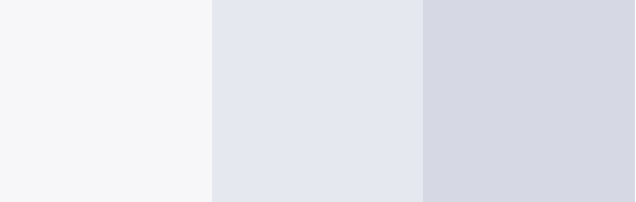# Leisure-seeking volunteers: ethical implications

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People construct socially salient identities of others that in some cases affect their morally significant perceptions of, and interactions with, those groups. If these perceptions are flawed, this has a bearing on fundamental ethical questions: in particular, how one sees, treats and understands those groups. Museum volunteers are a group that are often viewed with differing positive and negative associations and values. The objective of this article is to explore the values and commitment of serious leisure volunteers in order to make a more appropriate representation of volunteers. The article presents the results of a study of volunteers at three large museums and art galleries. The results show that these volunteers place a very high value on the work they do for the institution, and that their commitment to the institution is a combination of affective and continuance commitment. These findings challenge typified representations of volunteers, and the implications for ethical volunteer management are discussed.

Ethics is a 'hard issue' that includes complex elements such as ethical approaches, differing value concepts, ways of reasoning and methods of decision-making. It is beyond the scope of this article to examine all ethical issues, but ethical practices underscore the discussion of volunteer values and commitment in relation to the volunteer's role within the organisation. According to Singer (1993), for any person 'a job is never just a job, it also has a moral dimension: pride in one's product, cooperation with one's colleagues and concern for the well-being of the company'. Conversely, the institution has an obligation to recognise the needs and rights of its personnel. Institutions that utilise volunteers face a particular set of problems as they try to manage dual workforces: the paid and unpaid. Dealing with different staff groups is a complex issue for institutions. Walker (1998:178) contended that the assumption that people are a kind or type is propagated and created by representational conventions, which 'are among those that construct socially salient identities for people'. Representational conventions arise in order to simplify the process of understanding others by providing information about individuals based on group membership (Ford and Tonander, 1998). People's perceptions, even 'misinformed perceptions', often have 'the weight of established facts' (Gordon, 1995:203). In this

respect ontological matters are very significant. Ontology centres on notions of being or identity – including human identity – who one is and who one is not, including how relationships form and function. Ontological matters relate to important questions of seeing, experiencing, meaning, being and identity (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004).

Ethics and ontology are linked by a concern about how visual markers – such as skin colour, embodiment and gendered attributes – represent or determine the status of human beings, particularly in the context of value judgements. Thus, what we think we know about others from representations of identity can affect how we see, treat and understand them (Miller, 1994). The problem is that typified representations may undermine a group's dignity and historical integrity and cast a demeaning light upon their physical and intellectual habits and ontological status as human beings (Miller, 1994). These assumptions lead an individual to believe that he or she knows the other completely, and this assumption denies the 'other' status as human being and limits possibilities for human relationships (Borgerson, 2001). Thus these beliefs are never appropriate if they create epistemic closure without reasonable justification.

Complexities around volunteering may arise because the relationship between paid staff and volunteers can be confusing. Volunteers can serve on boards as well as in the programme, volunteers sometimes become paid staff and paid staff sometimes volunteer, paid staff may be required to be involved in corporate volunteer programmes, volunteers can be donors and volunteers can be members of the institutions in which they are volunteering. While it is broadly accepted that volunteers make a positive contribution to the organisations they work for, research has found that 'perceived stereotypical images of volunteers and ideological assumptions have been reproduced and continue to colour perceptions about volunteers, preventing them from being fully understood' (Graham, 2004:13). Representational problems include: a distrust of volunteers by those that work with them (Lewis, French and Steane, 1997; Lockstone, Deery and King, 2004); the belief that that volunteers cannot be managed, should and will perform any task, are readily available to all who want them (Brudney, 1999) and are more about socialising than working (Grossman and Furano, 1999). These judgements have negative consequences for working relationships within institutions: they can engender adversarial relationships with paid staff (Brudney, 1999), can alienate the volunteer, create insecurities in paid staff and at worse inhibit the organisation from realising its goals and objectives.

The dilemma is that these representations may contain grains of truth: unsupported and poorly designed and managed volunteer programmes are likely to result in any or all of these problems. Therefore a continued understanding of volunteering can break down representations of volunteers and assist in building positive relationships between paid staff and volunteers. As organisations have an ethical obligation to manage their volunteers appropriately, a discussion on volunteer values is required to assist in understanding them better and to improve volunteer management practices. The objective of this article is to explore the values and commitment of serious leisure volunteers in order to contribute to a more appropriate representation of volunteers, such that institutions can meet their ethical obligations in managing this workforce and realise operational goals and objectives.
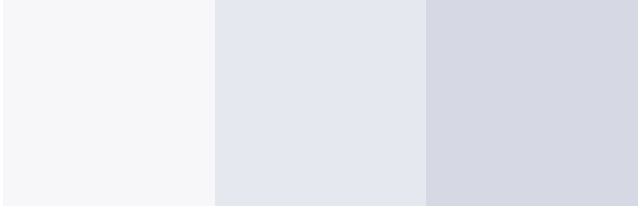
Ethics and values

