# ISCTE ⊗ Business School
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# HOW TO MANAGE AND RETAIN VOLUNTEERS IN AN INTERNATIONAL START-UP BUSINESS

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# Abstract

The dissertation aims to study how an international for-profit start-up business manage and retain volunteers in the workforce. Qualitative interviews were conducted with ambassador managers and the management of Uniplaces, an international start-up company. The data was discussed to the literature review with previous research and theory about human resource management, organisational life cycles, motivation theory, and volunteer management.

The results show that the volunteers are managed by flexibility, financial compensation, a social work environment, learning opportunities, autonomy at work, recognition, and challenging job tasks. The results also explain what costs there are to managing volunteers. The conclusion indicate that the ambassador managers can be defined as volunteers and that the company can manage volunteers in order to deal with the increasing growth and complexity of the company structures. The conclusion show that the international start-up company is in its early stages of its organizational life cycle and that they manage and retain volunteers in the workforce by using different features that can be categorized as motivators and hygiene factors.

*Keywords:* volunteer management, human resource management, organisational life cycles, start-up.

**JEL Classification:** M130; M540

# Resumo

A presente dissertação de mestrado tem como objetivo estudar o modo como uma empresa *start-up* com fins lucrativos gere e retém voluntários para efeitos de mão-de-obra. Foram realizadas entrevistas qualitativas com gestores de embaixadores e com a gestão da Uniplaces, uma empresa *start-up* internacional. Os dados foram discutidos na análise de literatura com uma prévia investigação e teoria sobre a gestão de recursos humanos, ciclos de vida organizacionais, teoria de motivação e gestão de voluntários.

Os resultados demonstram que os voluntários são geridos através de flexibilidade, compensação financeira, um ambiente social no trabalho, oportunidades de aprendizagem, autonomia no trabalho, reconhecimento e tarefas de trabalho desafiantes. Os resultados demonstram igualmente quais são os custos associados à gestão de voluntários. A conclusão indica que os gestores de embaixadores podem ser definidos como voluntários e que a empresa pode gerir os voluntários de forma a fazer face ao aumento do seu crescimento e complexidade das estruturas da empresa. A conclusão da presente dissertação vai no sentido de demonstrar que uma empresa internacional *start-up* se encontra a dar os seus primeiros passos do ciclo de vida organizacional e que consegue gerir e reter voluntários para efeitos de mão-de-obra ao recorrer à utilização de diferentes características que podem ser categorizadas como motivadoras ou fatores de higiene.

*Palavras-chave*: gestão de voluntários, gestão de recursos humanos, ciclos de vida organizacionais, start-up.

**JEL Classification:** M130; M540

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Volunteers in the workforce of for-profit businesses appear in many different industries. Event organisations attract volunteers that play an important role in the event strategy as they provide work before, during or after an event while simultaneously allowing the organisation to keep within budget and increase quality of their service (Bachman, Norman, Backman, and Hopkins, 2017). Large enterprises use voluntary work by creating unpaid internships offering white collar work for young graduates looking to gain a first experience from the job market (Greenhouse, 2010; Landau, 2011; Lewis, 2011). Start-ups appreciate help from voluntary forces as they struggle for market establishment and so they may reach out to its target group with brand ambassador programs as a means to promote a product or a service (Engard, 2017; Oppong, 2016).

Research regarding management of volunteers within non-profit businesses are relatively easy to find. Research of volunteers in the context of profit seeking start-up business on the other hand are more scarce. I would like to find out how management is performed in a start-up with volunteers as a staff group and how this group are retained to stay when there is a lack of financial compensation. With focus on Uniplaces, an international start-up business with multiple offices around Europe, I am set to question the country specific management and volunteers of three country offices in order to analyse and identify what characterises their management.

By the combined insight from management representatives and the volunteers working closest to them, I want to map out the management of volunteers within a profit seeking start-up business, and connect my findings with previous research and theory. Contributions and implications of this thesis will be to highlight and discuss the phenomenon and existence of volunteers in a profit seeking start-up business. I want to support current academic findings in Human Resource Management and share my results with the studied company as their management may use it to gain a better understanding of possible improvements to take into consideration for future achievements of organizational goals.

## 1.2. Research questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyse and identify how an international for-profit start-up business manage and retain volunteers in the workforce, from the perception of the management and its volunteers. Five research questions will guide this dissertation in answering to its purpose:

Q1    What are the motives of Uniplaces for having volunteers?

Q2    What are the volunteers' motives for working in a for-profit company?

Q3    How is the management experienced by the volunteers?

Q4    How is the management of volunteers perceived by Uniplaces?

Q5    What costs are there to managing volunteers?

## 1.3 Company description

### 1.3.1. Uniplaces, the company

Uniplaces is a start-up company founded in year 2012 but officially launched as an international online market platform for student accommodation in 2013. Uniplaces is by the European commission's definition, a small to medium-sized enterprise (European commission, 2018) with a staff headcount on 132 employees (Bearne, 2017) situated in ten cities across five different European countries. The company is based in London and operates in the private sector, more specifically in the internet software and service sector, and has its head office located in Lisbon, Portugal (Uniplaces, 2018; Bloomberg L.P., 2018).

Uniplaces premise is to offer students a platform (www.uniplaces.com) to search and to find accommodation, and to provide landlords willing to rent out their homes with potential clients. Uniplaces highlight that they provide a great service of verified properties to students, and their aim is to create a global brand for student accommodation and to challenge the market with a modern helpful accommodation provider. Their service can be found in 15 different cities (Uniplaces, *About us,* 2018; Uniplaces, *Accommodation*, 2018).

1.3.2. Uniplaces brand ambassador, the voluntary program

Uniplaces has developed a brand ambassador program welcoming students to become brand ambassadors or ambassador managers. Uniplaces state on their ambassador website that the purpose of the program is to empower students with an interest in international management and entrepreneurship and provide their ambassadors with a platform where students can develop their skills and competences (Uniplaces, 2017).

The voluntary program operates in seven cities in four different countries, Lisbon, Porto, Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Rome, and Berlin. The internal program structure of each city may differ depending on the amount of ambassadors active in each city and how they choose to operate. Figure 1 show the structure of the program with brand manager and country marketing managers employed by the company managing the ambassador managers. Ideally every city with the ambassador program should include brand ambassadors operating in three different tracks based on the ambassador's own choosing and at least one ambassador manager holding the responsibility of managing the brand ambassadors. These tracks are named *Community Development*, *Operations* and *Creative and Social*, each track with its own goals and area manager but with the overall purpose of working towards increased brand awareness and sales. *Community Development* has the objective to launch and manage offline events and to foster local communities of international students and ambassadors. *Operations* is sales and business focused with activities mainly consisting of generating bookings and finding landlords for the company. In *Creative and Social* ambassadors are to keep the company's social media profile active by launching online campaigns and to provide content for the company's social media presence (Uniplaces, 2017).

The ambassador managers are not employed by the company but has a formal agreement made with the company. Some ambassador managers have signed internship agreements and others non-disclosure agreements, all ambassador managers receive a small monthly payment and work part-time with a minimum of 20 hours a month. The ambassador managers are non-employees, representatives of the brand ambassadors of the program, and in the absence of a formal employment contract they are in this paper referred to as either volunteers or volunteer respondents. The ambassador managers are working with, and managed by, employees of the company, the brand manager and the country marketing manager.
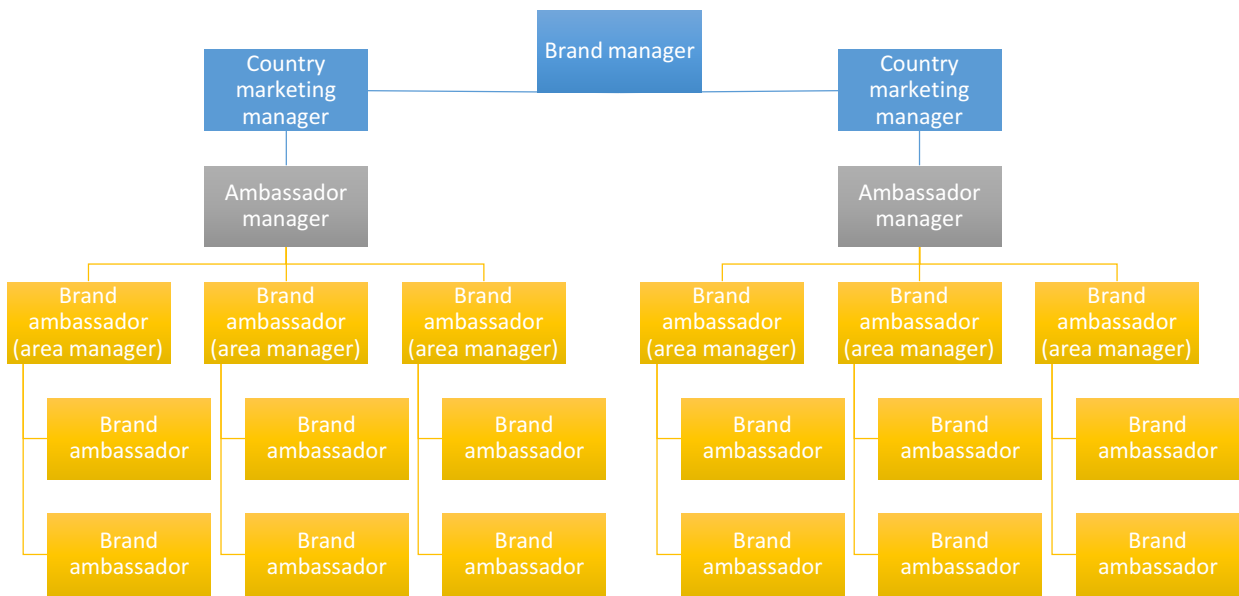
*Figure 1. Ambassador program structure.*

# 2. Literature review

Under the following chapter theory and previous research are presented covering the concept of human resource management, then continuing with the three-dimensional model of people strategy, the organisational life cycles and HRM, defining volunteer work, motivational theory, and at last volunteer management. Due to the lack of literature and previous research about volunteers in for-profit start-up companies, the last section of the chapter focuses on volunteer management in the non-profit sector categorized in Herzberg's model of hygiene and motivators factors.

## 2.1. Human resource management

Human resource management (HRM) can be summarised as activities that concern an organisations relationship with potential, current and leaving staff of the organisation, and the purpose of the HR function is to align its HR strategy of people management with the business strategy (Taylor and Woodhams, 2012; Wilkinson and Taylor, 2012; Boselie, Dietz and Boon, 2005). However, can HR policies and practices be correlated with organisational performance? Wilkinson and Taylor (2012) presents best practice approach, best fit approach, and resource-based view, three theories that are most commonly used in understanding how HR can influence organisational performance. Best practice approach focus on employee commitment as the key ingredient in a high performing workforce. Best fit approach (also known as the contingency model) seeks to understand the context of the business first and thereafter implement the right HR strategy for the best possible outcome of the company. The resource-based view believes that competitive advantage is achieved by acquiring and managing resources into gaining unique value that makes it hard for competitors to copy (Wilkinson and Taylor, 2012).

HRM can be performed with a so called hard or soft approach within an organisation and Truss (1999) describes these approaches as being of opposite characteristics of each other in terms of the people management. A hard approach is when HR view their employees more as a resource that through HR policies and practices are aligned with the company's strategic goals for the purpose of gaining competitive advantage. A soft approach is instead about a management that is flexible and adaptable towards the development of the employees for the sake of creating an empowered workforce based on trust and commitment (Truss, 1999). The authors connect hard and soft HRM with the concept of Theory X and Theory Y, linking hard HRM with Theory X,

and soft HRM with Theory Y. Theory X is explained as a management perception of employees disliking to work and in need for close monitoring in order for the employees to perform as desired. Theory Y is explained as a management perception of employees as people of great potential where the need of the employer and the employees are a priority to look after and integrate for the greater good of the organisation. Soft HRM are connected to Theory Y with the explanation that both theories are concepts of trust and commitment, where autonomous work is created by training and development, whereas hard HRM and Theory X focus on control over individual activities through performance management for the purpose of company competitive advantage. In summary, hard and soft HRM measures different companies' degree of control contra trust, and personal development contra organisational development (Truss, 1999).

