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The Effect of Choice Set Size and Other Choice Architectures on Decisions to Volunteer

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The Effect of Choice Set Size and Other Choice Architectures on Decisions to Volunteer

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A thesis submitted to Plymouth University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of:

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The Effect of Choice Set Size and Other Choice Architectures on Decisions to Volunteer

- Lauren Carroll -

This thesis adds to the existing literature on the too-much-choice effect. The effect documents a range of negative consequences as a result of choosing from extensive choice sets, such as increased decision difficulty, increased deferment likelihood, and increased feelings of uncertainty, regret and dissatisfaction with chosen options. The research presented in this thesis investigates the effect of choice amount in the novel domain of volunteering, specifically which organisation to volunteer for. This is an experiential choice rather than the material choices typically studied. The first three field studies focussed on real volunteering recruitment 'events' to gain preliminary insight into this new context. Study 1 demonstrated that an opt-out request for future contact consent elicited the greatest compliance. Study 2 found that only around half of the students that had intended to volunteer at the beginning of a year had done so by the end, but for those that had done so, volunteering was a positive and beneficial experience. Study 3 demonstrated the effectiveness of volunteer 'events' for the recruitment of volunteers, despite there being an extensive number of organisations present. Five further studies used an experimental methodology and focussed on choosing from computer based choice sets to simulate online volunteer recruitment. Study 4 found evidence of the too-much-choice effect. The greater the number of options looked at on a real volunteering website, the greater was the likelihood of decision deferment. This was mediated by decision difficulty. Study 5 replicated these findings using a more controlled experimental design and hypothetical organisations. Studies 6, 7 and 8 investigated potential choice architectural moderators of the too-much-choice effect. Option categorisation facilitated students' decisions but not non-students (Study 6), deferment likelihood was reduced if options were presented in a 'box' format

rather than a 'list' format (Study 7) and option familiarity appeared to have no effects on decisions (Study 8). Overall, this research demonstrates that extensive choice can be problematic in the novel context of volunteering and it begins to investigate choice architectures that have the potential to help people deal with extensive choice. The limitations and implications of these findings in relation to volunteer recruitment are discussed as well as possible avenues for future research.

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Statement of Ethics

The research and studies presented throughout received thematic ethical approval from the University of Plymouth's Faculty of Science Human Ethics Committee and was carried out under full compliance with the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines.

1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

This thesis investigates the “too-much-choice” effect (a term used to describe the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set) in the context of volunteering decisions and possible choice architectures that may moderate the effect. It aims to build upon psychological literature that has demonstrated negative consequences as a result of choosing from extensive choice sets, such as a more negative decision making experience, an increase in deferment likelihood and feelings of dissatisfaction and regret with chosen options. I chose volunteering as the domain of focus for my research as I am particularly interested in how psychological theories and findings can be applied to real-world situations. To determine the extent to which choice amount affects people’s decisions about which organisation to volunteer with and investigate possible choice architectures that may facilitate this decision seemed a worthwhile cause given that voluntary organisations are always in need of new volunteers to provide their services, and volunteering has been shown to be beneficial to the volunteers themselves.

The majority of the research on the effect of choice amount on decisions has focussed on relatively trivial material choices. This research will add to the body of literature on the too-much-choice effect for a novel context (volunteering) and for an experiential rather than a material choice, and also test some potential choice architectural moderators of the effect.

The research presented is timely as the provision of choice for all domains in life has increased dramatically in recent years on the assumption that it can only make people better off and not worse off. Similarly, the benefits of volunteering to the volunteers

themselves and to society are being realised and people are being encouraged to volunteer. Volunteering is especially important in the current economic climate as people need to gain extra skills in order to compete for the limited number of job opportunities available.

The main aim of the research presented in this thesis was to 1) Investigate whether the too-much-choice extended to decisions about which organisation to volunteer for, and 2) to investigate the effectiveness of potential choice architectures that could be implemented to facilitate decision making with regard to choosing an organisation to volunteer for. A series of eight studies was conducted. The findings from these are discussed in terms of volunteering recruitment and how more people could be encouraged or assisted to volunteer through implementing choice architectures to facilitate decisions about which organisation to volunteer for.

1.2 Choice

1.2.1 The growth of choice provision

The provision of choice is something that we have become accustomed to for the majority of the decisions we have to make. We now have more choice than ever before (Schwartz, 2004) and in domains in which we previously had no choice (Schwartz, Ward, Monteroso, Lyubomirsky, White & Lehman, 2002). Usually, whenever possible, multiple options, often resulting in an extensive choice set are provided. For example, according to the Food Marketing Institute (as cited in *The Economist*, 2010) the average American supermarket offered 48,750 unique units in 2010; five times the amount of 1975. Until relatively recently, when ordering a hot drink, you might have had to decide whether to have tea or coffee, with, or without sugar, that was about it. Now Starbucks claim that as a result of all the possible combinations of drink, creamer, syrup and spice there are over 87,000 drink possibilities on offer (Starbucks, 2011).

1.2.2 Benefits of Choice Provision

The provision of choice and the freedom to choose is important. It allows people to feel in control of their lives (Leotti, Iyengar & Ochsner, 2011; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and to live their lives the way they choose to do so (Markus & Schwartz, 2010). It enhances intrinsic motivation, effort, task performance and perceived competence (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008). The ability to choose has positive health benefits. It improves people's welfare (Schwartz, 2004), is associated with greater life satisfaction and health status (Botti & Iyengar, 2006; Langer & Rodin, 1976) and life longevity; elderly adults lived longer when given seemingly trivial choices about their living settings including how to look after their plants (Langer & Rodin, 1976). When restrictions are imposed on what we can choose, people experience feelings of hopelessness and helplessness (Fitzsimons, 2000).

Also, people like variety. When simultaneously selecting multiple options from a choice set people often select different options (Read & Loewenstein, 1995), particularly if people are choosing for future consumption (Simonson, 1990). Ariely and Levav (2000) state that when faced with the same choice set over and over again, people sometimes make different decisions from their norm purely because of curiosity or as a result of satiation.

Aside from the psychological benefits of choice provision there are also benefits to consumers in terms of utility maximisation, and product suppliers in terms of profit maximisation. The ability for consumers to choose which products they purchase ensures competition between product suppliers for competitive prices and quality products; *“Competition usually works well in private markets in the absence of market failures. It places downwards pressure on costs, forces firms to focus on meeting customers' needs and leads to more efficient allocation of resources between firms. It also acts as a spur to innovation. In well-functioning markets, strong competition is driven by consumer choice,*

with active consumers putting pressure on firms to improve their product offering, in part by looking for opportunities to switch” (Office of Fair Trading, 2010).

1.2.3 Preference for Larger Choice Sets

Section 1.2.2 highlighted the positive importance of the availability of choice and variety from which to choose; but the number of options in a choice set also affects how people view assortments and choices. People are more attracted to large choice sets than small choice sets (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Anderson, 2003; Berger, Draganska & Simonson, 2007) and actively seek variety (Kahn & Ratner, 2005). In the literature, a ‘large’ choice set typically consists of around 24 options and a ‘small’ choice set typically consists of around 6 options (based on Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Larger choice sets are often more visually appealing, viewed more favourably (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982) and rated more positively than smaller assortments (Oppewal & Koelemeijer, 2005). When additional items are added to an assortment it enhances people’s evaluation of the assortment (Oppewal & Koelemeijer, 2005). People also report greater enjoyment when making choices from larger choice sets compared to smaller choice sets (Haynes, 2009). This evidence suggests that as much choice as possible should be given to people as this would make them happiest and better off in their decisions. However, Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar (2008) point out that satisfaction, when choosing from large choice sets may have more to do with the perceived differences among options rather than the number of options.

1.2.4 Benefits of Extensive Choice Provision

In accordance with economic theory, more choice can only be beneficial. This appears to be the consensus of opinion in Western society (Schwartz, 2004) and is perhaps why the

number of choices available in all domains has increased exponentially in recent years. In theory at least, adding additional options to a choice set does not decrease the value of any of the other options available, it simply provides more variety. Therefore, it is more likely that choosers will find the option they desire and meets their expectations when choosing from a large choice set, due to the greater diversity of options (Jessup, Veinott, Todd & Busemeyer, 2009; Chernev, 2003b). Economic theory assumes we all have varied and differing preferences or requirements when choosing, so the greater the variety on offer, the more likely that there will be sufficient variation among options for diverse individual preferences to be met (Botti & Iyengar, 2006; Dolan & White, 2007). If only a limited selection was on offer, choosers may have to make trade-offs between their ideal option attributes and may have to settle for a suboptimal option due to their ideal option not being in the choice set.

Extensive choice benefits some people more than others. People that are experts in a particular domain or have strong prior preferences towards one particular option benefit from having more options to choose from (Chernev, 2003b; Mogilner et al, 2008; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder & Todd, 2010). There are several reasons for this including the fact that they are likely to have specific criteria for their ideal option to meet and it is more likely that their desired option that they are seeking will be in amongst a large choice set. Experts in a domain know that there is a greater likelihood of them finding a specific option from a large choice set and as such prefer to choose from large choice sets (Chernev, 2003b). For experts, choosing from a large choice set increases the likelihood of them making a purchase and also increases satisfaction with their chosen option (Chernev, 2003b). Despite the benefits of large choice sets for experts, non-experts, despite possible disadvantages discussed below, may also use the amount of choice offered by specific brands to assist a decision about which product to purchase. Berger, Draganska & Simonson (2007) argue that consumers may conclude that a brand which has many options is superior to one which has only few options by indicating to the consumer that the brand must be

knowledgeable and competent to offer such variety compared to a competitor that just offers a few options. Therefore, people are more likely to choose a product from the brand that provides the most choice based on these assumptions.

Benartzi & Thaler (2001) state that according to economic theory, people cannot be worse off from having more options to choose from. It simply allows them to search all of the options should they wish, in order to find the best option for them, to search until they find a suitable (but maybe not the best option), or to allocate a time limit on their search depending on the importance of the decision. Economists view increasing choice as a Pareto efficient move in that increasing the amount of choice available to people will not make anyone worse off (those people who do not want more choice do not have to look at all the options, and will still have the same options as previously available to them) but will make some people (the people that want more choice and are prepared to search through options) better off.

1.2.5 Costs of Extensive Choice – Key Paper. An introduction to the Too-Much-Choice Effect

However, in recent years people have begun to question the consensus that ‘more choice is better’ and considered the possibility that extensive choice provision could have downsides. Research into the ‘dark side of choice’ (Schwartz, 2004) has become more prominent in the last 10 years - at a crucial time considering the overabundance of choices on offer. A key paper in the field of choice amount that demonstrated negative consequences of choosing from extensive choice was published by Iyengar and Lepper in 2000. Since then it has been cited over 1450 times and much research has stemmed from their studies and findings.

Iyengar and Lepper (2000) report the findings of three studies. In their first study, a field study looking at jam tasting and subsequent jam purchases, they varied the number

of jam flavours presented on a tasting table outside a supermarket. They showed that people were more likely to approach the jam tasting table when there were twenty four jam varieties on display compared to just six, indicating that people were more attracted to large choice arrays (as discussed in Section 1.2.3). The people that stopped at the jam tasting tables were then given a coupon for some money off a purchase of any variety of the same brand jam in store (all of the different varieties of jam were available in store regardless of the amount of jam seen on the tasting table outside). Surprisingly, only 3% of people that stopped at the large (24) assortment of jams subsequently purchased a jam in store compared to 30% of people that stopped at the small (6) assortment of jams. So although the larger choice set lured people over to the tasting table this action did not convert into actually purchasing behaviour. People were much more likely to go on to buy a jam in store if they had visited the tasting table with a small selection of jams on offer. The large variety of jams on offer may have actually deterred people from purchasing a jam. Another unexpected finding was that the people who had purchased jam after having stopped at large jam assortment table were less satisfied with an eventual purchase than people that had stopped at the small jam assortment table, despite having the same selection of jams to choose from in store. Iyengar and Lepper (2000) demonstrated that in terms of decision satisfaction and purchasing likelihood, more choice might actually be detrimental. People were more likely to refrain from, or defer making a decision (i.e., to purchase any jam) and were less satisfied with an eventual purchase if they had previously been exposed to a large choice set of jams to taste. They termed these negative consequences of choosing from extensive choices sets the 'too-much-choice' effect. These findings directly contradict the assumptions of economic theory that more choice can only make people better off.

Iyengar and Lepper (2000) demonstrated the too-much-choice effect in two additional studies with essays, and chocolates. In their second study (the essay study), 197 students were asked to watch the film 'twelve angry men' and then told that for extra credits they could write a response paper to the movie. Students were given either six

different essay topics to choose from (limited choice condition) or thirty essay topics to choose from (extensive choice condition). The essay topics were controlled for difficulty, and there were five versions of the limited choice essay options presented to ensure essay topics were counterbalanced across conditions. Students were made aware that their performance on these essays made no difference to them receiving their extra credits. Despite all else being equal apart from the number of essay titles to choose from, 74% of students that chose from the limited selection of essay titles handed in an essay compared to 60% of students that chose from the extensive selection of essay titles. This difference was significant. They also found significant differences in the standard of essays produced by students in the limited and extensive essay title choice conditions; the students that chose from six essay topics performed better than those that chose from thirty essay topics, even though the difficulty of the essays was counterbalanced across conditions.

In their third study (the chocolate study), participants were asked to look at the appearance and names of a selection of Godiva chocolates (a fairly uncommon brand) and then pick the one chocolate they would choose to buy for themselves. Participants either picked from a limited array of six chocolates or an extensive array of thirty chocolates (again the selections were counterbalanced) and then answered questions about their decision making process (e.g., “how much did you enjoy making the choice?” and “how confident are you that this chocolate will satisfy you?”). Participants then sampled their chosen chocolate (with the exception of a ‘no-choice’ condition with a yoked design where they did not taste the chocolate that they had chosen, but instead were given a chocolate that had been chosen by a participant in one of the choice conditions). After they had eaten the chocolate they completed sample satisfaction measures which included items such as ‘Do you think there were chocolates on the table that were much better?’ before entering another room and being asked whether they would like to receive \$5 or a box of Godiva chocolates worth \$5 for taking part in the experiment. The results of this study also found negative effects as a result of choosing from extensive choice sets. People took significantly longer to make a

decision when choosing from thirty chocolates compared to six chocolates, found the decision harder (although they did report enjoying it more) and reported feeling like they had too many to choose from (those who chose from six chocolates thought their selection amount was about right). Once again, they demonstrated that participants in the limited choice condition were significantly more satisfied than participants in the extensive choice condition. However, participants that had no choice about the chocolate they tasted were less satisfied than both choice groups, indicating that some choice is important. Behavioural findings supported these self-reports: participants were much more likely to take a \$5 box of the chocolates rather than a \$5 note as a thank you for taking part in the study if they had previously tasted a chocolate from a small selection of chocolates (48%) compared to an extensive selection (12%) or when they had no choice about the chocolate they tasted (10%).

Iyengar and Lepper (2000) demonstrated in this key paper, across three different domains negative consequences of extensive choice (i.e., the too-much-choice effect). Choosing from extensive choice sets resulted in a decreased likelihood of purchasing behaviour (or greater deferment likelihood), longer deliberation time and lower satisfaction levels with chosen options. Given that classical economic theory states that more choice can only make people better off, our preference for extensive choice (see Section 1.2.3), and the increasing provision of choice (see Section 1.2.1), the findings from this paper are extremely important and relevant to Western society. Although we may think that we want more choice, there may be a range of situations where this may be objectively or subjectively worse for us than limited choice.

1.2.6 Other Evidence for the Too-Much-Choice Effect

Since the Iyengar and Lepper (2000) paper was published it has provoked more research into the too-much-choice effect and other researchers have also found evidence of the too-much-choice effect. For instance, there is some evidence that people avoid choosing from extremely large choice sets (Lenton, Fasolo & Todd, 2008). Further, Lee & Lee (2004) found that people choosing from 27 options felt more confused and less confident than people choosing from 18 options, and that people choosing from 18 options felt more confused, were less confident and were less satisfied than people choosing from 9 options. Similarly, people found choosing from ten options to be more difficult and frustrating than choosing from three options (Haynes, 2009). These studies suggest that the decision process is a more complex and negative experience when choosing from a large choice set compared to a small choice set, and that as the number of options increase, so does the complexity of the decision.

Studies have also shown that once a decision is made and an option chosen, the feelings toward a chosen option may be more negative when choosing from a large vs. small choice set. Chernev (2003b) found that when asked to choose a chocolate from either a low choice set of 4 chocolates or a high choice set of 16 chocolates, participants were less confident with their decision when they chose from the high choice set. They were less certain they had made the right choice and if given the option were more likely to change their choice than people that chose from a low choice set (Chernev, 2003b). People also felt greater regret towards a choice they made after having chosen from a large choice set, especially when the options within the choice set were more diverse from one another than similar (Sagi & Friedland, 2007). Interestingly, Roese and Summerville (2005) claim that people's biggest regrets in life are centred on decisions involving the greatest amount of choice (e.g., career and romance). People are also less likely to re-choose their original choice if it was picked from a large array of options (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000).

One of the main consequences of having an extensive choice set from which to choose is a greater incidence of deferment likelihood or decision paralysis (Redelmeier &

Shafir, 1995). That is the likelihood that people will choose to not make a decision at all, or to put off making a decision until a later date. The latter could also ultimately result in no choice being made as people rarely visit decisions they have decided to put off (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002). Choosing from large choice sets can be so complex and overwhelming that a chooser may experience decision paralysis and make no choice, or 'choose not to choose' (Jessop, Veinott, Todd & Busemeyer, 2009; Arunachalam, Henneberry, Lusk & Norwood, 2009; Dhar, 1997; Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Huberman & Jiang, 2004; Tversky & Shafir, 1992), perhaps due to the levels of difficulty and frustration experienced when faced with a large number of options. It may be easier to choose nothing than to make a choice. However, research has suggested that time pressure can reduce the likelihood of deferment (Dhar & Nowlis, 1999; see Section 1.5.2.1). Deferment likelihood is a crucial aspect of volunteer recruitment and as such develops into the key dependent variable in my studies. The relationship between deferment likelihood and volunteering recruitment is discussed in more detail in Section 1.7.4.

Product brand marketing teams keenly monitor the factors that increase or decrease sales. It appears that some brands have become aware of the too-much-choice effect and have acted accordingly. For example, Glidden (a leading American paint brand) rebranded themselves in 2009. One of their new initiatives was to reduce their paint range from 1000 options to 282 options. Their reasoning was because *"Americans' priorities are changing from 'more is better' to 'less is more'"* (Glidden, 2009). Similarly, Procter and Gamble reduced its range of 'Head & Shoulders' shampoos from 26 to 15 and their sales improved by 10% (Procter and Gamble, as cited in Iyengar, 2010). This is a real life example of perhaps initially the existence of the too-much-choice effect (people may have been put off purchasing a shampoo when there were 26 shampoos to choose from) and a demonstration that reducing choice set size to a manageable number of options can lead to lesser occurrence of deferment likelihood and an increase in purchasing behaviour (i.e., people were more likely to purchase a shampoo after the choice set size had been reduced).

1.2.7 Does the Too-Much-Choice Effect Exist for Experiential Choice As Well as Material Choice?

It is not only for material purchases that we have to make decisions and choose from various options. We also choose how to spend our time and the experiences we have.

Carter and Gilovich (2010) hypothesised that choosing an experience is easier than choosing a possession. They state that choosing how to spend your time one day (experience) does not preclude you choosing an alternative option or experience another day. Whereas, for most imperishable consumer purchases (i.e., not food) once you have bought one option (e.g., a new TV or sofa) it is unlikely that you will have the opportunity/need to purchase an alternative for a considerable time.

Carter and Gilovich (2010) conducted eight studies investigating the differences in making a material or experiential purchase. They found that choosing a material purchase was more difficult (also supported by Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003) than choosing an experiential purchase and that people subsequently felt more concern and less satisfaction regarding their choice. People also spent more time considering options forgone (not chosen) for material purchases than experiential purchases. With regard to decision strategy, people were more likely to use a satisficing strategy (discussed in more detail in Section 1.5.1.2) when choosing an experience than a material purchase. Their explanation for their findings is that material purchases are easily compared to one another, whereas experiential purchases are not (experiences have to be imagined and two differing experiences cannot be directly physically compared) and are considered in more absolute terms (in isolation from other possible experiences). Also the positive affect derived from experiential purchases is open to reappraisal (memories can be altered and are often enhanced; Wirtz, Kruger, Napa, Scollon & Diener, 2003) whereas material purchases usually

only get worse over time through age, wear and tear. This leads to satisfaction with experiential purchases increasing over time and satisfaction with material purchases decreasing over time (Carter & Gilovich, 2010).

Typically, the option sets for experiences are much larger and diverse than option sets for material goods, so the effect of choice amount on experiential decision making may vary from that of consumer decision making. People are increasingly faced with extensive choice sets from which to choose experiences (e.g., where to go on holiday), especially if they begin their information search online. Most of the literature on the effects of choice on subsequent satisfaction has focussed on material purchases. There is limited research investigating the choosing of experiences and especially whether the too-much-choice effect may extend to decisions involving choosing experiences rather than material goods. It is important to know how choice amount affects experiential decision making.

Park and Jang (2013) investigated the effect of choice amount for tourism. The choice process for holiday makers is similar to that of potential volunteers. Holiday makers are choosing an experience rather than a material purchase. It is important that they make a good choice as usually a holiday is a fairly rare occurrence and an expensive purchase. It is usually an experience that is non-refundable or exchangeable so people want to ensure that they pick the holiday they will enjoy the most. As with potential volunteers, often they will begin their search online and will visit a website that contains hundreds of possible holiday destinations and packages to choose from.

Park and Jang (2013) required students to choose (or decide not to make a choice) a holiday package for where they would spend their spring break. Students chose from varying number of options (1, 3, 10, 20 or 30) and prices, although other attributes of the decision (e.g., airline, distance to beach and hotel rating) were the same for all options. Half the students chose where to stay in a destination that was familiar to them (Orlando) and half the students chose where to stay in a destination that was unfamiliar to them (Acapulco). They found a U-shaped curve for deferment likelihood: as the number of options

increased, deferment likelihood decreased, up until approximately 22 choices, after which, as the number of options increased further, deferment likelihood increased. They also found that making a choice was preferable (less feelings of regret) than not making a choice up until choosing from 22 options. When there were more than 22 options to choose from people felt more regretful about the choice they made than people that did not make a choice. They also found that the familiarity of options did not function as a moderator of the too-much-choice effect. Option familiarity did not affect how likely people were to defer a decision.

Park and Jang's (2013) study is one of the only studies to have demonstrated the existence of the too-much-choice effect for an experiential purchase (holiday). Their results suggest that the too-much-choice effect occurs when there are more than 22 options to choose from.

1.2.8 Optimal Number of Options – An Inverted U-Curve

Choice set size (or choice amount) is clearly the foremost moderator of the too-much-choice effect. Choice architects (anyone that is displaying a set of options from which to choose) can decide how many options to include in a choice set. The benefits of providing extensive options are discussed in Section 1.2.4 but too many options may be problematic for a decision maker (see Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6). The number of options in a choice set has been shown to have significant effects on our decision making process, how likely we are to make a choice and our subsequent feelings about chosen options.

Most of the studies that have been carried out investigating the consequences of choosing from small or large choice sets have typically used small choice set sizes of around seven options and large choice set sizes of around thirty-four options for the large choice set (Scheibehenne et al., 2010) and compared differences between these extremes. There is

quite a considerable difference in the number of options presented in the small and large choice sets which may not reflect a decision in the real world in which the choice set size may lie somewhere in the midst of these extremes.

Choice set size is a key independent variable throughout my series of studies. The discussions above, namely that people prefer to choose from extensive choice sets (see Section 1.2.3), and that choice provision (see Section 1.2.2), and even extensive choice provision (see Section 1.2.4) is beneficial, yet research has shown that extensive choice may actually have unexpected negative consequences (the too-much-choice effect; see Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6) poses a dilemma. How many options should be presented to people in a choice set to ensure that 1) they feel like they have control over their choice and outcome, 2) there is sufficient variety among options for diverse preferences to be met and to increase the likelihood that a chooser will find a good option amongst the choice set and be satisfied with their choice, but 3) that there are not too many options that a person experiences the too-much-choice effect?

The studies that have shed the greatest light on the relationship between choice set size and decision satisfaction/likelihood are those which have looked at the effects of incremental increases in the number of options in a choice set curve. They claim that the relationship between choice set size and satisfaction with chosen options is an inverted U curve (Park & Jiang, 2013; Grant & Schwartz, 2011; Shah & Wolford, 2007; Sela et al, 2009; Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009; Lenton, Fasolo & Todd, 2008). That is, as the number of options increases so does the level of satisfaction with a chosen option, up until a certain point (number of options) at which satisfaction levels are greatest. Once this optimal number of options has been reached, increasing the number of options in the choice set further may not increase satisfaction. If the number of options continues to increase, satisfaction with a chosen option may actually decrease. However, where a default option exists this rule may not apply. Defaults are discussed in Section, 1.5.2.4.