A common application of ethics is to use it to refer to the formal study of morals, or to the work-related aspects of morality (Newman, 2000). In practice, Newman (2000:34) states:

> *Ethics and morality relate to the human ability to make choices among values, and to the human conduct which differentiates between what is thought to be right and what is thought to be wrong.*

Daily, people make decisions based on their values, on principles that they hold about what is the right or the wrong thing to do. 'Values are standards or criteria for choosing goals or guiding action and are relatively enduring and stable over time' (Dose, 1997:228). Values have a positive connotation and suggest something that a person is in favour of. Work values have been defined as evaluative standards that relate to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is 'right' or assess the importance of preferences (Dose, 1997). A person acting in a work capacity, while influenced by their personal values, must base their decisions on the values of the profession in which they work (Newman, 2000).

Volunteering is not a formal profession, but an activity that takes place in many professions; therefore volunteers would be required to demonstrate the core values of the particular profession for which they work. Core values that underpin professional practices in museums are education, conservation, preservation, community engagement and aesthetic approaches to display (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). Museums are governed internationally and nationally by codes of ethics. The ICOM Ethics Committee (2001) Code of Ethics states that museum professionals consist of personnel whether they are paid or unpaid and that 'the governing body should have a written policy on volunteer work which promotes a positive relationship between volunteers and members of the museum profession'. The Museums Australia (1999:2) Code of Ethics states that a volunteer is 'a person who, although not paid by the museum, nevertheless is treated in all respects as though he or she were a member of staff'. Edwards (2005) reported that people who contributed their time to museums were serious leisure volunteers. However, the fact that they see their volunteering as a form of serious leisure career does not mean that they should be managed as paid employees. On the contrary, museum volunteers want to enjoy what they do (Edwards, 2005); being managed as paid staff can make what they do less enjoyable, which defeats the purpose of them being there.

Values also relate to the identification of participants with the organisation and the internalisation of its goals and values (Tayyab and Tariq, 2001). Studies have found that the congruence between characteristics of the individual and characteristics of the organisation can affect volunteer attitudes and behaviour (Cuskelly, McIntyre and Boag, 1998; Farrell, Johnston and Twynam, 1998). Finegan (2000) asserts that organisations which do not have overriding values of economic gain may have values that are more altruistic. Museums are non-profit organisations that are motivated by values rather than by wealth creation. In part, this may explain why volunteers are attracted

to not-for-profit organisations such as museums, as they perceive a compatibility between the values of the organisation and their own (which are not for monetary compensation).

It seems likely that people who are not income-driven may place a greater emphasis on values that are central, enduring and distinctive, or as value-fit, as argued by Farmer and Fedor (1999). Therefore it could be assumed that the closer the fit between a volunteer's values and the values of the organisation, the greater the strength of the volunteer's commitment. This discussion is important, as volunteers bring their own values to an organisation and will work best where their personal values and those of the organisation coincide. It is these values that we need to understand better, as organisations have an ethical obligation to manage volunteers properly.

Commitment

Work values have been found to be related to commitment (Elizur and Koslowski, 2001). Commitment can be defined as:
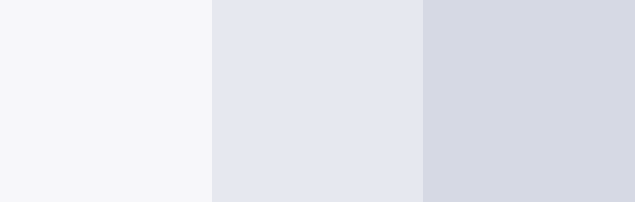
> [A] strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and definite desire to maintain organizational membership (Porter *et al.*, 1974: 604).

From an individual perspective, Werkmeister (1967) argued that commitment is a manifestation of the individual's own self, and reflects value standards that are basic to the individual's existence as a person. Thus individuals 'will be committed to an organization for different reasons and accordingly, each type of commitment may produce different effects' (Finegan, 2000:152).

Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three components to individual commitment:

1. *Affective commitment,* which describes the emotional attachment a person feels for the organisation.
2. *Normative commitment*, which describes the feelings of obligation a person has to remaining with an organisation.
3. *Continuance commitment*, which develops as employees recognise that they have accumulated investments that would be lost if they were to leave the organisation, or as they recognise that the availability of comparable alternatives is limited.

Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) found that each component of commitment develops as a result of an individual's different experiences, and has different implications for on-the-job behaviour. Affective and normative commitment are associated with higher productivity, more positive work attitudes and a greater likelihood of engaging in organisational leadership (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Finegan, 2000; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer *et al.*, 1989). In contrast, continuance commitment has very few positive relationships with performance indicators (Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991; Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1993; Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Following this argument, it can be concluded that members will participate in an organisation by supporting activities which sustain the organisation's needs and by using organisational resources to pursue their own needs as they seek to find a place within the organisation (Aldrich, 1999). According to Pfeffer (1997), if an individual can be persuaded to do something, and their behaviour is not attributable to a powerful external force such as a reward or sanction, then that person will become more committed to the action and to its implications for other attitudes and behaviour. He goes on to argue that there are three conditions which facilitate commitment: choice or volition, publicness and explicitness. Choice is required to ensure that there are implications for an individual's behaviour and to reflect an individual's beliefs or perceptions. Publicness demonstrates that an individual has acted and binds the individual to their choice. Explicitness means that an individual's behaviour has clear implications, that they are committed to having chosen one action over another. Volunteering by its nature appears to demonstrate these three conditions. First, volunteers are there by choice – there has been no coercion. Second, their actions are public, and the term 'volunteer' represents to others the bond between the person and their choice to give freely of their time. Third, the act of giving their time for no monetary or material gain has explicit implications: they must like the organisation and the tasks they perform, in order to forgo carrying out other activities or being elsewhere.

Given that volunteers receive no direct monetary reward, it may be assumed that in the short term their commitment would be affective. Over time, depending on the type of experiences the volunteer has as they form bonds with managers and co-workers, as socialisation increases or as they learn new skills, their commitment for remaining with the organisation may change. For this reason, organisations should carefully consider the nature of the commitment they inspire in order to avoid inadvertently contributing to problematic representational conventions.

Method

The study was conducted at three large museums: the Australian War Memorial, located in Canberra, the capital city of Australia, in the Australian Capital Territory; the Australian Museum, located next to Hyde Park in the centre of Sydney, New South Wales; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, located in the Domain, in the centre of Sydney, New South Wales.

Methods used for data collection included a self-administered questionnaire mailed to the total population of volunteers across the three institutions (641 at the time of data collection) and a total of eight semi-structured, in-depth interviews with serving volunteer co-ordinators from each institution between November 2002 and February 2004. The questionnaire realised a 54 per cent response rate. It asked museum volunteers about their motivation for joining the museum, whether their expectations on a number of motivational items had been met, what they valued in relation to their work environment, their satisfaction with their volunteering experience and whether they intended to continue volunteering at the museum. This article focuses on the values and commitment of the volunteers.
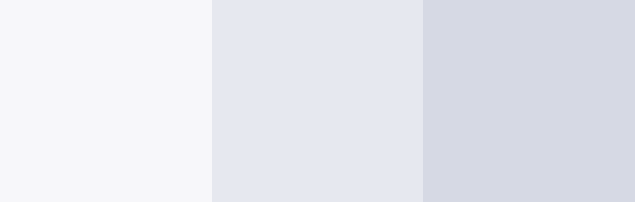
Value items used in this study were identified following a review of the literature; in particular, Porter *et al.* (1974) and Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). Work preference values were used because they are values concerned with what individuals like or prefer in their work environment instead of what they think is good or ought to be done (Dose, 1997). A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'very satisfied' to 7 'very dissatisfied' was used to measure responses. Some items were reverse coded to achieve consistency in respondent scoring. Respondents were also given the opportunity to make a written response to the question. Many took up this opportunity; consequently, those responses were treated as qualitative data.

The questionnaire was pre-tested in three focus groups. These groups consisted of six participants at the AWM, eleven at the AGNSW and five at the AM. Focus-group participants were representative of all volunteering areas within each museum. The questionnaire was modified following feedback from the focus groups.

Data analysis
Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 12.0.1. To test the internal reliability of the instrument, mean scores, standard deviations and scale alphas were identified and are presented in Table 1 for values in relation to work environment, satisfaction with the organisation and satisfaction with volunteer experience. Levene's test for equality of variance was used to explore the variance between the mean groups (men and women) on the value questions; this is a test to detect if members of a group are the same or different. When the value for F is large and the P-value is less than .05, this indicates that the variances are heterogeneous, which violates a key assumption of the t-test (Veal, 2005; Wielkiewicz, 2000). Subsequently, the test confirms or rejects the proposition that there were no differences between what men and women volunteers valued in relation to their work environment. The t-test results are presented in two formats. The first format – 'equal variances assumed' – is the test result that should be reported under most circumstances when the key assumption of the t-test is not violated. The second format reports a t-test for 'unequal variances assumed', which is an alternative way of computing the t-test that accounts for heterogeneous variances and provides an accurate result even when the statistics showing that the group shares similar characteristics do not hold (as indicated by the Levene test) (Wielkiewicz, 2000).