HR strategy theory, or strategic HRM, focus on the alignment between an organisation's strategy and structure with its human resources, where two dimensions of external and internal fit is considered to be the main objective (Milliman, Von Glinow and Nathan, 1991). Grundy (1999:8) define HR strategy as "…*the plans, programmes and intentions to develop the human capability of an organisation to meet the future needs of its external and internal environment…*". Moreover, HR strategy is created by analysing internal and external factors that influence the business and which can be addressed by HR implementations (Truss, Mankin and Kelliher, 2012; Grundy, 1999; Garavan, 2007). Truss *et al*. (2012) present four models of HR strategy based on the different combinations of (1) the staff's strategic importance to the organisation's product or service, and (2) the degree of profitability in the industry in which the organisation is operating within, with the degree of profitability being the organisations availability to invest in necessary HR systems. The authors present the four models as:

      a. Professional model, where staff has high strategic importance to product and there are high industry profitability results in focus on developing skills and competencies within workforce and to find and attract the best staff.

      b. Vocation model, where staff has high strategic importance to product and there are low industry profitability results in focus on creating involvement within the workforce, develop and train staff, and create understanding of monetary restrictions.

c. Social model, where staff has low strategic importance to product and there are high industry profitability results in focus to reward best performers, continuity of labour supply, and social rewards are important.

d. Lean model, where staff has low in strategic importance and there are low industry profitability results in focus to keep a low cost-income ratio and to use tight control and low empowerment on the workforce.

## 2.2. The three-dimensional model of people strategy

Gratton and Truss (2003) developed *the three-dimensional model of people strategy* that is used to identify the state of an organisation's HR strategy and to what degree it is aligned with a vertical, a horizontal, and an action dimension in search for areas of improvements concerning the HR strategy and its dimensions. The dimensions are explained as:

- Vertical alignment address to what degree HR policies are aligned with an organisation's overall business strategy and objectives.
- Horizontal alignment address to what degree individual HR policies within an organisation are coherent, consistent, and relate to one another in the overall HR strategy.
- Action dimension address whether or not these HR initiatives are practiced and experienced by the line managers and employees. This dimension is analysed by looking at the line managers' behaviours and attitude towards the implementation of the HR policies, and the employees' experiences of the implementation.

As described by Gratton and Truss (2003), for increased action taking the authors explain how the organisation can (1) consult and involve multiple stakeholders in order to create awareness and involvement in the organisations HR strategy, (2) allow the HR function to take action and be bold in its decision making when acting as a role model in the business, (3) focus to keep and attract people that advocate an action-taking behaviour in line with the HR policies.

## 2.3. Organisational life cycles and HRM

The concept of organisational growth is defined in previous research as organisational life cycles where an organisation goes through different stages of development from the time it is a

start-up and as it progresses through maturity (Milliman *et al.,* 1991; Phelps, Adams and Bessant, 2007; Rutherford, Buller and McMullen, 2003; Dodge and Robbins, 1992). Businesses go through four main phases starting with the struggle for autonomy, then expansion, stability and lastly institutionalization. In the first two phases of formation and early growth, an organisation has strategic concerns with providing the product to selected markets and to gain customer acceptance, and as sales activity increases, the company enters the early growth problems with stabilizing production and product reliability, keep up with the demand, maintain cash flow, and to formalize organisational structure (Dodge and Robbins, 1992).

Smith, Mitchell and Summer (1985) found in their research how three different top management priorities change and need to change from one organisational stage to another. Further, the management priorities are either going to be focused on technical efficiency, organisational coordination, or political support depending on what stage in the organisational life cycle the company currently is in. Technical efficiency is explained as a management looking for short-term accomplishment and maximisation of organisational efficiency. Organisational coordination is described as a priority for management wanting cooperation and integration of the total organisation. Political support is mentioned as a management priority seeking individual power, support and commitment of subordinates. The authors emphasise that management priorities typical for a particular stage is not necessarily the most effective priority for any organisation. Smith *et al*. (1985) conclude that there are three stages in the organisational life cycle and they are referred to as inception, high-growth, and maturity, with the first two phases describing the organisation when it is young and small, and later when it is expanding:

1. Inception is the first organisational stage where;
   a. there is no formal organisational structure,
   b. the reward system is personal and subjective,
   c. the communication is informal, face-to-face, and there is little planning,
   d. there is low adherence,
   e. decisions are made by individual judgement,
   f. top management staff are generalists,
   g. the organisational growth rate is inconsistent but improving,
   h. the organisation is young and small.
2. High-growth is the second organisational stage where;

a.  the organisational structure is centralized and formal,

b.  the reward system is systematic and impersonal,

c.  the communication is moderately formal and planning concerns budgets,

d.  there is high adherence,

e.  decisions are made by a professional management based on analytical tools,

f.  top management are specialists,

g.  there is a rapid growth rate,

h.  the organisation is larger and older.

In the inception stage, technical efficiency is the priority with the explanation that a new company with a limited track record need to perform well in order to gain support among suppliers and therefore the management is supposedly short-term and results oriented (Smith *et al.*, 1985). In the high-growth stage organisational coordination is a priority with the explanation that as the organisation evolve into a more complex structure a greater emphasis is needed for managing the whole organisation and not just problem solving specific issues and functions within. Continuing, an increasingly complex organisation means that one failing part of the organisation could cause damage to the whole system, and therefore integration, coordination, and communication with a long-term approach are crucial factors for the management (Smith *et al.*, 1985).

Rutherford *et al.* (2003) conclude in their research that HRM problems in small to medium-sized enterprises change depending on the different organisational life cycle stages of a firm, that there is a correlation between growth levels and HRM problems. It is explained how highest-growth firms have problems with development and communication as the manager no longer can keep up with the training of new staff members the development procedure of the firm is in need of formalization. On the contrary, highest-growth firms are believed to experience low levels of retention problems due to the growing and fast paced company attracting employees who accept less money just to be involved in the environment. Moderate-growth firms are explained having retention problems because of its less exciting work environment than the high-growth firm, while simultaneously the workload gradually increasing. Low-growth firms are explained to have low levels of training and recruiting problems due to its stable environment allowing the owner to train its own staff and recruitment not being an urgent issue. No-growth firms are explained to have the highest levels of recruiting

problems due to the difficulties for the firm to attract new employees with its current no-growth status (Ruther *et al.*, 2003).

Phelps *et al.* (2007) argue whether the organisational life is to be defined as cyclic and if not as certain phases any growing organisation eventually has to deal with. In their article a framework is proposed for organisational growth and outlines six challenging tipping points organisations face as a consequence of its own growth or environmental changes. According to the authors the six challenging tipping points concerns people management, strategic orientation, operational improvement, formalised systems, new market entry, obtaining finance, and operational improvements for greater efficiency and error avoidance. People management is explained as organisations grow by numbers of employees, perhaps located on different geographical sites, a more professional structured HR approach that fosters the management skills needed for successful delegation, communication and teamwork. In terms of strategic orientation, Phelps *et al.* (2007) points out that any strategic plan (including process and content) is preferable to having no strategy at all and that there is a positive correlation between organisational growth and to have strategic planning.
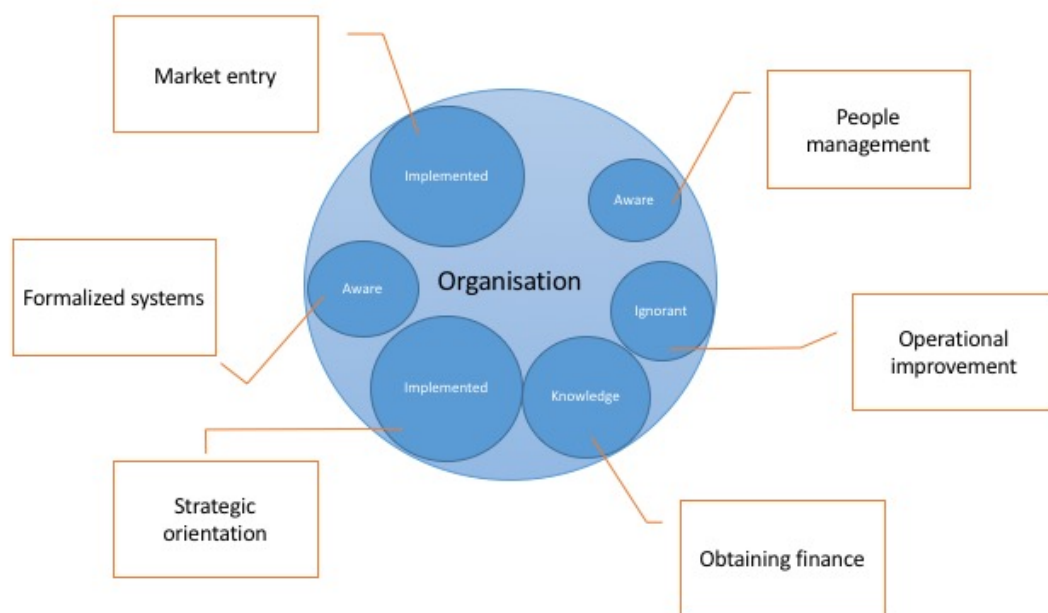


*Figure 2. Organisational growth and the six tipping points. Source: Phelps et al. (2007).*

An organisation responds to tipping point challenges by being either ignorant or aware of existing issues, acquiring the knowledge to deal with the challenge, or to successfully implement a solution (Phelps *et al.*, 2007). It is further mentioned how external knowledge

gained via network building and external experts can help to navigate passed the tipping points. Dodge and Robbins (1992) also explain in their article the importance for management to tackle issues of each organisational life cycle phase or otherwise the issue will carry on into the next phase.

## 2.4. Defining the concept of volunteer workers

In research by Cova, Pace and Skålén (2015) consumers, or brand enthusiasts, participate in unpaid volunteering activities contributing to a brand and its company for the sake of getting access to exclusive brand benefits. The authors coin the phrase *brand volunteering* describing it as unpaid consumers who co-create and contribute their skills, ideas and creativity into value-creating activities within a brand community program managed by a for-profit company. Additional research regarding brand volunteers in for-profit businesses are hard to find but in the context of the non-profit sector volunteering are helping activities including planned activities, engagement in prosocial behaviour, and the presence of an organisational structure in which the volunteering takes place in (Alfes, Antunes, and Shantz, 2017). Cova *et al.* (2015) define volunteering as unpaid and planned work based on an individual's free will to work. Laczo and Hanisch (1999) provide a similar definition describing a volunteer as any person donating time, skills and services to specific tasks in an organisational context but without the obligation to work and direct financial compensation.

According to Alfes *et al.* (2017), in contrast to paid employees, a volunteer lack monetary compensation and are not embedded in the organisational structure and hierarchy of the company as much as a paid employee would be. Charlesworth (2003) state that the distinction between paid and unpaid work can be blurry, that for some volunteers their work is as equally important with feelings of obligations as it is for paid workers. The author explains that whether it is unpaid or paid work it gives the worker a sense of identity and status, a personal focus for the week, and an opportunity to gain new social networks.