Perhaps the most well-known study investigating incremental choice increases was conducted by Shah and Wolford in 2007. They investigated the effect of choice amount on buying behaviour by incrementally increasing the number of options in their choice set by two rather than comparing the responses of participants from two extreme (low/high) choice groups like most other studies have done. This was an attempt to determine the optimal choice amount for purchasing behaviour. They used ball-point pens ranging in price from \$1.89 to \$2.39 pens as their consumer product. Twenty participants rated the pens twice (then scores averaged) on a scale of 1 (highly undesirable) to 20 (highly desirable) in a pilot study. This was to determine which pens would appear in certain choice sets. They set up a table in a University hallway under the guise that the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences was looking to purchase around 200 pens and wanted to buy the best possible. The number of pens on the table ranged from two to twenty pens increasing in choice set size in increments of two. The set of two pens consisted of the top rated pen and the tenth rated pen from the pilot study. For each increasing choice set they added two more pens (a relatively high rated pen and a relatively low rated pen). Participants were asked to choose the pen that they liked the best. They were then told that all the pens were in the \$2.00 range but as a thank you for taking part they could buy their chosen pen for \$1. They found that buying behaviour was a curvilinear function (inverted U-shaped) of the number of choices, with the optimal number of pens to induce buying behaviour being ten. They conclude that it is only after an optimal point has been exceeded that more choice results in less buying. It is worth speculating that the optimal number of options may be different for different products depending on the importance or complexity of a decision.

The optimal number of options to choose from when choosing a pen appears to be 10 (Shah & Wolford, 2007), the optimal number of menu choices for a fast food restaurant was 6, and for a fine dining restaurant was 7 for starter and dessert courses but 10 for the main course (Johns, Edwards & Hartwell, 2013). These numbers are similar to those used in the small choice sets in studies into the too-much-choice effect (e.g., 6 – Iyengar & Lepper,

2000; 6 – Malhotra, 1982) that led to the greatest satisfaction from choosers. However, Patall, Cooper & Robinson (2008) in their meta-analysis claim that the optimal number of options falls in the range of 2 to 4, although the studies they focussed on contained both child and adult samples. Finally, Lenton, Fasolo and Todd (2008) found that people would like to choose from between 20 to 50 potential matches in an online dating scenario, and Park and Jiang (2013) found that the optimal number of choices for a holiday package was 22. These findings imply that the optimal number of options in a choice set may vary depending on the decision.

Interestingly, both of the studies (Lenton et al, 2008 and Park & Jiang, 2013) in which the optimal number of options was greater than the optimal number of options suggested by consumer studies in the choice literature (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Malhotra, 1982; Shah & Wolford, 2007; Haynes, 2009) focussed on decisions in which a chooser was picking an experience (e.g., who to date or where to go on holiday) rather than a material good. This supports the notion that the optimal number of options in a choice set is likely to vary depending on the decision to be made, but also that choice amount may affect choosing experiences (e.g., which organisation to volunteer for) differently (to a greater or lesser extent) than choosing material goods. In short, people may prefer to choose from a larger choice set when making an experiential choice. Therefore the negative consequences of the too-much-choice effect may manifest after a different number of options is reached for experiential and material choices. The difference between material and experiential choices was discussed in Section 1.2.7.

1.2.9 Criticisms of Previous Research into the Too-Much-Choice-Effect

The majority of studies that have investigated the effects of extensive choice on satisfaction with options chosen and purchase behaviour have been carried out for consumer

purchases; jam (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000), chocolates (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Arunachalam et al, 2009), pens (Shah & Wolford, 2007), coffee (Mogilner, 2008), and gift boxes (Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009). These are fairly common and trivial decisions for which there is relatively little consequence for the chooser. This raises the question of whether the findings would be generalisable to all decisions, in particular more important and meaningful decisions that may have a greater impact on our well-being, and for which any effects of sub-optimal decision making may last for longer and have greater consequences. When faced with a decision of importance, people may allocate more time and resources to enable them to make an optimal decision and therefore may be less prone to the negative consequences of the too-much-choice effect. Or conversely, perhaps they may experience the too-much-choice effect to a greater extent due to the added pressure of making a good choice and the greater negative consequences that could be experienced as a result of making a bad choice. At this stage, this is just speculative as there is very limited research that has investigated the too-much-choice effect for important decisions. However, the research that has been conducted suggests that the too-much-choice effect is likely to occur for more important decisions. For example, Iyengar, Huberman and Jiang (2004) tested the too-much-choice effect's presence in a more consequential decision – whether to participate in and how much to contribute to a 401(k) retirement benefit plan offered to people by their employers. Supporting the findings of the too-much-choice effect for trivial decisions, they found that benefit plans that offered fewer than 10 options to employees had a significantly higher employee participation rate than plans that offered more than 10 options. They stated that people were less likely to sign up to a plan as the number of options increased further than 10. This study was based on real life data from employees of 647 plans in 69 industries so their findings appear to exhibit ecological validity.

Another criticism is that most of the research that has demonstrated decreased satisfaction when choosing from large choice sets has relied on self-report measures which are not as reliable as behavioural measures. Although it is likely that these self-report

measures of satisfaction are fairly reliable given that behavioural measures appear to support these findings (e.g., decreased likelihood of purchasing behaviour), self-report measures of satisfaction can be influenced by other variables aside from the variable interested in. For instance, when people are in a positive mood they report higher levels of satisfaction (Isen, Thomas, Clark & Karp, 1978; Schwarz & Clore, 1983).

Further, the research that has been carried out has typically focussed on short term consequences of the too-much-choice effect. It is not known how long the consequences of the too-much-choice effect last. Oppewal and Koelemeijer (2005) point out that research demonstrating that sales can increase when assortment sets are made smaller usually focuses on the short term effect of assortment reduction on sales rather than longer term effects, so it is not as clear as to how assortment reduction affects sales in over a longer time period.

Another important point to note is that many studies have compared choosing from a small choice set to a large choice set (for example, the majority of the studies in Scheibehenne et al's 2010 meta-analysis). Reutskaja and Hogarth (2009) point out that the absence of a 'middle' choice amount in addition to the small vs. large choice sets likely removes the optimal amount of options and therefore the critical point of an inverted U curve at which the too-much-choice effect begins to manifest. Shah and Wolford (2007), Park and Jiang (2013) and Lenton, Fasolo and Todd (2008) did test incremental choice amounts and demonstrated a clear instance of the inverted U curve. Perhaps studies should consider a 'middle' choice set in order to confirm the incidence of an inverted U curve and also to provide a more accurate idea of the optimal number of options for a particular decision. It is likely that the optimal number of options in a choice set will vary depending on the complexity and perceived importance of a decision.

1.3 Possible explanations for the 'too-much-choice' effect

There is still no definitive explanation as to when and why the too-much-choice effect occurs (Scheibehenne et al, 2010). Some of the suggestions presented below may provide some possible explanations for the occurrence of the negative consequences of the too-much-choice effect.

1.3.1 Limited Cognitive Capacity

We only have a limited amount of mental resources. To reach a decision about which option to choose from a choice set, a chooser must perform trade-offs between option attributes to effectively compare and contrast each of the options to determine the optimal option for them. With limited options it is relatively easy to consider and retain relevant information about the options within a choice set in order to make a choice. However, when the number of options in a choice set increase, so does the complexity of the choosing task. Miller (1956) states that we are only able to process and retain 7 ± 2 pieces of information at any one time. Therefore it is virtually impossible to evaluate all options within rational constraints (Simon, 1957) when faced with an extensive choice set without relying on complex external mechanisms to assist us. In agreement with Miller (1956), Malhotra (1982) suggested that we can only optimally process six options with multiple attributes.

1.3.2 The Two Thinking Systems

In order to make choosing from an extensive choice set more manageable, people may to switch from a complex or systematic strategy (which is employed to great effect when choosing from a limited array) to a simpler, heuristic based strategy as the complexity of a

decision task increases (Payne, 1976) and rely on fast and frugal heuristics (Scheibehenne et al, 2007) rather than systematic cognitive processing. Dual process theory posits that there are two distinct ways of thinking: System 1 and System 2 (Sloman, 1996; Kahneman, 2003). System 1 is known as the automatic system and is associated with fast, effortless, uncontrolled, unconscious thinking that often feels intuitive and does not require much cognitive effort from the thinker. System 2 is known as the reflective system. It is the opposite of the automatic system and involves slow, controlled, conscious reasoning that is rule-following, deductive and involves cognitive effort from the thinker. Decisions made using System 1 thinking are likely to be based on an intuitive gut feeling that does not fully process all the information available whereas decisions made using System 2 thinking are more likely to be carefully thought about rationally and the costs and benefits of each outcome considered. Clearly, using System 2 thinking would result in more rational, optimal decisions being made but would require more cognitive resources and time (both of which are limited, see Section 1.3.1). Indeed due to time constraints, the context or complexity of a decision or other factors we may make decisions using System 1 without even consulting System 2 (Payne, 1976; Payne, Bettman & Johnson, 1988; Simonson & Tversky, 1992). This can sometimes result in sub-optimal decision making as a result of using heuristics rather than logical rational thinking, which may in some cases be flawed. Although, in some cases heuristics can assist us to make quick, and optimal decisions (see Gigerenzer, 2008).

1.3.3 Cognitive Dissonance

When people are presented with a choice and find it difficult to make a decision because of conflicting cognitions (they can be torn between options) it can result in cognitive dissonance, an aversive psychological state. According to Festinger's (1957) dissonance theory, after a choice situation, any information that favours the option chosen is consonant (in agreement) with the choice behaviour, and any information that favours a rejected

choice is dissonant. The greater the relative attractiveness of an unchosen alternative to the chosen option, the greater the cognitive dissonance experienced.

Once a decision has been made, if cognitive dissonance is experienced, people may attempt to reduce this dissonance by rationalising or justifying the option they eventually chose, or by adjusting their attitudes, beliefs or behaviour to match their choice; they think of other forgone options in the choice set as worse than previously, and the chosen option as better than previously (Brehm, 1956). Evidence suggests people can sometimes be highly efficient at subjectively altering their perceptions of events to optimise their psychological outcomes. The strategies used to enhance people's perceptions of their outcomes have been come to be known as the Psychological Immune System (PIS; Gilbert & Ebert, 2002). The PIS protects people from the negative emotional consequences of sub-optimal decisions. People seem to be unaware of the PIS and its abilities to alter perceptions and beliefs so that sub-optimal decisions do not appear so bad. This can result in repeated sub-optimal decision making as people fail to predict that they will not be as disappointed with their final choice as they expected, due to the role of the PIS.

1.3.4 Greater Expectations

The larger the choice set from which to choose, the greater people's expectations might be that the choice set will contain some high quality options and they will find an ideal option amongst it (Salecl, 2010; Diehl & Poynor, 2010). Due to these expectations that there will be an optimal option among the choice set, a chooser may evaluate the whole of the choice set against a higher standard (Schwartz et al, 2002). Berger, Draganska and Simonson (2007) found that when presented with two brands of chocolate, people were more likely to select a chocolate to taste from the brand that contained 30 chocolates compared to the brand that contained 10 chocolates. When asked to justify their reasoning people stated that it

was because they thought that the chocolates from the brand presenting 30 options would be of a higher quality than the chocolates in the brand presenting 10 options. In another of their studies, a chocolate from a selection of 30 chocolates was rated as better quality and tasting than a chocolate from a selection of 13, despite the chocolates tasted actually being identical.

Evaluating a choice set against a higher standard can ultimately lead to disappointment (Diehl & Poynor, 2010) and may account for why people report feelings of dissatisfaction, regret or fail to choose an option when choosing from an extensive choice set. When presented with a limited choice set people may lower their expectations and therefore be less likely to be disappointed with their eventual chosen option, and may actually experience greater levels of satisfaction if they choose an option which exceeds their initial expectations. Thinking about other options forgone or 'what could have been' (Epstude & Roese, 2008) can also impact decision. Counterfactual thinking is discussed in more detail in Section 1.3.7.

1.3.5 Choice Complexity

The complexity of a decision is also likely to affect choosers' decision experience and subsequent satisfaction with chosen options. Naturally, as the number of options to choose from increases, so does the complexity of the choosing task, especially for decisions which involve choosing between options that have multiple different attributes to compare and contrast. This problem was already recognised in classical economic discussions of choice and in attempts to account for the rise in decision 'costs' as option number increased (Dolan & White, 2007). Crucially, both the number of alternatives and the number of their attributes influence choice complexity. As mentioned in Section 1.3.2, people may adjust their reasoning based on the complexity of the decision they face. Greifeneder,

Scheibehenne and Kleber (2010) demonstrated that satisfaction with a chosen option was lower when more alternatives were offered, and the alternatives were differentiated on six attributes, yet when the alternatives were differentiated on just one attribute, satisfaction was similar regardless of the number of alternatives. This shows that not only the number of options affects satisfaction but also the number of attributes that the options have.

People find choosing from large choice sets more difficult (Haynes, 2009) and confusing (Lee & Lee, 2004) than choosing from small choice sets as a result of the complexity of the decision. If a decision is complex people are more likely to defer the decision, seek new alternatives or go with a default option (Dhar, 1997a; Dhar, 1997b; Tversky & Shafir, 1992). People also take longer to make their decisions the more complex they are, but interestingly people may feel as though the time they took to reach a decision was shorter than it actually was (Fasolo, Carmeci & Misuraca, 2009). This suggests that as the complexity of a decision increases so do the cognitive resources needed to make a decision, potentially resulting in fewer cognitive resources available to monitor time needed to make decisions. This may thus contribute to people underestimating the time they have spent making a decision if the decision was a complex one.

The complexity of a decision has also been shown to affect the way in which people justify their choices, which in turn can lead to suboptimal decision making and dissatisfaction with chosen options (Sela, Berger & Liu, 2009; Wilson & Schooler, 1991; Wilson, Lisle, Schooler, Hodges, Klaaren & LaFleur, 1993). This is discussed further in Section 1.5.2.2.

1.3.6 Inaccurate affective forecasting

When choosing one option from a choice set, a chooser must try to imagine the outcomes of choosing any particular option in terms of the satisfaction that will be derived from the

choice. This can result in suboptimal decision making as people may fail to predict accurately which option will generate the best experience or because they fail to base their choice on their prediction, or both (Hsee & Hastie, 2006). When people consider the impact of any single factor on their well-being, they are prone to exaggerate its importance. This is known as the focusing illusion (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005; Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz & Stone, 2006). People are not always very good at predicting their feelings in the future and have been shown to overestimate the intensity and duration of feelings that the result of a decision will cause (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). Although some research suggests that older adults may be less prone to affective forecasting inaccuracies than younger adults (Nielson, Knutson & Carstensen, 2008) especially for positive events (Scheibe, Mata & Carstensen, 2011). As a result older adults may be less likely to experience dissatisfaction with options chosen. Although, research by Kim, Healey, Goldstein, Hasher and Wiprzycka (2008) found no differences in predicted satisfaction accuracies between younger and older adults in a choice satisfaction scenario.

Gilbert, Morewedge, Risen and Wilson (2004) found that people often overestimate the amount of regret they think they will experience. In regard to decisions with an abundance of choice and similar options this may cause people to be less likely to make a decision for fear of future regret. People may refrain from making a decision if they think that making a suboptimal decision will cause them to experience negative affect (Gilbert et al, 2004; Botti & Iyengar, 2006; Schwartz, 2004). People often neglect to realise that over time we become accustomed to our situations, experiences and surroundings. As a result our initial perceived satisfaction or dissatisfaction diminishes (Fredrickson & Kahneman, 1993). In other words, no matter which option we pick or decisions we make, we are likely to learn to live with it/them even though we may not think we will.

1.3.7 Counterfactual thinking

Counterfactual thinking refers to people's thoughts of 'what could have been' if the antecedents that led to an outcome had been different. In the context of choice and decisions it refers to people's thoughts about how they would feel if they had chosen a different option than the one they did. This is related to affective forecasting (predicting how we will feel), which was discussed in Section 1.3.6.

When people think about the other possible outcomes (or choices in a choice set) it can affect how they view the outcome they have ended up with (or the option they chose). This can make the situations (or choices) appear subjectively better or worse than they actually are. For example, athletics medallists that came 3rd in their event felt better about the outcome than the competitors that came 2nd, even though objectively 2nd is clearly a better outcome than 3rd (Medvec, Madey & Gilovich, 1995). The authors attributed this to the competitors' counterfactual comparisons to the other possible outcomes: the competitor that came 2nd very nearly missed out on coming 1st and was therefore disappointed not to have done so, whereas the competitor that came 3rd very nearly missed out of coming 4th (and therefore out of the medal placing) and so therefore was glad not to have done so.

Increasing choice set size is likely to increase counterfactual generation as a result of the greater number of alternative options that the chooser could have chosen. Research has shown that when people think about the other options in a choice set that they could have chosen (but didn't), their satisfaction with the option they did choose was lower (Hafner, White & Handley, 2011; Markman, Gavanski, Sherman & McMullen, 1993). Upward counterfactual thinking (comparing the experienced outcome to a better one) occurs more frequently than downward counterfactual thinking (comparing the experienced outcome to a worse one; Roese, 1997) so it is likely that if people do engage in counterfactual thinking they will feel worse about their choice and not better. These findings suggest that increasing

choice set size could lead to an increase in counterfactual generation, which could in turn lead to the feelings of regret and dissatisfaction experienced as a result of the too-much-choice effect.

1.4 Does the Too-Much-Choice Effect Really Exist?

Recently, there have been diverse and contrasting findings in the literature regarding the consequences of choosing from large assortments that have questioned whether the too-much-choice effect actually exists. For instance, Bergen, Draganska and Simonson (2007) conducted a similar study to that of Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) chocolate study. They asked people to choose to taste a chocolate from either a selection of 13 or 30 chocolates and found that despite the chocolates being identical in both choice sets, that people that chose a chocolate to taste from the large choice set reported higher quality ratings and were also more likely to go on to purchase a set of chocolates than if they had tasted a chocolate from the small choice set. This is a direct contradiction to the results of Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) chocolate study. Similarly, Arunachalam, Henneberry, Lusk and Norwood (2009) found that when given a choice between a free soda or \$2 cash people were more likely to choose the soda when they were presented with an array of twenty-four soda varieties (30%) than six (12%).

In order to investigate further, Scheibehenne, Greifeneder and Todd (2010) conducted a meta-analysis from 50 published and unpublished experiments investigating the too-much-choice effect¹. It is important to note the inclusion of unpublished papers (with insignificant results) in the meta-analysis. Journals usually only publish papers with significant results and so the true extent of the too-much-choice effect (or lack of it) may be

¹ They used the term "choice overload hypothesis" to combine terminology from multiple studies stating that adverse consequences occur when there is an increase in the number of options to choose from.

misrepresented in published literature. As expected, they found a publishing bias in favour of the too-much-choice effect and that more recent studies were less likely to show any negative effects of extensive choice. Across studies the mean effect size for choice overload was virtually zero, again suggesting that the too-much-choice effect may not exist, although they noted the variance was large between studies. Overall there did not appear to be any conditions that led to a reliable and consistent occurrence of choice overload although individual studies did identify several moderators that could be a precondition for the too-much-choice effect. All these findings suggest that the too-much-choice effect may be less prevalent than suggested by previous published studies.

1.5 Possible Moderator Variables of the ‘Too-Much-Choice’ Effect

The fact that numerous studies have demonstrated negative consequences as a result of too-much-choice (see Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6) suggests that choice amount may still have some effect on decision making and outcome satisfaction even if other studies have failed to find the existence of the too-much-choice effect (see Section 1.4).

Scheibehenne et al., (2010) suggest that it is possible that the too-much-choice effect does reliably occur but only in the presence of specific moderator variables which need to be investigated further. A Large range of potential moderator variables have been discussed in the literature. These include individual differences such as age (Reed, Mikels & Simon, 2008), and a person’s tendency to want to maximise their outcomes (Schwartz et al. 2002; Iyengar et al. 2006; Schwartz, 2004; Dar-Nimrod, Raen, Lehman & Schwartz, 2009; Schwartz & Ward, 2006; Arunachalam et al. 2007) over which a choice architect (persons designing a choice set) has no control. There are also situational constraints such as time pressure (Ben Zur & Breznitz, 1981; Payne, Bettman & Johnson, 1988; Dhar, 1997; Dhar &

Nowlis, 1999), whether or not a decision can be reversed (Gilbert & Ebert, 2002), the format in which the options are presented (Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo & Reutskaja, 2010; Chen & Tsoi, 2011; Chen & Pu, 2010; Flavián, Gurrea & Orús, 2009), categorisation of options (Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar, 2008; Kahn & Wansink, 2004), and whether a default option is present (Singer, 2009; Johnson & Goldstein, 2003) which can all be manipulated by a choice architect. Other factors which may moderate the effect is whether or not a decision needs to be publically justified (Scheibehenne et al. 2009; Sela, et al., 2009; Wilson, et al., 1993), and what the social norms of the situation would suggest (Asch, 1951; Salganik, Dodds & Watts, 2006; Reingen, 1982). Although all of these factors may be important moderators in terms of any too-much-choice effect for volunteering choices in particular, four seem particularly relevant in the current context, namely reversibility, categorisation, presentation format and familiarity.

1.5.1 Individual Differences

Everyone is different. People react in various and contrasting ways to life events and experiences. Therefore, choice amount is likely to affect individuals differently or to a lesser or greater extent. For example, despite the research outlined in Section 1.2.3, not everyone is attracted by large choice sets, and would prefer to choose from limited choice sets. For example, Arunachalam et al. (2009) told people that they could receive a free soda drink. On leaving the room they could either go to a table with six different soda drink flavours to choose from or a table with twenty-four different soda drink flavours - the same choice set sizes used by Iyengar and Lepper (2000) in their jam study. Although the majority (58%) of people went to the table with 24 soda flavours, 42% of people chose to go to the table with only six options, not having seen any of the options available in either the low or high choice

sets. People that actively seek out limited or extensive choice sets respectively may experience decision making from extensive choice sets differently from one another.

Three possible personality (or individual differences) variables that could moderate the too-much-choice effect (age, maximisers vs. satisficers and option familiarity) are discussed below. With the exception of option familiarity which can be manipulated in a choice setting (and as such could be considered a choice architecture, see Section 1.5.1.3 and Study 8, Section 4.3) the remaining individual differences are personality variables that cannot be manipulated by a choice architect (the person designing choice presentation).

1.5.1.1 Age

Age may be a factor. There is some evidence that older people prefer less choice to younger people (Reed et al. 2008) perhaps because they are less used to making decisions with many options, as when they were growing up and making decisions there was likely to have been fewer options available to them than are available to young adults nowadays (Schwartz, 2004; The Economist, 2010). Although they may have learnt over time that many options are essentially the same and thus strategically avoid the need to make spurious decisions which waste valuable time and cognitive effort.

1.5.1.2 Maximisers vs. Satisficers

People vary in the way they approach choice decisions. Some people search through all of the options to find their best option. These people are known as maximisers. Other people search through the options until they find an option that meets their expectations, choose this option and stop searching. These people are known as satisficers. The terms maximiser and satisficer was coined by Schwartz et al. in 2002, building on concepts first described by

Herbert Simon in 1955. To investigate these issues further, Schwartz et al. (2002) developed the 'maximiser scale' which attempts to measure the extent to which a person is a maximiser or a satisficer. Most people fall somewhere in the middle of the scale, but at the extremities lie the maximisers and satisficers, for whom it is likely that the effects of limited or extensive choice are likely to be greatest (Schwartz, 2004).

According to Schwartz, when choosing from extensive choice sets maximisers tend to compare as many options as possible in order to find the best option, whereas satisficers limit the number of options they compare and may just chose an option they deem 'good enough'. As a result of their differing search and decision strategies maximisers tend to do objectively better with their choice outcomes than satisficers, but feel worse about the outcome (Iyengar, et al., 2006; Schwartz & Ward, 2006). They also tend to experience more negative emotions than satisficers, take longer to choose and after making a choice are less happy, experience more regret and ruminate more about the alternatives foregone (Schwartz et al., 2002). In one study, maximisers were more prepared to sacrifice their time in order to be able to choose from a greater set of options, yet were less satisfied with their eventual chosen option than a) maximisers that chose from a smaller assortment or b) satisficers (Dar-Nimrod, Raen, Lehman & Schwartz, 2009).

Maximisers also tend to find making a decision more demanding and less pleasurable when choosing from twenty options compared to ten options, whereas satisficers view the increase in choice favourably (Arunachalam et al. 2007). Therefore increasing the number of options is likely to be affectively worse for maximisers than satisficers. Although, Güth (2010) states that when presented with an extensive choice set, people may use a satisficing strategy (rather than a maximising one) and simply pick the best option from a randomly selected subset of the options on offer.

Sparks, Ehrlinger and Eibach (2012) provide an explanation for why the difference in satisfaction levels for maximisers and satisficers occurs. They state that maximisers' lower levels of satisfaction with ones chosen options is a result of them being less willing to

commit themselves to their chosen option than satisficers. Satisficers experienced classic dissonance reduction once they had chosen (and committed) to an option in order to re-evaluate their chosen option more positively than previously and the options they did not choose more negatively than previously so that they felt satisfied with their chosen option. Because maximisers were not as committed to their chosen options as they were more likely to retain the possibility to revise their choice they did not experience dissonance reduction and viewed their chosen option and options forgone as attractive as before. This led them to be less satisfied with their chosen option. Post decision dissonance reduction was discussed further in Section 1.3.3.

1.5.1.3 Option Familiarity/Prior preferences

How familiar a chooser is with the set of options they have to choose from is likely to influence their decision strategy and subsequent feelings about their choice. As discussed previously (see Section 1.2.4), people that are knowledgeable in a particular domain or have prior preferences may benefit from choosing from large choice sets (Chernev, 2003a, 2003b; Scheibehenne et al, 2010). Familiarity with options has been shown to enable people to choose an option quickly and confidently (Park & Lessig, 1981) and people are more likely to choose an option that they are familiar with (Soyer & Hogarth, 2011; Scheibehenne et al, 2009).