Qualitative data analysis was conducted with the aid of QSR NUD*IST Vivo software, a program specifically designed to facilitate analytic induction. Analytic induction is 'the thesis that there are regularities to be found in the physical and social worlds' (Huberman and Miles, 1994). Constructs used to express these regularities are obtained by an iterative procedure not too dissimilar from grounded theory, where emerging concepts, theories and propositions come directly from the data and not some form of a priori assumption, other research or existing theoretical frameworks (Huberman and Miles, 1994). This procedure involved three distinct activities: ongoing discovery, coding and review of findings (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). First, ongoing discovery was conducted by identifying themes and developing concepts and propositions. Then, as the data were collected, the researcher constantly theorised and tried to make sense of the data. As notes and transcripts were read, emerging

themes were tracked and developed, and concepts and propositions of the data were interpreted. Second, following data collection the data were coded and the researcher's understanding of the subject matter was refined. The final activity was to review findings by understanding the data in the context in which they were collected (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). During all stages, attention was paid to negative cases in order to redefine the phenomenon (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) and to assert a more valid claim on the general nature of what was found.

Results

The Australian War Memorial (AWM) houses the largest collection of war artefacts in Australia. The purpose of the AWM is to commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who died in war; its vision is:

> To be an outstanding Memorial that is acclaimed for its commemorative ethos, activities and exhibitions; engages with the greatest possible number of people; undertakes continuing revitalisation; and is recognised as a pre-eminent national institution (Australian War Memorial, 2002).

The AWM has a code of ethics for collections but not for professional working conduct.

The Australian Museum (AM) houses a national science collection. AM's purpose is to propagate knowledge about the natural environment of Australia and to increase that knowledge specifically in the areas of biology, anthropology and geology (Australian Museum, 2003). The vision of the museum is 'Sustainable environments and cultures for future generations achieved through documenting and understanding the past and present' (Australian Museum, 2003:2). To achieve the vision, the AM's mission is to 'Research, interpret, communicate and apply understanding of the environments and cultures of the Australian region to increase their long-term sustainability' (Australian Museum, 2003:2). The AM has a code of conduct which relates to gifts, benefits and secondary employment, but not to professional working conduct (Australian Museum, 2003).

The Art Gallery of New South Wales (AG) houses an extensive collection of national and international artworks. The purpose of the AG is to 'develop and maintain a collection of works of art, and to propagate and increase knowledge and appreciation of art' (Art Gallery New South Wales 2003). Its mission is:

> [To] maintain a reputation as an energetic, outgoing and accessible art institution in Australia, and at the same time strive to be a major international gallery of the world, continuing to inspire, interest and provide enjoyment to increasingly diverse audiences (Art Gallery New South Wales, 2003:1).

The AG developed a code of conduct in 2001 which *inter alia* states that: staff should support their co-workers and colleagues in a responsible and ethical manner; should perform all duties associated with their positions diligently, impartially, conscientiously, in a civil manner and to the best of their ability; and treat members of the public and

other staff members with courtesy and with sensitivity to their rights (Art Gallery New South Wales, 2001).

Of the 90 per cent of respondents who chose to answer the demographic questions, 65 per cent were women and 35 per cent were men. Consistent with other volunteer studies (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001; Wilson, 2004; Wilson, 2000), the majority of respondents were either living with someone or were married and had two or three children. A large proportion of respondents are in the later life-cycle stages, with 82 per cent in the 55–74 age group. The majority of respondents (61 per cent) were retired and well educated, with 70 per cent of respondents having gained either a college certificate or university degree. Respondents contribute their services for long periods of time: at the time of data collection, 54 per cent of respondents had been with the institution for more than five years and 44 per cent for up to five years.

Guiding is the main activity carried out by volunteers (49 per cent), followed by front of house (28 per cent) and research (24 per cent). There is a gender difference in the types of roles that volunteers undertake: proportionally more women undertake roles in guiding, front of house and administration, while proportionally more men undertake roles in research. Other activities carried out by volunteers include: working at various day and evening functions serving drinks and food; manning activity stations; working in the library; training guides; conservation fieldwork; making costumes and designing activities for children; opening mail; filling envelopes; working in the coffee shop; selling tickets to special exhibitions; counting votes; and organising rosters. Demographic data tell us who is volunteering; the next section presents the results of volunteer values and satisfaction.

Volunteer values
Table 1 displays the mean scores, standard deviations and scale alphas for variables: values, satisfaction with how volunteers are organised and satisfaction with their experience. The table illustrates that the internal reliability for values and satisfaction with volunteering experience is high, with coefficient alphas of .74 and .86. Standard deviation for satisfaction with the organisation of volunteers indicates that there may have been some highly satisfied and some highly dissatisfied people.

Table 1: Mean scores, Standard Deviations (SD) and Reliabilities (_)

Variables	N	Mean[a][b]	SD	_
Values in relation to work environment	342	2.41	0.63	0.74
Satisfaction with organisation	333	2.07	1.14	N/A
Satisfaction with volunteer experience	334	1.66	0.83	0.86

[a] Lower scores indicate higher levels for each variable
[b] Scale range 1–7 for each variable

The majority of value items were important, as indicated in Table 2. However, what volunteers valued most was how well they fulfilled their tasks. They take pride in their work and they are proud to work in the organisation. It is important to them that they get the job done, and they consider the work that they do for the organisation to be important. These values were more important to volunteers than the goals of the organisation. This suggests that volunteers place a very high value on the work they do. Being involved in decision making and having a job description were the least valued, scoring a mean of 3.47 and 4.06 respectively. A majority of respondents (81 per cent) felt they had similar values to the institutions for which they volunteered – which is not surprising, given that they have self-selected into these organisations. Only 60 per cent of respondents felt it was important to be involved in decision-making and only 43 per cent valued having a job description.