Volunteers are active in the workforce of a wide range of organisations not only in the non-profit sector but also in organisations of the private and public sector (Simon, 2013). Strauss (2008) present how voluntary engagement can be a job strategy for higher educated people to gain social network and develop soft skills qualifications in order to commercialize their labour power. The author explains four volunteering alternatives to paid work labelled as (1)

*reinforcement*, when time-intensive volunteering is combined with professional interests, (2) *addition*, a less time-intensive volunteering for the purpose of being a leisure activity, (3) *transition*, when volunteering in times of unemployment in order to prevent a discontinuous working life and for seeking a professional environment or to gain new skills, or for professional re-orientation, and (4) *compensation*, volunteering as a complement to a current job one's not satisfied with.

## 2.5. Motivation theory

Herzberg's hygiene and motivator theory divide employee motivational factors into two categories, hygiene and motivators (Herzberg, 1987; Dessler, 2005). Hygiene factors are explained as extrinsic job dissatisfactory attributes such as pay, working condition, polices and administration, supervision, safety, status, and interpersonal relations with manager, peers and subordinates. Motivator factors are explained as intrinsic job motivational attributes such as achievement, recognition, the job itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Continuing, the hygiene factors are short-lived motivators such as a pay increase that only satisfies the employee for a short amount of time. The motivator factors are on the contrary described as long-lived motivators that lies within the worker's own enjoyment of the job and the personal achievements that it brings. Further, Herzberg's theory suggests that management should motivate the staff by giving challenges in the job, and to provide feedback and recognition, all of which are intrinsic motivators. In conclusion, motivators are described as the primary source for job satisfaction and hygiene factors are typically a source for job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987; Dessler, 2005).

Pfeffer (1998) contributes to motivation theory saying that management need to be careful not to use extrinsic rewards to the extent that it diminishes the intrinsic motivation of the worker. In a list of six myths about pay the author argues that individual incentive schemes have a short-term focus that undermines teamwork and may create perceptions of unfairness. The author argues that management should not fall for the myth that people work for solely money, but rather work for a meaning in their lives. Hence it is suggested that management retain employees by providing engaging work and a friendly work environment (Pfeffer, 1998).

## 2.6. Volunteer management

In volunteer management there are five motivators and two hygiene factors for job satisfaction (see table 2). Starting with management flexibility towards volunteer needs and interests, this is a motivator intrinsic to the job itself (Herzberg, 1987). Different volunteers need different types of management styles and it is considered a weakness if organisations are incapable to be flexible in its volunteer management (Simon, 2013). The author explain that the volunteer role should be adjusted to fit the person holding the position in order to motivate and increased volunteer performance. According to Saksida, Alfes and Shantz (2017), understanding a volunteer's intrinsic motivational needs become more important for the sake of retaining when there is an absence of extrinsic rewards. McCannon and Han (2016) state that a stronger sense of commitment is generated among volunteers when the manager listens and understand their personal values and interests in the program.

Organisational goals and policies can be identified as both motivators and hygiene factors, with organisational goals related to achievement it is a motivator factor, and organisational policies and administration are a main source for job dissatisfaction among employees according to Herzberg (1987). However, studies show that organisational goals, policies and strategies can help motivate and create a committed volunteer workforce (Simon, 2013; Alfes *et al*., 2017; Laczo and Hanisch, 1999). Simon (2013) argue that organisational policies or strategies help create a framework for role definition, volunteer recruitment and support, which in turn communicates organisational commitment towards volunteers and provides consistency to the management. Other studies show that volunteers are more motivated to contribute to the organisational objectives than paid employees (Alfes *et al*., 2017; Laczo and Hanisch, 1999). According to Boezeman and Ellemers (2014), management should communicate effectiveness to volunteers, meaning that volunteers need to understand how important they are and what role they play in the organisation in order to better identify with the organisation and to be satisfied with the leadership. Charlesworth (2003) suggest that management should implement formal or informal contracts, explaining that a formal contract can help the volunteer to gain role definition. A formal contract should be tailored after the volunteer's own interests and values but avoid becoming a burden that scares away the volunteer from the role (Charlesworth, 2003). Charlesworth (2003) give as an example that a volunteer with the motive to gain experience and develop new skills in order to find paid employments could have a contract including training and feedback as it could be considered valuable to the worker.

While professional relationships to supervisor, peers and subordinates are extrinsic to the job and a source to job dissatisfaction according to Herzberg (1987), volunteers are on the other hand more motivated to belong to a social group and by social interaction in comparison to paid employees (Saksida *et al.*, 2017; Alfes *et al.*, 2017; Charlesworth, 2003). Previous research has shown that responsible coordinators of volunteers can maintain volunteers' motivation by providing continuous availability and by creating an inclusive environment (Simon, 2013). Boezeman and Ellemers (2009) argue that relatedness needs are the key to a volunteer's job satisfaction and intent to stay in the organisation. It is explained that relatedness needs are covered by the volunteer's own integration and relationships found in the social work environment. In a later study, Boezeman and Ellemers (2014) stress the importance of a leadership that gives sufficient support to volunteers in their work tasks as it fosters leadership satisfaction. According to McCannon and Han (2016), by allowing volunteers to work together instead of alone makes for a more engaging volunteer experience that can lead to long-term commitment among volunteer workers. The authors explain that working together with other volunteers create a sense of connection to a greater cause. McCannon and Han (2016) advice volunteer coordinators to create a fun and enjoyable environment for the volunteers to be in. The work environment should not publicly rank individual performance causing embarrassment but rather serve as a culture of learning highlighting what does and does not work (McCannon and Han, 2016). Pfeffer (1998) agree that people are motivated by being part of a fun work environment and that the lack thereof can cause staff workers to decrease in loyalty and commitment.

Learning opportunities are connected to achievement, recognition, and growth which are motivator factors for job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). Learning opportunities and personal and skills development are motivational factors for managing and retaining volunteers (Charlesworth, 2003). The author suggest that management should provide volunteers with a variety of tasks for learning and motivation purposes. Previous research also show that sufficient volunteer training and orientation promotes role definition (Simon, 2013; Saksida *et al.*, 2017). It is explained that volunteers having training and supportive relationships with paid employees increase their understanding of their voluntary role and how to be successful in the organisation which consequently increases volunteers' commitment (Saksida *et al*, 2017). On the contrary, McHugh (2017) mention negative findings from a study of comparing volunteers and paid employees referring to how volunteers are perceived by the organisation as less

important, receives less training and orientation, has a lower performance standard, and are exposed to less feedback than paid employees.

Autonomy at work is a motivator factor for learning and growth (Herzberg, 1987) and serves as a motivational aspect in volunteer management (Charlesworth, 2013). McCannon and Han (2016) argue that management can develop a volunteer's confidence and skills with training and by giving the competence and autonomy they need to progress. Cova *et al.* (2015) explain that managerial control can be applied onto volunteers by mobilizing the right skills and allow autonomy in their contributions.

Recognition and feelings of achievement are considered motivator factors for job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). According to Charlesworth (2003), feelings of achievement is a motivation factor used to manage and retain volunteers. Simon (2013) explain that rewards for contribution and company attitudes towards volunteers are important in attracting and retaining volunteers, and because of this, management should inform the volunteer about their contributions and value. The management should provide recognition in the form of frequent feedback by different methods, involve volunteers in decision making, show interests in the volunteers' personal lives, give symbolic rewards, provide opportunities for further responsibilities, and show gratitude towards loyal volunteers (Simon, 2013). Boezeman and Ellemers (2014) argue that volunteers need to be encourage to share ideas with the management as it helps to increase volunteers' pride and respect which as a result increase volunteer commitment to the organisational identity and leadership satisfaction. According to Cova *et al.* (2015) recognition of efforts, skills, interests, and commitment are more important for job satisfaction among volunteers in comparison to paid employees. Recognition in the form of financial rewards are however a hygiene extrinsic factor according to Herzberg (1987) and can undermine teamwork, provide a short-term focus among staff members, and cause inequality (Pfeffer, 1998).

Lastly, job tasks are motivator factors that contribute to job satisfaction as it provides workers with a sense of achievement, challenges, advancement, and growth (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg distinguish between job loading and job enrichment. Job loading is described as adding horizontal enlargement to the job by introducing meaningless additional tasks. Job enrichment, or vertical job loading, is explained as adding job motivators to ensure greater personal achievement, growth and advancement in the job (Herzberg, 1987). Previous research show that successful management give the volunteer a variety of tasks (Charlesworth, 2003).

According to Simon (2013) it is important for the management to monitor and supervise the volunteer's involvement, achieved objectives, integration and acceptance by other volunteers and employees of the organisation, and that the volunteer enjoy his job tasks. The evaluations are made to establish short-term and long-term objectives for the volunteer and should be carried out regularly with the opportunity to both receive and to give feedback (Simon, 2013). McCannon and Han (2016) recommend setting individual benchmarks for each volunteer in order to measure individual progress and contribution to objectives, and to share the data with the volunteers for understanding their own contribution and strengthen their commitment.

Simon (2013) conclude in her research about volunteer management that there are typically two models of volunteer management called formal and informal model that help identify the organisations perception, purpose and management style of their volunteers (see table 1). As a warning, Simon (2013) point out that there are both strengths and limitations to the two models but to apply a formal model in an informal organisational setting can have dangerous consequences.

*Table 1. Formal and informal model of volunteer management.*

| Formal model | Informal |
|---|---|
| • *Purpose of organisation is to be structured with efficient bureaucracy.* | • *Purpose of organisation is have full expression of principle values.* |
| • *Authority is formal and universal with application of rules and procedures.* | • *Authority is informal and ad hoc with application of values.* |
| • *Equal roles between employees and volunteers.* | • *Employee/volunteer roles are different but could be equal.* |
| • *Authority is distributed hierarchy with volunteers subordinate to employees.* | • *Shared authority between employees and volunteers.* |
| • *Direct and formal control.* | • *Control is indirect and free.* |
| • *Social relations are functional with managers and employees.* | • *Social relations have permissive boundaries. Personal and functional relations between all stakeholders.* |
| • *Recruitment and promotion criteria is based on equal opportunities and on risk management.* | • *Recruitment and promition criteria is intuitive with ideals, shared interests and friendships.* |
| • *Intrinsic reward method with focus on employees with similar responsibilities (expenses, training).* | • *Intrinsic reward method with focus on achievements.* |

*Source: Simon (2013).*

Table 2 show the volunteer management features presented above categorized and divided into either motivator (blue boxes) or hygiene (pink boxes) factors from Herzberg's theory (1987).

*Table 2. Volunteer management features.*

| *Management of volunteers.* | Simon (2013). | Charlesworth (2003). | McCannon and Han (2016). | Saksida *et al.* (2017). | Boezeman and Ellemers (2009). | Laczo and Hanisch (1999). | Alfes *et al.* (2017). | Boezeman and Ellemers (2014). | Cova *et al.* (2015). |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Flexibility.* | Motivational. | | Increases commitment. | For retaining in the absence of extrinsic rewards. | | | | | |
| *Organisational polices/strategies.* | Role definition, organisational commitment and consistency. | Formal or informal contracts. | | | | Motivation and commitment. | Motivation and commitment. | Communicate effectiveness. | |
| *Social work environment.* | Availability and an inclusive environment. | Motivational. | Teamwork for commitment. | Motivational. | Cover relatedness needs. | | Motivational. | Supportive leadership. | |
| *Learning opportunities.* | Role definition. | Variety of tasks. | Develops confidence and skills. | Role definition, performance, and commitment. | | | | | |
| *Autonomy.* | Feature of the informal model. | Motivational | Develops confidence and skills. | | | | | | Managerial control. |
| *Recognition.* | To attract and retain. | Feelings of achievement. | | | | | | For pride and respect. | Job satisfaction. |
| *Job tasks.* | Ensure enjoyment of tasks. | Variety of tasks. | For progress, contribution and commitment. | | | | | | |

# 3. Methodology

Under the following chapter the methodology is presented with its research design, approach, sample selection including a table of interview respondents, how the data was collected, interviews conducted and the data analysed, and lastly research quality and ethics.