However, people that are less knowledgeable about the choice domain may also use their familiarity levels with options to guide their decisions. The familiarity heuristic (derived from the availability heuristic; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) posits that people use the degree of their familiarity with options to aid their decision making and evaluate the options, and have a tendency to choose options that they have encountered or chosen previously. When faced with a complex decision, rather than use a lot of cognitive resources to compare and contrast options to arrive at an eventual choice, people may rely on the familiarity heuristic

based on the assumption that something that they have chosen before or have heard of will be a better choice than something they had not. The studies that have demonstrated the existence of the too-much-choice have often required people to choose from options that they are not familiar with (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Scheibehenne et al., 2010) offering support for the notion that perhaps these people experienced the negative consequences of the too-much-choice effect because they could not rely on the familiarity heuristic to assist in their decision making.

However, Park and Jiang (2013) found that the familiarity of options did not function as a moderator of the too-much-choice effect. Option familiarity did not affect how likely people were to defer a decision about whether and where to go on holiday. Option familiarity is investigated alongside choice amount in Study 8 (see Section 4.3).

1.5.2 Choice Architectures

This thesis is focussed on investigating the too-much-choice effect in the context of volunteering recruitment, and potential choice architectures that could moderate the effect. The aim was to establish choice architectures that may facilitate choosing from extensive choice sets. Aside from personality variables (see Section 1.5.1) which we have very little control over that will affect how we tackle decisions, the way in which choices are presented to us will also affect our decision making and subsequent feelings towards chosen options. Choice architects (the people that design and present choices) *do* have control about the way in which to frame and present options to choosers to either facilitate choosers' decisions or lead them towards the choice architects' preferred choice (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Some possible choice architectures are discussed below.

1.5.2.1 Time Pressure

When people have to make a decision under time pressure choosers have been shown to alter their search tendencies and decision strategies. When under time pressure research has shown that people reduce the amount of time spent looking at individual options in a choice set in order to look at more options (Reutskaja, Nagel, Camerer & Rangel, 2011).

They also place more importance on the most meaningful attributes of the options and may focus especially on any negative information (Ben Zur & Breznitz, 1981; Payne, Bettman & Johnson, 1988). When under time constraints it has been shown that people can sometimes make a satisfactory decision about which option to choose despite not having the time to peruse all of the options (Reutskaja, Nagel, Camerer & Rangel, 2011) perhaps due to the use of heuristics (see Section 1.3.2) or they simply pick the best option from a random selection of the overall options (Güth, 2010). Although Haynes (2009) found that people find choosing from a larger choice set (in this case 10 options) more difficult and confusing than choosing from less choice and having no time pressure and were also less satisfied with their choice.

Time constraints can also affect deferment likelihood. Dhar and Nowlis (1999) found that when the attractiveness of options within a choice set was similar (i.e., people experience high load and conflict when making their choice) that being under pressure from a time constraint appeared to make the decision easier as people were less likely to defer their decision (21%) than if there was a clearly superior option in the choice set (36%). This is a direct contrast to research that found that without time pressure if the options in a choice set are of similar attractiveness that people are more likely to defer a decision (Dhar, 1997). One explanation for the decrease in choice deferment likelihood when under time restrictions is that people have less opportunity to think about the other options within the choice set and for feelings of uncertainty to develop, and that selecting the best option from a choice set precedes a deferral decision (Dhar & Nowlis, 1999).

1.5.2.2 Choice Justification

Scheibehenne et al., (2009) found no occurrence of the too-much-choice effect unless participants had to justify their choice explicitly. Other studies that have found the too-much-choice effect have also required participants to justify their decisions (for instance, Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Sela et al., 2009; Mogilner et al., 2008). Sela, et al., (2009) demonstrated that as choosing from larger choice sets is more complex and difficult than choosing from smaller ones people tend to look for reasons to justify their choices. Wilson, et al., (1993) state that introspection about the reasons for making a choice can lead people to focus on attributes that are easiest to verbalise/rationalise (rather than go on a 'gut instinct') which leads them to make a different decision than they would have if they had not had to justify their reasoning. If people experience conflict when choosing from a choice set, they may switch their consideration of the options from desirability to justifiability. This ultimately leads them to feel less satisfied and more regretful about the choice they made a few weeks later.

Choice justification could lead people to make 'better' decisions for themselves though. For instance, Sela, et al., (2009) argue that choice amount does not only affect whether a chooser makes a choice or not but also what they choose. They found that people are more likely to choose options that were better for them (e.g., reduced fat ice-cream rather than the full-fat version, or fruit rather than cookies or cake) when choosing from larger choice sets because it was easier to justify the choice (e.g., the reduced fat ice-cream is better for me). Wilson and Schooler (1991) argue though that if people think too much about their choice and the available options they can make suboptimal decisions as their attention becomes focused on non-optimal decision criteria and they are less able to discriminate between options. However, at least for older adults, getting them to evaluate their options increased their predicted satisfaction with their chosen option, but also their actual satisfaction and the effects last at least two weeks (Kim et al., 2008). This suggests

that cognitive control processing is required before greater cognitive-emotional interaction can impact satisfaction.

Requiring a chooser to justify their choice in combination with the number of options present in a choice set may alter the option chosen.

1.5.2.3 Social Norms

How others around us act and the knowledge of what other people have done when faced with the same decision affects our own subsequent behaviour. The most well-known examples of the pressure to conform to social norms come from Asch's 1950's conformity experiments (Asch, 1951) in which he demonstrated that when presented with an extremely simple task, people gave answers that they knew were incorrect if they had heard the vast majority of people before them give a wrong answer.

More recent research has also demonstrated that social norm information can guide people's behaviour. Salganik, Dodds and Watts (2006) created an online artificial music market and recruited 14,341 participants mostly from a teen-interest web site to rate and download songs. People were more likely to download a song if other people had already done so and rated the song highly. The stronger the saliency of social norms the greater effect it had on individuals subsequent preferences and behaviour. This highlights the importance of targeted advertising for products (e.g. 'the recommended for you section' on Amazon.com as a result of the products you have looked at and what others that bought that product also liked).

Other people's previous actions have also been shown to influence donation behaviour. Reingen (1982) demonstrated that people were more likely to donate (money/blood) when they were shown a list of people that had donated previously, especially if the number of people that had previously donated was high. Social norms also affected freely chosen monetary donations. People were more likely to match what

previous donors had given. Similarly, people were more likely to accept a request to take part in an experiment if they had just witnessed someone else accept the request, and more likely to reject the request if they had just witnessed someone else reject the request when compared to a control group who had not witnessed someone else's reaction prior to their own request (Rosenbaum & Blake, 1955).

1.5.2.4 Defaults

Often for many decisions we make there is a default option. An option that is pre-selected and the option we get if we refrain from making an active decision. This has been shown to be important for everything from healthy food choices (Singer, 2009) to investment in pension funds (Madrian & Shea, 2001) and organ donation (Johnson & Goldstein, 2003).

Singer (2009) in an article about the highlights of the 2009 Behavior, Energy and Climate Change Conference held in Washington, DC mentioned an experiment conducted during the registration process for the conference. When choosing their lunch meal during registration the low-carbon producing vegetarian option was listed first and pre-selected, with the meat option presented below, not selected. Around 80% of conference goers chose the default vegetarian (pro-environmental) option, compared to previous years of the same conference in which typically only between 5-10% of conference goers chose the vegetarian option. It is likely that the people attending these conferences are more likely to make pro-environmental decisions than the average person due to the nature of the conference and their interests, however the fact that the difference in the selection of the vegetarian option at the same conference was so different highlights the impact that the presence of a default option can have on people's preferences and behaviour.

In terms of future retirement plans, default options have been shown to assist people to invest their money in plans so that they are financially better off in the future. People are often aware that they are not saving enough for when they retire and can be

reminded about possible 401(k) plans from their employers yet still fail to sign up. In fact in 2006 roughly 30% of employees eligible to join a 401(k) plan failed to do so (Investment Company Institute, 2006). Deciding how much money to invest in a retirement plan each month is a complex decision. People have to consider how long they intend to work for, how long they think they will live, who they will need to provide for during retirement, the cost of the lifestyle they hope to have when they retire, amongst others. Perhaps the complexity of this decision could cause people to defer making a decision. Madrian and Shea (2001) found that if employers implemented a simple opt-out default strategy with regards to retirement plans, participation increased from 20% to 65%, and that 90% of new employees.

Another example of how opt-out rather than opt-in defaults can dramatically influence large numbers of people's behaviour and in this case potentially save millions of lives is that of organ donation. In the UK around 8000 people need an organ transplant each year, but only around 3000 are carried out. Whilst waiting for an organ, many people needing a transplant will die. There is a desperate need for more people in the UK to become organ donors to bridge the gap between supply and demand, however at present the UK operates an opt-in donor policy. Unless you actively sign-up to be an organ donor it is presumed upon death that you do not wish your organs to be used to provide transplants to others. When asked the vast majority of people (97%) said they supported the idea of organ donation, however their behaviour didn't reflect their beliefs as only 43% had the box checked on their drivers licence that they were willing to be an organ donor (Kurtz & Saks, 1996). One explanation for this discrepancy is the way in which the decision to be an organ donor is structured. Johnson and Goldstein (2003) demonstrated that implementing an opt-out default for organ donation increased people's willingness to be a donor from 42% (in the opt-out default condition) to 82%.

These findings may have parallels for volunteering in the sense that here people are being asked to volunteer their organs after death, whereas in the current research they are being asked to volunteer their time during their life. Accordingly, in Study 1 (see Section

2.1.2) I examined the use of defaults in terms of being contacted to take part in future studies.

1.5.2.5 Decision Reversibility

Some decisions that we make are reversible whereas some are not. For example, stores often offer a money back guarantee for a certain period of time after a product is purchased in which the consumer can bring back the product so long as it is still in working order, receive their money back and receive no penalties for doing so. If the option is available, people prefer for their choices to be reversible rather than not, and believe that the reversibility of a decision will not affect their subsequent satisfaction with a chosen option (Gilbert & Ebert, 2002).

However, Gilbert and Ebert (2002) suggested that we may actually be better off making non-reversible decisions (perhaps even if the 'best' choice is not chosen). This is because outcomes which are unchangeable are more likely to be subjectively optimized by the PIS (Psychological Immune System; mentioned in Section 1.3.3) than changeable outcomes. When we make a decision that cannot be reversed, we are stuck with the option we chose (no matter whether it be a good or bad choice), there is nothing we can do about it, we just have to put up with it. Therefore, after a non-reversible decision has been made our PIS kicks in to ensure that we do not feel like we made a bad choice, so in the instances of having made a bad choice, we may actually retrospectively increase our liking for the choice that we made. There is no need for our PIS system to kick in for reversible decisions as the choice is not perceived as final and therefore doesn't need to be justified as such. However, often reversible decisions are only reversible for a period of time (until the return policy ends for example). Therefore, once this time has elapsed we are left with our initial choice (if we have not changed it during this time), yet it has not been psychologically justified like it would have been had our decision been non-reversible. This suggests that

we will actually be more satisfied with an identical choice if it was chosen as a result of a non-reversible decision than a reversible one, because when chosen as a result of a non-reversible decision it will have the aid of our PIS to optimise our decision and make us feel subjectively better about our choice.

1.5.2.6 Categorisation

How the options in a choice set are grouped also affects decision making. Categories can be used to provide structure to a choice set and to arrange similar options close to one another in particular area of a selection. This can help a chooser differentiate between the options and ascertain easily which options are similar to one another and which options are different from one another. Categories can also guide people towards options that have specific attributes which they are seeking. Kolotis (as cited in 'The Economist', 2010), Tropicana's marketing director stated the adding extra fruit juice varieties to their range increased sales by 35%, but that in order to assist consumers to "*navigate what can be a difficult range*" they colour code (categorise) their bottle tops.

Organising options into categories may also increase people's perception of variety (Mogilner, Rudnick and Iyengar, 2008; Kahn & Wansink, 2004) which as mentioned in Section 1.2.3 people are attracted to. Interestingly, perceived variety was as a result of the number of categories in which the options were grouped rather than the actual number of options themselves (Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar, 2008); the greater the number of categories, the greater the perceived variety of options. The categorisation of options may particularly benefit choosers that are unfamiliar with a choice set. Choosers feel satisfied that they have had a large variety of options from which to choose and the categorisation of options simplifies their decision by guiding them towards options of interest and filtering out unappealing options (Mogilner, et al., 2008). The potential effect of the categorisation

of options on deferment likelihood and decision satisfaction is discussed further in Study 6, Section 4.1.

1.5.2.7 Presentation Format

The way in which options are presented can cause choosers to pay more or less attention to options within a choice set as a result of their positioning. For commercial websites, the way in which products are displayed affects buyer behaviour (Lohse & Spiller, 1998). People's attention has a tendency to be biased towards information that is placed 'first' (Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo & Reutskaja, 2010). In Western cultures, this means, to the left and at the top (Reutskaja, Nagel, Camerer & Rangel, 2011).

Considering online choice sets, the usual way for options to be presented is either in a grid or a list format. Grid like formats afford easier web interface usability (Chen & Tsoi, 2011), and appear to facilitate choice decisions more effectively than list formats. People consider more options and in more detail when they are presented in a grid format, and there is a greater likelihood of an option being chosen from the selection (Chen & Pu, 2010; Chen & Tsoi, 2011). People are likely to spend the majority of their search time on the options at the top left of the screen and are more likely to select an option if it was positioned in one of these prominent areas (Boyce, et al., 2010). Kammerer and Gerjets (2010) found that participants viewed arrays linearly and were biased towards options at the top of the list when options were presented in a list format, but were unbiased and paid equal attention to all options when they were presented in a grid format. However, Hong, Thong and Tam (2004) found the opposite. They found that people took less time to make their decision, were better at recalling images and brand names presented to them, and had a more positive attitude towards a website when choosing from a list format than an array (grid) format. Flavián, Gurrea and Orús (2009) also found no differences on presentation format (list vs. grid) on user's perceptions and behaviour.

Boyce, et al., (2010) found that there appeared to be a 'blind spot' in the lower middle section of a computer screen in which people viewed the least suggesting that important information, or information which will aid decision making should not be placed in this area of a screen, although in Reutskaja, et al.'s study people spend the greatest proportion of time looking at the options that were in the centre of a screen of options in a grid format.

Perhaps these contrasting findings could be explained (as suggested by Flavián, et al., 2009) in terms of the cognitive effort that is required from the chooser to compare and contrast options. When comparing a small choice array (for example., $N_s = 6$ Hong, et al., 2004; Flavián, et al., 2009), list presentation format may be preferred as the options are closer together (with no need to scroll) so can be compared easily without the chooser having to move their head, eyes or internal attention as much than when the options are presented in a grid format. However, when a large number of options are presented the cognitive effort flips from being less effortful when scanning a list array than when scanning a grid array. A large number of options presented in a grid format will take up less screen space and therefore require less cognitive effort than if they were presented in a list format which would require scrolling. Therefore I consider these issues in Study 7 (see Section 4.2) in relation to more vs. less choice and in the context of volunteering.

It is several of these choice architectures that I focus on in my thesis in relation to choice amount: decision reversibility (see Section 1.5.2.5), categories (see Section 1.5.2.6), presentation format (see Section 1.5.2.7) and option familiarity (see Section 1.5.1.3). The decision to investigate these possible choice architectural moderators of the too-much-choice effect and not others mentioned above was determined in the process of carrying out the series of studies and in response to the findings of preceding studies. It is noted however that all of the above possible choice architectures could have an impact on decision making and the likelihood of the-too-much-choice effect occurring.

1.6 Volunteering

The focus of my research was on the effect of choice amount on volunteering recruitment. For research investigating the too-much-choice effect there needs to be a decision domain. I chose to focus on volunteering decisions, specifically which voluntary organisation people would choose to volunteer with. I felt that this would provide novel research to add to the literature on the too-much-choice effect, as no previous research has focussed on volunteering decisions and there is also only limited research that has investigated the too-much-choice effect for experiential (as volunteering is) rather than consumer/material choices. I also thought that volunteering was an important and useful domain to focus on as the findings from my studies would be of relevance in the real world in terms of volunteer recruitment. This next section will provide some background information on volunteering and why trying to encourage as many people as possible to volunteer is important.

1.6.1 Definitions

Volunteering has been defined as: *“any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups other than or in addition to close relatives) or to benefit the environment”* (Davis Smith, 1997) or *“the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain”* (UK Volunteering Forum, 1998). The element of free choice is what makes volunteering differ from mandatory obligations. As such, choice and volunteering go hand in hand together.

1.6.2 Volunteering in the UK

The UK has one of the strongest non-profit making sectors in the developed world (Salamon, 2001). This “‘third sector’ is growing in significance and is seen as having an increasing role in the delivery of services and strengthening community cohesion” (Economic & Social Research Council [ESRC], 2008). This is reflected by the huge number of organisations in this sector, which is continuing to grow (164,000 registered charities in 2005/06 [The Cabinet Office 2008] compared to 171,000 in 2006/07; The UK Civil Society Almanac 2009), plus several thousand community groups (The Cabinet Office, 2008). Annual monetary donations to the third sector are around £10 billion (Charities Aid Foundation [CAF], 2007) compared to the even greater economic benefits of volunteering of around £40 billion (NCSR, 2007). Clearly volunteering plays a crucial part in the service provision capabilities of voluntary organisations and the value of volunteers’ time to them is considerable.

Increasing volunteering uptake in the UK would be beneficial to society as a whole in terms of greater and improved service provision.

1.6.3 Volunteering Trends

An estimated 73% of adults were involved in some form of volunteering in 2007/08 (The Citizenship Survey 2007/08). Despite Government efforts to increase volunteering in the UK, volunteering levels have remained flat with no upward trend since 2001 (although volunteering levels did increase during 2005, the Government-backed ‘year of the volunteer’; Jump, 2008). The increasing number of voluntary organisations coupled with the statistics that there has not been an increase in volunteers has left voluntary organisations in a difficult position. The increase in the number of outlets that people can volunteer for has led to competition for members (particularly active members) between organisations

and some organisations are reporting a decrease in the number of volunteers volunteering for them, for example Samaritans (2008).

1.6.4 Benefits of Volunteering to Society

The benefits of voluntary organisations (and their volunteers) to society is obvious.

Voluntary organisations provide services at no or very low cost which members of the public are free to use if they wish to (e.g., medical support groups) or that care for or enhance our surroundings (e.g., environmental conservation organisations). Charitable organisations are self-funded so do not drain Government resources and the labour is provided free of charge from willing volunteers.

1.6.5 Benefits of Volunteering for Volunteers

There are also benefits of volunteering to the volunteers themselves. Until fairly recently volunteering was regarded very much as an altruistic act, but in recent years people appear to have realised the individual benefits one gets from volunteering. Psychological research has shown that volunteering has beneficial effects for the individuals taking part in volunteering activities including increased well-being in terms of greater life satisfaction (Meier & Stutzer, 2008). In a longitudinal study conducted from 1985 to 1999 they showed that volunteering positively affected life satisfaction. Life satisfaction ratings on a scale of 0-10 increased from 6.93 for people who never volunteered to 7.35 for people that volunteered weekly. They also noted that people who are more extrinsically orientated benefit less in terms of life satisfaction from volunteering than people who put more importance on intrinsic life goals. Also, a national survey conducted in 2007 showed the benefits of volunteering as highlighted by volunteers included satisfaction from seeing the

results of their volunteering (97%), enjoyment (98%), personal achievement (49%), and meeting people and making friends (49%) amongst others (Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving, 2007).

There is evidence that volunteering is more beneficial in terms of health and happiness than other altruistic acts. Volunteering has been shown to be significantly associated with health and happiness, whereas monetary or blood donations were not (Borgonovi, 2008). In a US survey of almost 29,200 people, the amount of volunteering activities also appeared to affect life satisfaction. Controlling for a range of potential confounds such as age, gender, ethnicity and employment status, people that volunteered less than once a month were 4.5% more likely to report excellent health, and people that volunteered monthly or weekly were 6% more likely to report being in excellent health (Borgonovi, 2008). Similarly, people volunteering less than once a month were 7% more likely to report being very happy and that this grew to 12% for people who were volunteering more than monthly but less than weekly and 16% when people volunteered weekly. This increase in the probability of being very happy as a result of weekly volunteering was the equivalent to the extra happiness resulting from moving from a personal income of less than \$20,000 to incomes between \$75,000 and \$100,000 (Borgonovi, 2008).

However there have been difficulties in determining causality from reversed causality; do volunteers become happier or do happier people volunteer? Borgonovi (2008) attempted to address this problem by using data from a longitudinal panel and concluded that the positive association that exists between volunteering and health is at least in part due to happier people being more likely to volunteer. Nonetheless, in the case of religious volunteering in particular the evidence does support the idea that volunteering leads to higher happiness in the future, implying a causal route.

1.6.6 Motivations for volunteering

Davis, Mitchell, Hall, Lothert, Snapp and Meyer (1999) state that before people actually volunteer they carefully consider the costs and benefits of volunteering based on the anticipated derived satisfaction of the volunteering experience. However, as discussed in Section 1.3.6, people are not always very good at accurately predicting their emotional reactions to future events or 'affective forecasting' (Gilbert, et al., 2004).

Detailed research has been carried out on people's motivations for volunteering and has shown that people's motivations for volunteering appear to have changed over the last ten years. Wanting to improve things and help people appears to have become more important with 35% of current volunteers in the UK reporting this as a reason for starting to volunteer in 1997 compared with 53% in 2006/07. Having spare time also seems to be more important; in 1997 21% of respondents reported that as a reason for volunteering compared to 41% in 2006/07 with older people the most likely to cite this as a reason for becoming involved. Conversely, volunteering with organisations because they were connected with the needs or interests of friends and family seems to have become less important with 45% of respondents noting it in 1997 compared with 29% in 2006/07 (Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving, 2007).

1.6.7 Retaining volunteers

Knowing the motivations of volunteers is useful for recruiting campaigns to target potential volunteers, but this advantage may be limited if once recruited, volunteers' motivations are not fulfilled to the extent they expected them to be, possibly resulting in drop-outs. Finkelstein (2008) assumes that people will continue volunteering if their experience meets their reasons for volunteering. Motive fulfilment leads to satisfaction which leads to

sustained volunteer activity. He measured the importance of six motives to volunteering, the extent to which volunteering fulfilled those motives and satisfaction with the volunteering experience. As predicted, the fulfilment of volunteer's motivations for helping correlated positively with satisfaction for all motives except career although this may be attributed to the fact that the mean age of participants was 65 and so were not likely to be motivated by advancing their careers. Interestingly though, the extent to which motives were fulfilled was correlated with their strengths, so strongly held motives were more likely to be fulfilled.

Retaining volunteers is essential to voluntary organisations, yet proves extremely difficult. In a longitudinal study following 238 volunteers from 9 different voluntary organisations over their first twelve months volunteering, Davis, Hall and Meyer (2003) found that by the end of the twelve months nearly three quarters of the original volunteers were no longer volunteering. This problem has also been highlighted by Samaritans (Pahl, White & Carroll, 2008). It is often difficult to obtain accurate reasons as to why people cease their volunteering activities; perhaps because they do not wish to discuss the reasons with the organisation, they no longer have an interest in answering questions regarding the organisation, they are no longer contactable, their reasons for leaving are personal and they do not wish to discuss them, or the lack of reliability of self-reports.

The determinants of volunteer longevity appear to be elusive. Davis et al.,'s (2003) elaborated volunteer process model could not successfully predict volunteer persistence suggesting that *"there are many complex variables working in conjunction with one another to determine persistence, which is also affected by other circumstances such as relocation"*. Shedding some light on this though, they did demonstrate that of the participants that were still volunteering at the end of the twelve months there were no differences in gender or on any of their three measures of dispositional empathy. Continuing volunteers tended to be older, educated to a higher level and had lower levels of altruistic and self-oriented initial motivation than dropouts (Davis et al., 2003). For Finkelstein (2008), the fulfilment of the

values and understanding motives were correlated with the amount of time spent volunteering but there was no correlation between motive fulfilment and length of service. Satisfaction predicted the amount of time devoted to volunteering but not volunteer longevity. Although, Penner and Finkelstein (1998) found that motive strength did not correlate with time spent helping or length of service with the exception of their values motive; people with stronger altruistic concerns tended to volunteer for longer. There appears to be no clear link between volunteer's motivations for engaging in voluntary activities and their persistence. Other factors must play a part.

Windsor, Anstey, and Rodgers (2008) demonstrated that moderate level of volunteering (at least 100 hours of volunteering a year but less than 800) was associated with higher positive affect, lower levels of negative affect and greater life satisfaction. However, when people engaged in high levels of volunteering this was associated with lower positive affect, higher negative affect and lower life satisfaction. They attributed this to two factors: firstly, increasing role overload and burden of responsibility and secondly, reducing time and energy available that could be spent on other meaningful activities. Longitudinal studies should be carried out to investigate causality.