Table 2: Values in relation to work environment (N = 342)

	% Agree	% Disagree	Mean[ab]	SD
Take pride in the work that I do	98.0	0.87	1.50	0.68
Getting the job done is important	96.5	0.58	1.67	0.74
Proud to tell others I work for the organisation	96.8	0.58	1.75	0.80
The work I do is important	96.5	1.45	1.87	0.86
It is important that I am allowed to use my initiative	91.3	5.22	2.04	1.14
Goals of the organisation are important	86.7	5.80	2.07	1.26
Doing my job as instructed by my supervisor is important	86.4	3.77	2.13	1.14
It is important to me that I can work independently	81.4	13.91	2.55	1.44
I chose to work in this organisation because I think our values are very similar	80.6	3.19	2.48	1.11
It is important that I receive regular training	80.6	12.75	2.48	1.50
It is important that I have a work plan	75.9	13.04	2.72	1.47
It is important that I am recognised for my efforts	74.5	21.45	2.92	1.64
It is important that I am involved in decision making process	60.0	34.20	3.47	1.83
It is important that I have a job description	43.2	45.80	4.06	1.94

[a] Lower scores indicate higher levels for each variable
[b] Scale range 1–7 for each variable

Comments on values

A number of respondents felt it necessary to comment on the work value items; the results are presented in Table 3. Their remarks focused on recognition, training, self-satisfaction, receiving support and encouragement, being independent, using their skills and a management style that was responsive to their workplace needs. This indicates that even though respondents did not rate recognition as highly as other items, it is still an issue of concern to them. Table 4 shows that twenty-three out of forty-five responses were centred on recognition. Although the comments that follow are various, the examples highlight the importance that volunteers place on recognition in making them feel valued.

Table 3: Comments on values

Theme	Number
Appreciated/recognised/thanked/valued	10
Recognition is important	5
Lack of recognition	5
Training	3
Job description, instruction is important	3
Personal attachment/self satisfaction	3
Support	3
Recognition is not important	3
Skills not used	3
Independence is valued	3
Encouraged	2
Unresponsive management	2
Total	**45**

Volunteers are appreciative of the recognition they receive:

> *Although I would continue to do the same work without acknowledgement (at weekends and supervisors are never there when I work) it is nonetheless REALLY [respondent's emphasis] nice that we are publicly thanked so warm-heartedly. It wasn't always done so well and I appreciate the efforts made now.*

However, a number of comments by volunteers suggest that the way volunteers are perceived by others in the organisation is not an appropriate representation. There are perceptions that volunteers will perform any job task, are readily available to work any time and are not an intrinsic part of the organisation:

> *There is often a feeling that volunteer guides are important to AGNSW only because they save money – I think we need ideals, philosophies to reach for and to abide by.*

> *I cancelled an outing to help. When I arrived at 9.30 a.m. I was not rostered for an*

activity until 11 a.m. There were five volunteers present that day and two were given their first task at 11 a.m.

I do believe that there is a sense of 'us' and 'them' between curatorial staff and the guides.

I often wonder if my supervisor knows who I am. I would appreciate being informed I am necessary – I am treated as a number.

Management of volunteers is highly authoritarian, totally out of touch with present day working place practice.

Recognition was also discussed, at some length, in each of the focus groups. Here participants said that being recognised by the organisation's director was important to them; if this did not occur, they were disappointed and did not feel valued.

Together we get great acknowledgement. Individually we just don't exist. Together he'll tell you, 'You are all very wonderful'; then he'll tread on you as you walk down the floor.

It's taken sixteen years for him to say 'Hello' to me.

Much more appreciation needs to be given by trustees etc of work done by volunteers.

Other respondents obtained their recognition from visitors:

It's a reward when people appreciate what you've done, that's the way I see it anyway. Whatever your contribution is, in your capacity as a guide, that you give a really good guided tour, that people appreciate the explanation you've given them, everything else, they show that at the end. That is the reward.

It seems that the recognition volunteers receive works in three ways. First, it gives volunteers intrinsic satisfaction that what they are doing is worthwhile. Second, visitor appreciation supplements the recognition they do not receive from the institution. Third, recognition indicates to volunteers that they are seen in an appropriate way by others in the organisation. Recognition is important to volunteers as it can provide a clear and visible indication that their work is valued, and contributes to the overall mission and goals of the organisation.

