that this is their maximum capacity level.

4.2.1.2. Charity 2

Table 3: Summary of Recent Financial Accounts and Social Impact (Charity 2)

Financial Year	Income	Spending	Difference	Social Impact
2017-2018	£237,706.00	£175,515.00	£62,191.00	900
2016-2017	£142,952.00	£ 97,704.00	£45,248.00	600
2015-2016	£ 77,018.00	£ 57,483.00	£19,535.00	340
2014-2015	£ 39,050.00	£ 41,605.00	−£ 2,555.00	-
2013-2014	£ 24,481.00	£ 27,901.00	−£ 3,420.00	-

This charity is doing extremely well since the 2015 to 2016 financial year, both in terms of financial efficiency and social impact.

4.2.1.3. Charity 3

Table 4: Summary of Recent Financial Accounts and Social Impact (Charity 3)

Financial Year	Income	Spending	Difference	Social Impact
2017-2018	£133,346.00	£144,452.00	−£11,106.00	-
2016-2017	£194,978.00	£200,390.00	−£ 5,412.00	-
2015-2016	£153,026.00	£187,887.00	−£34,861.00	-
2014-2015	£198,512.00	£143,780.00	£54,732.00	-
2013-2014	£112,638.00	£136,880.00	−£24,242.00	-

Without evidence of social impact, the researcher was unable to evaluate their social value, however this charity has not been running financially efficient for four of the past five years.

4.2.1.4. Charity 4

This organisation established their online volunteering programme in July 2010. Their accounts (below) demonstrate that their charity is not running as efficiently as possible, as in 2017 their income (£211524) was lower than their expenditure (£215839) of that year (see overleaf).

Table 5: Summary of Recent Financial Accounts and Social Impact (Charity 4)

Financial Year	Income	Spending	Difference	Social Impact
2017-2018	£229,812.00	£219,187.00	£ 10,625.00	-
2016-2017	£211,524.00	£215,839.00	-£ 4,315.00	-
2015-2016	£251,619.00	£245,327.00	£ 6,292.00	-
2014-2015	£223,039.00	£164,014.00	£ 59,025.00	-
2013-2014	-	-	-	348
2012-2013	-	-	-	94
2011-2012	-	-	-	161
2010-2011	-	-	-	131
2009-2010	-	-	-	100
2008-2009	-	-	-	119
2007-2008	-	-	-	71
2006-2007	-	-	-	26

The researcher was able to examine Annual Activity Reports from 2006 to 2014, which although recent years have not been published, they do display their social impact before and after the introduction of online volunteering; without any recent data, it is difficult to judge if online volunteering has positively affected their charity's social value, however there was an unsteady increase between 2010 to 2011 and 2013 to 2014. Please note that this charity also works with a vast variety of partner organisations, which means that they indirectly support many others – therefore an accurate calculation of their social value is very difficult to define.

4.2.1.5. Charity 5

Table 6: Summary of Recent Financial Accounts and Social Impact (Charity 5)

Financial Year	Income	Spending	Difference	Social Impact
2016-2017	£ 1,343.00	£ 2,231.00	-£ 888.00	-
2015-2016	£ 2,070.00	£ 1,043.00	£ 1,027.00	-
2014-2015	£19,204.00	£14,421.00	£ 4,783.00	-

This organisation established their online volunteering programme in January 2018, and so their most recent annual accounts have not yet been publicly released. However, by examining their accounts from the previous financial period (2016 to 2017), they are not running

efficiently. Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to gain access to their social impact numbers to see what effect this had upon their social value.

4.2.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Only three charities provided documentation regarding their volunteering programmes, which included policies, induction checklists, agreements, application forms, and handbooks. However, some documentation was collected from their websites. These results are captured in a matrix ([Appendix L: Matrices of Qualitative Results](#)), however the main themes are summarised below, including some word clouds where appropriate:

4.2.2.1. Online Volunteering

The application forms that were provided were often a Microsoft Word file to complete, so they are already using online tools to recruit volunteers, perhaps without realising. The charities also had online volunteering roles, again, without realising. For example, the Social Media Volunteer that was mentioned, needn't work from their offices, as the role could easily be performed from someone's own internet connected device, from anywhere, at any time. Also, basic administrative roles could also be performed from anywhere, with the use of the volunteer's device (remote access dependent).

4.2.2.1.1. Human Resources

It is evident that charities invest a lot of human resources into providing a quality volunteering programme, and it can be seen by volunteers having the similar status and responsibilities as paid members of staff. The human resources of the charities were described as putting emphasis towards recruitment, training and policy development.

Forms, Google Forms or Survey Monkey), online video creators for induction and training (PowToon or Promo), online job sites (Do It or Reach) and social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) to promote their volunteering opportunities, and finally Disclosure and Barring Service checking websites (uCheck) where the applicant completes the process online, rather than the organisation.

The second objective was to develop knowledge to better use charity resources. By analysing the primary data, some charities are already implementing opportunities that could be defined as 'online volunteering', without even realising it. This research has demonstrated a need to raise awareness within the charity sector, highlighting all the benefits of online volunteering programme has upon their often limited resources.

The final objective was to improve online volunteer programmes, policies and procedures. The data has shown that investment of resources within the induction and training of volunteers has a positive effect on retention, and therefore the charity will not need to waste resources on a constant recruitment cycle due to a high volunteer turnover rate, and this can be done by creating high quality, tailored and engaging training videos using the online tools mentioned above.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

After conducting primary and secondary research, the researcher has demonstrated how the research objectives have been met. This section will answer the key question and hypothesis, set out in the [Definitions](#) and Abbreviations

- HR: Human Resources
- IBM: International Business Machines
- NCVO: National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- UK: United Kingdom
- UWTSD: University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Introduction of the report, followed by the limitations and implications of the research, with some self-reflection and a conclusion to the study.

5.1. Key Question and Hypotheses

The researcher has answered the key question proposed by stating that online volunteering and online tools do allow charities to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage through their volunteering programmes.

In terms of the three hypotheses, the researcher has successfully proven that firstly, online volunteers do have less impact on charity resources (although set up of online tools and templates may need some initial investment); secondly, that online volunteering programmes do create a positive social value for the charity, which therefore, in turn, contributes to their competitive advantage in their marketplace (which was the third hypothesis).