## 3.1. Research design

Primary data is the data collected for the research project and secondary data is data collected from other research projects for a different purpose (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The data of this study origins from the collection of secondary data gathered from multiple sources with documentary material from previous research, literature, websites, and company documents, and the primary data was gathered from interviews.

Understanding the volunteer management require an understanding of the subjective experiences explained by the volunteers and employees themselves. A non-standardised qualitative interview research turned out to be the most suitable method for answering the research questions of this thesis. A qualitative method generates qualitative data, or so called non-numerical data, and this data can be gathered via qualitative interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). It is explained that a qualitative research method is to be used when the purpose of the research has an exploratory element of trying to understand and gain insight of a phenomena. The volunteer management in a for-profit start-up business is an undiscovered territory in previous research, and so this study could be considered to be exploratory in its aim and objective.

Due to its exploratory nature, the qualitative data allowed the analysis to have a mainly inductive approach but also to some degree a deductive approach. Previous research and theory was collected before and after the interviews took place, giving me the possibility to adapt research questions and interview guide before the data gathering, and after the interviews, add more research and theory to the theoretical framework to better analyse the data. Saunders *et al.* (2009) describe the inductive approach as being open for theory to emerge from the data collection and analysis by gathering supporting theory after the data collection process. The inductive approach of this study can to some extent be described as influenced by grounded

theory. Saunders *et al*. (2009) explain grounded theory as when the researcher builds its theory up from a collection of gathered data without an initial theoretical framework. However, the research method of this study combines an inductive and deductive approach and does not aim to create a new theory but simply identify the management characteristics within a specific start-up business.

Qualitative data requires qualitative interviews which are helpful to use when the purpose of the research is exploratory, and when it is important to establish personal contact with research participants, when there are many and complex interview questions to be answered, and for the sake overall completeness of the research process and questions (Saunders *et al*., 2009).

## 3.2. Approach

A curiosity for management of volunteers within a trending start-up business in Lisbon ignited me to formulate the research purpose of how an international for-profit start-up business manage and retain volunteers in the workforce. Based on previous research and theory the research purpose and research questions were defined and became the foundation for the interview guides for the primary data collection. The interview guides were tested in three pilot interviews conducted over the phone with brand ambassadors from Uniplaces and a HR representative from another international company. Some final changes to the interview guides were made from feedback from the pilot interviews. Via a contact person from Uniplaces I was able to get in touch with participants and arrange interviews. After the interviews had been conducted transcripts were made out of the audio recordings. Additional literature was added to the theoretical framework and lastly, the data was analysed, discussed and presented in the written format of this thesis.

## 3.3. Sample selection

This study focus on the management of one company, Uniplaces, and so the sample consisted of line managers, volunteers and an employee from the company's HR department. The reason for choosing Uniplaces was because I had already established a contact with the company from previously being part of the voluntary program myself. The sample selection of participants for the interviews were recommended to me by a contact person from Uniplaces. My contact provided me with contact information to line managers of the voluntary program, an HR

representative from Uniplaces, and ambassador managers of the voluntary program. I proceeded via e-mail to have direct contact with the employees and volunteers willing to participate in an interview with me. Only line managers employed by the company and who directly manage volunteers from a voluntary program were interviewed as management respondents. The HR representative was interviewed with the criteria being employed by the company and the closest link to HR and the voluntary program. Only volunteers who were part of the voluntary program, not employed by the company, and directly being managed by employed line managers of the voluntary program were interviewed.

The sampling technique used in this study was characterised by *self-selection sampling* and *convenience sampling*. I had a specific case that I wanted to study in a company of my own choice and as I approached the company presenting my idea the company showed interest and was helpful in suggesting employees and volunteers to participate in my interviews. Saunders *et al*. (2009) call it self-selection sampling when exploratory research is conducted and when data is collected from those who show interest in participating in the study. Respondents were selected by my contact person and the sample size was complete when all available employees and volunteers that fit my criteria had been interviewed. I was relying on a convenience sampling which is described as selecting the respondents that are easily obtained until a sufficient quota has been reached, but it is important to mention that this could also risk the sample to be prone to bias (Saunders *et al*., 2009). Finally, the sample size of volunteers was balanced in accordance to the amount of employees. A non-probability sample size should be adequate in order to answer to the research purpose and generalisation is made from theory rather than of the population (Saunders *et al*., 2009).

The respondents are distinguished between management respondents (MR) and volunteer respondents (VR). All management respondents, except the HR representative, manages directly the volunteer program via the ambassador managers. The sample selection of volunteer respondents includes ambassador managers that are not employed by the company but has made a formal agreement with the company. Some volunteer respondents have signed internship agreements and others non-disclosure agreements, all respondents receive a small monthly payment and are expected to work part-time with a minimum of 20 hours a month. In the absence of a formal employment contract, the ambassador managers are in this study referred to as either volunteer respondents or volunteers. In Table 3 all respondents are listed but not numbered in its reference for the purpose to maintain the participants' confidentiality.

*Table 3. List of interview respondents.*

| Reference | Job position | Active in current position | Active in Uniplaces | City/Country | Sex | Interview location | Interview date and time | Interview duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V | Ambassador manager | 6 months | 6 months | Valencia/Spain | Woman | Via Skype | 5 Dec 2017; 15:30 (CEST) | 18 min |
| V | Ambassador manager | 1 month | 7 months | Lisbon/Portugal | Woman | Uniplaces office, Lisbon | 8 Feb 2018; 11:00 (WEST) | 25 min |
| V | Ambassador manager | 6 months | 1 year | Madrid/Spain | Man | Uniplaces office, Madrid | 30 Nov 2017; 16:00 (CEST) | 15 min |
| V | Ambassador manager | 2 months | 2 years | Rome/Italy | Man | Via Skype | 10 Jan 2018; 11:15 (WEST) | 40 min |
| V | Ambassador manager | 6 months | 6 months | Madrid/Spain | Woman | Uniplaces office, Madrid | 30 Nov 2017; 16:30 (CEST) | 19 min |
| M | Talent acquisition manager | 6 months | 1 year, 6 months | Lisbon/Portugal | Man | Uniplaces office, Lisbon | 11 Dec 2017; 12:45 (WEST) | 41 min |
| M | Brand manager | 2 months | 1 year, 6 months | Lisbon/Portugal | Woman | Uniplaces office, Lisbon | 12 Dec 2017; 16:00 (WEST) | 36 min |
| M | Country marketing manager | 7 months | 7 months | Lisbon/Portugal | Woman | Uniplaces office, Lisbon | 25 Jan 2018; 16:00 (WEST) | 39 min |
| M | Country marketing manager | 1 year | 2 years, 9 months | Madrid/Spain | Man | Uniplaces office, Madrid | 30 Nov 2017; 13:20 (CEST) | 21 min |
| M | Country marketing manager | 5 months | 5 months | Barcelona/Spain | Woman | Via Skype | 2 Feb 2018; 14:30 (WEST) | 40 min |

## 3.4. Data collection

The data was collected by a non-standardised qualitative research method using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to use themes and questions that are set before the interview but may be altered during the interview, or vary from one interview to another, if it is for the greater good of achieving the research objective (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Based on the company context and the theoretical framework three different interview guides (see appendix 1, 2, and 3) were created for the three different kinds of respondents. Each interview guide had approximately 15 questions that covered three topics concerning (1) background questions, (2) questions about motive asking for what reasons the company uses volunteers and why the volunteers stay working for the company, (3) questions about the volunteer management, and an additional fourth theme was added for the HR representative with questions about the company specific HR strategy and its alignment with the voluntary program. Interview guides with questions structured in topics gave a clear direction and established a guide that was aligned with the research purpose (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

## 3.5. Conducting interviews

First, three pilot interviews were conducted in order to check for possible edits to be made to the interview guide. The pilot interviews were tested on two volunteers, brand ambassadors of Uniplaces working directly under the ambassador managers, and on one HR worker from a private pharmaceutical company located in Sweden. After the pilot interviews, minor changes to the questions were made and some entirely deleted.

All participants were informed in written format via e-mail of the purpose of the interviews and their right to have their personal information and interviews treated confidential. If needed, at the interviews the purpose and further explanation was once again given and all the participants got to sign a consent form, except for three respondents giving their consent verbally. The respondents were interviewed at the Uniplaces office in Lisbon and Madrid face-to-face and one-to-one. In three interviews a face-to-face meeting was not possible and the interview was carried out using the Internet-mediated communication tool Skype. During the interview I followed the interview guide and allowed the respondent to speak freely in order to answer the questions while I listened and took additional notes on paper. The interviews were recorded and

the approximated duration of the interviews with the volunteers lasted about 20 minutes and for the managers about 30 minutes.

## 3.6. Analysing the data

The audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed into written format. The transcripts were kept simple, straightforward and in detail including word for word, but excluding sounds and noises such as a cough and stuttering. Tone of voice and non-verbal communication was not included in the transcripts but occasional pauses, exclamations, questions, and laughter was added. Consistency between the transcripts was achieved as the researcher was the only one transcribing.

The transcripts were analysed by the process of *condensation* which is explained by Saunders *et al.* (2009) as a way to analyse qualitative data by compressing longer statements into summaries with additional comments by the researcher about the person interviewed and the nature of the interview. When analysing the transcripts, the condensation analysing method was helpful in getting an overview of the data, find meaning and relationships between the different interviews, and connect the data with the research questions. With condensation I was able to find common themes in the data making it possible to distinguish patterns and similarities that could be aligned with the literature review. Based on the data gathered further theory could be added to the literature review, theory that was used to better understand the results.

The action dimension of the three-dimensional model of people strategy by Gratton and Truss (2003) have influenced the gathering and understanding of the data as I have interviewed both volunteers and management in an attempt to get a more full-bodied description of the volunteer management phenomenon. The action dimension is analysed by looking at the experience of line managers and their staff to better understand the implementation of volunteer management.

Quotes are presented by the use of /…/ and the confidentiality of the respondents are kept by referencing the volunteer respondents as V1 to V5, and M1 to M5 for the management respondents.

## 3.7. Quality

*Reliability* and *validity* are two types of quality issues important to consider when using qualitative data from interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Reliability questions is explained as if the data were to be collected again at another instance would it be similar to the previous results. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009) reliability is achieved by having respondents informed about the interviews and its reasons, as well as a professionally conducted interview free from misunderstandings and provocations that might affect the respondent's answers. Validity questions if the data gathered is the correct data for the purpose of the research, but also whether the data can be generalised onto a broader population (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). It is not likely that the data gathered from semi-structured interviews can be generalised onto a broader population but it will provide an insight into a real start-up business managing real volunteers and answer to the purpose of this paper.

## 3.8. Research ethics

A consent form was outlined and presented to all participants to sign. The consent form provided information about the background and purpose of the research and its interviews, a promise of *confidentiality* in treating the participants answers and personal data, and to gather the participants *informed consent*. Confidentiality was reached as the transcripts were not shared with anyone else and the quotes in the results cannot be used to directly or indirectly identify the respondent's identity. Saunders *et al.* (2009) define confidentiality as making sure personal data provided from participants are kept private and undisclosed throughout the study. Informed consent is achieved when participants give their consent under free will after being thoroughly informed about their rights as participants and use of data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

The participants were first informed about the interviews via email and once again verbally with the consent form to sign at the time that the interviews took place. Written consent was received from all participants except in three cases in which verbal consent was given and recorded.