Gender differences in work values
Table 4 presents results from t-tests performed on differences between men and women on work value items. Levene's Test for equality of variances has a P-value less than .05 for four items – 'goals of the organisation are important' .019; 'getting the job done is important' .020; 'having a work plan is important' .028; and 'it is important that I can work independently' .000 – which indicates that men and women do not share similar characteristics across these items. However, it must be noted that the results

were indistinguishable. From the 'equal variances not assumed' value on these items, the t-value 3.03 is significant P = .003 for 'having a work plan is important'. Thus it can be said that having a work plan is significantly different between men and women. An inspection of the means suggests that women value having a work plan more than men. For all other items, it can be assumed from the equal variances t-value that there was not a significant difference between men and women except on the item 'doing my job as instructed by my supervisor is important'. For this item the t-value 2.83 is significant P = .005. Thus it can be assumed from inspection of the means that 'doing my job as instructed' is valued more by women than by men.

Table 4: Differences between men and women on items of work values

	Men (n=107)		Women (n=198)			
	M ab	SD	M ab	SD	t	p
Take pride in the work that I do	1.52	0.62	1.51	0.75	0.22	0.829
Getting the job done is important*	1.70	0.60	1.68	0.81	0.30	0.768
Proud to tell others they work for the organisation	1.79	0.80	1.73	0.80	0.65	0.519
The work I do is important	1.79	0.79	1.90	0.88	1.02	0.306
It is important that I am allowed to use my initiative	1.96	0.99	2.07	1.20	0.76	0.447
Goals of the organisation are important*	2.03	1.16	2.11	1.32	0.57	0.571
It is important that I am recognised for my efforts	2.37	1.14	2.39	1.39	1.56	0.121
Doing my job as instructed by my supervisor is important	2.41	1.17	2.03	1.12	2.83	0.005**
It is important to me that I can work independently*	2.42	1.14	2.64	1.59	1.40	0.163
I chose to work in this organisation because I think our values are similar	2.56	1.11	2.47	1.11	0.65	0.519
It is important that I receive regular training	2.60	1.43	2.39	1.49	1.16	0.248
It is important that I have a work plan*	3.12	1.63	2.56	1.37	3.03	0.003**
It is important that I am involved in decision making process	3.48	1.82	3.44	1.81	0.15	0.882
It is important that I have a job description	4.25	1.90	3.98	1.93	1.16	0.246

a Lower scores indicate higher levels for each variable
b Scale range 1–7 for each variable
*t value was calculated based on non equal variances
** $p < .01$; $df = 303$

Volunteer satisfaction and commitment

Overall, respondents were satisfied with their volunteer experience. They were most satisfied with the support (93 per cent) and information (92 per cent) they received to do their job, and were least satisfied with the recognition they received from the organisation (79 per cent). At 79 per cent, satisfaction with recognition could be perceived to be satisfactory. However, it is comparatively lower than other levels of satisfaction. Therefore, when considered alongside the negative comments that relate to this issue, one must conclude that recognition is of concern to respondents. Respondent satisfaction with the way that volunteers are organised was only 89 per cent, indicating that the issues discussed here impact on the organisational satisfaction of volunteers.

Surprisingly, 98 per cent of respondents said that they would continue volunteering for their institutions. The few respondents who said that they would not continue volunteering cited personal health or work-related problems as the cause. The reasons for respondent commitment are represented in Table 5.

Table 5: Reasons for continuing

Theme	Number
Availability: time, health, location	25
Personal satisfaction	14
Social	10
Enjoy the work	9
Contribution	8
Problems	6
Rewarding experience	5
Instrumental rewards: résumé, new skills,	4
Continue using skills	3
Pride	1
Total	**83**

Given the predominantly older age group to which respondents belonged, it is understandable that a number of responses focused on an individual's capacity to continue. This was followed by the personal satisfaction they received and the enjoyment they got out of their participation. The more altruistic notion of making a contribution ranked as the fifth reason for continuance; this is not inconsistent with previous comments. The following statement best captures the underlying reason for such a high continuance rate:

> I love volunteering at the AM – really look forward to my days there. I particularly love wet Sundays because we are busy then. Sometimes I feel a fraud, especially when we are thanked generously for our help – I think I get so much from my experiences at the AM. The only regret I have is that work commitments mean that I cannot get to the Museum more often. Meeting the interesting and interested

*visitors to the Museum is such a treat, and a privilege; it makes the long journey
there worthwhile.*

Attitudes of volunteer managers and co-ordinators

All volunteer managers indicated that they valued their volunteers. This was particularly
evident in the way they spoke about the volunteers, the inflection in their voices and,
in the case of two attractions, their criticisms of the way in which senior management
was, they felt, failing to recognise volunteers. The amount of resources volunteer
programmes received was viewed as an indicator of how senior management valued
the programme. Volunteer managers would compare their programme's resources
against other, similar programmes, for example:

*The one that really, really impressed me was the Melbourne Cricket Ground
Museum. Their treatment of volunteers was fabulous: they have quite a bit more
money, they put a lot of money in, a lot of effort, they attach quite a lot of prestige,
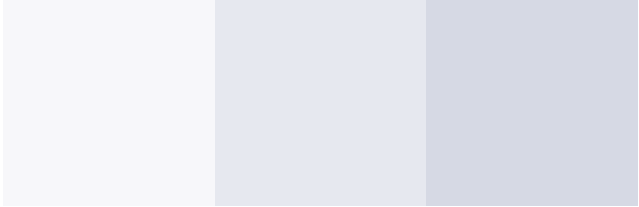they value them incredibly.*

*I was talking to one of the co-ordinators from one of the volunteer organisations
round here; she was saying her budget was what we spend on the Christmas
function for ours.*

The author presented her results at the executive meeting of one museum. This was
perceived to be a significant moment for the volunteer manager, who had never
participated in an executive meeting before and was hopeful that the volunteer
programme would receive greater prominence as a result.