5.2. Discussion

In the researcher's opinion, the most surprising contribution to knowledge that this report found was the lack of charities that have started to provide online volunteering – either on its own, or in combination with offline volunteering. The researcher was hoping to compare such volunteering programmes, however most charities still only provided offline volunteering, despite advances in technology and consumer demand for innovation. It was cited that charities have not considered online volunteering due to their limited resources, which is somewhat ironic, as although an online volunteering programme may take some initial resources to set up, the ongoing management of online volunteers would be more efficient than offline volunteers.

Regardless of providing online and/or offline volunteering programmes, most charities did use at least some online tools to increase efficiency of their volunteering programmes, therefore

freeing up charity resources, which can then be reallocated to an alternative business function to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage.

5.3. Recommendations from Research

The following recommendations were made as a result of the data analysis and synthesises the citations obtained from the literature review. The researcher has collated these into a blog to influence volunteering policy and procedure for charities.

Firstly, the researcher suggests that specifically autism youth groups should consider developing online volunteering programmes to deliver online user services, direct to a generation that spend a lot of their time interacting online, as they were under-represented in the 'online' volunteering programme type. As aforementioned, Young (2007) believed that businesses (in this case, charities) will suffer if they don't embrace the technological paradigm shift, especially when the service users will likely be technologically savvy.

The creation of a volunteering opportunity was one of the most efficient activities of the participating charities, and the corresponding promotion of the opportunity was only slightly less efficient, however a recommendation would be to combine the two processes by the person responsible for creating the volunteering opportunity, by writing it directly onto the free volunteering job sites; this would cut out a large section of the process, and still deliver the same results, without any financial cost. This is in agreement with Berman's (1998) point that although volunteers are unpaid, there are still financial costs involved in recruiting, retaining and rewarding them.

Online Disclosure and Barring Service checking is a much more efficient method for charities, than in person. This is in terms of the time and human resources used in processing the checks. The cost differs per Disclosure and Barring Service checking website but can often be only

slightly more than an in person/paper application. The charity can research and decide which website is best for them.

From a good practice point of view, providing expenses is a great way to retain volunteers and they will not be out of pocket for their time; however, this is an unnecessary expense for the charity. The volunteer could work from home using their own devices and therefore not need to claim travel or sustenance expenses. There are some unavoidable financial costs to the charity such as insurance to protect themselves and their volunteers.

It is recommended that e-certificates should be used to demonstrate gratitude to the volunteers, instead of paper certificates to save on printing costs.

Hosting online volunteer social events should be explored by the charities as to how they can add value to such an experience; to encourage fun and informal online group interactions, rather than host a volunteer social event in person. This encourages team bonding and job satisfaction. This could include a quiz or informal webinars.

Outsourcing the recruitment of both online and offline volunteers is a way to alleviate charity resources. From the research, many participant charities use their local volunteer centres to promote their opportunities and recruit volunteers on the charity's behalf. This is often a free or low cost service. Lists of local volunteer centres (or "community voluntary service" centres) can be found online, for each region of the United Kingdom. Volunteer Centres can also provide training to the volunteer and the charity, which would save on the human resources that would otherwise be done in house. Depending on the volunteer centre, this can be a free or low cost service, and will take very little time for the charity to set up.

Charities need to be enlightened to the knowledge that despite who they provide support services to, and how they do it, they can still establish an online volunteering programme to provide organisational resilience and competitive advantage. Some charities mentioned that

they would be unable to provide online volunteering opportunities because of who they provide a service to, but all charities should begin to adopt online volunteering programmes to create organisational resilience and competitive advantage, as it is an efficient and achievable option. Chung and Lippe (2018) emphasised that it will become the norm to work remotely, and so these charities should adapt to this way of working. These charities will need better promotion of what online volunteering is, and to widen their understanding of the capabilities of volunteers, as not only be able to deliver user services, but really contribute to the charity's core support activities.

Even if the charity doesn't wish to implement a completely online volunteering programme, the researcher recommends implementing efficiency measures, such as digitisation of at least some of their volunteer roles to save their financial resources. For example, one of those volunteer roles could be a Fundraiser, as they could then create a greater source of income, whilst utilising minimal financial resources to host them. Awareness of such alternative online roles needs to be raised for charities to consider such online roles. The introduction of online volunteers frees some capacity for the people who work with the service users, and therefore allow for more autistic people to be supported.

When recruiting volunteers, a simple efficient method is to utilise Microsoft Forms for the application form; it is an extremely user friendly tool that would automatically collect and collate all volunteer data into a volunteer spreadsheet for reference. The tool also automatically creates graphs to monitor recruitment trends within their organisation. Free templates are also available online for creating volunteer policies and agreements.

The induction and training of volunteers were the most resource heavy activities that the participant charities did within their volunteering programmes, and so a recommendation would be to create online training videos to inform, motivate and engage the volunteers with

the different aspects of the charity. Charities could use free or low cost online creators and then upload to YouTube as an ‘unlisted’ video, which is not publicly accessible. Doing this would mean that the new or established volunteers could be emailed the training videos to watch in their own time, on their own devices, and would therefore not utilise any charity resources to become inducted into their role. A further recommendation is that once the charity has gained the knowledge of how to create engaging videos, the charity could create their own YouTube channel with regular uploaded content that could attract new funders, new talented volunteers and more autistic service users. Free video software and templates are available online and are easy to use. The volunteers can always then refer to the videos again when needed. This will save on human resources, as no-one will have to organise and lead on the facilitating the training in person, and a quality induction would save time otherwise spent performing a constant recruitment cycle due to a high turnover of volunteers.

There is no hiding the fact that a quality volunteering programme that encourages retainment and productivity will initially take time to establish, however once in place, it will be a more efficient and effective use of the charity’s time, which Mari (2019) had agreed, by highlighting that online volunteering can indeed bring security and productivity. Therefore, making charities aware of this will be vital, and so support from local volunteer centres and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations will be of utmost importance in digitally transforming their volunteer programmes. But charities really should at least consider providing online volunteering opportunities, as it seems that they have nothing to lose.

5.4. Implications

5.4.1. For United Kingdom Autism Charities

Although it may take initial human, financial and time resources, the researcher does recommend that charities start to use online tools for their volunteering programmes, as well

as provide online volunteering opportunities, which are both create a more efficient usage of their resources. Online volunteering may not increase the number of people who are able to access their service, but they can increase the quality of the service provided, due to the charity gaining access to more talented volunteers that are not necessarily in their geographical region.