# 4. Results

The following chapter presents the results from the interviews. The chapter follows the initial order of the research questions starting with Uniplaces motives for having volunteers, the volunteers' motives for working for a for-profit company, how the management is perceived by the volunteers, how Uniplaces perceive the management of volunteers, and what the costs of managing the volunteer program are. The chapter ends with a results summary.

## 4.1. What are the motives of Uniplaces for having volunteers?

A majority of the management respondents considers the purpose for having volunteers to be:

1. a source of information about the company's target market;
2. for building brand awareness, and;
3. a source of labour for marketing and sales tasks.

A minority of the management respondents also considers the voluntary program to be operating as a recruitment platform for potential future employees. One manager describes the program as a platform for development of potential employees:

> /…/ a platform to students to develop their own skills and knowledge and attitudes, like everything, like all these competencies that they need in the entrepreneurial world, so that we can then recruit them for example to be a part of our company or they can find better jobs later on. (M2)

The value volunteers bring to the company is said by many respondents to be aligned with the purpose of managing volunteers, it is said that volunteers bring value by providing information about the target market and brand awareness by generating trust and credibility among customers and in partnerships.

> /…/ they know what is going on in universities, they know what is going on like on the ground, and people in the office most of the time we kind of forget. (M1)

> So it was a very wide array of activities that we set out ambassadors to do, but the most important objective for the ambassador program initially was to create brand awareness, was to make Uniplaces look like a very student centred company. (M2)

Some respondents include labour as a valuable factor volunteers bring to the company. The respondents explain that volunteers help to manage bookings creating revenue to the company, attend at marketing events, complete translations for the company website, and to bring ideas and material for the marketing department.

> A percentage of all of our bookings are generated by the volunteering program. A very specific percentage. And there is a proper KPI for the program to actually achieve "X" amount of bookings generated by the program. So that is the value, that is the direct value, kind of financial value let's say. (M5)

The short-term goal in having volunteers are according to most management respondents to facilitate brand awareness and to bring revenue by generating customer bookings to the company website. When asked about long-term goals of having volunteers the answers from the respondents does not reach a consensus but a minority of the respondents believe that brand awareness would still be the objective of the voluntary program.

> /…/ long-term mission is pure brand awareness and brand sustainability, brand positioning within the student community. (M5)

## 4.2. What are the volunteers' motives for working in a for-profit company?

A majority of volunteer respondents describe the motives in working for a for-profit company to be for the opportunity to learn and develop within the program. While the opportunity to learn is the most common motive for these respondents most volunteers agree that the job tasks and its job setting, the work environment, and financial compensation are important motives for being part of the program. The respondents say that the opportunity to learn are found in the challenge of the job tasks, in the interactions with employees and their manager, and from the overall experience itself. Many respondents agree that the reason why they first joined the program was to get professional experience from a real company and to learn and develop from this experience.

> To get some professional experience. To know more, like how a company works from inside. (V1)

A frequently mentioned factor by all the respondents in what they expect in return from their involvement in the program is to learn and develop, get compensated for their work, and a chance to meet and work with people for both networking, social, and learning reasons. For some respondents there is an expectation that their current position in the program will give them the necessary experience they need in order to find a job.

> I think that the main reason why you choose start-up volunteer job is to learn, discover yourself through the others and through your actions. (V4)

The work environment is attractive to many respondents describing it as a social and exciting start-up environment with many young people working together. Often times the respondents describe their managers as friends rather than an authority figure.

> I think that they are both really friendly and the environment in the office is really, not formal at all, it is really, they are older than me but I feel really comfortable with them. (V5)

The financial compensation that the respondents receive monthly is by many considered essential for them in their role as ambassador manager. However, the volunteers state that the size of the compensation is not enough to make it a main motivational factor to stay long-term, and for some it is can be a reason for exiting the ambassador manager position. One respondent expresses a desire to stay working for Uniplaces if it were not for the possibility to earn more money elsewhere:

> /…/ I wanted to save more money, as I told you, and fortunately I found another job for what I really studied for and I am going to gain little bit more of money so this was the main reason. But if not, I would have definitely stayed with Uniplaces. (V3)

The job and its job setting is attractive to many respondents because it is part-time and flexible, and the tasks and position matches the respondent's personal interests and is enjoyable for them to do. When asked about their motives to stay as a volunteer in the program the financial compensation was not a main motivational factor but instead the character of the job tasks and job setting allowing the volunteers to continue to learn and enjoy the job tasks together with

their team, colleagues and manager, as well as for the independence they are entrusted at work and for the flexibility to work whenever and how much they want.

> The very first thing that kept me, that kept my eyes on this company, is the kind of feeling that I have when I am working with people my age and when I have that independency /…/ (V3)

> I feel the need to work on different things. So don't focus just on one. A position like that allow you to do that. So maybe if I was working full-time for Uniplaces I could not do other stuff I am doing. (V4)

## 4.3. How is the management of volunteers perceived by the volunteers?

The manager's ability to guide and help the volunteers in their job is mentioned as a prominent feature, both as a motivational factor for the volunteers in succeeding in their work, and as an area of improvement where more help and guidance from the managers in the volunteer work are needed. The respondents mention how their managers give them independence at work but most respondents say they need more guidance before dealing with the work alone.

> /…/ the flexibility and the freedom to work as we want has made us to push ourselves more. So that's nice. (V1)

A minority of volunteers mentioned how they had been promised certain work characteristics in their role as ambassador manager that were never realised by the manager. When asked if there are any changes to be made to the ambassador program one respondents points out:

> /…/ sometimes they are promising things they are not going to get. Most of the times. (V2)

A majority of respondents describe that they have a close relationship with their managers**.** The close relationship with managers and other volunteers is referred to as a source of motivation. A few respondents talk of how their manager help to bring volunteers and employees together.

> /…/ you are motivated more for the people you work for than the thing that you work on /…/ (V4)

A manager that facilitate learning is the aspect that most volunteer respondents talk about. The respondent mention how their manager gives them training, explain and guide the volunteers in order to meet objectives, coaches through daily tasks, and for some, are an inspiring manager that the volunteers can learn from.

> I expect mainly, as I am so young, I expect mainly to learn, to understand how this works, how does a company that is growing works? (V5)

The managers are perceived by the respondents to be inclusive to all volunteers in their communication, that they are understanding and listening, have an open communication between volunteers and management, and frequently giving feedback and have weekly meetings with the volunteers. That the managers are available via communication tools and at the office is mentioned by a few respondents as a management characteristic.

> If I have a problem I can just email or Slack or call one of them, and immediately, usually in less than an hour they answer me, and ask "Ok, if you need something else just tell me" or "If you come to the office we can talk about this and that", or even Skype if I have a lot of doubts. So they are really available as I said, it is really easy to get the information I need. (V5)

*Appreciation, attention and compensation* are mentioned as areas of improvement. Many respondents believe there is a lack of compensation to them as ambassador managers but also to their team, how they would like there to be more money put into activities for volunteers, and how the volunteers need more attention from the company and its headquarter. One respondent says that the volunteers does not seem to be a priority to their manager, another respondent believe more attention from the whole company is needed in order to motivate volunteers.

> /…/ I would say the compensation and I would also say that we would like to have more attention, not from my managers, but from the Uniplaces central in Lisbon /.../ Just for them to know who are they [*brand ambassadors*] working for, you know? (V3)

> /…/ Well, I was here because of the money, mainly. But like, a lot of ambassadors, well not that much, but some ambassadors have been there for a long time and they have struggled so much because actually they didn't pay them so much. (V1)

I think it is really, really complicated because at the end if you as a volunteer are watching other people earn money doing the same tasks that you are doing, sometimes it is kind of "ok, I will stay more just to check if I can grow here", but if I can't I don't want to be here, because I could be volunteering at a non-profit you know? With kids, with older people. (V2)

## 4.4. How is the management of volunteers perceived by Uniplaces?

The management respondents answered to how they manage volunteers, how they motivate the volunteers to work, how they facilitate teamwork and development, and what the greatest challenges of managing volunteers are. From the answers ten factors emerged that captures the management respondents' perception on how the volunteers are managed within the company.

Most management respondents talk about being flexible in managing the changes in the company but most importantly flexible towards the volunteers' different personal interests in for motivational and development purposes. One manager speaks of how teamwork and development is promoted by pairing volunteers together with similar interests in groups in order to facilitate learning from one another. Other respondents talk about how the program itself is designed in a way that makes it possible to match a volunteer's interest with position and tasks.

> We like to give a lot of flexibility to the ambassadors because they are students and we understand that they have other commitments happening at the same time, and another very important thing that we keep in consideration is their personal interests. That is why we give them different options for specialization in the program. (M2)

However, to understand and to align volunteers' expectations with the company expectations is considered to be a difficult task according to the managers. The respondents explain that the they need to understand what motivates each individual volunteer, and that the rewards available to give to volunteers are not diverse enough to fulfil all personal interests.

> /…/ the biggest difficulty for me is when you group different type of people. It is very difficult to understand why are these people at the program? And given to them, all of them, the same rewards. That's for me the most difficult task. (M1)

The financial compensation is mentioned by many respondents as a motivational factor when managing volunteers. Compensation is believed to be essential but not the most important factor for keeping volunteers to stay in the program. For the volunteers earning a monthly salary as ambassador managers, the management respondents agree that the compensation is essential for the position that these volunteers are in. Some respondents believe that the financial compensation that is paid out to volunteers are not enough for keeping them in the program. Speaking of the fixed compensation that ambassador managers are given on a monthly basis, one respondent says:

> Well there is definitely the financial incentive, which is part of the deal. Nobody would do this for free. (M2)

The work environment is a reoccurring theme mentioned by most respondents to play a crucial part in the management and retaining of volunteers. The respondents often talk of different social activities that fosters development, motivation and teamwork. Social activities are rarely mentioned as something the respondents actively participates in or manage but rather something that they encourage the volunteers to partake in. Some respondents speak of how they strive for a work environment with good colleagues or creating a community of friends as a way to keep volunteers to retain in the program. It is mentioned how kick-offs and team building days are arranged for the volunteers to recruit new members, to create teamwork and to implement an understanding of the program. The respondents talk of development opportunities in the work relationship between volunteers and other employees, but that a lack of professionalism can be a challenge within the company expectations of volunteers and in the balancing act of a work environment that should include both fun and work.

> /…/ when you give management positions to unexperienced people sometimes it doesn't go the way you expect. Because they are not used to manage people /…/ (M1)

> /…/ the best way to get volunteers, in my opinion, should be creating a community of friends, and that is kind of what I am empowering at the moment. (M1)

Availability is mentioned by almost all respondents as a characteristic in their management towards volunteers. Availability is described as being an easily approachable manager and to

be constantly in contact with the volunteers via social communication tools, or in person. To quote one manager:

/…/ to be constantly in contact with them in order for them to be more engaged and be more part of the community. (M4)

The volunteer's own availability is considered a challenge to the managers as the brand ambassadors do not have a contract binding them to a certain amount of hours they have to work for the company. At times when the company need the volunteers the most is also the time when the volunteers are least available due to other priorities with school work. The managers struggle with not having the volunteers available when needed.

We are not their priority because they are volunteers, they have other priorities that are bigger than us. (M3)

Company reputation and identity helps the volunteers to stay motivated and simplifies teamwork, states most respondents. Some respondents speak about the company reputation as trendy and visible which helps attract volunteers to the program, or that volunteers identify with the company objectives, purpose, or the international start-up work environment consisting of a young workforce much like the volunteers themselves.

/…/ for our style, we are a start-up, a young company, most of our current employees are young so in order to have this (*ambassador program*), like it is also part of our identity. (M4)

Many respondents say they believe that the opportunity to learn and experience within a company is an important motivational factor for volunteers to retain within the program. The managers mainly facilitate learning via feedback sessions, by conducting informal trainings, by empowering volunteers to develop through their own work, by delegating new job tasks, or by bringing volunteers and employees together.