Discussion and implications

According to Bahm (1993), 'much of the motive for understanding values is that ethical
choices can be validated only when their ultimate value bases are clear'. Museum and
art-gallery volunteers take enormous pride in their work, have an emotional attachment
to the institutions they participate in, value their roles highly and like to be recognised
for their contribution. If they are going to volunteer, they are going to do it well. There
is very little difference between the values of men and women. Volunteers differ
significantly only in their values towards 'having a work plan is important' and 'doing
my job as instructed by my supervisor is important'. Women place a greater value
than men on both these items. The two items seem to be linked: women perceive that
in order to do their job as instructed, it is important to have a work plan. Therefore
volunteer managers and co-ordinators should ensure that they provide female
volunteers with work plans so that they can carry out their tasks appropriately.

The findings confirm Pfeffer's (1997) conditions for commitment: choice, publicness
and explicitness. Pursuing a leisure activity by choosing to volunteer for an institution
in which that activity can take place provides these people with rewards such as
training, learning new skills, personal satisfaction, continuing to be useful, being
in an environment they find interesting and social interaction. They are publicly
demonstrating their choice, and are bonded by this choice through fulfilling their
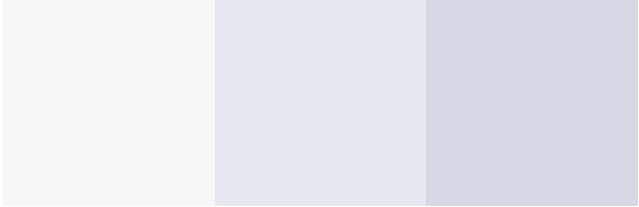commitment that they will volunteer for the specified hours required by the institution.

Their values are similar to the mission and outcome statement reported by the institutions in which they are volunteering. Their attachment to the organisation is such that they are willing to forgo other activities in order to participate.

There are other reasons that explain the commitment of these volunteers. First, the recruitment process acts as a form of socialisation that prepares them for successful and positive interaction within the organisation. In each institution, volunteers must go through a somewhat rigorous recruitment process where volunteer co-ordinators explain the number of hours per week or per year the volunteer is expected to contribute. Second, prior to joining, volunteers must commit to an extensive training programme that ranges from a minimum of six months at one institution to a maximum of a year at another. Taken together, these last two requirements indicate the level of effort and commitment needed to gain membership of these organisations. Third, respondents already have a high level of attachment to the organisations before joining. Fourth, they have a high level of personal interest in the activities of the organisation. Fifth, for the large number of retired people, serious leisure volunteering in an activity in which they are interested provides them with opportunities to continue using acquired skills in an enjoyable way.

As we have seen, the recruitment procedures instil a high level of initial commitment into volunteers by asking them, upon joining, to commit to a certain number of hours and to training. The person has self-selected an institution to which they already have a personal attachment and in which they are most interested. Respondents willingly accept the organisation's goals and values, which they perceive to be aligned with their own, are willing to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and have a definite desire to maintain membership of the organisation. Therefore, in line with Meyer and Allen (1991), the individual commitment of respondents is a combination of affective commitment, which signifies their emotional attachment to the organisation, and continuance commitment, which has developed as respondents recognise they have accumulated investments in the form of personal benefits which they would not want to lose by leaving the organisation.

Although respondents cited a number of problems they have in relation to the management and organisation of volunteers in the respective programmes, when asked if they were dissatisfied, the majority of them gave a categorical No. Compared with other studies, there was no evidence that volunteers resist change and create organisational problems for key actors. It appears that volunteers in this study are more likely to leave the organisation than create a problem. In contrast to other studies that found continuance commitment had few positive relationships with performance indicators, in this study continuance commitment may add to volunteer performance. The personal benefits gained by museum volunteers – such as personal satisfaction, social environment, the contribution they can make, having a rewarding experience, gaining new skills and using acquired skills – also foster a positive work attitude. Therefore it is in the best interests of the institution to continue to offer volunteers the opportunities to realise these benefits. For example, knowing that a volunteer values autonomy and providing opportunities for that volunteer to work independently will benefit the volunteer and lead to continued effort.

Farmer and Fedor (1999) argue that volunteers who are high in value commitment will look for visible indications that their work is contributing to the organisation. Volunteers in this study also seek recognition because they place a high level of importance on the work they do and they want to know that their contribution is worthwhile. Implicitly, volunteers expect a reciprocal approach to their contribution that lets them know their work is valued by the organisation. It would be difficult to imagine that the work values espoused by respondents in this study are not also valued by the institutions they work for.