5.4.2. Increase in Peer-Led Services

As people with autism can have problems with socialising, it could be suggested that if autism charities provide online volunteering opportunities, then the service users could also contribute by volunteering in an environment that they are comfortable and productive in, for example, their home. These roles needn't be customer facing, and so could enhance the core business functions, whilst still allowing them to access the user services for their own benefit. This would increase the quality of service provision, as it would become a peer-led service.

5.4.3. Implications for Future Research

Conducting interviews would have provided further insight into how charities can gain value through their volunteering programmes. Also, if there were a longer timeframe, it would have been possible and beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study to track the effects of implementing an online volunteering programme over time, by incrementally repeating the research methods to demonstrate the longer term effects on the efficiency of autism charities, after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union later this year. Whilst considering the possibility of a longitudinal study, it is also worth highlighting the prospect of also conducting a latitudinal study. Although this piece of research is generalisable across all United Kingdom charities, it would be worth repeating the research with other specific charity types, for example, those that support cancer victims, animal welfare or environmental issues. It would also be of value to compare against similar charities in other countries, particularly those that remain in the European Union for comparative purposes.

5.4.4. Limitations of Report

Upon reflection, a limitation of this report was to have not asked certain questions that would have made more efficient use of the researcher's time, for example, firstly asking which country's Charity Commission they are registered with, and secondly, what their charity does. These questions would have saved the researcher cross referencing the charity registers for each participant. Also, a question regarding how the participating charities heard about the survey (Email, Twitter or LinkedIn) would have provided useful knowledge for future researchers who wish to contact United Kingdom charities.

5.4.5. Self-Reflection

During this research, the study skill of self-reflection has been enhanced by observing the pressure that the researcher had placed upon himself, and the pace in which he wanted to work. Therefore, a key learning point of this research was to slow down and enjoy the learning process.

5.5. Conclusion

The United Kingdom simply does not know what effect that leaving the European Union will have upon the charity sector, specifically that of autism charities. So, in order to be competitive to source major funding, talented volunteers and disadvantaged service users, charities should consider the digitisation of their volunteering programmes to ensure they are efficient leaders within their market place. By utilising online tools and developing online volunteering opportunities, autism charities can become more effective at creating organisational resilience to best serve their service users. By increasing both quality of services and the capacity of supporting more vulnerable service users. To conclude, the report will finish, as it began, paraphrasing Cox (2016), who asserted that the way space and time are fundamentally intertwined dictates that we can only move forward in time. Even though traveling back in time

is impossible, it doesn't erase our past. It's still out there within this spacetime fabric. Therefore, even though in-person volunteering has been successful, charities should adopt the provision of online volunteering to progress and stay relevant to future demands.

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Chapter 7: Appendices

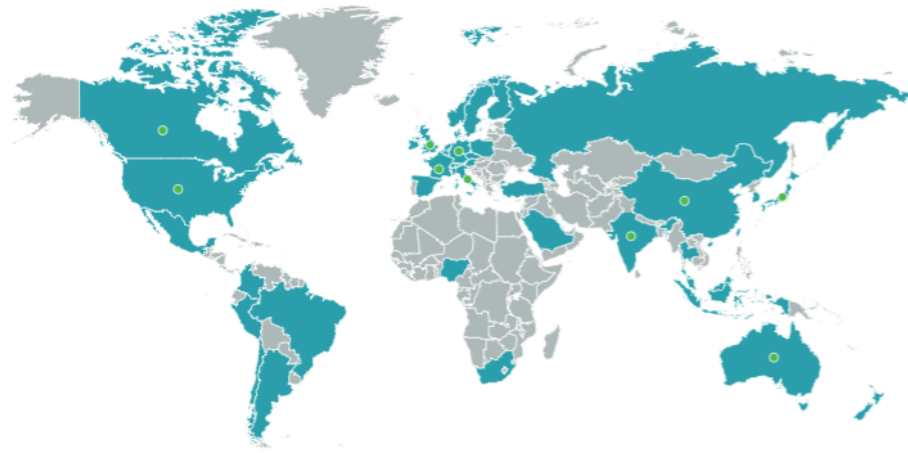
Appendix A: Porter's Value Chain Framework (Harvard Business School, 2019)



Appendix B: Global Millennial Survey Sample (Deloitte, 2019)

Survey Methodology

The 2019 report is based on the views of 13,416 millennials questioned across 42 countries and territories, and 3,009 Gen Zs from 10 countries.