I provide them support in terms of training, explaining to them how to do specific tasks, monitoring their performance, giving feedback, solving problems together, and making sure that it works. (M2)

Empowering volunteers with autonomous and independence at work is important according to a majority of management respondents. To allow autonomy or independence in their work is usually referred to by the respondents as to trust the volunteers, to not monitor directly their work, and to leave them space to work on their own. This aspect of empowerment is brought up as a managing tool and by some respondents as a way to develop the volunteers.

> To work by themselves. I think it is very important to, not only to take their opinions into consideration, and try to implement their ideas, if they are good of course as much as possible, because I think that is the main motivation for them., to really see that what they have been working on in paper was implemented. But also to give them autonomy and to just guide them and then let them do their job and then give them feedback of course. (M3)

> I try to be really close to them. To give them trust. To also try to empower them in order to do stuff. (M4)

A majority of management respondents address the importance of guiding the volunteers to set, reach and understand objectives. The respondents believe that it is important for the volunteers to understand what the company expects from the volunteers, why it is important, and what purpose their objectives have to the overall company objectives. With clear goal setting and a shared understanding the managers believe this aspect of management act as a motivational factor for the volunteers in their work.

> So if you simply explain them what is the goal and what are we trying to achieve and give them access to more information that they might need to find /…/ and provide support whenever they need it. They are going to be able to deliver almost equally the same results as a full-time employee who has maybe three years of experience. (M2)

Communication is often mentioned by the respondents as giving and receiving feedback and to have regular meetings in person or via video calls with the volunteers. Geographical distance, lack of English language skills among some volunteers, and too many layers of management are some of the factors mentioned as challenges in the communication between managers and their volunteers. Most respondents talk of communication as a tool to facilitate learning and motivation among volunteers via feedback sessions, meetings, and by listening to volunteers' ideas, opinions, and interests.

> And even if there are crazy ideas, which sometimes they are, and we don't have budget to
> do them, it is always very interesting to try to work on those ideas and make them feasible,
> and I think students are great for that. (M3)

Most respondents mention the motivational importance that the job tasks have in the management and retaining of volunteers. One manager explain how job tasks are the reason why volunteers chose to stay in the program, another manager talks of how the job tasks bring volunteers to collaborate together with shared tasks, but above all a variety of challenging job tasks are important for the volunteers in their learning and developing and consequently it is a motivational factor.

> I think it is mainly a feeling like you are contributing to something big, something that you
> identify with, and of course learning and feeling like you are getting some soft skills that
> you would not be getting if you were serving coffee at some corporate company or like do
> copies. (M3)

## 4.5. What costs are there to managing volunteers?

The management respondents talk of seven costs that are connected to the volunteer program in the company:

- Monthly fixed compensation to the ambassador managers. Regardless of the agreement between the local company office and the ambassador manager, each ambassador manager earn a fixed compensation each month which is paid out by the company.
- Reward and performance-based compensation. All ambassadors are compensated for the amount of hours or tasks that has been accomplished by the volunteer. Usually the volunteer earn compensation from making bookings, working at events, and to complete translations for the company webpage.
- Employee hourly pay. Every hour an employee of the company interacts with the program and its volunteers, in workshops, trainings, meetings and seminars, it is an employee salary cost for the company.

- Line managers of the program. The local line managers of the program for each country devote approximately one work day per week to managing the volunteer program. The brand manager spends more time managing the program.

- Merchandize for the program. The volunteers are given merchandize such as t-shirts or hoodies.

- Events and activities within the program. The company finances events and activities within the volunteer program. These include informal activities for social gatherings, and teambuilding days that is related to the recruitment of new ambassadors.

- Volunteer website. A website only for the purpose of the volunteer program was developed by the company.

> So it is a volunteering program in that sense with no proper salary, but because the compensation scheme you can actually get a lot of cash out of it. But in terms of costs, so in our case, like I said, there is the direct costs of the incentive scheme. There is the people costs of paying salary of people who actually manage /…/ And then there is all the effort, the hours which you can translate into cash, but it is basically a cost, all of the hours of all of the teams and other people who somehow interact with the program. (M5)

## 4.6. Results summary

The motives of Uniplaces for having volunteers are to gain information about the target market, to build on the company's brand awareness, and to be a source of labour for completing marketing and sales tasks. For some, having a volunteer program is viewed as a recruitment platform for finding and developing potential employees. The volunteers should bring revenue to the business as a short-term goal for the company and increasing brand awareness is considered to be both the long and short-term goal of the program.

The reason why the volunteers of this study work for a for-profit company is for:
- the opportunity to learn and gain experience from a real company, partially for the reason of increasing their chances of finding a new job later;
- the young sociable work environment with an attractive company reputation and networking opportunities;
- the financial compensation, which also is the main reason for volunteers leaving the program in the lack thereof, and;

- the character of the job itself that include independent work and a flexibility towards the volunteer's own interests, which allows them to learn and enjoy their work.

The volunteers describe the management and the voluntary program as flexible towards their personal interests and needs but for some volunteers there are sometimes promises that are not being met. The managers are perceived by the volunteers a source of support, guidance and trust by having independence in their voluntary work, though for some volunteers more guidance in their independent work is said to be needed. The volunteers experience that their managers help bring people together and that they have a close relationship with their managers. The managers are mentioned as facilitators of learning giving and receiving feedback, training, and coaching through work. The managers are inclusive in their communication and listen to the ideas of the volunteers, but there it is mentioned that improvement is needed in the attention and compensation they receive from the managers and the company.

The management speak of elements of communication, guiding through goal setting, being flexible towards volunteer's interests, empowering autonomous work with trust, encourage a social work environment, being available to the volunteers, facilitate learning through feedback, training, trust, and by bringing volunteers and employees together. To manage and retain volunteers mainly performed via the social work environment, a program structure that is flexible towards volunteers' interests, a company reputation that attract and maintain volunteers, facilitating a learning relationship between employees and volunteers, provide training, provide new job tasks, and a financial incentive scheme. The greatest challenges in management of volunteers lies in communication barriers, volunteers' individual expectations, their availability and professionalism.

The costs of managing the program and its volunteers, according to the management, are to be found in the financial compensation to volunteers, the time employees and managers spend interacting with the program, program merchandize, events and activities within the program, and the volunteer website.

# 5. Discussion

In this chapter the results of this study is discussed together with the literature framework in order to understand and make relevant assumptions on how an international start-up business manage and retain volunteers in their workforce. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research questions against the literature review and ends with a methodology discussion, conclusion, and implications for further studies.

## 5.1. What are the motives of Uniplaces for having volunteers?

The motives behind why Uniplaces include volunteers in their staff is for marketing purposes of creating brand awareness and to understand the target audience, a source of labour, and to find potential employees. By comparing previous research and theory about organisational life cycles and the resource-based view with the results it is possible to find certain similarities between the two.

Uniplaces have the motive to develop volunteers that can later be employed by the company. Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that Uniplaces use the voluntary program as a recruitment platform in order to better integrate volunteers into the business and become potential employees. This would be an approach that share similarities with the management priority typical for the second phase of high growth in the organisational life cycle according to Smith *et al*. (1985). According to Smith *et al*. (1985) an increasingly more complex organisation of high-growth usually have the management priority to integrate all aspects of the business, and with the voluntary program Uniplaces could avoid hiring the wrong candidates and develop the volunteers into better suitable employees. Furthermore, by developing the volunteers before employment could also be perceived out of a resource-based view as a way for Uniplaces to develop potential employees with a unique value for competitive advantage. Wilkinson and Taylor's (2012) resource-based view argue that competitive advantage is achieved by acquiring and managing resources into gaining unique value that makes it hard for competitors to copy.

Brand awareness is a main motive and the volunteers bring trust and credibility to the brand and the target market. Volunteers generating trust and credibility to the brand can be interpreted to be intangible resources hard for the competitors to copy similar to Wilkinson and Taylor's (2012) resource-based view. Managing trust among volunteers can also be an indicator that

Uniplaces has a management approach towards their volunteers similar to the soft approach (Truss, 1999) where trust between management and workers is a crucial characteristic. However, having volunteers with the motive to perform simple tasks of generating bookings would not be aligned with the resource-based view as the motive is not an approach to bring unique value to the voluntary staff. For the simple tasks of bookings, presence at events, and do translations, the volunteers' role in the company indicate that it is not of strategic importance for company success but loyal and well-performing volunteers are rewarded and financially compensated by measure of individual performance. This description shares similarities to what Truss *et al.* (2012) call the social model of strategic orientation where a staff group is of low strategic importance to product and best performers contributing to profitability get recognition by social rewards. It is possible to assume that the company motive for having volunteers initially have low strategic importance to the business similar to Truss *et al.* (2012) social model, with the objective to generate sales and visibility for marketing purposes. However, if the volunteers allow themselves to develop within the program there are chances they might become increasingly valuable to the company wanting to recruit them as employees with unique value similar to the resource-based view (Wilkinson and Taylor, 2012).

Having volunteers can be the company's way of meeting the issues typical for the early growth phase in Dodge and Robbins' (1992) organisational life cycle model. The issues for the early growth phase are described as when sales activity increases problems arise with stabilizing production and product reliability, to keep up with the demand, to maintain cash flow, and to formalize organisational structure (Dodge and Robbins, 1992). Increased brand awareness with trust and credibility to the product could be a way to meet the issue of product reliability, volunteers close to the target market help the company to keep up with the current demand, and access to volunteer labour generate bookings and provide creative content could be a way to maintain cash flow.

The managers agree on the short-term goal of the volunteer program but consensus is not reached regarding the long-term goal. No long-term strategy for the volunteer program could be an indicator for a tipping point challenge in the organisational life of the company where it has to tackle the issue of what Phelps *et al.* (2007) define as strategic orientation in order to grow further as an organisation. Phelps *et al.* (2007) state that any strategic plan is preferable to not having any strategy at all, and if an existing issue is ignored by the management a

company might carry the issue into the next phase of their organisational life cycle (Dodge and Robbins, 1992).

## 5.2. What are the volunteers' motives for working in a for-profit company?

A volunteer is someone donating their time and skills to perform planned tasks and activities within an organisational context without being financially compensated (Alfes, *et al.*, 2017; Laczo and Hanisch, 1999; Cova *et al.*, 2015). Despite the presence of a financial incentive scheme in the Uniplaces ambassador program, the compensation does not make it a reason for the volunteers to stay in their position, but instead the learning opportunities, social work environment, and job tasks. It is reasonable to assume that these volunteers' motives in working in a for-profit start-up company are to some extent similar to Alfes *et al.* (2017), Laczo and Hanisch's (1999), and Cova *et al.*'s (2015) definition of a volunteer.

Different to Alfes *et al.* (2017) and Laczo and Hanisch (1999) definition, Charlesworth (2003) state how volunteering can be a way for people to gain skills necessary for getting a future job and for networking purposes, this aspect can be found in our results as the volunteers' express an interest for networking and gaining a first job experience as a stepping stone for finding future jobs. The Uniplaces volunteer fit to the profile of Strauss (2008) who presents volunteering as a job strategy for higher educated people to gain social network and develop soft skills qualifications in order to commercialize their labour power. There is reason to believe that the volunteers of Uniplaces have the motive and profile similar to of what Strauss (2008) call reinforcement purposes when volunteering is aligned with professional interest, and addition purposes when the work is less-time intensive and is a leisure activity away from school work. The Uniplaces volunteers also look for a professional environment where they can gain new skills, thisshare similarities to Strauss' (2008) volunteering for transition purposes as but since they are current students there is no need for transition as a means to prevent a discontinuous working life. It is important to mention that Strauss (2008) research is based on unemployed people and not students, and this might be a reason why the brand ambassadors share characteristics to several different alternatives to volunteering.