1.6.8 Volunteer persistence

Once volunteering, it makes sense that satisfaction with their volunteering activities impacts on volunteers' persistence. The influence of motivation fulfilment had an effect on satisfaction up to four months after starting volunteering but this influence had diminished by the end of the twelve months (Davis et al., 2003). Davis et al.'s (2003) elaborated volunteer process model conceives volunteer satisfaction as the key determinant of two behavioural responses, volunteer involvement (the amount of time regularly spent in volunteering) and persistence in volunteering resulting from earlier subjective experiences

of the volunteer. Unexpectedly though, satisfaction at one time point did not predict persistence at the next time point (Davis et al., 2003), although a possible explanation for this is that amount of time between time points was too great and other extraneous variables could have had an effect on persistence.

Chacón, Vecina and Dávila (2007) found different results and demonstrated that satisfaction is linked to commitment. A volunteer's satisfaction with their volunteer work could predict their commitment to the organisation, with higher commitment leading to a greater intention to continue volunteering with the organisation. They also found that volunteers' intentions of whether to continue volunteering had a predictive power for real permanence duration. Therefore, asking volunteers how long they plan to continue volunteering is a good estimate of the volunteer's stability, but also establishes a minimum commitment towards which the volunteer will try to attain which could increase persistence.

Organisational commitment has also been noted in other studies as a factor in volunteer persistence, with greater commitment leading to greater persistence. For example, Grube and Piliavin (1996) state that volunteering for a long period of time increases commitment towards an organisation which leads to an increase in actions that benefit the organisation, such as volunteering more time or helping out with other activities. One possible explanation for this is that over time initial motives for volunteering become less important as a result of volunteers incorporating the 'volunteer' into their self-concept which drives future behaviour. Once being a volunteer has become part of their identity, then the activities (such as volunteering) associated with that identity will continue to be performed (Grube & Piliavin, 1996).

Other work has shown that the main reason for stopping volunteering is time (Pahl, White & Carroll, 2008), in particular a lack of it due to changing home or work circumstances identified by 41% of respondents (Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving, 2007).

1.6.9 Student volunteering

In the current economic climate there is strong competition for jobs so any extra skills potential candidates have to set them above the rest are becoming increasingly important. Volunteering allows an individual to gain skills free of charge and to develop social networks. These extra skills and networks are especially important for students as competition for graduate jobs is rife and employers often require extra-curricular activities to have been undertaken. Because of this, and because my research is based at the University of Plymouth the population used in the following studies will consist mainly of students.

For research into volunteer recruitment, students are a very important population to investigate. This is an age and stage of life when many people begin volunteering for the first time. In the UK, for instance, around 15% of first year students (Holdsworth, 2010) and more than 42,000 students in total volunteer each year through organised volunteering programmes at their Higher Education Institutions (Student Volunteering England [SVE], 2004). Key motivations include wanting to learn new skills (55.9%) and to gain experience for their future career (44.5%; SVE, 2004). The contribution to the economy is estimated to be around £34 million pounds (wage equivalent at 2003 values, SVE, 2004). Importantly students also tend to continue volunteering after leaving college. In the US, College graduates were more likely to volunteer (24.4%) than people without college experience (8.3%) and were also more likely to still be volunteering later in life (Marcelo, 2007a, 2007b).

1.7 Choice and volunteering

1.7.1 The increasing number of voluntary organisations

Combining the information from the choice and volunteering literature it is clear that there may be potential barriers to the recruitment of volunteers at present. Voluntary organisations are struggling to recruit and retain volunteers despite efforts from the Government to promote and encourage volunteering and highlight the benefits. In accordance with the findings discussed previously, the problems could stem from the sheer number of possible voluntary organisations to choose from for potential volunteers (171,000 in 2006/07; The UK Civil Society Almanac, 2009). The huge number of voluntary organisations from which potential volunteers are required to choose could undermine the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Someone who has decided that they would like to volunteer has to decide which voluntary organisation to devote their time to. If they have knowledge of or a personal attachment to one charity maybe because of family/friend circumstances this may lead them to volunteer with that charity; the equivalent of having prior preferences (Chernev 2003a, 2003b). In this case the number of organisations available for them to volunteer for is unlikely to hinder them. However, if people do not have prior preferences they must search for an organisation to volunteer with.

1.7.2 Competition between voluntary organisations

Due to the ever increasing number of voluntary organisations and the limited number of volunteers, organisations are constantly competing against one another to attract and retain volunteers (Samaritans, 2008). Voluntary organisations need to stand out from other organisations in order to get noticed and build public awareness. They are having to focus

more than ever before on the recruitment of new volunteers. One in five voluntary organisations feel that difficulties in the recruitment or retention of volunteers will hold them back over the next three years (The UK Civil Society Almanac, 2009). Providing voluntary organisations with effective choice architectures that could help guide potential new volunteers to their organisation would be highly beneficial to organisations and may increase volunteer recruitment.

1.7.3 Searching for an organisation to volunteer with

Someone with no prior preferences as to which organisation to volunteer with may start their search for an organisation to volunteer with online. One of the first websites that comes up if you type 'volunteering' into Google in the UK is 'Volunteering England'. On this website alone there were 115 different voluntary organisations arranged into categories². This would be regarded as an extensive choice set. If the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set extend the novel domain of volunteering this could pose a huge problem for the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

1.7.4 Do the negative consequences of extensive choice generalise to volunteering?

The number of organisations that potential volunteers face when searching for an organisation to volunteer is likely to be extensive, particularly as a result of internet searches. This knowledge, coupled with the evidence for the too-much-choice effect (see Section 1.2.5 and 1.2.6) which demonstrated that choosing from extensive choice sets can be overwhelming and lead to increased deferment likelihood, increased decision difficulty

² The website has since changed format and now only displays a limited selection of organisations

and decreased levels of satisfaction with a chosen option suggests that the too-much-choice effect may occur for people deciding which organisation to volunteer with. If the too-much-choice effect was found for volunteering, there would be significant implications for volunteer recruitment. People may decide that they would like to spend some of their free time volunteering and set about searching for an organisation to volunteer with. If they do not have prior preferences about which organisation to volunteer with they may experience the decision as overwhelming and may choose to defer their decision until a later date, or perhaps put it off altogether. This would undermine volunteer recruitment. If they do make a choice, they may experience feelings of dissatisfaction and regret about the organisation they chose as a result of uncertainty, and thinking about alternative options foregone. These feelings of dissatisfaction may continue once people have started volunteering with the organisation, and if their volunteering experience does not live up to their expectations they may decide to stop volunteering, undermining volunteer retention.

1.8 Current research

The series of studies presented in my thesis aim to investigate the relationship between choice amount and volunteering decisions, specifically, choosing which organisation to volunteer for. This research aims to provide new information regarding choosing from extensive choice sets in the novel domain of volunteering, and for an experiential rather than a material choice. Through a series of field and laboratory experiments I aimed to establish whether the too-much-choice effect existed for volunteering decisions. I then investigated potential choice architectural moderators of the effect that could be implemented to facilitate potential volunteers' decision making with the ultimate aim to increase volunteer recruitment.

Chapter two outlines three field studies that explored students' perceptions and experiences of signing up to volunteer with an organisation via volunteering 'events' organised by the volunteering department at Plymouth University. Chapter three empirically tested whether the too-much-choice effect occurred for decisions about which organisation to volunteer with: Two studies were outlined that investigated the relationship between choice amount and deferment likelihood, decision difficulty and decision satisfaction for volunteering decisions. Chapter four explored three possible choice architectural moderators of the too-much-choice-effect in the context of volunteering decisions: Categorisation of options (Study 6), presentation format (Study 7) and option familiarity (Study 8). Finally, Chapter five (the general discussion) outlined the findings of my series of studies independently and in relation to previous literature on the too-much-choice effect, their implications, limitations and possible avenues for future research.

2 Student Volunteering: Initial Insights

This initial empirical chapter presents results from three exploratory field studies. My research question was an applied one: Does the too-much-choice effect extend to volunteering decisions, and if so, can choice architectures be implemented to facilitate people's decisions to increase volunteering uptake? The majority of my participants were students at Plymouth University. Students are a group of particular interest as potential volunteers (see Section 1.6.9) so I felt that it was important to gather some background information regarding their perceptions of the volunteering recruitment process in place at the University. The volunteering department at the University hosts various volunteering events during the academic year to make students aware of the volunteering opportunities available to them and to attempt to assist students interested in volunteering to choose an organisation to volunteer for. I was able to find out why students had decided they wanted to volunteer, whether they did go onto volunteer or not, what they got out of it, why they may have stopped volunteering and what they thought of the provisions the volunteering department have in place to assist people in their search for an organisation to volunteer with.

The findings from the three field studies presented in this chapter enabled me to have a better overall picture of student volunteering and to develop items and possible choice architectures for my later laboratory studies.

2.1 Sports and societies fair 2009: Intentions to volunteer

2.1.1 Introduction

This pilot was carried out during the 2009 University of Plymouth Sports and societies fair. The fair is an annual event that takes place a few weeks into the start of each academic year. All the sports and societies at the University have a stall with information about their sport club or society. Students can sign up to join as many sports clubs or societies as they like.

One of the stalls is for volunteering. On this stall there is information about all the volunteering opportunities that are available through the University's volunteering department. Students indicate their interest in volunteering by writing their name, email address and interests on sign-ups sheets. They then get emailed information about how to sign up to specific volunteering opportunities, information about what's going on with volunteering throughout the year and information about the volunteering induction evening (which takes place a few weeks after the sports and societies fair and has individual stalls and representatives for various volunteering opportunities).

The sports and societies fair provided an opportunity to run two field studies: 1 – The effect of an opt-in or opt-out default on compliance to a request, and 2 – The discrepancy between intentions and actions.

2.1.2 Study 1: The effect of an opt-in or opt-out default on compliance to a request

2.1.2.1 Rationale

One of the main foci of my PhD was how choosing an organisation to volunteer with could be facilitated for potential volunteers, with the ultimate aim of increasing the number of volunteers in the UK. Often the first step for new experiences or purchases is the result of some sort of advertising (or new awareness). In order to expose people to continuous possible volunteering opportunities it is useful to have their contact details and their consent that they are happy to be contacted about volunteering opportunities in the future. For the purpose of my research it was useful for me to gather a database of contact details (email addresses) for students at the University that expressed an interest in volunteering and were happy to be contacted for future studies (in order for me to run studies on students that had expressed an interest in volunteering previously).

The way in which requests are framed can have an effect on subsequent behaviour (see Section 1.5.2). Default options have been found to increase compliance (Johnson & Goldstein, 2003), and beginning with a small request (e.g., asking someone to agree to their email address being kept on a database for future contact) followed by a larger request (e.g., emailing the person and asking them to take part in a research study) at a later date has been shown to be more effective in eliciting compliance than asking the larger request straight-away (Freedman & Fraser, 1966; Cann, Sherman & Elkes, 1975; Cialdini, Cacioppo, Bassett & Miller, 1978).

Also, the actions of others previously to a situation, affects a person's actions. Asch (1957) demonstrated in his series of studies on conformity that a subject would knowingly give a wrong answer to a question, if the vast majority of people that had answered prior to them had given a wrong answer. Even though the subject had no connections or loyalties to strangers in the group, the subject still felt compelled to go along with the majority of the group and give an answer they knew was wrong. Of particular relevance to the current study is the way that a list procedure can influence compliance. If someone is made aware of previous compliers (they can see other people have said yes to a request before them) they are more likely to comply with a request than if they are not presented with any

previous complier information (Reingen, 1982). In a different context, the number of previous donors and donation amounts also affected the likelihood of a donation and the donation amount with regards to monetary donations (Reingen, 1982). With regard to volunteering, if people can see that many people have signed up to volunteer before them, they may be more inclined to sign up themselves.

2.1.2.2 Aims

The aim of this pilot was to find out how many students were interested in (signed up to the volunteering society) taking part in some volunteering during the year and to try and get consent from them to allow me to contact them later in the year to take part in a study.

I wanted to find out whether an opt-in or opt-out default to be contacted to take part in a further study would elicit the most compliance to agree to be contacted about further studies.

2.1.2.3 Hypothesis

People that were presented with the request to allow me contact them with volunteering studies in the future in an opt-out format would be more likely to agree to be contacted than those who were presented with the request in an opt-in format (H1).

2.1.2.4 Participants

577 students (360 in the opt-in condition, 217 in the opt-out condition as a result of whichever sign-up sheet they indicated their interest on) put their names and contact details on a sign up form indicating they were interested in volunteering. Most of these

sign-ups will have been from the sports and societies fair, but a number of students will have signed up before or after the event through the volunteering department directly.

2.1.2.5 Procedure

The volunteering departments' usual sign-up sheet to indicate interest in volunteering was modified to include the following 'tick box' question; Opt-in condition: *"We are doing some research on volunteering. Please tick this column if you are happy to be emailed with details of studies you could participate in (no obligation)"* or Opt-out condition: *"We are doing some research on volunteering. Tick this column if you do not want to receive emails with details of studies you could participate in"*.

Half the sign-up sheets contained the opt-in wording and half the sign-up sheets contained the opt-out wording. These sheets were then placed on the volunteering stall for the duration of the sports and societies fair and afterwards in the volunteering department. People were free to sign-up to volunteering at any time.

2.1.2.6 Results

The responses regarding future contact requests were not clear from three participants in the opt-in condition. Therefore their data was removed from the analysis. This resulted in 357 participants in the opt-in condition and 217 in the opt-out condition.

Supporting H1, there was a significant difference in compliance to the contact request as a result of condition (opt-out vs. opt-in), $X^2(1, N = 574) = 89.82, p < .001$. Only 56.3% of people in the opt-in condition stated that I could contact them at a later date, compared with 93.5% of those in the opt-out condition (see Figure 2.1). People in the opt-out condition were more likely to state that they were happy to be contacted in the future

regarding volunteering than people in the opt-in condition. This resulted in 404 students indicating that they were happy to be contacted via email with information about future studies about volunteering.

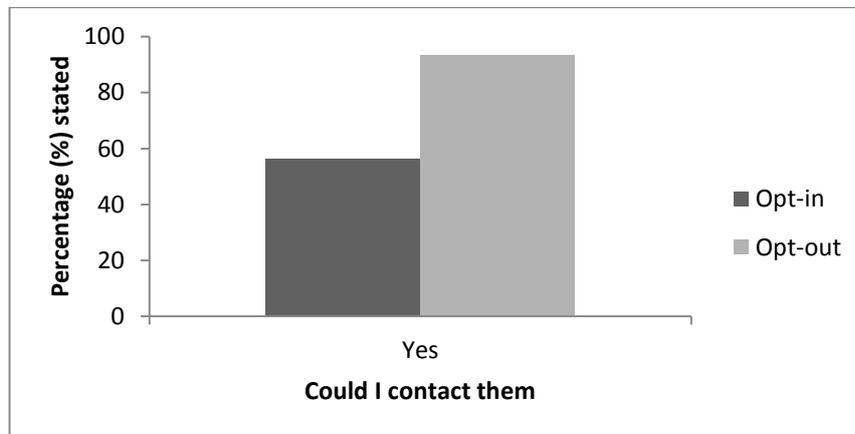


Figure 2.1. Study 1: Percentage of compliance to contact request

2.1.2.7 Discussion

This study highlighted the importance of how requests are framed and the responses they elicit from people. This finding supports those of previous literature that when asked to select an option people tend to stick with a preselected or default option (Johnson & Goldstein, 2003). When the request for people to allow me to contact was framed in an opt-out fashion, requiring people to tick a box if they did not want to be contacted at a later date people were much more likely to allow me to contact them at a later date.

This suggests that in order to get the best rate of compliance when requesting something from people, you should adopt an opt-out strategy. This will elicit the greatest percentage of compliance while still providing people with free will and the opportunity not to comply should they wish. If people show an initial interest in volunteering, getting them to agree to allow you to contact them in future about possible volunteering opportunities could perhaps ultimately increase the number of new volunteers. Thus the study provided valuable information about how to frame requests for participation in future studies, and

for volunteering organisations to get people to agree to receive more information about volunteering.

2.1.3 Study 2: The discrepancy between intentions and actions

2.1.3.1 Rationale

People often do not follow through with their intentions (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). In a meta-analysis of 10 meta-analyses, Sheeran (2002) found that people's intended behaviours accounted for 28% of the variance in their actual behaviour. Only 47% of people that intended to do a certain behaviour (e.g., quit smoking) actually followed through with their intentions and achieved their goal. There are a number of factors that influence the likelihood of an intention being achieved, including the strength of the intention (Sheeran, 2002), initiating the intended behaviour (Milne, Orbell & Sheeran, 2000) and the time duration between intention and action (Sheeran & Orbell, 1998) amongst others.

In the present study, the students that signed their name on the volunteering society sign-up sheets at the sports and societies fair had intentions to volunteer at some point during the next academic year. I was interested in how many students followed up their intentions and took up volunteering.

2.1.3.2 Aims

In this study I wanted to find out how many of the students that had indicated their interest and intention to volunteer by signing up to the volunteering society at the sports and societies fair had actually gone on to engage in some form of volunteering during the following academic year.

I also wanted to gather information about students' perceptions of the volunteering stall at the sports and societies fair, deciding which organisation to volunteer with and their experiences if they did undertake some volunteering.

2.1.3.3 Hypotheses

I predicted that although a large number of students had intended to do some sort of volunteering during the following academic year that in reality the number of students that did engage in some sort of volunteering would be much lower (H1).

2.1.3.4 Participants

The 404 students that had previously indicated that they were happy to be contacted to take part in further volunteering studies (see Section 2.1.2.6) were emailed a link to the current study. As a result 55 students (13.6%) completed the questionnaire and took part in the study. Those that took part were entered into a prize draw with the chance to win £50.

2.1.3.5 Procedure

Participants were sent an email explaining that I was conducting some research into volunteering and that I was interested to know about their experiences related to volunteering since they had expressed an interest in volunteering at the sports and societies fair earlier in the year. The email contained a link to a website address which directed them to an online questionnaire (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dDhRak1tdUVXOHRkX19vZ1dOVzYyTOE6MQ#gid=0>). The questionnaire took no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire initially asked participants whether they had taken part in any volunteering since they had attended the sports and societies fair at the beginning of the year. Participants were then directed to questions dependent on whether they had volunteered or not. Those that had engaged in some volunteering were asked about how they chose to volunteer with the organisation/s they had and how they felt about their choice once they had started volunteering with those organisations. The items can be seen in Table 2.1. The students that had volunteered were also asked open ended questions about what they got out of their volunteering experience. Those participants that had not engaged in any volunteering were asked why they decide not to volunteer. Finally, all participants were asked their volunteering intentions for the following year.

Table 2.1. Study 2. Questionnaire items

Question
^a How satisfied are/were you with the group/s you volunteer/ed with?
^b How hard was it to decide which group/s to volunteer with?
^b Were you confused over who to volunteer with?
^a How sure are you that you made the right choice about who to volunteer with?
^d The number of available volunteering opportunities to choose from was:
^d The amount of information about available volunteering opportunities was:
^e My volunteering experience was than I expected it to be
[§] I think that my volunteering experience could have been improved somehow.
^c Do you wish you'd perhaps chosen a different group to volunteer with?
^a Do you think that volunteering will have improved your future employability?
^a To what extent did the sport and societies fair help you make your decision of who to volunteer with?
^f I got what I wanted out of my volunteering experience
^a Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)
^b Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)
^c Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Definitely)
^d Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not enough) to +3 (Too much)
^e Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Much worse) to +3 (Much better)
^f Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)
[§] Items presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Completely disagree) to +3 (Completely agree)

2.1.3.6 Results

47.3% of students had done some sort of volunteering since they attended the sports and societies fair evening, 52.7% had not. This supported H1.

26 of the 29 students that had not done any volunteering since the beginning of the year gave their reasons for not volunteering (3 did not provide a reason). These reasons can be seen in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Study 2: Reasons for not volunteering and percentage of responses

Reason for not volunteering	%	Example
Lack of time	44.8	"The demands of the course meant that I didn't have enough time to volunteer as I would have liked to"
Lack of information or contact from volunteering organisations	20.7	"Because I haven't been told about any opportunities that were available to me even though I signed up."
Other	10.3	"Family issues"
Not at a suitable time	6.9	"Most activities were days when I had lectures or work commitments"
None of interest	6.9	"None of the opportunities on offer greatly interested me"

Of the 26 people that had volunteered since the sports and societies fair 65.4% were still volunteering at the time they completed the questionnaire, whereas 34.6% were not.

Of those 8 that were no longer volunteering, all but one of the reasons people gave for having stopped volunteering were work related (87.5% e.g., "stopped due to uni work load"). Another reason that one person gave for having stopped volunteering was "I thought that the volunteering would be a wide range of both local and national charities/schemes etc. and to find that most of it was schools and environment based disappointed me. Therefore I continued on my own route of volunteering".

The students that volunteered represented a vast range of local volunteering organisations including, Looe Monkey sanctuary, Moor trees, BTCV, Beach cleans, Cyber mentors, The Beckley centre and many more. The amount of time on average spent

volunteering a week varied; 0-2 hours (16%), 2-4 hours (56%), 4-6 hours (24%) with the highest amount of time spent volunteering a week being 6-8 hours (4%).

2.1.3.6.1 Volunteer perceptions

The students that had undertaken some volunteering during the year were asked about their decision about which organisation to volunteer with and their experiences volunteering. The questions asked, the means and standard deviations of responses and their difference from a neutral response of 0 can be seen in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Study 2: Means, standard deviations and difference from a neutral response of 0 for questions asked

Question	M (SD)	t	df	p
^a How satisfied are/were you with the group/s you volunteer/ed with?	1.85 (.92)	10.18	25	<.001
^b How hard was it to decide which group/s to volunteer with?	-.77 (1.50)	-2.61	25	.015
^b Were you confused over who to volunteer with?	-1.88 (1.37)	-7.04	25	<.001
^a How sure are you that you made the right choice about who to volunteer with?	1.85 (1.19)	7.91	25	<.001
^d The number of available volunteering opportunities to choose from was:	-.15 (1.08)	-.72	25	.476
^d The amount of information about available volunteering opportunities was:	.23 (.86)	1.36	25	.185
^e My volunteering experience was than I expected it to be	.92 (1.06)	4.46	25	<.001
^g I think that my volunteering experience could have been improved somehow.	.00 (1.55)	.00	25	1.00
^c Do you wish you'd perhaps chosen a different group to volunteer with?	-1.81 (1.44)	-6.39	25	<.001
^a Do you think that volunteering will have improved your future employability?	1.77 (1.31)	6.91	25	<.001
^a To what extent did the sport and societies fair help you make your decision of who to volunteer with?	.58 (1.69)	1.69	23	.105
^f I got what I wanted out of my volunteering experience	1.46 (1.30)	5.72	25	<.001

^aItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)

^bItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)

^cItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Definitely)

^dItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not enough) to +3 (Too much)

^eItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Much worse) to +3 (Much better)

^fItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

^gItems presented on a Likert scale ranging from -3 (Completely disagree) to +3 (Completely agree)

The items used in this study allowed me to test them in a field setting to assess their effectiveness at ascertaining the information I desired. The findings enabled me to adapt the items for use in later laboratory studies.

One-sample *t*-tests (see Table 2.3) revealed that, compared to a neutral response of 0, people were satisfied with the group(s) they had chosen to volunteer with. They had not found it hard to decide which group(s) to volunteer with, nor were they confused over which group(s) to volunteer with. People were sure that they had made the right choice and did not retrospectively wish they had picked another group to volunteer with. With regard to their experiences volunteering, people reported that they had got what they wanted out of volunteering, and in fact, that their volunteering experience had been better than they thought it would have been. They also believed that volunteering will have improved their future employability. Some examples of what students had got out of volunteering can be seen in Table 2.4.

People gave a neutral response (not significantly different from 0) with regard to the number of options available to choose from, indicating that they thought this number was about right. This was the same for the amount of information available to them. People also gave a neutral response to whether their volunteering experience could have been improved and the extent to which the sports and societies fair had helped them make their decision perhaps indicating uncertainty.

Table 2.4. Study 2: What participants said they got out of volunteering. Percentages and examples

	%	Example
Feel good factor	24.0	“Felt really good to put something into community and physically felt good as well as good days out”
Met new people	24.0	“Meeting lots of friendly people”
Experience	20.0	“Experience and learning how to mentor different people of different ages”
New skills	16.0	“I learnt new skills (and continue to learn), and have grown as a person, especially in confidence. I was also able to take part in the Learning Through Volunteering Module, and gain an extra 5 credits at undergrad level”
Other	16%	“I got to work closely with animals”

2.1.3.7 Discussion

This study has provided further evidence that people often do not follow through with their intentions. Only about half of the students that took part in this study had done any volunteering over the previous year although all of them had intended to. This was an almost identical figure reported by Sheeran (2002; 47%) with respect to the number of people who turn intentions into actions more generally.³ Clearly there are barriers that influence whether a person follows through with their intentions or not. This highlights an important issue for volunteer recruitment; many potential volunteers are being lost after having decided to volunteer but not acting on it. This could be a possible example of decision deferment (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002). Some people may have simply not decided to volunteer after all.

The main reason for people not volunteering was due to time constraints, followed by a lack of information about volunteering opportunities. The University’s volunteering

³ It is also important to note that every student that indicated that I was able to contact them at the sports and societies fair when they initially indicated their interest in volunteering was contacted (404) but only 55 subsequently chose to take part in the study. It is likely that those that did take part in the study would have been those that had undertaken some form of volunteering, and so the actual volunteering levels as compared to volunteering intentions at the start of the year may be lower than reported here.

department could provide the students that signed up to the volunteering society more information about possible volunteering opportunities to try and overcome this.