Key

■ Millennials ● Gen Zs

Global Millennial Survey 2019

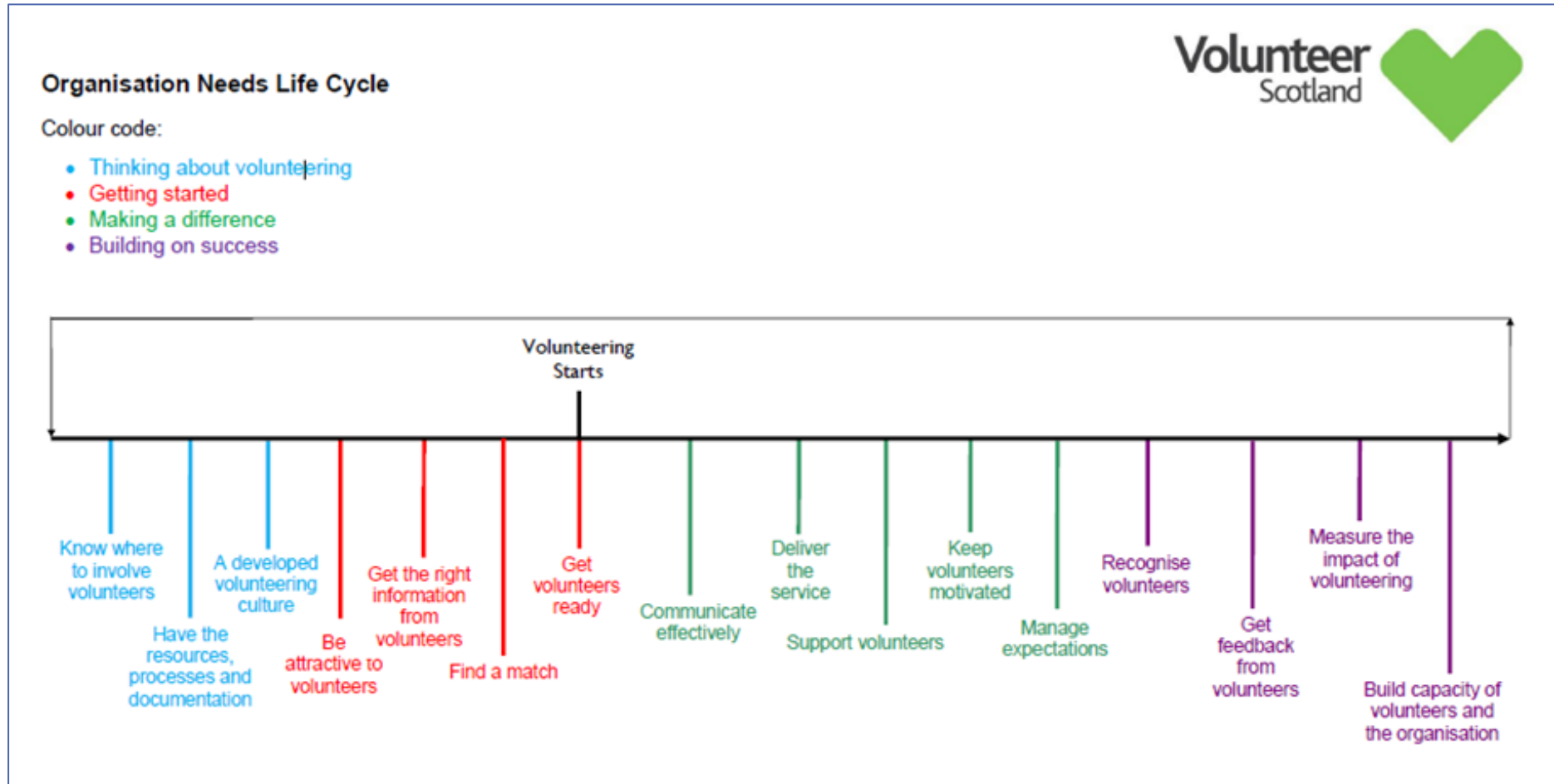
MILLENNIAL RESPONDENTS Interviews conducted: 13,416

Argentina	300	Malaysia	201
Australia	500	Mexico	300
Austria	300	The Netherlands	300
Belgium	301	New Zealand	300
Brazil	301	Nigeria	300
Canada	500	Norway	200
Chile	302	Peru	301
China	500	The Philippines	301
Colombia	301	Poland	300
Czech Republic	300	Russia	301
Denmark	202	Saudi Arabia	301
Finland	200	Singapore	200
France	500	South Africa	300
Germany	500	South Korea	302
Hong Kong	300	Spain	301
India	300	Sweden	200
Indonesia	300	Switzerland	300
Republic of Ireland	300	Thailand	200
Israel	200	The UK	500
Italy	301	The US	500
Japan	500	Turkey	300

GEN Z RESPONDENTS Interviews conducted: 3,009

Australia	301
Canada	302
China	300
France	301
Germany	301
India	301
Italy	301
Japan	301
The UK	301
The USA	300

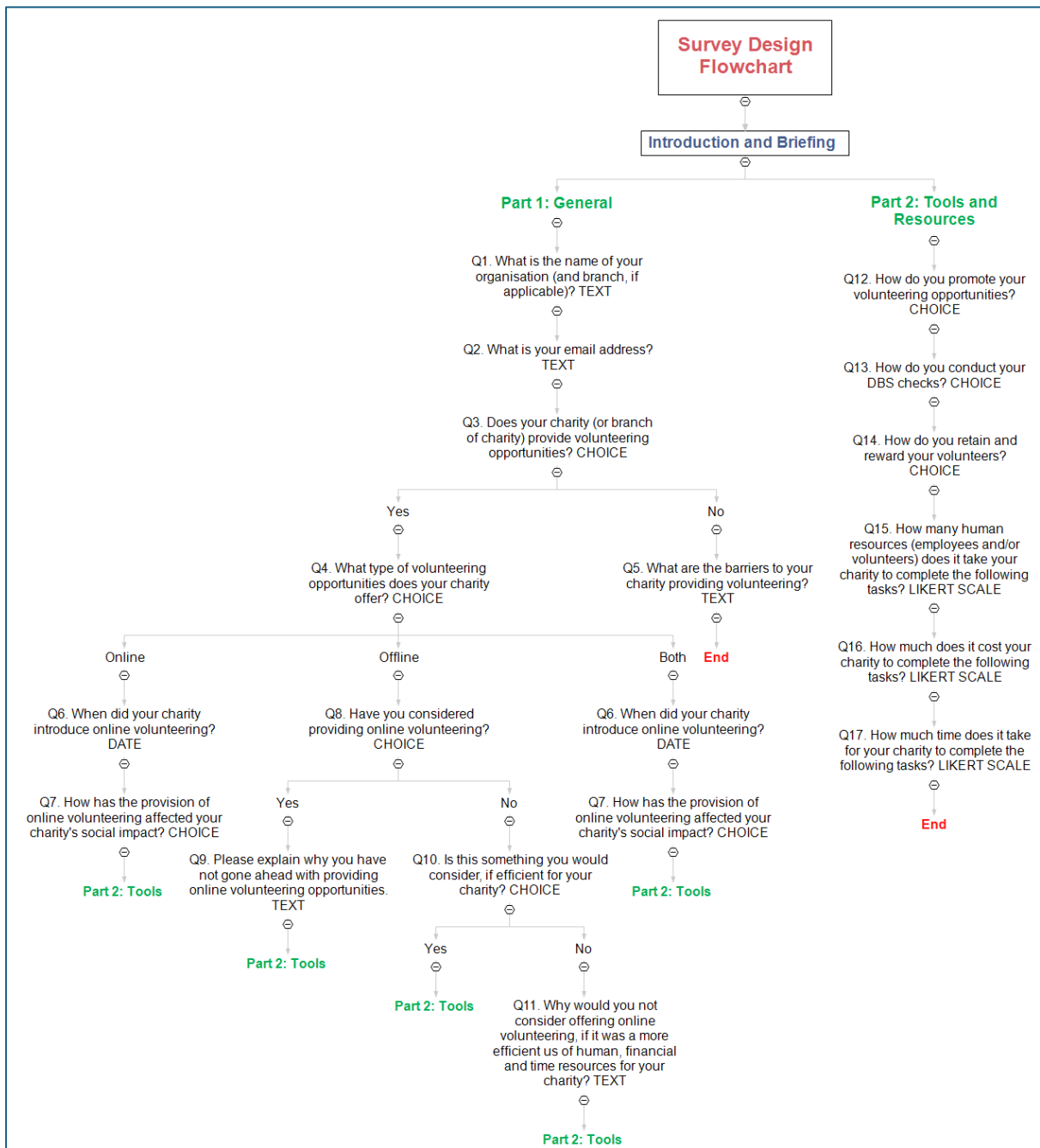
Appendix C: Volunteer Management Model (Volunteer Scotland, 2015)