The results show that the exciting start-up environment is one factor for the volunteers to primarily have joined the company. This could be an indicator typical for high-growth SME firms which according to Rutherford *et al.* (2003), easily attract people willing to work for a

less amount of money just to be a part of a fast paced and growing environment. However, learning opportunities, job tasks, work environment, and financial compensation are the main motivational factors for the Uniplaces ambassador managers to volunteer. It is possible to identify learning opportunities and job tasks as intrinsic motivators that are sources of long-term job satisfaction, and the work environment and financial compensation are extrinsically hygiene factors of short-term job satisfaction but are also commonly known as a source of job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987; Dessler, 2005). Perhaps does this explain why the respondents do not perceive their financial compensation as a reason for them to stay longer in the volunteer program, but rather a short-term motive, and thus we find support in our data with the Herzberg (1987) hygiene-motivator model.

## 5.3. How is the management of volunteers perceived by the volunteers?

From the volunteers' perception of their management similarities and differences to the literature review are found, and every aspect of the results that corresponds to previous research are pointed out in Table 4.

*Table 4. Volunteer management according to the volunteers.*

| *Management of volunteers* | Perception of the volunteers. |
|---|---|
| *Flexibility towards personal values and interests* | **Position match personal interests. Availability of support.** |
| *Organisational polices/strategies* | **Financial incentive scheme.** |
| *Social work environment* | **Inclusive communication, learning relations with paid employees, networking and collaboration opportunities. Social and informal environment.** |
| *Learning opportunities* | **Learning exists in the job tasks and facilitated via the managers.** |
| *Autonomy* | **Independent work for learning but lack of guidance from management.** |
| *Recognition* | **Some lack of recognition, appreciation, and compensation.** |
| *Job tasks* | **Frequent feedback and meetings.** |

First, the volunteers express how the manager is flexible towards their needs and interests which is perceived as a favourable characteristic. This could indicate that Uniplaces are exercising flexibility for a more motivated volunteer workforce similar to previous research promoting flexibility in order to retain and manage volunteers to be motivated at work (Simon, 2013; Saksida *et al.*, 2017). The volunteers find flexibility in the structure of the voluntary program and in the management adjusting work based on interests. That the volunteers find flexibility to be motivational and helping them to succeed in their work share similarities with Herzberg's theory (1987) in which flexibility can be categorised as a motivator for job satisfaction.

Second, some volunteers mention promises that have not been met, and perhaps it is reasonable to assume that the management needs to improve organisational policies and strategies for role definition, recruitment and support, which would signal organisational commitment towards its volunteer according to Simon (2013) and Charlesworth (2003). However, Herzberg (1987) would disagree in implementing further organisational policies and administration as it is considered a hygiene factor and one of the largest sources of job dissatisfaction.

Third, the volunteers perceive their environment as inclusive and social with managers that trust them in their work giving them space to independently work on their own. The volunteers receive trainings from paid employees of the company and get to work with job tasks that fit their personal interests. These descriptions can be translated into what Truss (1999) would call a soft approach to management, which is best described as being flexible towards the development of the workers with the aim to create a workforce that is empowered by trust and commitment. The volunteers are motivated by the close relationship that they have to their manager and other volunteers, and the social environment share similarities to previous research arguing that volunteers are motivated to belong to a social group and by social interaction in comparison to paid employees (Saksida *et al.*, 2017; Alfes *et al.*, 2017; Charlesworth, 2003). The statement seems to contradict that relationships with supervisor, peers and subordinates would be a source for job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

Fourth, for volunteers the purpose of working is believed to be more intrinsically motivating in comparison to paid employees, where volunteers seek to gain personal development and learning opportunities (Saksida *et al.*, 2017; Charlesworth, 2003). We find similarities between this statement and the results where volunteers are mainly motivated to work and to retain in their position as volunteer due to the learning opportunities from the manager, the job, and the

work environment. The learning opportunities can be connected to the independent volunteer work and the relationship with their manager and other paid employees as Saksida *et al*. (2017) mention how training and supportive relationships with paid employees can help the volunteer with a clearer role definition in the organisation, how to succeed in their role and therefore increase their levels of commitment to the organisation.

Fifth, managers can develop volunteers' skills and confidence with training and autonomous work (McCannon and Han, 2016), and similar to the results the volunteers experience their independent work as a learning progress that sometimes can be frustrating when they feel as if they have not been given clear instructions on how to pursue their objectives. There is reason to believe that the lack of guidance in autonomous work indicates to some extent the importance of Boezeman and Ellemers (2014) statement on how leadership should give sufficient support to the volunteers in their work tasks as it fosters leadership satisfaction. Furthermore, it is possible to locate independent work as a motivator as it is intrinsic motivation connected to the job itself, and the volunteer's learning relationship with their manager and other paid employees as a hygiene factor an extrinsic motivation surrounding the job (Herzberg, 1987; Dessler, 2005). In these factors the volunteers are satisfied with the independent work but have some job dissatisfaction with the frustration that comes with the missing explanations from the managers, all of which gives us further support that job dissatisfaction are more common in hygiene factors rather than motivators (Herzberg, 1987). Independent or autonomous work are frequently mentioned by the volunteers as a source of learning and motivation, and in the literature it is possible to find the concept of responsibility as one of the most vital motivator factors in job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

Sixth and last, the volunteers' perception of their management do not agree with McHugh (2017) findings of volunteers being perceived by its organisation as less important. Instead the volunteers experience open and inclusive communication from the management similar to what is a motivator factors for recognition (Herzberg, 1987). However, the mere presence of a financial incentive scheme seems to be a source of inequality experienced among some volunteers as it is highlighted by the volunteer that more attention is requested from both on a manager and on a company level. In relation to the Herzberg's model, the financial incentives are sources of job dissatisfaction but feelings of recognition, achievement and advancement are motivators worth managing for greater performance and job satisfaction among the volunteers (Herzberg, 1987). Pfeffer (1998) say that managing extrinsic rewards can even damage the

intrinsic motivation and that individual incentive schemes are only for short-term motivation and could undermine teamwork. Continuing, the volunteers want more attention, appreciation and compensation for their work. According to Simon (2013) to show recognition and appreciation is a crucial step in attracting and retaining volunteers and continues by saying how management need to communicate volunteer's value and contribution to their volunteers. It is possible to support this statement from the results as the volunteers' state that the lack of recognition would be one of the reasons to leave the program.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the volunteers experience their management most similar to Simon's (2013) informal model. In comparison between results and the informal model (Simon, 2013) there are similarities found in that (1) the volunteers perceive their work environment as informal and their job setting and manager as flexible to their interests, this is shared with the informal model that states that authority is informal and ad hoc, (2) the volunteers speak of independence at work similar to the informal model's control that is indirect and free, (3) the volunteers speak of their manager more of as friends rather than an authority figure similar to the informal model's description of social relations which consists of permissive boundaries including personal and functional relations.

## 5.4. How is the management of volunteers perceived by Uniplaces?

Uniplaces volunteer management include mainly five motivator factors of flexibility, learning opportunities, autonomy, recognition, and job tasks, and two hygiene factors which lies in the social work environment with relations to manager, peers and subordinates, and the financial compensation (Herzberg, 1987). The volunteer management characteristics identified in the results are presented in Table 5.

The managers are constantly available to their volunteers and are open to understand and listen to the ideas of the volunteers. This approach can be identified as a means for managers to better understand their volunteers, a flexible approach that is advised by McCannon and Han (2016) for creating commitment among volunteers. It is considered by the managers that the volunteers' expectations are one of the challenges they face, and so it is reasonable to assume that more efforts need to be made in order to overcome this obstacle as Simon (2013) conclude that it is considered a weakness for organisations that are not able to be flexible in its

management towards the volunteers' need. To be flexible towards the volunteers' needs share similarities of being a motivator factor for job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

*Table 5. Volunteer management according to the management.*

| Management of volunteers | Perception of the management. |
|---|---|
| **Flexibility towards personal values and interests** | **Meet volunteer's values and needs. Available management.** |
| **Organisational polices/strategies** | **Financial incentive scheme.** |
| **Social work environment** | **Social activities. Manager facilitates a community of friends. Learning relationships. Company reputation attracts. Lack of professionalism.** |
| **Learning opportunities** | **Informal training, feedback, autonomy, variety of job tasks, and learning relationships.** |
| **Autonomy** | **Autonomy at work for learning. Based on trusting the volunteers.** |
| **Recognition** | **Financial compensation. Feedback. Listens to volunteers ideas and interests.** |
| **Job tasks** | **Teamwork. Challenging variety of tasks for learning and motivation.** |

The managers strive to maintain a work environment that is friendly and enjoyable but struggles with keeping the right balance between mixing work and fun for the volunteers. The results imply that the company values an important feature in volunteer management, to create an enjoyable, stimulating social environment for integration and learning (McCannon and Han, 2016; Saksida *et al.,* 2017; Charlesworth, 2003). The relationship between supervisors, peers and subordinates are considered a hygiene factor (Herzberg, 1987), a source for job dissatisfaction if not managed well. However, Pfeffer (1998) mention that management should understand that people are motivated by a fun work environment and the lack thereof can cause staff workers to decrease in loyalty and commitment. The results show that management encourage social activities and to create a friendly workplace, this have similarities with Pfeffer's (1998) research. For some managers there are concerns about volunteers' lack of professionalism. This could be an example of job dissatisfaction due to the relationship between manager and worker as Herzberg (1987) categorise relations as a hygiene factor. There is a

possibility that the professionalism challenge could be handled with further training and closer relationship with paid employees as Saksida *et al.* (2017) finds that learning relationship between volunteers and paid employees to help volunteers understand their role in the company and learn how to be more successful in it.

The managers say that they are constantly available towards their volunteers, and this can be interpreted to be similar to Simon (2013) who states that responsible coordinators can maintain volunteers' motivation by being available and by creating an inclusive environment. The volunteers' restricted availability is mentioned as an issue by the managers, but they say they understand this problem as there is no formal contract. It can be debated whether a formal contract would be a solution to some of the management and the volunteers' issues or not. A contract can help establish expectations between the parties (Charlesworth, 2003) and communicate organisational commitment and consistency (Simon, 2013), but a contract would also fall in the category of organisational policy and administration, a hygiene factor for short-term motivation and a source for job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

Continuing with work environment attributes, the managers perceive the company reputation to be one factor that helps attract new recruits. The managers say that the company identity with its young social workforce, company objectives and values speaks to the volunteers own personal values. The attraction of the company reputation shares similarities to personal achievement, a motivator according to Herzberg (1987). This aspect of the company find support from previous research by Alfes *et al.* (2017) where it is mentioned that volunteers are more motivated to work for their organisation in comparison to their paid colleagues with the reason being that people who do volunteer work do it for reasons of helping to achieve the organisational objectives. Furthermore, Laczo and Hanisch (1999) talk about how people volunteer with organisations that they share interests with in organisational objectives and values.

The managers say they give feedback, training, autonomy at work, provide a variety of job tasks and that there are learning opportunities in the relationships among other volunteers and paid employees. In comparison to previous research it is possible to find support that these aspects are used as sources for learning in volunteer management. Training and orientation are said to help volunteers understanding their role in the organisation (Simon, 2013; Saksida *et al.*, 2017). McCannon and Han (2016) write that volunteers are motivated by training and development as

it can satisfy the intrinsic need of the worker in the absence of extrinsic rewards. By satisfying the intrinsic need learning can be labelled as a motivator factor (Herzberg, 1987).