Overall the students that did volunteer had a positive experience deciding which organisation(s) to volunteer with and actually volunteering with their chosen organisation(s). They did not find choosing an organisation to volunteer with difficult or confusing and were satisfied and certain that they had made the right choice.

People got what they wanted out of volunteering, and in some instances their volunteering experience was better than they had expected it to be. This is a positive feature of volunteering that potential volunteers should be made aware of – the benefits of volunteering may be even greater than those expected or currently advertised by voluntary organisations. If potential volunteers were made aware of this it may encourage more people to actually volunteer.

This study provided valuable information on the number of people that initially intended to volunteer at the start of the year and the amount that actually went on to volunteer. The study explored what students that had done some volunteering had thought of their experience, and showed that volunteering was a positive experience for students, suggesting that as much should be done as possible to encourage more students to volunteer. Students did not report finding choosing an organisation to volunteer for difficult, although the number of options they considered was not known. The current study focussed on time points before (registering interest in volunteering) and after (whether they had volunteered or not) the students' actual decision making process about which (if any) organisation to volunteer for. Therefore, Study 3 was carried out to ascertain students' thoughts and experiences during the decision process of choosing an organisation to volunteer with from an extensive set of options.

2.1.4 Study 3: Evaluation of Volunteer Induction Evenings 2009 and 2010

2.1.4.1 Rationale

Each year the Volunteering department at the University organises a Volunteer Induction Evening. The aim of the evening is to showcase some of the possible volunteering organisations and volunteering opportunities available to students. Representatives from different organisations have a stall at the event. Via these stalls there is the opportunity to present information to potential volunteers, hand out leaflets, have informal chats with students and sign people up to volunteer with a specific organisation. All students that have previously expressed an interest in volunteering (by signing up at the sports and societies fair) are invited to the evening via email. The evening is also publicised throughout the University and the University website and anyone is able to attend.

I was interested to see how useful the evenings were to potential student volunteers. Specifically I was interested in what they thought of the event, whether it had helped them decide who to volunteer with, whether they signed up to take part in some volunteering, and how easy they found it to decide which organisation(s) to volunteer for given that there was relatively large (over 30) number of potential organisations on offer for students to volunteer with.

This study acts as a real life insight into choosing an organisation to volunteer with from an extensive choice set. The students attending the Volunteer Induction Evening intended to make a choice about which organisation(s) to sign up and volunteer with. They were presented with over 30 organisations to consider at the evening which would be classed in the literature as an extensive choice set (for example; Iyengar & Lepper, 2000).

2.1.4.2 Hypotheses

In line with the existing literature on the too-much-choice effect (see sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6), I predicted that as these students will be exposed to a large choice set they would experience some degree of confusion, difficulty and frustration whilst considering which organisation(s) to sign up to volunteer with.

I also predicted that as a result of these negative emotions they would experience decision paralysis and therefore be less inclined to sign up to volunteer with any organisation even though they initially set out to.

2.1.4.3 Participants

Participants were attendees at the Volunteer Induction Evenings in 2009 (216) and 2010 (249). The vast majority were students at the University of Plymouth (others were University employees and members of the public) and had heard/seen the evening advertised around University or received an email. All attendees of the evening were approached upon entering the building and participation in the study was voluntary, with no incentive or payment for taking part.

2.1.4.4 Procedure

The procedure for both years' events was exactly the same. Everyone who entered the building where the event was being held was greeted upon arrival and given a questionnaire, asked to keep it with them and then fill it in just before they were going to leave and return it into one of the 'completed questionnaires' boxes situated near the exits. There was also a stall set up that consisted of a poster asking people 'Have you completed a

questionnaire?', some spare questionnaires, pens and space for people to complete the questionnaires as well as other reminders situated around the volunteering stalls and at the exits that prompted people to remember to fill in their questionnaire.

In 2009 there were 32 stalls each representing a voluntary organisation and in 2010 there were 37. Each stall had posters, leaflets, photos and at least one representative from the organisation on the stall to talk to people about volunteering with their organisation and what it would entail. Attendees of the evening were free to browse the stands, pick up leaflets and information, speak to the volunteering organisation representatives and sign up to volunteer with (a) specific organisation(s). The duration of the event was 2 hours, in which people could come and go as they pleased.

A copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix A. The questions for the study are shown in Table 2.5. In 2009, out of around 430 potential participants that were given a questionnaire, 216 (50%) completed and returned their questionnaires. In 2010, out of around 500 potential participants that were given a questionnaire 249 (50%) completed and returned the questionnaire.

Table 2.5. Study 3. Items in questionnaire

Question
How useful did you find the evening? ^a
Before today, how much had you looked into volunteering opportunities? ^b
What are your reasons for wanting to volunteer?
Are you/have you ever volunteered through the University before?
Have you signed up to volunteer?
If no, why no?
If yes, who for and why?
Did you know before today who you were going to sign up with?
How satisfied are you with your choice? ^a
How sure are you that you made the right choice? ^a
How hard was it to choose who to volunteer for? ^a
Were you confused over who to volunteer for? ^a
The number of projects was: ^c
Did the evening help you decide who to volunteer with?
Please explain:
Do you think your decision could have been made easier?
If so, how?
How do you think the evening could be improved?
^a -3 (Not at all) to 3 (Very)
^b -3 (Not at all) to 3 (A lot)
^c -1 (Not enough) to 1 (too many)

2.1.4.5 Results

As there was little difference between responses at the 2009 and 2010 volunteering induction evening the data from 2009 and 2010 will be combined and only discussed separately if a difference was found between the two years. For the individual year figures see Table 2.13 **Error! Reference source not found.**

2.1.4.5.1 Motivations to volunteer

It was assumed that the vast majority of the people that attended the volunteer induction evening intended to volunteer, or were at least interested in the prospect of volunteering.

The reasons people gave for wanting to volunteer were categorised and can be seen in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6. Study 3: Categories, examples and percentages of motivations to volunteer

Motivations for wanting to volunteer	Example	%
To help/give something back	"I want to help people", "Giving something back"	30.6
To gain experience/expand skills	"Expand my horizons", "Just experience"	15.7
Related to course/to enhance CV and career prospects	"My course and CV", "To enhance job prospects"	15.5
Meet others/socialise/practise English	"Practice English", "Meet people"	8.2
Enjoyment/fun	"Fun", "For pleasure"	4.5
Do something useful with free time	"To do something useful with my spare time", "Something to do in my spare time"	4.5
Try something new	"To try something new", "Doing something different"	2.8
To protect the environment/Conservation	"Environmental responsibility", "Interests in conservation and environmental issues"	2.4
Self-satisfaction/rewarding	"For self-satisfaction", "Very rewarding"	2.4
Do it already/Past experience	"Do it already", "I have always volunteered and got involved as much as possible in fundraisers and charity work"	1.3
Personal reasons	"It's close to my heart"	.4

2.1.4.5.2 Previous volunteering research, sign-up rates and reasons for volunteering (or not)

The attendees of the Volunteer Induction evening had done varying amounts of research into volunteering opportunities ($M = -.05$, $SD = 1.85$), from none to a lot. The spread of responses can be seen in Figure 2.2.

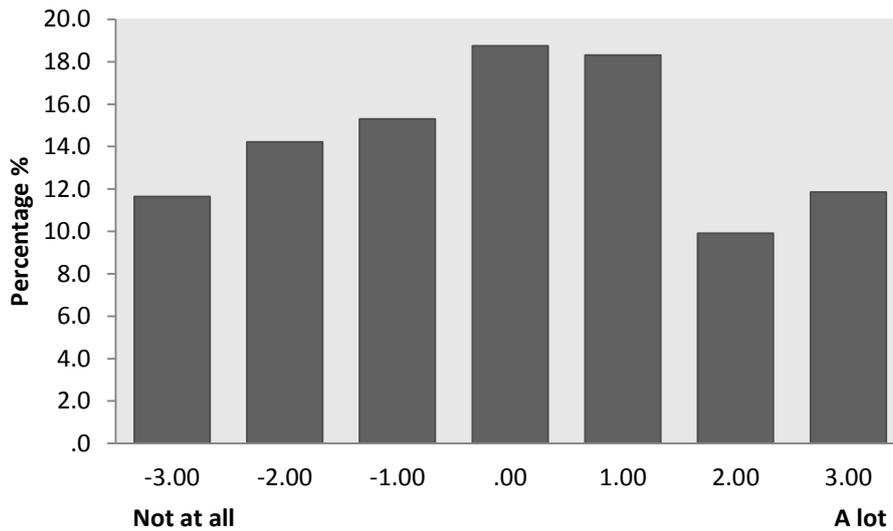


Figure 2.2. Study 3: Percentages of how much people had looked into volunteering opportunities

The majority (85.9%) of attendees had not volunteered through the University previously whereas 14.1% had.

The evening proved to be an important tool with regard to volunteer recruitment. On the evening, the vast majority (88.3%) of attendees reported they had signed-up to volunteer, 4.5% had not, and 7.1% of attendees said they had not signed-up during the evening but may do at a later date.

The reasons people gave for signing up to volunteer can be seen in Table 2.7. The attendees at the evening that did not sign up to volunteer with an organisation ($n = 21$), or those that stated that they would at a later date ($n = 33$) were asked why they did not sign up. The reasons of those that responded can be seen in Table 2.8.

Table 2.7. Study 3: Reasons, examples and percentage of people stating reasons for volunteering

Reasons for volunteering	Example	%
Related to course	"Relevant to my degree", "It is relevant to my course"	4.1
Interests	"They interest me most", "Looked interesting"	3.9
Fun/enjoyable	"They seem like fun things to do", "I enjoyed it last year and wanted to continue the work"	3.4
To help children	"Help kids", "I would like to help young people"	3.4
To help	"I love to help people", "Would like to actively labour to aid or benefit"	2.8
To gain experience/opportunities	"Great opportunities", "For a wide range of opportunities"	2.2
To protect the environment/conservation	"Protect the environment", "To help the environment and conservation, experience"	1.9
Personal reasons/beliefs	"I was bullied", "They're what I believe in"	1.7
Stall advertising/volunteer representative	"They are friendly and kind", "Austin was AMAZING at selling his charity"	1.7
To assist with future career	"CV", "Experience for career"	1.5
To help animals	"Animal person!", "Because I like animals!!"	1.3
To help the elderly	"To work with the elderly", "To help the elderly"	1.1
To make a difference	"I think I could make the most difference there", "To make a difference"	.6
To meet people	"To meet new people and try new things", "Meet friends"	.4
Good use of free time	"Spend my free time usefully", "Boredom"	.4

Table 2.8. Study 3: Reasons, examples and percentage of people stating reasons for not volunteering

Reasons for not volunteering	Example	%
Time worries/constraints	"Not sure if I have enough time yet", "Too busy"	1.9
Nothing of interest	"Not currently an opportunity with my interests", "Nothing stood out. Noted some organisations as possibilities"	1.7
Couldn't choose between options	"Too many opportunities, need to put thought in first", "I'm not sure who I want to volunteer for yet"	1.5
Not sure	"Not sure about it", "Not sure"	.9
Unaware that you could	"All sheets were for information only. I'll definitely sign up later", "Didn't know you could"	.4
Lazy	"Lazy!", "Lazy"	.4
Will at a later date	"Will at a later date"	.4
Opportunities were not useful to self	"Did not feel opportunities were useful for me"	.2
Thought opportunities were too difficult for self	"I thought that the volunteer job is little bit difficult for me"	.2

2.1.4.5.3 Raising awareness

The evening also seemed to prove useful in making people aware of volunteering opportunities available to them that they were not previously aware of. Of those who signed-up to volunteer, only 28.5% knew before the evening took place which organisation(s) they were planning to sign up with, whereas the majority (70.2%) did not. 1.3% stated 'yes and no' and signed up to volunteer with multiple organisations, so perhaps knew one but not all that they were going to sign up to.

2.1.4.5.4 Feelings regarding decision-making process and choice

The means and standard deviations for all items (2009 and 2010 combined) as well as their difference from a neutral response of 0 can be seen in Table 2.9. The data in Table 2.9 demonstrates that people found the volunteering induction evening useful. People responded neutrally with regard to how much they had looked into volunteering opportunities before the evening. With regards to their decision making process, people did not find it hard to choose which organisation to volunteer with, nor did they find it confusing. They were satisfied with the choice they had made and were sure that they had made the right choice. In fact, the majority of responses for how sure people were that they had made the right choice (38.1%) and how satisfied they were with the choice they had made (43.2%) were at the most positive extremities of the response scale that they could have chosen.

Table 2.9. Study 3: Mean, standard deviation and difference from a neutral response of 0 for items (2009 and 2010 combined)

Question	Difference from a neutral response of 0				
	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
How useful did you find the evening?	1.72	1.20	459	30.88	<.001
Before today, how much had you looked into volunteering opportunities?	-.05	1.85	463	-.58	.564
How satisfied are you with your choice?	1.98	1.13	426	36.22	<.001
How sure are you that you made the right choice?	1.86	1.16	425	33.16	<.001
How hard was it to choose who to volunteer for?	-.66	1.84	439	-7.48	<.001
Were you confused over who to volunteer for?	-1.13	1.75	450	-13.77	<.001
The number of projects was:	-.11	.48	454	-4.81	<.001

Note: All responses were presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Very) with the exception of 'The number of projects was:' which was presented on a 3 point Likert scale ranging from -1(Not enough) to +1 (Too many)

2.1.4.5.5 Thoughts on the number of options provided

In relation to the number volunteering organisations that people could choose to volunteer with (32 in 2009 and 37 in 2010), statistically people thought that the number of stalls was not enough (compared to a neutral response of 0; $M = -.11$, $SD = .48$, $p < .001$). When their responses were categorised however it suggests that the majority of people reported the number of organisations to choose from to be about right (e.g., 17.4% of people thought the choice amount was not enough, 76% thought that this was just right and 6.6% of people thought that this was too many).

2.1.4.5.6 Usefulness of the evening

Overall the evening was reported to be very useful. 87.4% of people stated that the evening had helped them choose who to volunteer for whereas 12.3% stated it had not, with one person (0.2%) stating 'yes and no'. Some of the reasons attendees gave as to how the evening helped them to choose which organisation/s to volunteer with can be seen in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10. Study 3: Categories, examples and percentages of responses as to how the evening had helped attendees to decide which organisation/s to volunteer with

How decision could have been made easier	Example	%
Able to meet/chat to organisation representatives	"Chance to speak to people", "You actually got to talk to people more broadly about the job"	14.9
It didn't	-	12.1
Informative	"Plenty of information", "Gained more info"	11.6
Made aware of options	"Showed me what was available", "Provided different types of organisations"	9.3
Other	"It just did", "I had interests but this evening made contact easier"	2.8
Good layout	"Well laid out floor plan with refreshments works every time!", "The stalls helped direct me"	.6

Most (81.7%) people stated that their decision could not have been made easier whereas 18.3% said it could. Those that stated that their decision could have been made easier were asked to explain how. Their responses were categorised and can be seen in Table 2.11.

Table 2.11. Study 3: Categories, examples and percentages of responses of suggestions as to how attendees' decision about who to volunteer with could have been made easier

How decision could have been made easier	Example	%
N/A - (Stated that decision could not have been made easier)	-	82.5

Did not give suggestion	-	6.5
Other	“If ideas were given for choosing a group to join”, “I have more motivation to be a volunteer”	2.6
More information	“Being told information prior to fair”, “More leaflets”	2.2
More interaction from volunteer representatives	“People could have approached you more”, “Talkers need to be more enthusiastic”	1.5
More choice	“A greater choice in opportunities”, “Wider range”	.9
Less choice	“Maybe a few less”, “Less volunteering groups”	.9
More space/less crowded	“More space”, “More space to talk to people”	.9
An organisation to match specific individual interests	“But more choice surrounding my interests”, “By having more projects on what I was wanting to do”	.9
Clearer labelled stalls	“More clearly labelled displays”, “Clearer displays on the stalls so it wasn’t necessary to talk to someone or read tiny writing in the crowd”	.9
Categorise opportunities	“Have the room segmented into different sections with signs, E.g., environmental, youth etc.”, “Order the stands in terms of interest”	.4

2.1.4.5.7 How evening could be improved

People’s suggestion as to how the evening could have been improved were categorised and can be seen in Table 2.12.

Table 2.12. Study 3: Categories, examples and percentages of responses of suggested improvements to make to the volunteer induction evening

Suggested improvements	Example	%
No response	-	55.0
More choice	“More stalls”, “Bigger variety on offer”	13.4
It couldn't	“Was very good :)”, “It couldn't. Thank you!”	9.3
Free food or drink	“A few biccies maybe...”, “Free food”	5.6
Other	“Butlers with canapés on silver trays”, “More enthusiasm from the people on the stall”	5.2

Bigger space/less crowded	“Bigger space - quite crowded”, “Stalls less cramped together”	4.3
More information/guidance on layout and procedure	“A map of the stall layout so you can check that you haven't missed anyone or find stalls particularly interesting”, “An overall organiser to help you - what to do? How many to join? What the commitments are?”	2.6
On at a different time	“Held for longer and at another date”, “At weekend during day. Not clash with other commitments”	1.3
More publicised	“Maybe more publicised. Didn't know before having lecture here today. Always look in the hive”, “Better publicity”	1.3
More information to take away	“More leaflets”, “More leaflets at stalls”	1.1
Categorise similar projects together	“Better layout and clump similar stands together”, “Organised into sections e.g. children, animals, environment and had a map of where things were”	1.1

2.1.4.5.8 Comparisons between 2009 and 2010

There was not much difference in people’s perceptions of the 2009 and 2010 volunteering induction evenings (see Table 2.13). When a bonferroni correction was applied to take into account the chance of getting a false positive significant finding (type 1 error) as a result of performing multiple comparisons there were no significant differences at this new adjusted alpha level, which was understandable since the format did not change. Potential student volunteers found both evenings useful, the majority signed up to volunteer with at least one organisation, and were satisfied with the choice(s) they had made.

Table 2.13. Study 3: Means and standard deviations for questions asked for 2009 and 2010 and the difference in responses between 2009 and 2010.

Question	2009		2010		Differences between 2009 and 2010		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
How useful did you find the evening?	215	1.82 (1.13)	245	1.64 (1.25)	458	1.67	.10
Before today, how much had you looked	216	-.11 (1.87)	248	.00 (1.84)	462	-.67	.50

Adjusted alpha level with bonferroni correction for 7 items; .007

Note: All	into volunteering opportunities?							
	How satisfied are you with your choice?	188	2.05 (1.03)	217	2.03 (1.08)	403	.192	.85
	How sure are you that you made the right choice?	187	2.03 (1.06)	217	1.81 (1.15)	402	2.00	.05
	How hard was it to choose who to volunteer for?	179	-.92 (1.76)	212	-.60 (1.83)	389	-1.71	.08
	Were you confused over who to volunteer for?	210	-1.33 (1.68)	241	-.96 (1.79)	449	-2.28	.02
	The number of projects was:	209	-.09 (.50)	246	-.12 (.46)	453	.69	.49

responses were presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Very) with the exception of 'The number of projects was:' which was presented on a 3 point Likert scale ranging from -1(Not enough) to +1 (Too many)

2.1.4.6 Discussion

Overall the volunteering evening was very successful in achieving what it aimed to. The evening provided volunteering organisations with the opportunity and outlet to promote themselves to interested potential volunteers and encourage them to volunteer with themselves, and the evening also provided students interested in volunteering with lots of information about volunteering as well as over 30 potential organisations in which they could choose to volunteer with.

The results from the questionnaire show that on the whole the evening was highly effective, valued, informative and useful to the students that attended. Most people stated that the evening had helped them choose and that it was useful to them and did not state any suggestions as to how the evening could have been improved or their decision made easier. They reported finding it easy to make their decision, did not feel confused during the decision making process and felt satisfied and certain with any organisations they eventually

chose. Despite there being what would be considered an extensive choice of organisations to choose from (over 30), this did not seem to elicit the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set the too-much-choice effect would have led me to expect.

A key aspect to note were the comments on how the evening could have been improved or decisions made easier. From the suggestions people made that could be implemented by a choice architect, it appears that the evening could have been less confusing and more coherent if the organisations had been arranged in sections or categories so that similar types of volunteering opportunities would be placed near one another, and if some signage was put in place to indicate to attendees where the different types of volunteering were situated. Categorisation was investigated as a choice architecture in Study 6, Section 4.1. Another suggestion was that near the entrances to the building some sort of 'map' should be displayed that showed all of the different volunteering organisations that had a stall at the evening, a brief description of what they did and where their stall was situated in the building.

Perhaps most importantly, as a result of the evening, the vast majority of attendees signed up to volunteer with at least one organisation, indicating that evenings such as this could be a useful tool in volunteer recruitment. Perhaps the high interactivity of this volunteer recruitment method compared to online searches may have been a factor in the high volunteering sign-up rate. Although, just because someone signed up to volunteer with an organisation does not mean that they did end up volunteering with the organisation. The people in this study were not followed up to see if they actually volunteered with the organisations that they signed up to.

2.1.5 General Discussion

Study 1 highlighted the importance of framing requests to elicit the greatest compliance. For volunteering organisations trying to recruit new members it is imperative for them to reach as many people as possible with their advertising strategies. It showed that the most effective way to get interested parties to agree for you to contact them with similar information or opportunities at later dates (e.g., via email) was to frame the request as an opt-out default.

This information coupled with the finding from Study 2 that often, even though people intended to carry out an action (in this case, volunteering) they do not, could be useful to voluntary organisations. Even if someone shows an interest in signing up to volunteer (e.g., at a showcase event like the Volunteer Induction Evening at the University), they may not actually follow through with their intentions. If voluntary organisations implemented an opt-out default at the initial contact with an interested party for them to agree to be contacted by the organisation in the future, over time this may increase the likelihood of that person actually volunteering with the organisation as it may reinforce their initial intention to volunteer. Without an agreement for future contact from interested people, volunteering organisations may lose vital potential new volunteers.

Study 2 highlighted the many positive benefits that students got out of volunteering and indicated that even though students were aware of some of the benefits prior to volunteering, they were not aware just how much they would get out of volunteering until they had actually undertaken some. Perhaps voluntary organisations should attempt to emphasise the benefits that volunteers get out of volunteering even more than they currently do.

Study 3 appears to suggest that the difficulties resulting from choosing from an extensive choice set may not exist for volunteering decisions. Students did not report experiencing choosing an organisation to volunteer with to be difficult, confusing or frustrating and they felt no uncertainty or regrets about their choice. There are several potential explanations as to why the too-much-choice effect did not seem to occur. Firstly,

most of the studies used in extensive choice investigations have required participants to choose one option (e.g., Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Haynes, 2009; Arunachalam et al., 2009; Chernev, 2003), however - in Studies 2 (although not directly measured) and 3, people were free to sign up to as many organisations as they wished, so perhaps did not feel as pressured to make the 'best' choice as if perhaps they would have if they had to commit to just one organisation. Secondly, merely signing up to volunteer with an organisation and actually going on to volunteer with that organisation are somewhat different things. Just because someone signed up to volunteer with an organisation does not mean that they actually ended up volunteering with the organisation. In fact, it may be unlikely that they did, given the findings of Study 2 that most people who intended to volunteer at the start of the university year had not actually followed through with their intentions by the end of the year. Perhaps there is a final decision stage that occurs after the sports and societies fair and the volunteer induction evening at which point people would be required to act on their intentions and engage in some volunteering. Perhaps it is at this point that people are faced with the realisation that their time is limited and they must choose which organisation to volunteer with. Decision paralysis may occur and people may not end up volunteering with the organisations even though they recorded their interest at the volunteer induction evening. Thirdly, choosing an organisation to volunteer with is a much more varied and complex choice than many consumer decisions. With consumer goods there are a limited number of attributes in which products could vary (e.g., price, flavour, appearance etc.) whereas the number of varied opportunities for volunteering are much greater (e.g., organisation type, number of hours volunteered, voluntary activities to be undertaken, location etc.). Perhaps the satiation point for volunteering organisations is greater than for material purchases and therefore the too-much-choice effect may occur in the presence of a greater number of options for volunteering decisions than for consumer purchases.

The high sign-up rate to volunteer (89.3% in 2009 and 87.5% in 2010 at the volunteer induction evening) could be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, that the subset

of students that attended the volunteering evening was the most highly motivated potential volunteers of the general student population. As a result, they may also have been the least in need of guidance or assistance during the decision process. It could also provide some insight into the effect of pre commitment and implementation intentions. The majority of people that turned up to the volunteer Induction Evening had already shown their interest in volunteering at the Sports and societies fair that was held previously at the University. More specifically, they had confirmed their interest in writing (by signing their name, interests and contact details on a sign-up sheet) which has been shown to further increase the effects of pre-commitments and subsequent consistent future actions (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Perhaps this made these students more likely to turn up to the volunteer induction evening. Moreover, once these students had made a commitment to volunteering by their mere attendance at the evening, perhaps they would be more likely to sign up to volunteer with an organisation by the end of the evening. The stages these students went through prior to actually signing up to volunteer with an organisation may lead to them ultimately being more likely to volunteer. Encouraging students to initially commit to their interest in volunteering (by requiring them to sign their name and contact details on the sign-up sheet) may have led them to be more likely to actually sign up to volunteer. This is in line with the foot-in-the-door technique (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Similarly, pre-commitment to behaviour influences the likelihood of the behaviour being carried out. Sherman (1980) asked people during a phone survey to predict what they would say if they were asked to spend three hours collecting money on behalf of a charity. Most people said they would agree to do it, probably as they would like to have appeared to the questioner as a charitable and altruistic person. When they were actually approached a few weeks later by a cancer charity to collect donations on behalf of the charity, it led to a 700% increase in the number of people that agreed.