Appendix D: Question and Theory Matrix

Survey Question	Related Theory in Chapter 2: Literature Review
1: Name of Charity	Charities Act (2011), National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2019a), Staples (2018)
2: Email Address	<Not an applicable question to relate to theory.>
3: Volunteer Provision	National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2019b/c), Miller (2005), Janus and Misiorek (2018), Hudson (2009), HR Dept (2017), Office for National Statistics (2017), Mastromatteo and Russo (2017)
4: Type of Volunteering	United Nations (2019), Prince's Trust (2018), Murray and Harrison (2005, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012), Cravens (2006, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012)
5: Barriers to Volunteering	Berman (1998), Vizeshfir et al. (2019)
6: Introduction of Online Volunteering	Morgan (2019), Porter (2004), Office for National Statistics (2017)
7: Social Impact:	Pallotta (2013), Livingstone (2013), Porter (2004), Merchant and Van der Stede (2012), Wolf and Goldkind (2016), Westlake (2012, as cited in Wolf and Goldkind, 2016)
8 and 9: Consideration of Online Volunteering	Young (2007), Smith and Williams (1998), Chung and Lippe (2018), Deloitte (2019), Armstrong (2017), Wadhawan (2019), Faragher (2019), Simmons (1996), Rochester et al. (2012)
10 and 11: Consideration of Efficiency	Mari (2009), Useem (2017), Porter (2004), Audit Commission (2007, as cited in Welsh Assembly Government, 2008), Williams and Giardina (1993), Mitton (2004, as cited in Philips, 2005), Merchant and Van der Stede (2012), Rochester et al. (2012), Simmons (1996), Stredwick and Ellis (2005), Brown and Jackson (1990), Home Office (1990, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012), Wales Council for Voluntary Action (2007, as cited in Welsh Assembly Government, 2008), Knapp (1990, as cited in Kendall, 2003), Poister et al. (2015), Fox (2002), Martin (2019), Hudson (2009), Philips (2005), Institute of Volunteer Research (2004, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012)
12: Promotion (Marketing)	Johnson (2013)
13: Disclosure and Barring Service Checking	Society for HR Management (2004, as cited in Levashina et al., 2017), Klass, McClendon and Gainey (1999 and 2001, as cited in Levashina et al., 2017)
14: Retain and Reward	Hudson (2009), Garrity (2012), Philips and Philips (2010), Johnson (2013)
15: Human Resources	Do It (2019), Reach Volunteering (2019), Fox (2002), Philips (2005)
16: Financial Resources	Simmons (1996), Knapp (1990, as cited in Kendall, 2003), Philips (2005), Institute of Volunteer Research (2004, as cited in Rochester et al., 2012)
17: Time (as a Resource)	Hudson (2009)


Appendix E: Survey Branching Flowchart



Appendix F: Screenshot of Final Survey Briefing Design

Forms Preview Theme Share

Questions Responses 39

 PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Volunteering Survey for UK Autism Charities

Please note:

- *Participation is optional.
- *Refusal to participate will not affect your treatment.
- *You may withdraw from the survey at any time and for any reason.
- *Your data will be treated with full confidentiality.
- *Your charity name and email address will NOT feature in the report.
- *Research has been approved by the Ethics Committee at University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- *Data will be held for analysis until September 2019, and then destroyed, in line with General Data Protection Regulations.

10010101
11101001
01000110

Appendix G: Risk Assessment

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?
Personal data being accessed by unauthorised people.	The charity that has participated in the research, the researcher, and the research organisation which could affect their reputations.	Data will be stored on the research organisation's password-protected OneDrive, which is only accessed by the researcher. The data will be reviewed by the Dissertation Supervisor, but not traceable to a participant as charities will be codified.	The participants will be briefed on how the data will be stored and used. Participants will be able to withdraw their data at any time. Questions will be voluntary and won't be required to be answered if the participant feels uneasy about providing that information.	Researcher	From Research Method Design stage
Spending too long at computer.	The researcher, through eye strain, bad back from sitting at computer.	Due to the researcher hyper-focusing, there is a tendency to spend extended uninterrupted periods at the computer.	Set reminders to take breaks from computer.	Researcher and Specialist Mentor	Throughout every stage of the project
Distress from the releasing of internal charity information	Participants may not trust the study and experience emotional distress.	Offering optional participation, and questions, meaning that they can provide info without intruding on the charity's confidential and private information.	The participant will be fully briefed at the start of the survey and case study.	Researcher	Research Method Design and Data Collection stages

Appendix H: Invitation Templates

Identifying information redacted in red.

First Email Invitation

FREE VOLUNTEERING REPORT 📎 1 ▾ +

ⓘ This message was sent with High importance.

MW Michael Winn (1803726) 👍 ↶ ↷ → ...
Mon 08/07/2019 10:21
[REDACTED]

Hi,

I am a researcher at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and I am investigating the efficiency of volunteering programmes, delivered by UK autism charities.

I am inviting your organisation to participate by completing a simple survey, which should take no longer than 10 minutes. Your responses will remain anonymous and will not be traceable back to you.

As a thank you, I will send you the finalised report in September, which will include recommendations for your organisation to deliver a volunteering programme through efficient use of charity resources, to provide further social value/impact and competitive advantage over other similar charities for major funding, talented volunteers, and disadvantaged service-users.

[<<SURVEY - CLICK HERE>>](#)


Please do not share this email with anyone outside of your organisation.