The managers mention autonomy as a source for learning and motivation, but according to Truss (1999) it can also be a characteristic for a Theory Y management approach. Autonomous work is the product from a management that promotes trust and commitment through training and development, and Truss (1999) make a connection between this management attribute and Theory Y. It is reasonable to assume that the results can be connected to Theory Y as the managers work with empowering their volunteer workforce with autonomous work and by guiding through goal setting and giving the support needed for the volunteers to manage their own work.

The relationship between a volunteer and his manager are initially considered by Herzberg's (1987) model as a hygiene factor extrinsic to the job. However, the results show that the managers use motivator factors in their relationship with the volunteers. The managers say they do not monitor directly and interfere too much in the work of its subordinates, by providing learning opportunities in job tasks, and to be adjust tasks and volunteer role to fit the personal interests of the volunteer, these can be understood as motivators promoting intrinsic achievement, growth, and advancement (Herzberg, 1987).

Issues of communication barriers are mentioned by the managers to be found in too many layers of management, the different geographical location with many volunteers, and the limited skills in English language among some volunteers. The communication issue could possibly be a tipping point challenge of people management (Phelps *et al*., 2007). Phelps *et al*. (2007) explain that more professional structured approach for delegation, communication and teamwork improvements are needed when a company is growing in numbers of staff members. According to Phelps *et al*. (2007) an organisation can respond to a tipping point challenges by being either ignorant or aware of existing issues, acquiring the knowledge to deal with the challenge, or to successfully implement a solution. The management talk about the issue but shared no answer to the dilemma, it is therefore possible to assume that Uniplaces could be aware but not yet have the knowledge to deal with this tipping point challenge.

The financial compensation to the ambassador managers are considered essential and the financial incentive scheme to the brand ambassadors serves its purpose as motivational tool

according to the managers. Monetary rewards or monthly payments are motivational factors that only give short-term effect on the job performance and satisfaction among workers (Herzberg, 1987; Dessler, 2005; Pfeffer, 1998). Cova *et al*. (2015) argues that recognition of efforts, skills, interests, and commitment are more important for job satisfaction among volunteers in comparison to paid employees, and therefore these aspects are important to consider for managing volunteers. When Uniplaces management give recognition it is in their work of being flexible in the program towards the volunteer's personal interests by providing different tracks to specialize in, or bringing paid employees and volunteers together in groups that share similar interests for learning reasons. Other types of recognition in the management include the frequent delivery of feedback which Charlesworth (2003) name as a motivational factor. It is reasonable to assume that Uniplaces could shift the focus from the financial compensation to the intrinsically more motivational factors such as feedback, symbolic rewards, learning opportunities, and a challenging variety of job tasks as these would promote long-term motivation and job satisfaction.

The job tasks are mentioned by the managers as a factor that help motivate and retain the volunteers. The managers describe that the volunteers need to be delegated a variation of challenging job tasks to learn from. Delegating different challenging job tasks shares similarities with previous research findings on how a variety of tasks serve as motivation in volunteer management (Saksida *et al*. 2017; Simon, 2013; Herzberg, 1987). However, delegating different job tasks can be vertical or horizontal and depending on the nature of the job tasks that are delegated to the volunteers the effect might differ (Herzberg, 1987). It is not possible to read from the result and understand if Uniplaces practices horizontal job loading or job enrichment (Herzberg, 1987). For Uniplaces job enrichment would be beneficiary to the volunteers' job satisfaction as Herzberg (1987) describes this as adding motivators to the job to ensure the worker gains feelings of achievement, growth and advancement in the challenges that the job tasks bring. The job tasks are also used by the management as a way to create teamwork among volunteers by having shared job tasks. Shared job tasks among volunteers could be a way to fulfil the relatedness need of volunteers, which is believed by Boezeman and Ellemers (2009) to be the need for volunteers to integrate into their social environment. To meet the relatedness need of volunteers it is more likely for volunteers to find job satisfaction and intent to stay longer in the organisation (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2009). Fostering long-term commitment by having volunteers collaborate together gets further support by McCannon and

Han (2016) who state that volunteers that work together instead of alone gives for a more engaging volunteer experience.

Lastly, it is possible to find similarities between the results and Simon's (2013) informal model for volunteer management. The managers say that they manage a community of friends among the volunteers and flexible towards their interests, this is similar to the informal model where authority is informal and ad hoc, and social relations have permissive boundaries (Simon, 2013). The managers say that they allow autonomy and do not monitor volunteers closely, this shares similarities with Simon (2013), explaining that in the informal model control is indirect and free.

## 5.5. Methodology discussion

The literature review regarding managing volunteers are all set in the context of non-profit organisations and it is important to highlight that despite the different nature between the studied company and the literature review the character of our respondents share many similarities with the literature's volunteer definition. A start-up company such as is in constant change and so the volunteer program has gone through several changes since the initial start of this paper. The ambassador manager role has evolved into what today is an internship role. I have gained insight through the exploratory nature of this qualitative research in the volunteer management in an international for-profit start-up business but it is important to understand that it is my subjective interpretation of the result in relation to the theoretical framework, and I have taken the measures available to be as objective as I possibly can. I understand that the convenience sampling method has its benefits but also open up for complications as respondents could be biased due to the selection sample relying on company representatives. Further, in an attempt to balance the sample size equally between volunteer respondents and management respondents HR was included but as it later turned out in the data collection phase the HR respondent was not involved in the management of the voluntary program and so their data did not answer to all the research questions.

# 6. Conclusion

Uniplaces motives to have volunteers in the workforce show that the management has a social model of strategic orientation to its volunteer program. From a resource-based view the voluntary program work as a recruitment platform developing volunteers into potential employees to the company. The possible absence of a long-term strategy for the voluntary program could be a challenging tipping point in the company organisational cycle indicating a need for a better defined strategic orientation in order to reach further organisational growth. In the discussion it is identified that Uniplaces share characteristics of the early stages of an organisational life cycle when a business is leaving the initial stage and expanding into more advanced structures. Uniplaces motives for having volunteers indicate on an approach for dealing with high-growth and early growth stages in the organisational life cycle where integration and meeting an increasing market demand is a management priority.

The volunteers' motives working for Uniplaces are interpret as sharing similarities with the literature review's definition of a volunteer. The volunteers choose to work within the program for mainly intrinsic motivational reasons of learning opportunities and job tasks, but also some extrinsic motivational reasons of financial compensation and the work environment. A motive why the volunteers joined the program can be identified as a result due to the high-growth character of the company and as a job strategy for higher educated people.

The volunteers experience flexibility, work environment, learning opportunities, autonomy at work, and recognition as factors in their management but say that expectations, recognition, and support in the autonomous work needs improvement. Five motivators are identified in the flexibility, learning, autonomy, recognition, and job tasks, and two hygiene factors of work environment and financial compensation, from Herzberg's model were identified in the volunteer management from the perception of the volunteers. The volunteers' perception of the management share similarities with a soft management approach and an informal volunteer management model. The management is characterised by flexibility for fostering development among workers and to empower the staff with trust and commitment similar to the soft management approach. The results indicate on aspects of the informal model in the sense that the volunteers experience an informal work environment, independence at work, and permissive boundaries with both personal and formal relations with managers.

In a comparison between the results and previous research and theory indications of a Theory Y approach and the informal model was identified. The managers trust their volunteers and provide them with autonomous work and are flexible towards their personal values and interests, similar to the Theory Y approach. Similarities to the informal model is found in the managements informal and flexible authority, indirect and free control, and in the social and functional relations between the managers and their volunteers. There are challenges in the management work with volunteers found in communication barriers, expectation management, the volunteers' professionalism and limited availability. The communication issue could be a need for a more professional management approach for greater delegation, communication and teamwork. The expectation management points to improvements needed in flexibility towards volunteer values in the management. The professionalism issue can be a need for stronger learning relationships between paid employees and volunteers. The limited availability issue could be managed by introducing a contract but that would also mean introducing another hygiene factor. Further, five motivators and five hygiene factors flexibility, learning, autonomy, recognition, job tasks, and two hygiene factors of work environment and financial compensation, from Herzberg's model were identified in the management of volunteers from the perception of the managers.

Further, the costs of managing volunteers are not discussed but explained in the results to be found in the financial compensation to volunteers, the time employees and managers spend interacting with the program, program merchandize, events and activities within the program, and the volunteer website.

## 6.1. Suggestion for further studies

A suggestion for further studies would be to interview volunteers who do not receive a fixed monthly financial compensation. Within Uniplaces this group of volunteers would be the brand ambassadors who are compensated in accordance to their performance. It would also be interesting for further studies to approach for-profit businesses that include staff groups that are in the grey zone between employees and volunteers. I believe there is a great deal to learn from today's labour market on which industries include volunteers, paid and unpaid interns, and brand ambassadors in its staff, for what reasons, and what the consequences and profits of including these volunteers are.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Interview guide for HR

Sex:        Age:

### Background

1. For how long have you been employed in your current organisation?

2. For how long have you been employed in your current position?

### HR strategy

3. What role does HR have in the overall business of your company?

4. What are the key functions of HR in your company?

### Motives for using volunteers

5. What would be the purpose for having volunteers in the company?

6. What value do you see the volunteers bring to your company?

7. How is the value of having volunteers related to the purpose of having volunteers?

8. What are the long-term goals of having volunteers?

9. What are the short-term goals in having volunteers?

### Management of volunteers

10. What does HR do in order to motivate its volunteers to work?

11. What does HR do in order to develop its volunteers?

12. How do you work with keeping volunteers to stay within the company?

13. What tools do you provide the line managers for managing the volunteers?

14. What do you consider being the greatest challenges in managing volunteers?

15. What costs are connected to having volunteers?

16. Lastly, is there anything that you would like to add to this interview?

# APPENDIX 2

## Interview guide for line managers of volunteers

Sex:          Age:

### Background

1. For how long have you been employed in your current organisation?

2. For how long have you been employed in your current position?

3. Could you please describe your current position and what it is that you do?

4. What responsibilities do you have as a line manager for volunteers?

### Motives for using volunteers

5. What would be the purpose for having volunteers in the company?

6. What value do see the volunteers bring to your company?

7. How is the value of having volunteers related to the purpose of having volunteers?

8. What are the long-term goals of having volunteers?

9. What are the short-term goals in having volunteers?

### Management of volunteers

10. How would you describe yourself as a manager of volunteers?

11. What do you do in order to motivate your volunteers to work?

12. How do you work in creating teamwork among your volunteers?

13. What do you do in order to allow your volunteers to develop?

14. How do you work with keeping volunteers to stay within the company?

15. What would you describe as being the greatest challenges when managing volunteers?

16. What costs are connected to having volunteers?

17. Lastly, is there anything that you would like to add to this interview?

# APPENDIX 3

## Interview guide for volunteers

Sex:          Age:

## Background

1. Have you ever been working as a volunteer before?
   a. If yes, please describe your previous experience as a volunteer.
   b. How does your current volunteer work differ to your previous experiences as a volunteer?

2. For how long have you been a volunteer in your current organisation?

3. Could you please describe your current position and what it is that you do as a volunteer?

## Motives

4. Why do choose to be a volunteer at your organisation?

5. In exchange for your voluntary work, what do you expect to get back from the organisation?

6. How long are you planning on staying as a volunteer in your company?

7. What will be your next step after this voluntary work?

## Management of volunteers

8. How would you describe your manager?

9. How does your manager motivate you to work?

10. How does your manager create teamwork among volunteers?

11. How does your manager support you with your work?

12. What opportunities for development are there for you in your company?

13. What makes you stay as a volunteer at your company?

14. What are the greatest challenges of working as a volunteer in your company?

15. What changes would you like there to be to the voluntary program of your company?

16. Lastly, is there anything that you would like to add to this interview?