Although the volunteering induction evening appeared to be a highly useful tool in increasing student volunteering levels, it is important not to forget those students that

expressed an interest in volunteering (for example at the sports and societies fair) but did not attend the volunteer induction evening. We must consider how best to aid them in bridging the gap between interest and action. The volunteer induction evening proved useful to those that attended and perhaps only minor changes such as grouping the projects together in categories and guiding people to their areas of interest via signs would make the evening more effective but we must also consider alternative ways of encouraging and guiding students towards a volunteering project that matches their interests.

The findings from these exploratory studies were key to the development of the research in my thesis. Initially, I set out to investigate the effect of choice amount on the satisfaction with the organisation chosen as the one that people would most like to volunteer with. But what the results from these pilot studies made me realise is that even before satisfaction with a chosen option occurs, choice amount could be having an effect on volunteering recruitment, specifically by affecting deferment likelihood (whether someone who is interested in volunteering - a potential volunteer - does or does not end up volunteering after seeing the volunteering opportunities available to them). Satisfaction with a chosen option is likely to affect the retention of volunteers (see Sections 1.6.7 and 1.6.8) but it is unlikely to affect the recruitment of volunteers. I felt that it was important to investigate whether the amount of organisations people had to consider affected how likely they were to sign up to volunteer with an organisation. Therefore, the focus of my research shifted from the effect of choice amount on satisfaction with chosen options (although this was still investigated) to the effect of choice amount on deferment likelihood. If it was the case that increasing choice amount led to increasing deferment likelihood (undermining volunteer recruitment and also depriving the potential volunteers of the benefits they could gain from volunteering) this is an important part of a potential volunteers' decision process to focus on. Perhaps the initial step in trying to increase volunteer recruitment is to investigate whether choice architectures could be implemented that would make people less likely to

defer (or refrain from making) a decision about which organisation to volunteer for. Choice architectures and facilitators should be put in place to make the jump from deciding to volunteer to actually volunteering easier and to increase the likelihood of people that intended to volunteer actually doing so.

3 Does the Too-Much-Choice Effect Exist for Volunteering?

3.1 Introduction

The studies described in this chapter aim to empirically explore my prediction that the too-much-choice effect may extend to volunteering decisions. Specifically, I will focus on hypothetical decisions about which organisation to choose to volunteer with after having decided to devote some spare time to volunteering. The studies in this chapter focus on the potential of extensive choice to increase the likelihood that individuals will put off making an immediate decision and instead defer a decision to later. Given the general propensity not to revisit deferred decisions (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002) this could have important implications for volunteer recruitment.

There are many benefits of volunteering; for volunteers themselves, society and service users (see Sections 1.6.4 and 1.6.5, for an overview). There are thus a range of reasons why people should be encouraged to volunteer. For some people, their desire to volunteer may be linked to a specific voluntary organisation (for example, to 'give back' to an organisation that may have cared for a loved one during their time of need) so in their case they just need to obtain information as to how they can go about volunteering with their chosen organisation. For others, specific organisational preferences may be less clear and in such cases they will most likely need to make a choice from the diverse range of volunteering options available. Potential volunteers may encounter different volunteer recruitment methods. For instance, they may attend a volunteering 'event' such as the ones described in Studies 1, 2 and 3 or they may well use the internet to help them. Studies 1, 2

and 3 demonstrated that volunteering 'events' were useful tools with regard to volunteering, with a large number of attendees leaving having signed up to volunteer. Perhaps the most likely volunteer recruitment tool is the internet. Someone who has decided that they would like to volunteer may use an internet search to find potential volunteering opportunities. There are a number of websites dedicated to providing a database and a source of information about many volunteering opportunities to searchers on the internet (e.g., www.volunteering.org.uk and www.do-it.org), so it is likely that someone may stumble across one as a result of their internet search. These websites contains hundreds of volunteering opportunities for searchers to peruse and ultimately choose from; clearly an extensive choice. As a result of the importance of the internet in the recruitment of potential volunteers, the studies hereon switch the focus to choosing an organisation to volunteer with from computer based (online replication) choice sets rather than volunteering 'events'.

As described in Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6, extensive choice has been shown to have negative consequences with regards to decision making and subsequent thoughts and feelings regarding eventual chosen options for consumer and materialistic purchases (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Schwartz, 2004; Haynes, 2009; Arunachalam et al, 2009; Sagi & Friedland, 2007; Gilbert et al, 2004; Chernev, 2003b; Vohs & Schooler, 2008; Redelmeier & Shafir, 1995). However, there is limited research that has looked at the too-much-choice effect in relation to experiential rather than materialistic choices and purchases (Carter & Gilovich, 2010; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2002; Park & Jiang, 2013; see Section 1.2.7) and no such research on volunteering decisions. Given the previous research it seems likely that the too-much-choice effect may extend to volunteering decisions.

Choosing which organisation to volunteer with (although people may volunteer for very different reasons) ultimately is choosing an experience in which to spend their spare time. There is an extensive choice set of volunteering experiences from which potential volunteers must choose. It is an important decision in that it could affect a volunteer's

health and life satisfaction (Meier & Stutzer, 2008; Borgonovi, 2008). Therefore the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set could perhaps be even greater for volunteering decisions than for the consumer purchases described in the too-much-choice literature. If the too-much-choice effect does extend to volunteering decisions, this could pose a potential barrier to both the recruitment and retention of volunteers, undermining the intentions of the Government and volunteering organisations to increase the number of volunteers because of the associated benefits.

My primary hypothesis was that as the number of organisations considered by potential volunteers increases, the likelihood that they will defer the decision will also increase. In Study 4, subjects were asked to explore one of the main UK volunteering websites and choose which organisation they would most like to volunteer with. The association between the number of options considered and deferment likelihood was then tested. Study 5 presented subjects with either a large or relatively small choice set of hypothetical organisations, and deferment preferences were again recorded. My secondary hypothesis was that feelings of confusion, difficulty and lack of confidence during the decision process might mediate this effect (Chernev, 2003; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, & Todd 2009).

Given the novelty of this research, the most effective items to measure the impact of too-much-choice are not well documented. Typically, studies into the too-much-choice effect have focussed on material choices that were generally 'consumed' by the participant at the time of the study (e.g., chocolates to taste). However my research focussed on the experiential domain of volunteering. My participants were never actually asked to participate in volunteering activities with their chosen organisation and consequently they were not able to truly experience how 'satisfying' volunteering with their chosen organisation would be (unlike sampled chocolate for instance). Therefore, in Study 4, aside from trying to ascertain satisfaction level with a chosen option, a range of additional possible outcomes of the too-much-choice effect were explored including the extent of

counterfactual generation (e.g., “There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for”, “I would continue looking at other options” and “Do you think there were other organisations that were much better?”), the extent of negative affect during the decision making process (e.g., “Did you find it difficult to make your decision?”, “How frustrated did you feel when making the choice?”), the extent of positive affect during the decision making process (e.g., “How much did you enjoy making your choice?”) and the usual items that are considered, the amount of satisfaction, certainty, and regret experienced once a choice was made.

Based on the outcomes of the two studies presented in this chapter, I was able to ascertain more accurately the types of outcome (choice reaction) that are affected by the choice amount. This enabled me to reduce the number of items explored in later studies presented in later chapters.

3.2 Study 4 – The Association between Number of Options Considered and Decision Deferment for Real Volunteer Organisations

3.2.1 Rationale

Although there are figures to show the extensive number of voluntary organisations in the UK (171,000 in 2006/07; The UK Civil Society Almanac, 2009) that people could choose to volunteer with, there is no information on people’s expectations of the choice process for choosing which organisation to volunteer with and how they feel when actually faced with the extensive choice. It is possible that people may underestimate the number of voluntary

organisations they will have to choose from and become overwhelmed (experience the too-much-choice effect) when they actually come to choose an organisation to volunteer with. This underestimation of the difficulty of choosing an organisation could lead them to defer a decision about volunteering until a later date, or possibly altogether.

This study simulated a potential volunteers' internet search into volunteering opportunities. Participants were required to search through the genuine volunteering opportunities presented on one of the UK's top volunteering websites (www.volunteering.org.uk) and to choose the organisation they would most like to volunteer with. This study aimed to gather information about people's perceptions of the decision making process associated with choosing an organisation to volunteer with, both a) pre choice exposure (before seeing the array of options available to them) and b) post choice exposure (after having looked through the options and chosen the organisation that they would most like to volunteer with). Although students that attended the volunteering induction evening in Study 3 did not appear to have experienced the too-much-choice effect when choosing an organisation to volunteer with this may have been due to a difference in decision making experience as a result of the recruitment method (event vs. internet). Volunteering events are likely to attract people that are more committed to volunteering (they have definitely made their mind up), take a relatively long time to go around, and encourage interaction with volunteer representatives and the information available. In contrast, volunteering internet searches may be carried out by people that are undecided (less committed) as to whether they want to volunteer, are relatively quick, and require little or no interaction between volunteer representative and available information. As a result of these differences I felt it was important to investigate the too-much-choice effect in an online replication setting to see whether the too-much-choice effect may occur.

As the main focus of my research was on choice set size and its effect on choice decisions, I also explored the number of options that people looked at and considered (split into relatively low choice set size groups and relatively high choice set size groups according

to people's self-reported responses on the number of options they looked at) whilst searching for an organisation to volunteer for and the consequences for decision difficulty and deferment likelihood.

3.2.2 Hypotheses

With regard to people's perceptions of the decision making process, I predicted that there would be discrepancies in opinions pre and post choice exposure. Specifically, I predicted that pre choice exposure people would underestimate how time consuming, complex and frustrating choosing an organisation to volunteer with would be. Before they actually saw the possible volunteering opportunities, I expected that people would believe it to be relatively easy to choose an organisation to volunteer with, would want to choose from as many options as possible and would expect to feel satisfied and committed to any choice they made. However, after having seen the large array of options and made a choice or deferred (post choice) I expected that people would feel more uncertain and confused regarding choosing an organisation to volunteer with, would believe that they would be less satisfied with the outcomes of a decision and would be more likely to state that they would like to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer with.

My main hypothesis (H1) was that the more organisations people considered, the more likely people would be to want to defer their decision. My secondary hypothesis (H2) was that this process would be mediated by how difficult subjects reported the decision making process to be. In other words, I predicted that the more options people looked at, the more difficult they would find the decision and in turn the more likely it would be that they would put off making any decision.

3.2.3 Participants

Fifty-two undergraduate Psychology students at the University of Plymouth (43 females, 9 males; *M* age = 20yrs) took part in the study. They were recruited via the University's participation points system which encourages students to take part in studies in return for course credit.

3.2.4 Design

A pre-post choice exposure design was used. In addition participants were split into low versus high choice sets according to the number of options they chose to look at.

3.2.5 Materials

The experiment consisted of three paper questionnaire tasks (an identical pre and post choice questionnaire [see Appendix B] and a choice search questionnaire [see Appendix C]) and an internet computer task. The website used during the computer task was: www.volunteering.org.uk, specifically the Volunteering in the UK section: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/IWantToVolunteer/Volunteering+in+the+UK>.

On the website there were one hundred and fifteen different volunteering opportunities arranged across nine different categories (e.g., environmental, social care etc.)⁴. Within each category, volunteering organisations were listed alphabetically, the organisation name in bold followed by a description of the organisation and what volunteers could do.

⁴ Since this study was conducted the format of the website has changed and there are now fewer options.

3.2.6 Items

The items that were used in the current study can be seen in Table 3.1, **Error! Reference source not found.**2 and Table 3.3.

The items in Table 3.1 aimed to assess students' level of interest in volunteering before and after they had taken part in the study, and also how much they had already looked into potential volunteering opportunities.

Table 3.1. Study 4. Items related to volunteering interest level

Question (pre and post choice questionnaire)
How interested are you currently in finding a volunteering job? ^a
How much have you looked into volunteering opportunities? ^b

Note. Question 2: "How much have you looked into volunteering opportunities?" was omitted in the post choice questionnaire

^aScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Very)

^bScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (A lot)

The items in Table 3.2 were presented to students immediately after they had made a choice to gather an indication of how people went about making their choice, but predominantly, how many options they had considered and shortlisted whilst making their choice.

Table 3.2. Study 4: Questions presented immediately after choice decision (search tendencies questionnaire)

Question
What organisation did you choose to volunteer for?
Which of these categories did you look at? (tick all that apply)
Animal welfare
Arts and heritage
Campaign volunteering
Environmental and conservation volunteering
Residential volunteering opportunities in the UK
Sport volunteering
Volunteering in health and social care
Young people
Other ideas

Which categories did you spend the most time looking at?

1:

2:

Which categories did you spend the least time looking at?

1:

2:

Which category were you most interested in?

Which category were you least interested in?

In the category you were most interested in, about how many options did you consider?

0-3, 3-5, 5-8, 8-10, 10-15, 15+

In the category you were least interested in, about how many options did you consider?

0-3, 3-5, 5-8, 8-10, 10-15, 15+

Altogether, roughly how many organisations did you look at?

1-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, 70-80, 80-90, 90+

About how many organisations did you shortlist?

0-3, 3-5, 5-8, 8-10, 10-15, 15+

Ideally, how much time would you have liked to look at the website for?^a

Ideally, how many options would you have liked to have seen?^a

How do you think your decision could have been made easier?

^aScale ranging from -3 (Much less) to +3 (Much more)

The main intention of the current study was to ascertain people's perceptions of what they thought choosing an organisation to volunteer with would be like, prior to actually choosing an organisation, and what they thought after they had experienced making a choice. The items used can be seen in Table 3.3. There is no research to my knowledge that has previously investigated people's thoughts on the amount of volunteering opportunities available and what they believed choosing an organisation to volunteer with would be like. As such these items were of an exploratory nature. They aimed to assess what people thought about the amount of information and organisations available to them, whether they would like structure and guidance to assist them making their choice, how difficult it would be to make a choice, how likely they were to think that they would put off making a choice, and how they would feel about their choice if they did make one.

Table 3.3. Study 4. Pre and post choice questionnaire items

Question
There's just too much choice in volunteering these days
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering
I don't really know where to start
I'll probably put off a decision who to volunteer for
I feel confused when it comes to selecting the right organisation for me
It's easy to choose an organisation for volunteering
There is not much good information available to me about volunteering opportunities
I'd really like structured information about volunteering opportunities
I would appreciate guidance when choosing a volunteer place
I want as much choice as possible when it comes to volunteering
I want to see all the information before I make a decision
Too much choice is confusing
I would feel quite uncertain whether this is the right choice ^c
I would continue looking at other options ^c
I would feel extremely committed ^c
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind ^c

Scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

The factorability of the seventeen items in Table 3.3 was examined. Several well-recognised criteria for the factorability of a correlation were used. Firstly, all items correlated at least .3 with at least one other item, suggesting reasonable factorability. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .65, above the recommended value of .6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(136) = 329.21, p < .001$). The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all above .5, supporting the inclusion of each item in the factor analysis. Finally, the communalities were all above .3 (see Table 3.4), further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was conducted with all seventeen items.

A principle component factor analysis with a varimax rotation was carried out on the seventeen items in Table 3.3 to establish the relationships between items and whether items could be grouped. The factor analysis revealed six factors with an eigen value greater than 1 (see Table 3.4) that accounted for 72.33% of the variance. The items that loaded on the first factor were related to decision difficulty and

deferment likelihood and accounted for 18.90% of the variance. The items that loaded on the second factor related to structure and guidance accounting for 12.23% of the variance. The items that loaded on the third factor related to having too much choice or information and accounted for 11.78% of the variance. The items that loaded on the fourth factor were related to choice commitment and accounted for 10.22% of the variance, the items that loaded on the fifth factor were related to information search and accounted for 10.17% of the variance. Finally, the items that loaded on the sixth factor were related to how worthy the cause was and accounted for 9.05% of the variance. However, a scree plot (see Figure 3.1) revealed that the eigen values for the factors 'levelled off' after the initial three factors. Scale reliability analyses on factors four, five and six confirmed that the items for these factors (with appropriate items reversed) did not have sufficient Cronbach's alpha levels to indicate internal scale consistency (choice commitment [2 items]: $\alpha = .39$; Information search [2 items]: $\alpha = .56$, and worthy cause [2 items]: $\alpha = .49$). As a result of the scree plot and unreliable scales, I decided to treat these six items as independent items.

Table 3.4. Study 4. Factor loadings and communalities based on a principle components analysis with varimax rotation

	Decision difficulty and deferment likelihood	Structure and guidance	Too much choice and information	Choice commitment	Information search	Worthy cause	Communality
There's just too much choice in volunteering these days	.338	-.114	.682	.071	-.368	.186	.77
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for	-.083	.252	.059	-.066	.108	.844	.80
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering	.275	.236	.184	-.197	.689	.174	.71
I don't really know where to start	.771	.137	.347	.002	.072	-.114	.75
I'll probably put off a decision who to volunteer for	.544	.023	.246	.271	.352	-.344	.67
I feel confused when it comes to selecting the right organisation for me	.792	.245	.093	.130	.238	.014	.77
It's easy to choose an organisation for volunteering	-.708	-.220	-.008	-.134	.137	-.159	.61
There is not much good information available to me about volunteering opportunities	-.104	-.400	-.594	.040	.152	.327	.66
I'd really like structured information about volunteering opportunities	.096	.840	.026	-.098	.230	.132	.80
I would appreciate guidance when choosing a volunteer place	.293	.828	-.005	.196	.082	.077	.82
I want as much choice as possible when it comes to volunteering	.002	.492	-.565	.305	.015	.099	.66
I want to see all the information before I make a decision	.038	.090	-.208	.053	.831	.007	.75
Too much choice is confusing	.214	.025	.684	.378	.252	-.057	.72
I would feel quite uncertain whether this is the right choice	.823	-.066	.044	-.246	.108	-.084	.76
I would continue looking at other options	.213	-.055	-.001	-.759	.186	-.135	.68
I would feel extremely committed	.081	-.058	-.309	.478	-.020	.651	.76
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind	.339	.082	.171	.653	.137	-.105	.61

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

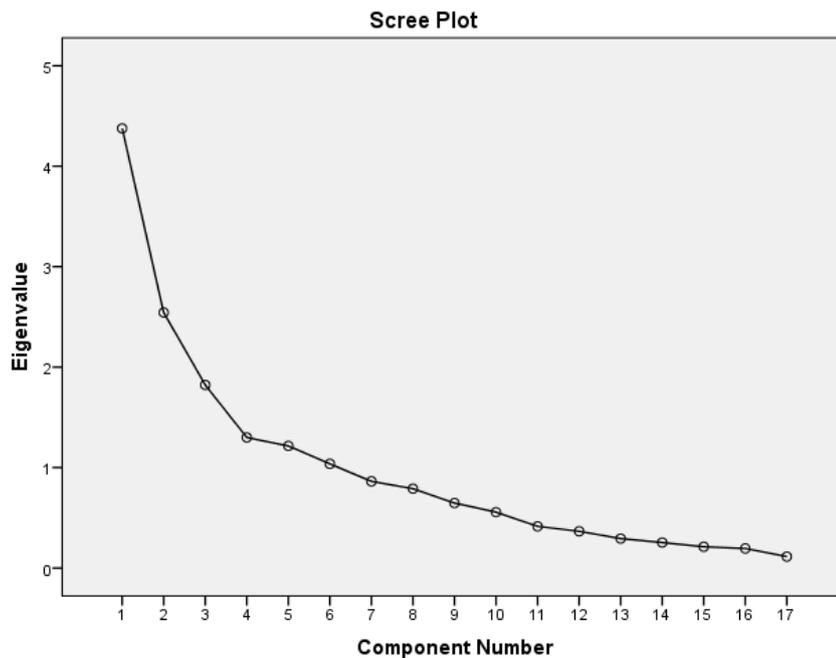


Figure 3.1. Study 4. Scree plot of factor analysis

The items that loaded on the first factor were related to decision difficulty and deferment likelihood. It makes sense that these items would be highly related to one other given that the difficulty experienced while making a choice may affect how likely a chooser is to make a decision (or put it off). However, I felt that it was important to discriminate between decision difficulty experienced during the choosing process and subsequent deferment likelihood. The level of deferment likelihood may be a result of decision difficulty experienced. In consumer choice literature, purchasing behaviour is used as a behavioural measure of the too-much-choice effect (e.g., Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Shah & Wolford, 2007). In my studies, participants did not actually make a decision as to whether to volunteer (or not) with an organisation so behavioural outcomes could not be measured. I used deferment likelihood as a potential outcome of choosing from small vs. large choice sets as I was not able to measure actual behaviour. For these reasons, I decided to

split the items that loaded on the first factor into two groups: those related to decision difficulty and those related to deferment likelihood.

This led to four factors (plus the additional independent items discussed earlier): 1) decision difficulty [2 items], 2) deferment likelihood [2 items], 3) structure and guidance [2 items] and 4) too much choice and information [4 items]. Internal consistency for each of the scales was examined using Cronbach's alpha, see Table 3.5. The alpha levels were all acceptable. Therefore, composite scores were created for each of the four factors, based on the mean of the items that had their primary loadings on each factor.

Table 3.5. Study 4: Factors, items and scale reliability

	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Decision Difficulty	I feel confused when it comes to selecting the right organisation for me It's easy to choose an organisation for volunteering (reversed) I would feel quite uncertain whether this is the right choice	.73
Deferment Likelihood	I don't really know where to start I'll probably put off making a decision about whom to volunteer for	.69
Structure and guidance	I'd really like structured information about volunteering opportunities I would appreciate guidance when choosing a volunteer place	.80
Too much choice and information	There's just too much choice in volunteering these days There is not much good information available to me about volunteering opportunities (reversed) I want as much choice as possible when it comes to volunteering (reversed) Too much choice is confusing	.61

3.2.7 Procedure

Participants arrived at the lab and were seated at a table. They were given a written brief informing them of what they would be required to do.

Firstly, participants completed a pre-choice questionnaire consisting of nineteen questions. The questions assessed participants' perceptions of the decision making process associated with choosing an organisation to volunteer with, as well as asking participants to imagine how they would expect to feel about their choice if they had actually signed up to volunteer with an organisation (see Appendix B).

Participants were then sat in front of a PC screen showing the Volunteering England website (www.volunteering.org.uk), specifically the Volunteering in the UK section (to avoid them selecting exotic but unrealistic opportunities overseas). They were requested to stay in the Volunteering in the UK section and not follow links to the individual organisations' websites. Participants were given 5 minutes to explore the website, to consider as many options as they liked and pick the organisation they would most like to volunteer with. Choosing time was limited to 5 minutes as I believed this would be sufficient time for participants to reach their decision. Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo and Reutskaja (2010) found that even for an important decision such as choosing which hospital to get treated at for a serious non-urgent knee problem needing surgery, people only took 2.7 minutes to make their decision.

They were told that after the five minutes were up they must have made a decision about which organisation to volunteer with. They were informed when they had 'one minute' and 'thirty seconds' search time left. Participants then completed a paper questionnaire about their decision making process and how they felt about their choice (see Appendix C).

Following this, participants completed an identical questionnaire to the one they completed at the start of the experiment (the only difference being the omission of the

question “How much have you looked into volunteering activities?”). Now when participants were asked to imagine that they had signed up to volunteer with an organisation, they had a concrete volunteering organisation in mind (the one they had just picked) from which to refer to answer the questions and had experienced a simulation of the decision making process that may occur when trying to decide which organisation to volunteer with.

Once this second questionnaire was completed participants were given a written debrief to take away with them which had contact information in case they had any questions following the experiment.

3.2.8 Results

3.2.8.1 Volunteering interest level

Prior to taking part in the study and choosing the organisation they would most like to volunteer for, students had not previously looked into volunteering opportunities ($M = -.87$, $SD = 1.53$; a one-samples t-test confirmed that this response was significantly different from a neutral response of 0, $t(51) = -4.07$, $p < .001$).

Prior to taking part in the study, participants responded neutrally (not significantly different from a neutral score of 0) as to how interested they were in finding a volunteering job ($M = -.13$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(51) = -.64$, $p = .526$. Post choice exposure though they reported being moderately interested in finding a volunteering job ($M = 1.04$, $SD = 1.43$).

3.2.8.2 Pre choice exposure perceptions of choosing an organisation to volunteer for

I have used the term ‘choice exposure’ to refer to seeing the possible options (volunteering organisations) that could have been chosen to volunteer with. ‘Pre-choice to choice

exposure' refers to people's perceptions before they had seen the possible options. 'Post-choice exposure' refers to their perceptions after having seen the possible options (and therefore made a decision about which organisation to volunteer for).