Thanks,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Second (Follow-Up) Email Invitation

ACTION REQUIRED: VOLUNTEERING SURVEY 📎 5 ▾ 🗄

ⓘ This message was sent with High importance.



Michael Winn (1803726)
Thu 11/07/2019 12:50

👍 ↶ ↷ → ⋮

[REDACTED]

Hi,

This is a follow-up email to the one I sent at the start of the week. I am investigating the efficiency of volunteering programmes by UK autism charities, and would really appreciate it if you could spare just 6 minutes (the average time taken by participants so far) to complete my online survey?

[CLICK HERE FOR SURVEY](#)


As a thank you, I will send you the final report in September, with recommendations to improve the efficient use of your charity's resources to deliver further social value and competitive advantage to gain major funding, talented volunteers and disadvantaged service-users.

If you have any questions, please just ask.

Thanks!

Twitter


Invitation



Mike W
@MikeW08072246

[REDACTED]

Hi, I am a researcher studying the efficiency of volunteering programmes, delivered by UK autism charities. Would you be willing to complete a short survey?



Forms


Fill | Volunteering Survey for UK Autism Charities

Please note: *Participation is optional. *Refusal to participate will not affect your treatment. *You may withdraw from the survey at any time and for any reason. *Your data will be treated with full...

forms.office.com

9:36 AM - 8 Jul 2019

LinkedIn Invitation




Mike UWTSD-Researcher
Student at University of Wales Trinity Saint David
now

⋮

****ATTENTION ALL UK AUTISM CHARITIES**** Please complete my quick survey regarding the efficiency of your volunteering programme. All participants will receive the final report, with recommendations to improve your programme.

#autism #charity #volunteer #volunteering #efficiency

Case Study Invitation



Michael Winn (1803726)
Mon 15/07/2019 10:13

👍 ↶ ↷ → ⋮

Hi,

Thank you for completing my survey into the efficiency of UK autism charities. Your input is very much appreciated and will provide a comprehensive insight into how volunteering programmes can enhance the quality and quantity of service provided to people with autism.

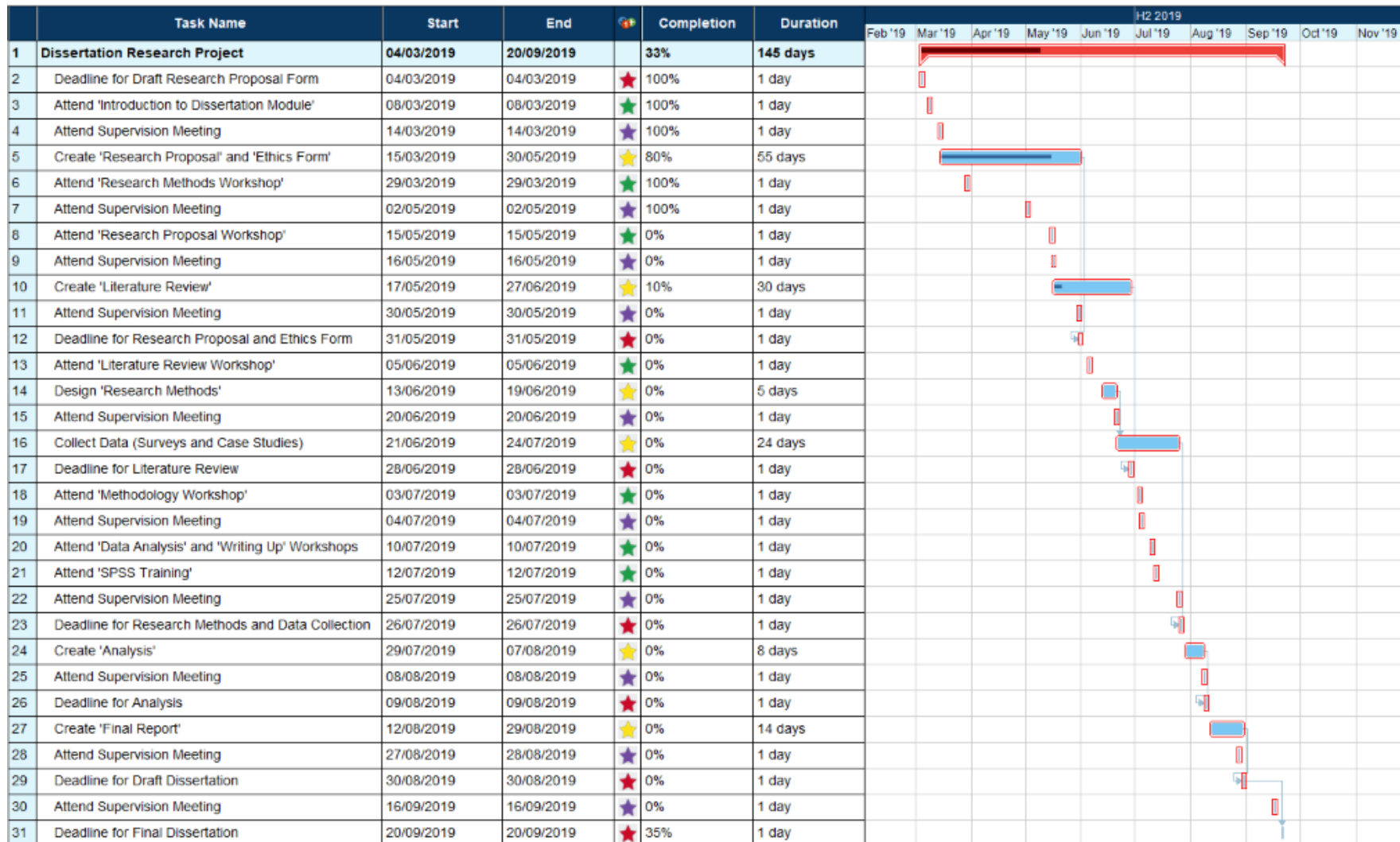
If you are willing, I would really like to participate in the second phase of the research, by becoming a case study for the report. This will only involve you sharing any of the following volunteer-related documentation with me:

- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Handbook
- Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Recruitment Process
- Volunteer Application Form
- Volunteer Personal Development Plan
- Volunteer Award / Reward Policy

This is to further investigate the efficiency of volunteering programmes. All data will be kept confidential and [REDACTED] will not be mentioned in the report, as all participating charities will be codified. Also, all documentation and data will be destroyed upon submission of the report in September.