The results show that the way volunteers are seen, treated and understood is not appropriate to recognising the volunteer effort. Although volunteer co-ordinators and managers make an effort to recognise volunteers, findings indicate that museum volunteers need to know that they are valued by others in the organisation, not just their immediate supervisor. This issue is important, because if the organisation does not communicate to volunteers that their efforts contribute to its success, how are volunteers to understand that their contribution is meaningful or that their skills and abilities are adequately utilised? A lack of recognition will at best leave volunteers feeling misrepresented, undervalued and disgruntled, and at worst result in them withdrawing from the organisation. It may be necessary for the organisation to adopt measures that inculcate certain ethical values among staff to ensure that their mindset is to view volunteers as legitimate contributors to the institution.

Franken (2002) stated that attached adults have higher interest in their jobs, experience greater job satisfaction, are less fearful of being evaluated and are happy to work alone. This is true for museum and art-gallery volunteers. Through their commitment, volunteers are fulfilling their ethical obligations to the institutions they contribute to. High affective and continuance commitment of respondents indicates that the organisations they work for need not change their management approach, because if they continue as normal, volunteers would remain committed for all the reasons discussed so far. However, this a superficial approach that would not fully capitalise on the volunteer resource or take account of the implicit, reciprocal nature of their participation. It would represent a neglect of ethical responsibilities on the part of the organisation.

Volunteers raised concerns about how they are organised and managed, and about alienation. The institutions have a requirement as part of their relational contract to manage these concerns. In accepting volunteers, the organisation has an ethical obligation to manage them appropriately: it is implicitly expected by these volunteers that they will give their time to a large institution that has the resources and staff appropriate for managing them. The findings indicate that they are treated somewhat differently by paid staff. Ethical guidelines and policies are required in large museums to provide a structure for managing the work-related issues of volunteers. When in place, these guidelines should be used to inform staff management practices at all levels to facilitate a supportive work environment for volunteers. It will require a 'soft' model of volunteer management based on inclusiveness, commitment, flexibility and relationship building.

The implication for management practice is that managers can determine the values of volunteers. Volunteer values can be identified by including questions relating to work values on volunteer application forms during the selection process, and can be subsequently monitored through yearly surveys. It should not be a difficult task, as each institution currently maintains a volunteer database that already includes information on volunteers obtained when they first joined the museum. Assistance with carrying out surveys and maintaining databases can be provided by a volunteer (this idea was suggested to one institution which is now in the process of implementing it). As a result, institutions would be in a position to use this information to influence the value systems of volunteers – whether they are satisfied with the values expressed by their volunteers, whether they need to create a new set of values or whether they need to assist volunteers to realise the outcomes of those values. An identification of volunteer work values can also assist managers to align volunteers to either a specific 'job' or to the organisation as a whole. For example, some areas of work within museums require more independence than others and some volunteers like to work independently. Process-focused training could be used to align volunteers to the organisation as a whole, to ensure the volunteers are informed of the values held by the organisation and of the ethical rules and procedures that guide those values (Grossman and Furano, 1999).

Further research

A limitation of this study is the narrow focus: the number of items included in the questionnaire and the type of value items measured. The values identified in this study are most central to museum and art-gallery volunteers in large non-profit museums; however, there are many small museums, and cultural and heritage attractions, that are managed entirely by volunteers. Studies are required to identify whether values and commitment for volunteers in small organisations are similar to, or different from, those for volunteers in larger museums and art galleries. A grounded theory approach to work-related values of volunteers would benefit theory development in this area. It would be valuable to extend this research to both large and small museums and cultural and heritage attractions in other countries to identify similarities and differences across countries and cultures. Areas of particular interest are: the comparison of volunteer values with paid staff values; whether volunteer values change following the socialisation of volunteers and direct experience with the organisation. Further research into what representations paid staff hold of volunteers and how they are formed would assist in the overall understanding of how paid staff see, treat and understand volunteers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to contribute to volunteer representations by analysing the values and commitment of museum volunteers in relation to the institutions they volunteer for. Volunteers hold similar values to the core values that underpin professional practices in museums: education, conservation, preservation and community engagement. In this study volunteers represent a workforce who take pride in their work and are focused on realising the goals of the institutions they work for. They demonstrated that they are well informed about the organisation's expectations of

them in terms of their role, obligations and commitment. These volunteers were found to have both affective and continuance commitment to their respective institutions, and what they valued most was how well they performed their tasks. An underlying issue for volunteers is recognition, a lack of which can lead volunteers to feel undervalued and to wonder if what they are doing has value to the organisation.

The findings from this study challenge typified representations of volunteers and can be used to inform museum professionals of appropriate group identities of museum volunteers. Subsequently typified representations of this group should reflect a positive and considerate understanding. Large museums that involve volunteers need to develop an ethical climate to ensure that the way in which all staff see, hear and treat volunteers is appropriate. In business, as in life, respect and concern for others leads to lasting relationships, true friendships and the peace that comes with an untroubled conscience (Mauro, Natalie and Libertella, 1999).

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