Students' responses to the items asked in the study, prior to them seeing the available available options on the website and having made a choice from the selection can be seen in

Table 3.6. Study 4: Items presented in the Pre and Post Choice Questionnaires. Means and Standard deviations for all items pre and post choice exposure, whether these responses were significantly different for 0 (a neutral response) and differences in responses to items pre and post choice exposure

Items	Pre Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)			Post Choice Exposure	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Decision difficulty	-0.21	1.11	-1.33	51	.188	-0.40	1.21
Deferment likelihood	-0.07	1.48	-0.33	51	.744	-0.41	1.40
Structure and guidance	1.41	1.09	9.37	51	< .001	1.36	1.10
Too much choice and information	-0.44	.74	-4.27	51	< .001	-0.36	1.00
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for	2.04	.97	15.16	51	<.001	2.38	.60
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering	.52	1.24	3.00	51	.004	1.50	1.64
I want to see all the information before I make a decision	1.76	1.12	11.45	51	<.001	2.27	.90
I would continue looking at other options	-0.55	1.69	-2.40	51	.020	-0.25	1.70
I would feel extremely committed	1.40	1.07	8.89	51	<.001	1.78	1.11
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind	1.10	1.65	4.90	51	<.001	.88	1.64

Scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

Note: To take account of the increased chance of a type 1 error occurring as a result of performing multiple t-tests, a bonferroni adjustment was conducted on the paired samples t-tests that compared participants' pre and post choice exposure perceptions of choosing a volunteering organisation to volunteer for. As there were 10 items tested this meant that the critical *p* value (α) required to indicate a significant result was reduced to .005. Significant findings taking into account the bonferroni correction are highlighted in bold.

. One-sample *t* tests (see Table 3.6) were carried out to assess students' perceptions towards choosing an organisation to volunteer with (in relation to a neutral response of 0).

Prior to seeing potential options and making a choice students responded neutrally to how difficult they thought it would be to make a choice (their response was not significantly different from a neutral response of 0 indicating that they did not think that the choice would be easy, nor did they think it would be particularly difficult). They also responded neutrally about how likely they thought they would be to want to defer a choice.

Students reported wanting structure and guidance whilst making their choice to assist them. They believed that there were lots of worthy organisations to volunteer for and that there would not be 'too much' information available to them. They wanted to see all the information before making a decision and thought that it would take quite a long time to compare all the organisations offering volunteering opportunities. Participants thought that once they had made their choice that they would feel committed to it, would feel guilty if they changed their mind and would not continue to look at other organisations.

Table 3.6. Study 4: Items presented in the Pre and Post Choice Questionnaires. Means and Standard deviations for all items pre and post choice exposure, whether these responses were significantly different for 0 (a neutral response) and differences in responses to items pre and post choice exposure

Items	Pre Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)			Post Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)			Pre and post choice exposure differences		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Decision difficulty	-0.21	1.11	-1.33	51	.188	-0.40	1.25	-2.32	51	.025	1.28	51	.206
Deferment likelihood	-0.07	1.48	-0.33	51	.744	-0.41	1.40	-2.13	51	.038	1.90	51	.063
Structure and guidance	1.41	1.09	9.37	51	<.001	1.36	1.16	8.40	51	<.001	.44	51	.664
Too much choice and information	-0.44	.74	-4.27	51	<.001	-0.36	1.06	-2.42	51	.019	-0.59	51	.561
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for	2.04	.97	15.16	51	<.001	2.38	.60	28.70	51	<.001	-2.48	51	.017
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering	.52	1.24	3.00	51	.004	1.50	1.64	6.60	51	<.001	-3.71	51	.001
I want to see all the information before I make a decision	1.76	1.12	11.45	51	<.001	2.27	.90	18.13	50	<.001	-3.06	50	.004
I would continue looking at other options	-0.55	1.69	-2.40	51	.020	-0.25	1.70	-1.07	50	.288	-1.13	50	.264
I would feel extremely committed	1.40	1.07	8.89	51	<.001	1.78	1.13	11.14	49	<.001	-2.57	49	.013
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind	1.10	1.65	4.90	51	<.001	.88	1.68	3.75	50	<.001	1.08	50	.287

Scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

Note: To take account of the increased chance of a type 1 error occurring as a result of performing multiple t-tests, a bonferroni adjustment was conducted on the paired samples t-tests that compared participants' pre and post choice exposure perceptions of choosing a volunteering organisation to volunteer for. As there were 10 items tested this meant that the critical *p* value (α) required to indicate a significant result was reduced to .005. Significant findings taking into account the bonferroni correction are highlighted in bold.

3.2.8.1 Effect of Choice Amount (H1)

3.2.8.1.1 Number of options looked at

Participants were asked "How many organisations did you consider" and "How many organisations did you shortlist". The majority of people said they looked at between 10-15 options. Nevertheless there was considerable variance, with 21% of subjects looking at fewer than 10 and 38% looking at more than 15 options. Thirty nine per cent shortlisted between 0-3 options, 45% shortlisted between 3-5 and 15.69% shortlisted between 5-8 options. Since the number of options considered and the number shortlisted were highly correlated ($r = .57$; $\alpha = .62^5$) these two scores were collapsed to form a single 'Personal Choice Amount' variable such that higher scores indicated more options in the person's own choice set.

3.2.8.1.2 Deferment likelihood

My key dependent variable was deferment likelihood - how likely people were to say that they would put off making a decision about which organisation to volunteer with. I was also interested in how difficult people found the decision making process. Items for deferment likelihood and decision difficulty, their means and reliabilities are presented in Table 3.7.

⁵ Cronbach's α (alpha) is a coefficient of reliability used to measure the extent to which items in a scale correlate with one another (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 3.7. Study 4: Items, α 's and Means for Personal Choice Amount, Deferment Likelihood and Decision Difficulty scales

DV	Items	<i>r</i>	α	M (<i>SD</i>)
Personal Choice Amount	How many organisations did you consider	.57	.62	5.27 (1.94)
	How many organisations did you shortlist			
Deferment Likelihood	I don't really know where to start	.53	.69	-.83 (2.81)
	I'll probably put off making a decision about whom to volunteer for			
Decision Difficulty	I feel confused when it comes to selecting the right organisation for me		.73	-1.25 (3.76)
	It's easy to choose an organisation for volunteering (reversed)			
	I would feel quite uncertain whether this is the right choice			

Note: All items (apart from personal choice amount) were presented on a scale ranging from -3 (totally disagree) to 3 (totally agree)

In line with my main hypothesis (H1), there was a significant positive correlation, $r = .30$, $p = .03$ between personal choice amount and deferment likelihood. The more options participants considered and shortlisted the more likely they were to say they did not know where to start and to want to defer a decision. To test the potential mediating role of Decision Difficulty I carried out a three step regression model (Baron & Kenny, 1986). H2 was also supported; Personal Choice Amount predicted both deferment likelihood in Step 1 ($\beta = .30$, $p = .03$), replicating the correlational analysis, and also decision difficulty in Step 2 ($\beta = .31$, $p = .03$). When both variables were entered in Step 3, the effect of personal choice

amount was reduced to non-significance while that of decision difficulty was highly significant (see Table 3.8 and Figure 3.2).

Table 3.8. Study 4: Summary of the unstandardised Bs (Standard Errors), and standardised beta weights and p values for Choice Amount and Decision Difficulty regressed against Deferment Likelihood

	Step1 (Predicting Deferment)			Step 2 (Predicting Difficulty)			Step 3 (Predicting Deferment)		
	B (SE)	β	p	B (SE)	β	p	B (SE)	β	p
Choice Amount	.39(.18)	.30	.03	36(.16)	.31	.03	.11(.14)	.08	.43
Decision Difficulty	-	-	-	-	-	-	.77(.12)	.68	<.001
F		4.79			5.30			25.52	
$R^2_{adjusted}$.07			.08			.49	

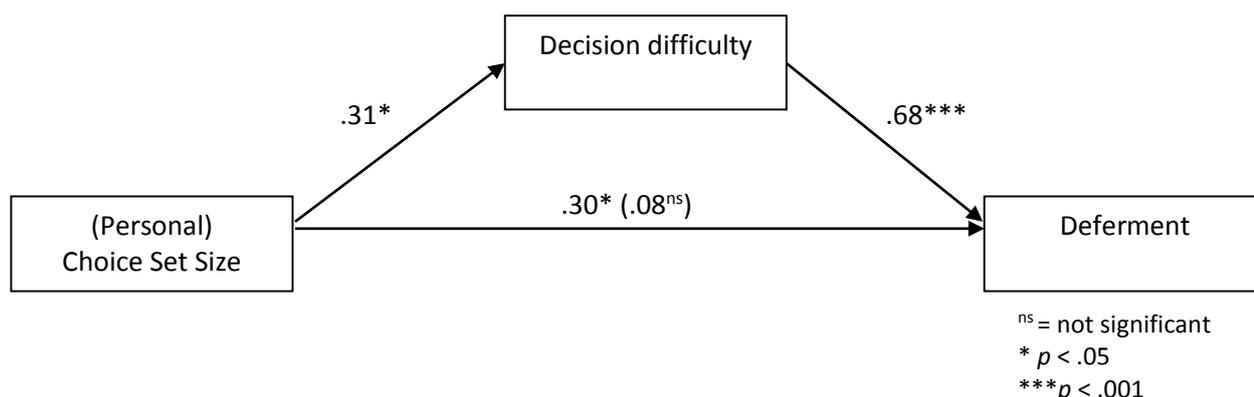


Figure 3.2. Study 4: Regression models predicting Deferment Likelihood for volunteering

3.2.8.1 Post choice exposure perceptions of choosing an organisation to volunteer for

Students post choice responses to items in the study can be seen in

Table 3.6. Study 4: Items presented in the Pre and Post Choice Questionnaires. Means and Standard deviations for all items pre and post choice exposure, whether these responses

were significantly different for 0 (a neutral response) and differences in responses to items pre and post choice exposure

Items	Pre Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)			Post Choice Exposure	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Decision difficulty	-.21	1.11	-1.33	51	.188	-.40	1.21
Deferment likelihood	-.07	1.48	-.33	51	.744	-.41	1.40
Structure and guidance	1.41	1.09	9.37	51	< .001	1.36	1.10
Too much choice and information	-.44	.74	-4.27	51	< .001	-.36	1.00
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for	2.04	.97	15.16	51	<.001	2.38	.60
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering	.52	1.24	3.00	51	.004	1.50	1.64
I want to see all the information before I make a decision	1.76	1.12	11.45	51	<.001	2.27	.90
I would continue looking at other options	-.55	1.69	-2.40	51	.020	-.25	1.70
I would feel extremely committed	1.40	1.07	8.89	51	<.001	1.78	1.11
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind	1.10	1.65	4.90	51	<.001	.88	1.64

Scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

Note: To take account of the increased chance of a type 1 error occurring as a result of performing multiple t-tests, a bonferroni adjustment was conducted on the paired samples t-tests that compared participants' pre and post choice exposure perceptions of choosing a volunteering organisation to volunteer for. As there were 10 items tested this meant that the critical *p* value (α) required to indicate a significant result was reduced to .005. Significant findings taking into account the bonferroni correction are highlighted in bold.

). One-sample *t* tests (see

Table 3.6. Study 4: Items presented in the Pre and Post Choice Questionnaires. Means and Standard deviations for all items pre and post choice exposure, whether these responses were significantly different for 0 (a neutral response) and differences in responses to items pre and post choice exposure

Items	Pre Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)			Post Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Decision difficulty	-0.21	1.11	-1.33	51	.188	-0.40	1.25	-2.32	51
Deferment likelihood	-0.07	1.48	-.33	51	.744	-0.41	1.40	-2.13	51
Structure and guidance	1.41	1.09	9.37	51	< .001	1.36	1.16	8.40	51
Too much choice and information	-0.44	.74	-4.27	51	< .001	-0.36	1.06	-2.42	51
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for	2.04	.97	15.16	51	<.001	2.38	.60	28.70	51
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering	.52	1.24	3.00	51	.004	1.50	1.64	6.60	51
I want to see all the information before I make a decision	1.76	1.12	11.45	51	<.001	2.27	.90	18.13	50
I would continue looking at other options	-0.55	1.69	-2.40	51	.020	-0.25	1.70	-1.07	50
I would feel extremely committed	1.40	1.07	8.89	51	<.001	1.78	1.13	11.14	49
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind	1.10	1.65	4.90	51	<.001	.88	1.68	3.75	50

Scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

Note: To take account of the increased chance of a type 1 error occurring as a result of performing multiple t-tests, a bonferroni adjustment was conducted on the paired samples t-tests that compared participants' pre and post choice exposure perceptions of choosing a volunteering organisation to volunteer for. As there were 10 items tested this meant that the critical *p* value (α) required to indicate a significant result was reduced to .005. Significant findings taking into account the bonferroni correction are highlighted in bold.

) were carried out to find out students' perceptions of volunteering decisions after having made a choice. Their responses were compared to a neutral response of 0.

After having seen the volunteering website and making a choice, students thought that it would not be too difficult to choose an organisation to volunteer for and that they probably wouldn't defer a decision. They stated that they wanted structure and guidance when making their decision and that they did not think that there was too much choice or information on offer to them. Students thought that there were loads of worthy organisations to volunteer with, wanted to see all the information about volunteering opportunities before they made a decision and thought that it would take a long time to make a decision about which organisation to volunteer for. They stated that once they had made a choice they would be committed to it, would feel guilty if they changed their mind and would not continue looking at alternative organisations.

3.2.8.2 Pre and post choice exposure differences in perceptions of choosing an organisation to volunteer with

Taking part in the study, looking at the volunteering website and choosing which organisation they would most like to volunteer for increased students' interest in finding a volunteering job. A paired samples t-test revealed that they were significantly more interested in finding a volunteering job post choice exposure ($M = 1.04$, $SD = 1.43$) than pre choice exposure ($M = -.13$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(51) = -7.36$, $p < .001$.

Paired-samples t tests were carried out to assess if there were any differences in students' perceptions with regard to the decision making process of choosing an organisation to volunteer with pre and post choice exposure. The complete means, standard deviations and differences in responses to the pre and post choice questionnaires can be seen in

Table 3.6. Study 4: Items presented in the Pre and Post Choice Questionnaires.

Means and Standard deviations for all items pre and post choice exposure, whether these responses were significantly different for 0 (a neutral response) and differences in responses to items pre and post choice exposure

Items	Pre Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)			Post Choice Exposure		Difference from 0 (neutral response)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Decision difficulty	-0.21	1.11	-1.33	51	.188	-0.40	1.25	-2.32	51
Deferment likelihood	-0.07	1.48	-0.33	51	.744	-0.41	1.40	-2.13	51
Structure and guidance	1.41	1.09	9.37	51	< .001	1.36	1.16	8.40	51
Too much choice and information	-0.44	.74	-4.27	51	< .001	-0.36	1.06	-2.42	51
There are loads of worthy organisations to volunteer for	2.04	.97	15.16	51	<.001	2.38	.60	28.70	51
It would take a long time to compare the organisations offering volunteering	.52	1.24	3.00	51	.004	1.50	1.64	6.60	51
I want to see all the information before I make a decision	1.76	1.12	11.45	51	<.001	2.27	.90	18.13	50
I would continue looking at other options	-0.55	1.69	-2.40	51	.020	-0.25	1.70	-1.07	50
I would feel extremely committed	1.40	1.07	8.89	51	<.001	1.78	1.13	11.14	49
I would feel guilty if I changed my mind	1.10	1.65	4.90	51	<.001	.88	1.68	3.75	50

Scale ranging from -3 (Totally disagree) to +3 (Totally agree)

Note: To take account of the increased chance of a type 1 error occurring as a result of performing multiple t-tests, a bonferroni adjustment was conducted on the paired samples t-tests that compared participants' pre and post choice exposure perceptions of choosing a volunteering organisation to volunteer for. As there were 10 items tested this meant that the critical *p* value (α) required to indicate a significant result was reduced to .005. Significant findings taking into account the bonferroni correction are highlighted in bold.

. To control for the increased likelihood of obtaining a false positive significant result (or a type 1 error) as a result of running multiple t tests simultaneously, a bonferroni correction was performed. As there were 10 items tested this meant that the critical p value (α) required to indicate a significant result was reduced to .005 rather than .05. As a result there were only two significant differences in students' perceptions of choosing an organisation to volunteer for pre and post choice. Firstly, they believed that it would take a long time to compare voluntary organisations to a greater extent post choice exposure ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 1.64$) than pre choice exposure ($M = .52$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(51) = -3.71$, $p = .001$. Secondly, post choice exposure, they wanted to see all available information before making a decision ($M = 2.27$, $SD = .90$) to a greater extent than pre choice exposure ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 1.12$), $t(50) = -3.06$, $p = .004$. There were no other significant differences in perceptions pre and post choice exposure.

3.2.8.3 Qualitative findings

Finally, when asked 'How do you think your decision could have been made easier?' people's responses could be categorised into the following suggestions: more options (e.g. "a few more options"), fewer options (e.g. "There was a lot of choice so personally for me, less options"), better structure (e.g. "More categories with specialised topics, more construction to the order of organisations to make navigation easier, and maybe a brief overview at the top to save scrolling through all the ones you have no interest in"), more information regarding the activities volunteers would be doing (e.g. "Clearer details on exactly what the job would entail"), more information about the organisations (e.g. "More information about organisations and what they are doing"), more pictures (e.g. "Pictures would have helped influence my decision. Pictures would have made the decision process easier for me"), more information about how to get started (e.g. "How to get involved made more obvious"), feedback from other volunteers (e.g. "If there were some feedback reports

from people who had participated in the volunteering”), other sources (e.g. “Taster sessions”) and more time (e.g. “longer to look”).

These qualitative findings were useful in terms of gaining more detailed information about what would could be done to facilitate decisions about which organisation to volunteer for based on the suggestions as to how the decision could have been made easier from people that had experienced having to make a choice, rather than just speculation.

These suggestions guided later studies in terms of possible choice architectures to investigate which may facilitate volunteering decisions.

3.2.9 Discussion

This study provided an insight into students’ perceptions of choosing an organisation to volunteer for. They believed that there were lots of worthy voluntary organisations that they could volunteer with, but did not think that there was too much choice or information available to them. They wanted to see all the information available to them (especially post choice exposure) and to have structure and guidance in place to assist them making their choice. They thought that it would take a long time to compare volunteering organisations to make a choice (especially post choice exposure) but did not think that choosing an organisation to volunteer with would be particularly difficult, nor that they would want to defer making a decision. Once they had chosen an organisation they believed that they would feel committed to their choice and would not look at any further volunteering options. There was little difference in students’ perceptions of what they thought choosing an organisation to volunteer for would be like pre and post choice exposure which is positive as this indicates that should a student decide they would like to volunteer, their expected experience of what the decision making process may entail should be similar to their actual decision making experience. However, it should be pointed out though that the

choices made in this study were hypothetical (students did not go on to actually volunteer with their choice) and as such fairly inconsequential to choosers. In real life perhaps the decision making process would have been treated differently.

The study also provided evidence to suggest that choosing from a large number of options may be more difficult and result in greater deferment likelihood than choosing from a smaller number of options. Despite not experimentally manipulating the choice set size for students to consider, these findings support the contention that the more volunteering options an individual considers, the more difficult they find the decision making process and the more likely they are to want to put off making any decision. Given the extensive number of volunteering opportunities available to people in real life and the present study's findings that the greater the number of options considered, the greater level of difficulty experienced leading to an increased likelihood of decision deferment, could suggest that the negative consequences of choosing from extensive choice sets (the too-much-choice effect) may extend to volunteering decisions.

With regard to people's preferred amount of choice, the majority of participants freely looked at between fifteen and twenty options. They stated that out of these options they then short listed between three and five making the choice set size manageable. This self-reported search information seem to replicate previous Psychological findings (e.g., Shah and Wolford, 2007) that suggests that the optimal number of options may be around 10, although this is likely to fluctuate depending on the options in question.

There was evidence that getting students' to look through possible volunteering opportunities and choose which one they would most like to volunteer with significantly increased people's interest in volunteering. This is in line with research which has demonstrated increased liking and greater likelihood of choosing for something that they have merely been exposed to (Zajonc, 1968). Perhaps one way of boosting the recruitment of volunteers would be to make volunteering opportunities more known or easily accessible so that people are more aware of the opportunities available and are more likely to consider

volunteering. People who would not go out of their way to actively search for volunteering activities may be more likely to sign-up to volunteer. This finding could work in combination with the finding from Study 1 in the previous chapter with regards to trying to increase volunteering numbers. If people that could be encouraged to agree to be contacted in the future about possible volunteering opportunities using an opt-out method, when they were subsequently contacted, the mere exposure to the volunteering opportunities could make them more interested in volunteering and perhaps more likely to actually volunteer.

Participant's qualitative responses clearly indicate that people's decisions could have been made a lot easier and demonstrate that the Volunteering England website has room for improvement. More choice architectures need to be implemented to help facilitate people's decisions. People want as much information as possible about what they can expect volunteering to be like to help them choose, but there needs to be an easy way for a chooser to quickly eliminate options that are of no interest. Students suggested that categorising options would make navigating to potential volunteering organisations of interest easier.

The volunteering opportunities on Volunteering England had been categorised (although this categorisation could be improved further) and although people could have potentially seen every option available to them, they chose to completely ignore some of the categories in order to spend more time looking at options within their favoured category.

Despite these early indications of the potential problem of too much choice when faced with the real volunteering sector, the study had a number of limitations in terms of testing my hypotheses. First, all subjects had the opportunity to view up to 115 organisations and while there was considerable variation in the number people said they considered I had no objective way of checking this. Second, the relationship between this self-reported number and deferment likelihood may be accounted for by a third variable such as perceived decision importance which might have influenced both search strategy

and deferment. Fourth, the number of options people considered was not experimentally manipulated. It is not possible to conclude for certain that looking at a greater number of options caused choosers to experience greater difficulty choosing. It may be the other way round; that students' perceived decision difficulty caused them to consider more options. Finally, I took no account of people's prior familiarities or preferences for different real world organisations (cf. Scheibehenne et al., 2009; Soyer & Hogarth, 2011).

The findings from this study provided useful insight into the potential for the too-much-choice effect to exist for volunteering decisions. It demonstrated in a replication of a possible realistic occurrence of choosing an organisation to volunteer for (searching online and choosing from an actual volunteering website) that the greater the number of options considered, the greater level of difficulty experienced when making a decision which led to a greater likelihood of decision deferment. Further, more controlled studies should be carried out that manipulate choice set sizes to investigate whether the too-much-choice effect may extend to volunteering decisions.

3.3 Study 5 – Deferment Likelihood for Few Versus Many Hypothetical Volunteer Organisations

Due to the experimental control limits of Study 4, Study 5 explored the relationship between choice amount and deferment likelihood under more controlled laboratory conditions.

Study 5 manipulated the choice set sizes that participants were exposed to; participants were presented with either a relatively small (10) or large (30) amount of organisations from which to choose (these numbers were based on the number of options typically considered a 'small' and 'large' choice set in the literature, see Scheibehenne et al, 2010 for an overview). Also, for more control and to reduce the potential confounding effect of prior

preferences or familiarity with options (Chernev, 2003) the organisations presented were hypothetical rather than real.

3.3.1 Rationale

Currently there is no research investigating the consequences of choosing from a limited or extensive choice set in the domain of volunteering choice so this study was the first to do so. Knowing these consequences are highly relevant at this moment in time; both the government and individuals are realising the societal and individual benefits of volunteering (see Sections 1.6.4 and 1.6.5) and the number of outlets to volunteer is rising considerably (see Section 1.7.1).

I was also interested in the effect of choice reversibility on decision satisfaction⁶ (see Section 1.5.2.5). People prefer to make decisions and are more at ease when making a choice when they know beforehand that the decision is reversible (i.e. they can change their mind at a later date if they wish; Gilbert & Ebert, 2002). For consumer purchases we are often comforted by the knowledge that there is a 14/28 day money back guarantee if we are not happy with our purchase after we have bought it. The intention of this scheme is to ensure people can return goods if they are faulty or unneeded, but may also encourage consumers to make a purchase as they are assured that if within the guarantee dates they actually decide they do not want the product they can return it with no consequences. However, Gilbert & Ebert (2002) have shown that having the option to change your decision at a later date has similar effects to those described above as a result of too much choice; people are subsequently less satisfied with their decisions if they are reversible. It has been suggested that when decisions are irreversible this triggers a person's Psychological Immune

⁶ At this point in my research I was still focussed on decision satisfaction as a main dependant variable of my research in accordance with the literature on choice amount. The findings from this study provided further support and suggestion for the focus of my studies to switch focus from decision satisfaction to deferment likelihood, which I subsequently did.

System (PIS; see Section 1.3.3) which subjectively optimizes their choice outcome to be as positive as possible, whereas this does not occur for reversible decisions (Gilbert & Ebert, 2002).

There is limited research into how choice amount affects experiential decisions (see Section 1.2.7) so this study aimed to add to the gap in the research. Also, the reversibility of a decision may also affect material and experiential choices differently. For relatively 'important/consequential' material choices (e.g., spending money on a material asset that you will keep for a relatively long period of time) the ability to reverse (change your mind) the decision is not possible (aside from within the guarantee) and you are 'stuck' with your original choice. However, for relatively 'important/consequential' experiential choices (e.g., deciding to join a new group or organisation that will take up a significant amount of your time) you can decide at any point to leave the group and cease from partaking in the activities you were doing completely (and spend your time doing something else), or join an alternate group or organisation to carry on your activities but with another group or organisation. In other words, experiential choices are more reversible than material choices. You are more able to switch to an alternative option for experiential choices than for material ones.

Study 5 assessed the effect of choice amount and decision reversibility on decision satisfaction and deferment likelihood.

3.3.2 Hypotheses

Building on the results of Study 4, my main hypothesis (H1) was that the people that chose an organisation to volunteer with from 30 organisations would be more likely to want to defer their decision than those that chose from 10 options. My secondary hypothesis (H2)

was that this process would be mediated by how difficult subjects reported the decision making process to be.