Please let me know either way if you would be interested. Again, your involvement would be greatly appreciated. If you chose not to be involved, I would understand.

Appendix I: Gantt Chart



Appendix J: Sample Survey Response

Responder

03:41
Time to complete

Responder 1

1. What is the title of your charity (please include branch, if applicable)? *

Your answer is only for the researcher, and will not be included in the report. Charity names will be coded for the report, and so no answers will be traced back to you.

Stroud Court Community Trust

2. What is your email address?

This will ONLY be used for communication purposes with the researcher to not only send you the final report, (with recommendations to improve the efficiency of your volunteer programme) but to also invite you to further participate in this research. Your email address will NOT feature in the final report, nor will it be passed on to any other party/agency.

chris@stroudcourt.org

3. Does your charity (or branch of charity) provide volunteering opportunities? *

Volunteering is defined by the National Council for Voluntary Organisation (2019) as a freely-chosen "...activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups)..."

Yes

No

Appendix K: Quantitative Survey Results

Across the Regions

Case Processing Summary						
	Valid		Cases Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
What type of volunteering do you offer? * Which Charity Commission are you registered with?	91	77.1%	27	22.9%	118	100.0%

What type of volunteering do you offer? * Which Charity Commission are you registered with? Crosstabulation

Count

		Which Charity Commission are you registered with?			Total
		England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	
What type of volunteering do you offer?	Online	10	0	3	13
	Offline	40	6	4	50
	Both	22	5	1	28
Total		72	11	8	91

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.278 ^a	4	.179
Likelihood Ratio	7.063	4	.133
Linear-by-Linear Association	.795	1	.373
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 5 cells (55.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.14.

Across Charity Types

Case Processing Summary						
	Valid		Cases Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
What type of volunteering do you offer? * What does your charity do?	91	77.1%	27	22.9%	118	100.0%

What type of volunteering do you offer? * What does your charity do? Crosstabulation											
Count		What does your charity do?									Total
		Residential Care	Specialised School	Sensory Therapy	Community Support	Youth Group	Family Support	Trust Fund	Awareness and Education	Employment Support	
What type of volunteering do you offer?	Online	0	0	0	5	0	2	4	1	1	13
	Offline	2	3	4	20	5	10	2	2	2	50
	Both	0	0	3	20	1	1	1	2	0	28
Total		2	3	7	45	6	13	7	5	3	91

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.643 ^a	16	.035
Likelihood Ratio	29.055	16	.024
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.769	1	.016
N of Valid Cases	91		

a. 23 cells (85.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .29.

Date Ranges of Introduction of Online Volunteering Programmes

Statistics		
When did you start offering online volunteering?		
N	Valid	41
	Missing	77
Mean	JUL 2017	
Median	JUN 2018	
Mode	JAN 2019	
Minimum	JUL 2010	
Maximum	APR 2019	

When did you start offering online volunteering?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	JUL 2010	2	1.7	4.9	4.9
	JUN 2012	1	.8	2.4	7.3
	JUL 2012	1	.8	2.4	9.8
	APR 2015	1	.8	2.4	12.2
	JUL 2016	2	1.7	4.9	17.1
	OCT 2016	1	.8	2.4	19.5
	DEC 2016	1	.8	2.4	22.0
	JUL 2017	1	.8	2.4	24.4
	SEP 2017	2	1.7	4.9	29.3
	NOV 2017	1	.8	2.4	31.7
	JAN 2018	4	3.4	9.8	41.5
	FEB 2018	1	.8	2.4	43.9
	APR 2018	1	.8	2.4	46.3
	MAY 2018	1	.8	2.4	48.8
	JUN 2018	1	.8	2.4	51.2
	JUL 2018	3	2.5	7.3	58.5
	AUG 2018	2	1.7	4.9	63.4
	SEP 2018	2	1.7	4.9	68.3
	OCT 2018	2	1.7	4.9	73.2
	NOV 2018	1	.8	2.4	75.6
JAN 2019	5	4.2	12.2	87.8	
FEB 2019	2	1.7	4.9	92.7	
APR 2019	3	2.5	7.3	100.0	
	Total	41	34.7	100.0	
Missing	System	77	65.3		
Total		118	100.0		

How Disclosure and Barring Service checks are conducted

Case Processing Summary						
	Valid		Cases Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
What type of volunteering do you offer? * How do you conduct DBS checks?	89	75.4%	29	24.6%	118	100.0%

**What type of volunteering do you offer? * How do you conduct DBS checks?
Crosstabulation**

Count

		How do you conduct DBS checks?				Total
		Offline (In-Person)	Online	Combination	We do not conduct checks	
What type of volunteering do you offer?	Online	1	12	0	0	13
	Offline	17	19	6	7	49
	Both	5	13	7	2	27
Total		23	44	13	9	89

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.480 ^a	6	.011
Likelihood Ratio	18.833	6	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.077	1	.299
N of Valid Cases	89		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.31.

Appendix L: Matrices of Qualitative Results

Survey

Charity	Statements about Human Resources	Statements about Financial Resources	Statements about Time (as a Resource)	Other Statements
1	We are a service providing charity and the opportunities available to volunteers are limited to supported service users			
2	Because we are a school, volunteers would need a [Disclosure and Barring Service] check. In addition, because of the severity of need, people interacting with pupils need to have undergone specific training to keep themselves and others safe. this places a considerable strain on the organisation and is not something than can be offered for volunteers if they are only here for a few hours or days.		We would consider longer term volunteers, and have done in the past, but they would need to commit to honouring the time promised.	
3	Our work is about supporting people, so opportunities exist for face to face work. Online elements of the organisation			

	(e.g. website, Social Media) are already well supported.			
7				Don't know how it would be relevant to us
8				Not sure what this really means for us as we are face to face charity, but we do send lots of emails out to our clients who respond to us in this way
9	Face to face human interaction is a key feature of our success!			Not appropriate for the type of work we do. We provide therapy for children with autism which requires 1-1 or small group interaction.
10				Admin
11	None of my members have the skills and/or emotional energy to provide this. I do most of the work and is difficult enough to get volunteers. I only use people who are connected to the autism community.			
12				Communication is easier online when you cover a wide geographical area like Pembrokeshire
15	We have no training ourselves and would love more volunteers but don't have the energy or expertise to recruit and train them			

17				All our engagement is face to face
20			We had to provide this to keep up with the volume of work that we have	
23		We deliver online volunteering opportunities as it can be rolled on mass and as a national volunteer manager based in one area it would be impossible not to.		
24	I'm also not sure how you would 'host' or monitor/manage this effectively.			I'm not sure what tasks they could carry out online.
25				At the moment I don't believe it is relevant to our organisation and would require extra work to set up and manage.
26				We are only a small charity and would not have the need for this.
27				Can't see a role for it
28	Most of the carers are elderly and do not feel comfortable with IT systems.			
29	Currently not a need for volunteers			
30				We run groups which are face to face for children, young people and parents

31	All our registered ASC families are also volunteers of the charity.			We offer a closed confidential Facebook as part of our peer support programme.
32	Most of our delivery is by highly trained staff, less need for less skilled roles. Additionally, as a very small organisation the investment in training and supervision of volunteers would be a stretch for us			
34		Very small charity with limited resources		
36	As stated, much of our work needs to be carried out by people with good Medical, Scientific and / or Engineering knowledge. We are, therefore, limited by the qualifications and experience of potential Volunteers, in addition to suitable locations in which work can be undertaken.			
38	We meet in pubs for 5 socials a month and all members are equal and attend for social support. The group has no need for volunteers as it is self-run by the members all who have ASD.			
39				Will eventually

41	Because our volunteering is face to face on line would not work as we need adult to child ratio. There is no need to work from home			
42		Money	Time	
44				I would not know where to begin
54				Not needed right now
55	We prefer volunteers dealing directly with our autistic kids			
56	We are a peer support group, so our service users lead our groups			
58			No capacity right now	
63			No time right now	
64			I haven't got the time or knowledge about how to do it	
66			We just don't have the time at the moment	
72				I'd have liked a 'possibly' option. It is something we may consider in future but not something we are looking at yet.
77				Not appropriate in our line of work
79		No Money	No Time	
83				Wouldn't know where to start - would appreciate any help you can offer!

84	We use paid staff			
86				It needs a lot of investment - of time, staff and money.
88	We volunteer directly with people with autism, so I don't understand how we would do this online.			
91	We need volunteers to interact with the children			
95	It's just me doing everything. I prefer to do it all myself.			
96	Because all our volunteers work directly with our service users, and so how would we do that online?			
98	We have paid staff			
102				I don't know where we would begin to offer such a thing!!!!
105				don't know about it
107		We are currently experiencing financial difficulty, and so unsure of the future of the charity		
108	Paid employees only			
110			No time	
113		don't have much financial backing to have a volunteering programme	My own time	
116	Paid staff only			
Tallied Totals	24	6	10	21

Case Study (Netnography)

Due to confidentiality, please note that the researcher has excluded any references to the participating charities or anything that would identify them. Also, some of the information has been para-phrased by the researcher.

Charity	Online Processes	Human Resources	Financial Resources	Time (As a Resource)	Other
1	-	They are exposed to the same risks and have the same responsibilities as our paid staff conducting similar tasks. Volunteers are as subject to our policies and procedures as paid staff. We have the same moral, ethical and legal duties to our volunteers as anyone else that encounters our activities. As such, they are subject to our same recruitment, induction and training standards to ensure compliance with our practices and procedures, as would any paid member of staff. They are similarly entitled to the same	-	On a positive note, once employed, retention rates remain high.	The organisation has benefited greatly from a 12-month project by volunteers to restore a 130-metre walkway from the main house down to a sheltered and private valley.

		level of support and guidance as paid staff.			
2	<p>Word used for Application Form, to be completed online.</p> <p>Admin role: Update Charity Log (only key volunteers who have received training). Make flyers and posters- using the template provided.</p>	<p>Recruitment & Selection: We carry out informal interviews to ensure the role is right for both parties. We'll base our selection on the ability of each applicant to carry out the role, taking into account any effect volunteering may have on the safety of all parties, our brand and reputation.</p> <p>Training: You will be offered an appropriate induction including information about the volunteering environment and any equipment you may be using in your role. If you choose to take on an additional or alternative role or activity as a volunteer, your staff contact will be happy to help you widen or develop your skills and knowledge accordingly.</p>	<p>Expenses: You can claim for travel. All expenses should be agreed in advance by the CEO. The volunteering relationship is a unique relationship based on trust. It doesn't involve the obligations associated with employment and no other payment is made to people who give their time to volunteer.</p> <p>Insurance: All volunteers are covered for Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.</p>	-	<p>Social Media: Many of us have personal accounts on social media platforms to socialise and keep in touch with friends. You are expected to ensure that the information and opinions you share protects [our] reputation and are not in conflict with our brand, guidelines and policies or could bring the organisation into disrepute.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Our newest role is our social media volunteer who works to keep our online presence current and relevant as well as ensuring that our subscribers have access to stories of interest and keeping up to date with [our] activities and developments.</p>	<p>Committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination against employees, volunteers, clients, visitors or any member of the public who attends or uses its services. [We are] strictly opposed to any unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, in recruitment, employment or post-employment, for reasons related to the protected characteristics, identified in the Equality Act. All volunteers will be recruited using approved recruitment methods, ensuring that: All volunteers are interviewed/trained within a framework of Equal Opportunities. Full records are maintained. Acceptable</p>	<p>Insurance: [We] will ensure all volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance when volunteering for [us]. Expenses: All volunteers will be entitled to claim agreed out of pocket expenses associated with their role. [Disclosure and Barring Service] checks will be taken where appropriate for face to face volunteering roles.</p>	<p>The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure supervision formal or informal takes place every 3-4 months or more often if the need arises.</p>	<p>As our staff team is small and our member numbers are growing all the time, we rely on you, our volunteers to help increase the support we can offer to those who need it. Training videos: Some useful and interesting links and videos... [excluded]</p>
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		<p>references are obtained. Private file is set up for all personnel records. Information pertaining to volunteers will be treated as confidential, within our data protection guidelines. Volunteer opportunities are advertised via the local Volunteer Centre and on Do.it.org. All volunteers will undergo induction training: Structure and mission. Placement project guidelines, policies and procedures relevant to volunteers. Equalities and Confidentiality. Health and Safety. Claiming expenses. Volunteer agreement. Volunteer Role Description.</p>			
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