I also predicted that the people whose decision was reversible would feel less satisfied and certain with their choice and feel more regretful than people whose decision was not reversible (H3).

3.3.3 Design

The design of the study was a 2(Choice amount: Low/High) x 2(Reversibility: Reversible/Non-reversible) factorial design

3.3.4 Participants

Two hundred and six subjects, consisting of students and visitors on the University campus (70 male, 136 female; age was not recorded) took part in the study. Psychology students were recruited via the University's participation points system and received course credit for taking part; others were approached on campus and offered £3 to take part in the study.

3.3.5 Materials

The experiment was computer based and was programmed by a psychology technician at the University of Plymouth. The experiment took place in a lab which had the study program loaded onto the computers.

3.3.6 Number of options presented

The number of options to be presented in the extensive and limited choice conditions were chosen based on the choice literature and the choice sets used (typically 6 vs. 24 options; for example, Iyengar & Lepper, 2000), Shah and Wolford's (2007) findings that the optimal amount of choice appears to be between 10-12, and Study 4 which found that when asked to pick a voluntary organisation to volunteer with from the Volunteering England's website the majority of people (40.38%) looked at between 10-15 options and were happy with this amount. Therefore, in the present study the number of options presented in the low choice condition was ten and the number of options presented in the high choice condition was thirty.

3.3.7 Voluntary organisations

The present study was intended to be as controlled as possible; therefore the volunteering organisations used were hypothetical (although their descriptions were based on real volunteering organisations to keep the opportunities realistic). This was to ensure that participants could not have preconceived ideas about an organisation, its aims or activities. Prior research has suggested that prior preferences may be a moderator of the too-much-choice effect and that people that have prior preferences or are experts in a certain domain benefit from extensive choice sets (Chernev, 2003a; 2003b). Also some voluntary organisations are more well-known than others so using hypothetical organisations ensured that people did not choose an organisation to volunteer with based on familiarity. In a real-life situation the amount of information about volunteering opportunities varies from organisation to organisation so potential volunteers will see unequal amounts of information from different voluntary organisations. In the present study descriptions of the

organisations and volunteering activities were standardised for each hypothetical organisation so that each organisation had a short paragraph outlining the organisations aims/objectives and details of what volunteers could expect to be doing if they volunteered with that organisation.

The possible volunteering opportunities in real life are extremely diverse and different. The present study aimed to replicate this diversity and so ten volunteering categories were created (animal welfare, campaigning, charity, companionship, disability, English heritage, environmental, food, support and young people) to ensure that each participant saw a spread of varied volunteering opportunities. There were three volunteering organisations in each category giving a total of thirty organisations. The categories themselves were only used by the programmer to create the choice sets for the study and ensure that there was a random organisation from each of the ten categories present in the low choice set. The participants themselves never saw (or were aware) that any categories existed as this can affect choosing behaviour (Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar, 2008); only the organisation's names were presented to them in a random order on screen which could be clicked on to bring up information about that specific volunteering opportunity. In the low choice condition participants saw a random one of the three organisations in each category and so ten organisations in total. In the high choice condition participants saw all thirty organisations presented in a random order. For an example of a volunteering category, organisation and organisation details see Table 3.8. For the full list, see Appendix D.

Table 3.8. Study 5. An example of volunteering category, organisation name and organisation details

Volunteering category	Organisation name	Organisation details
Animal Welfare	Zoo Hands	Zoo hands provides voluntary support to the members of staff in zoos. Duties can vary depending on what is needed to be done but can include preparing animals food, cleaning out of enclosures and building new enclosures. For safety reasons there would be no physical contact with animals.

3.3.8 Items

The items used in this study can be seen in Table 3.9. The items used were copied and adapted for use in a volunteering domain from Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) chocolate study (Study 3). In Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) study they tested multiple items that assessed various parts of the decision making process and chooser's thoughts. They tested whether choosing from extensive choice sets was enjoyable yet overwhelming with the following items: "How much did you enjoy making the choice?", "Did you find it difficult to make your decision?", and "How frustrated did you feel when making the choice?". They also asked people to predict how satisfied they thought they would be with their choice: "How satisfied do you think you will be if you sample this chocolate?". They used the items "How confident are you that this chocolate will satisfy you?" and "How confident are you that this chocolate will be amongst the best you've ever had?" to test whether people choosing from an extensive choice set were more likely to maximise and people choosing from a limited choice set were more likely to satisfice. To test whether people that chose choose from an extensive choice set felt less informed about the options available to them they asked: "Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the chocolate that you picked?" and "Is this a chocolate that you would normally pick?" (note that this item was not used or adapted for the current study as choosing which organisation to volunteer for is something that people may never had done and that does not happen regularly). They asked three items that measured how satisfied people were with their choices to test whether people

that chose from an extensive choice set were less satisfied with their choices than people than chose from a limited choice set: “How satisfied were you with the chocolate you tasted?”, “How much did you enjoy the sample you tasted?” and “How tasty was the chocolate you sampled?”. Again, the latter two items regarding satisfaction were not used in the current study as people did not actually experience volunteering with their chosen organisation). To find out whether any decrease in satisfaction as a result of choosing from an extensive choice set was accompanied by increased feelings of regret they asked two items: “How much do you regret eating the chocolate that you tasted?”, “Do you think that there were chocolates on the table that tasted much better?”.

In their analysis Iyengar and Lepper (2000) predominantly treated each item as an independent item. Items were not grouped together to form a composite measure of a particular construct. Although, they did form a composite enjoyment measure using the three items that assessed subjective enjoyment directly, but this was not possible for me to replicate in the current study due to the lack of inclusion of two of the items used in their scale as a result of participants in my study not actually experiencing volunteering with their chosen organisation. They also grouped the two items that measured the amount of regret people experienced after having made their choice to form a composite regret measure. I chose not to do the same and to treat the two items as independent items because I felt that the second item assessing regret in Study 5 “do you think there were other organisations that were much better?” could also be a measure of counterfactual thinking (the extent to which people ruminate about other options they could have chosen) which has been shown to be more likely to occur when choosing from extensive choice sets (e.g., Hafner et al, 2012).

As the key independent variable of my series of studies was deferment likelihood, in addition to the items used by Iyengar and Lepper (2000) I also included the item “If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would?” which I used in Study 4 as a measure of deferment likelihood.

Study 4 demonstrated that deferment likelihood was mediated by decision difficulty. In Study 4 as a result of a factor analysis, three items were grouped to form a composite measure of decision difficulty. I felt that it was important to continue use the same measures throughout my series of studies. Two of the items from Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) study ("Did you find it difficult to make your decision?" and "How frustrated did you feel when making your choice") were similar to two of the items that formed the decision difficulty composite scale in Study 4 ("It's easy to choose an organisation to volunteer for (reversed)" and "I feel confused when it comes to selecting the right organisation for me") and as such I substituted them in place of the items I used in Study 4 so that the items in Study 5, 1) were predominantly the same items used by Iyengar and Lepper (2000) yet 2) were consistent with the items I had used in Study 4 and therefore analysed in the same way. As a result I also included "How certain are you that you made the right choice" in Study 5 (although not an item used by Iyengar and Lepper) as "I would feel quite uncertain whether this is the right choice" was one of the three items that formed the decision difficulty measure in Study 4.

Table 3.9. Study 5: Items used (adapted from Iyengar and Lepper [2000])

How much did you enjoy making your choice? ^a
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a
Did you find it difficult to make your decision? ^a
If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would? ^a
How frustrated did you feel when making the choice? ^a
How satisfied do you think you would be if you volunteered with your chosen organisation? ^a
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would satisfy you? ^a
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would be amongst the best you could have chosen? ^a
Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked? ^a
How much do you regret choosing the volunteering organisation that you did? ^b
Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better? ^c

^aScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)

^bScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)

^cScale ranging from -3 (No, not at all) to +3 (Yes, completely)

^dScale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

Although in study 4 “I don’t really know where to start” was one of the items used to measure deferment likelihood, I did not use the item in Study 5 as I did not think it was relevant. In Study 4 I was interested in people’s perceptions of choosing an organisation to volunteer for pre and post seeing an actual volunteering website. In Study 5, I did not gather people’s preconceptions about choosing an organisation to volunteer for and I presented them with hypothetical laboratory choice sets rather than a website which actually existed. As with Study 4, a scale reliability analysis was conducted on the items in Study 5 related to decision difficulty (outlined above), this revealed that they formed an acceptable scale ($\alpha = .66$) and could be combined to form a composite score of decision difficulty.

3.3.9 Procedure

Upon entering the experimental lab, participants were asked to sit at a computer.

Screenshots of the experiment can be seen in Appendix E. They were briefed in accordance with ethical guidelines on the computer screen.

In the first part of the experiment, participants were asked to imagine that they had an extra four hours spare time a week that they had decided that they would like to spend volunteering. It should be noted that different amounts of time allocated to volunteering as well as the number of volunteering organisations on offer may elicit differences in deferment likelihood. However, for the purposes of this first experimental study investigating the relationship between the amount of options and deferment likelihood I thought it best to standardise the expected amount of time spent volunteering per week for all subjects. The amount of four hours was based on the actual requirement for various volunteer organisations such as Samaritans (Pahl, White & Carroll, 2010).

Participants were informed that the names of voluntary organisations were going to be presented on screen and that they should look through them for as long as they wanted and pick the one that they would choose to volunteer with. All the participants were told that they would see the options again later in the experiment. However, half were told that they would be able to change their mind at this later viewing and that the choice they were about to make was only preliminary (reversible condition), whereas half the participants were told that would not be able to change their mind at this later viewing and that the choice they were about to make was final (non-reversible condition). At this point participants were allocated either to the low choice (10) condition or the high choice (30) condition.

The names of voluntary organisations were listed on the computer screen in random order for each participant. The positioning of organisations was randomised as it has been shown that people have a tendency to view options presented first more frequently than others; Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo & Reutskaja, 2010). The organisations' names could be clicked on for details about that specific organisation and what roles and activities volunteers could expect to do if they volunteered with that organisation. An example screen shot of a low choice/reversible decision can be seen in Figure 3.3, and an example screen shot of a high choice/non-reversible decision can be seen in Figure 3.4.

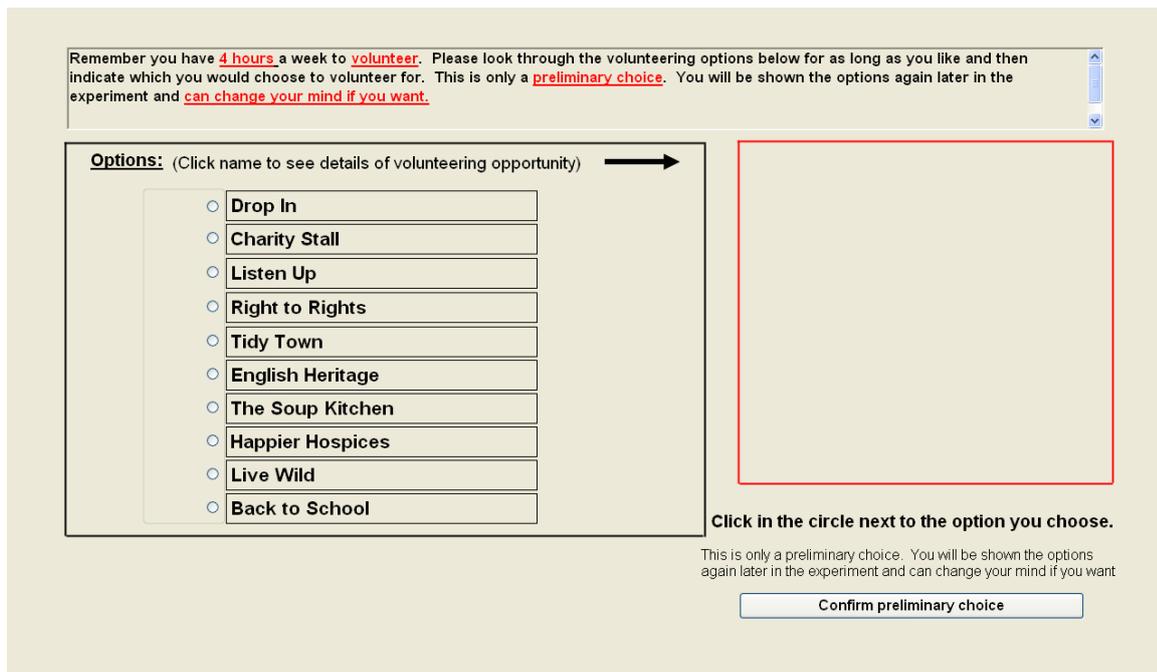


Figure 3.3. Study 5. A screen shot of the option screen seen by participants in the low choice reversible condition (Random choice of options).

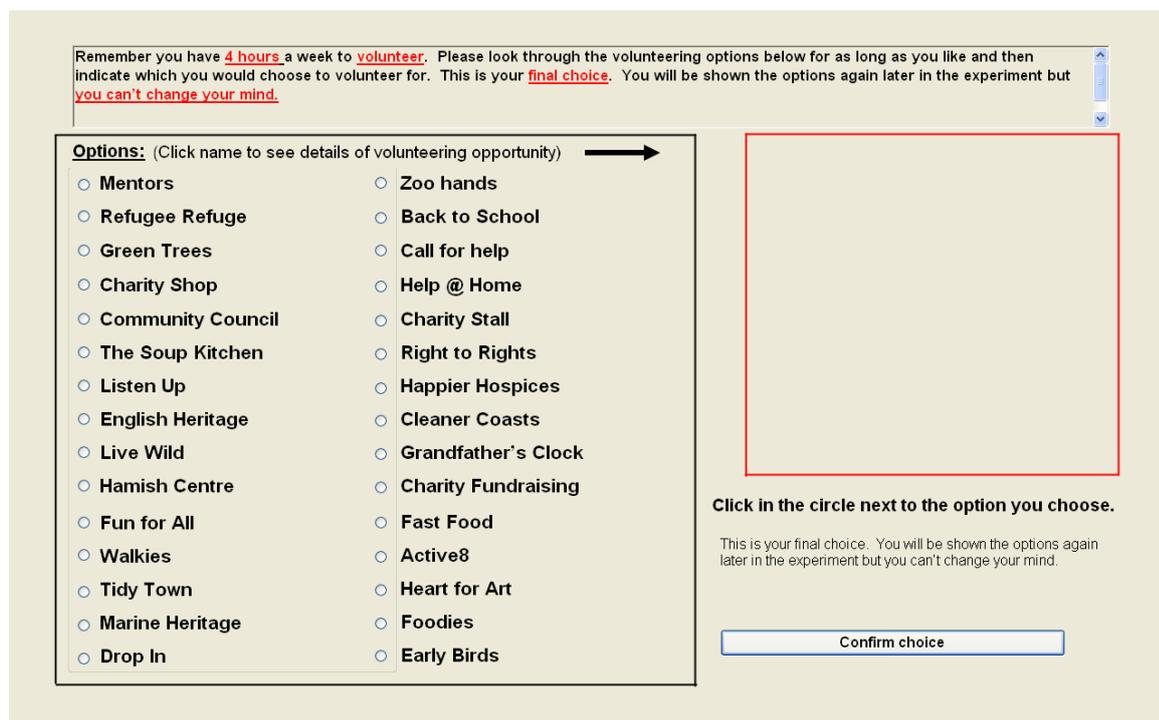


Figure 3.4. Study 5. A screen shot of the option screen seen by participants in the high choice non-reversible condition.

Participants had as long as they liked to look through the voluntary organisations and their details, and could re-look at organisation details as much as they liked. The computer

programme recorded a) the time taken to make a decision and b) each time an organisations' name was clicked, in order to monitor how many organisations were considered in more depth rather than relying on self-report data. Participants clicked to continue once they had chosen an organisation.

The second part of the experiment consisted of a computer filler task. The reason for this otherwise meaningless filler task being included in the experiment was to allow time to pass between participants seeing the options for the first time and making their choice and seeing the options for the second time. Often in real life situations people ruminate about their decisions and choices made and are often faced with the option set again at some point. In a laboratory experiment with a hypothetical decision it is difficult to replicate the real life effects of being able to reverse a decision and the psychological mechanisms that take place to help people justify or live with their decisions. This filler task was an attempt to do so, so that there would be opportunity for participants to ruminate about their decision and allow the reversibility aspect this experiment to be measured.

For the filler task, participants were required to sort, on screen, virtual coloured balls (black, white, blue or yellow; so as not to exclude participants that were colour blind) into their matching coloured side by clicking and dragging the ball on the screen with the mouse to the corresponding side. The task lasted three minutes with a new randomly coloured ball being presented immediately after the last ball had been sorted. Participants were instructed that they should try and colour sort as many balls as possible. A screen shot of the filler task can be seen in Figure 3.5.

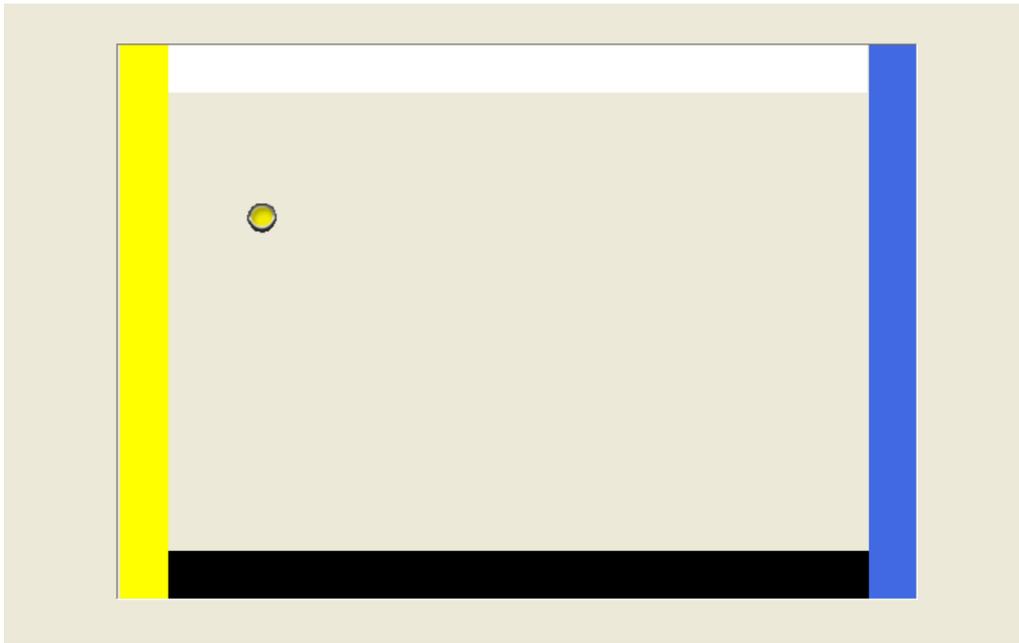


Figure 3.5. Study 5. A screenshot of the filler ball colour sorting task used in Study 5

In the third part of the experiment participants were presented again with the same volunteering organisations they had seen in the first part of the experiment (participants in the high choice condition saw all the options again but it was ensured that participants in the low choice condition would only see those organisations they had previously seen). They had as much time as they liked to look through the organisations again before clicking to continue with the experiment. Participants then answered thirteen questions based on the questions asked by Iyengar and Lepper (2000) about their choice and decision making process. The experiment took around 5-10 minutes to complete.

3.3.9.1 Parametric changes from Study 4

There were several parametric changes from Study 4. First, choice set size was experimentally manipulated rather than being determined freely by participants from an extensive array of choice. This was to experimentally investigate the too-much-choice effect in the context of volunteering decisions. Second, the volunteering organisations were

presented in a different format from those on Volunteering England's website used in Study 4; categorised and then presented in a 'list' format, in which voluntary organisations within categories were presented one after another on one webpage, which required scrolling down to see more options. In Study 5 the names of the voluntary organisations were all presented on one page. The names of the organisations could be clicked on to bring up the details of that volunteering opportunity. This was to enable me to record the number of organisations participants had looked at (via the number of clicks they had made) before making their decision. Third, participants were allowed as long as they liked to make their decision (rather than being made to consider the volunteering opportunities for 5 minutes). This was to enable people to spend as little or as long as they liked to choose the organisation they would most like to volunteer with, and also to find out how long it took people to choose an organisation from a small choice set compared to a large choice set. Fourth, the volunteering organisations/opportunities presented in Study 5 were hypothetical rather than actual organisations. This was to ensure that participants could not rely on option familiarity to help guide their decision. Further rationale was discussed in Section 3.3.7.

Fifth, participants saw the options they could choose from twice (interspersed with the filler colour sorting task). This was to investigate the effect of the reversibility of decisions which was not investigated in Study 4.

3.3.9.2 Spread of organisations chosen

The hypothetical organisations created appeared to be a good representation of the volunteering organisations available in the real world. The spread of organisations picked was good (see Figure 3.6). Out of the thirty possible organisations to pick from all were picked at least once during either the first or second presentation of the options.

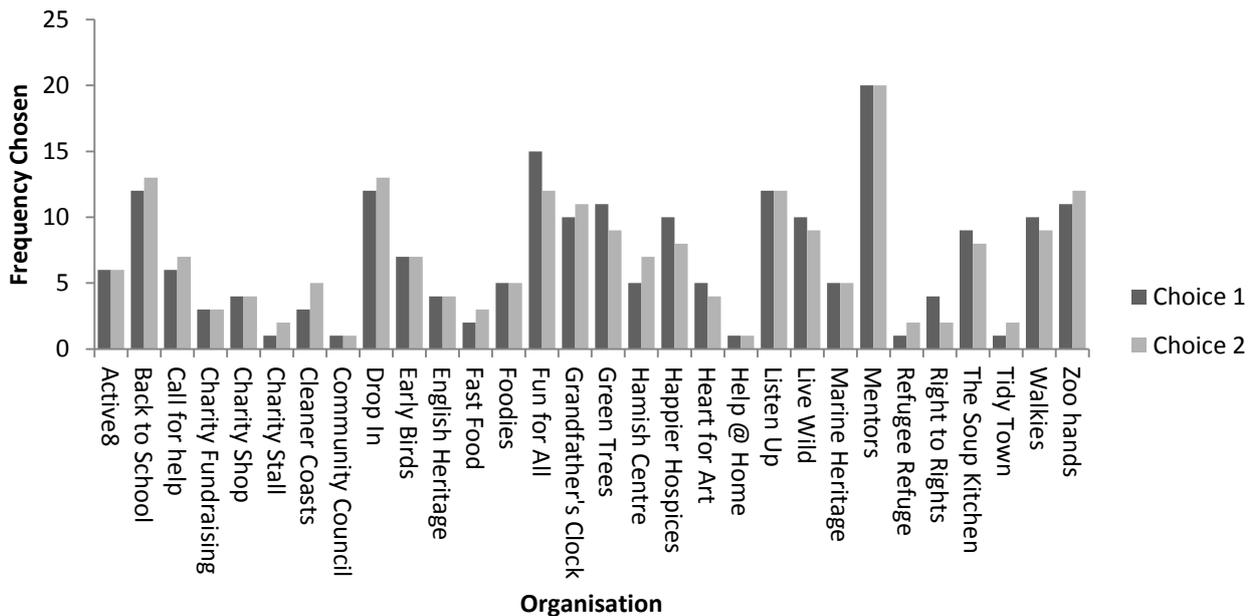


Figure 3.6. Study 5. The spread of organisations chosen to volunteer with the first time the options were presented (T1) and the second time the options were presented (T2)

3.3.9.3 Manipulation checks

The choice set sizes used (10 vs. 30) appeared to be appropriate. Participants in the relatively low choice condition viewed 10 options as “too few”⁷ ($M = -.35, SD = 1.38$) compared to zero $t(102) = -2.56, p < .01$ and subjects in the high choice condition viewed 30 options as “too many” ($M = .79, SD = 1.51$), compared to zero $t(102) = 5.28, p < .001$. Also,

⁷ Presented on a scale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

participants in the relatively low choice condition ($M = 7.92$, $SD = 4.35$) looked at fewer organisations (including re-looks) than subjects in the high choice condition ($M = 13.71$, $SD = 12.26$), $F(1,204) = 20.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$.

3.3.10 Results

The results of Study 5 are presented in two ways. Firstly, my main hypotheses were examined using only the items related to them as done previously in Study 4. This was because deferment likelihood was such an important dependant variable of my studies. Not only as an alternative manifestation of the too-much-choice effect to decision satisfaction typically studied in the choice literature (which I could not truly measure as participants did not actually volunteer with their chosen option) but also because finding out potential factors that influence deferment likelihood is crucial to volunteer recruitment and potentially increasing volunteer numbers. Deferment likelihood and decision difficulty of volunteering decisions were the key focus of my research and throughout all of my studies.

Secondly, however, as this research into the effect of choice amount was still exploratory in the context of volunteering, I felt it was important to investigate the effects of choice amount and decision reversibility on each item in my studies independently, as Iyengar and Lepper (2000) also did in their study. There were two reasons for this, firstly, to attempt to replicate their results in the novel context of volunteering, and secondly, to provide a broad overview of how choice amount may affect decisions about which organisation to volunteer for (for example in ways other than increased decision difficulty and deferment likelihood).

3.3.10.1 Effect of Choice Amount (H1)

Supporting H1, participants presented with 30 options were more likely to want to defer their decision ($M = .14, SD = 2.02$) than those shown 10 options ($M = -.41, SD = 1.88$), $t(204) = 1.99, p = .047$. Moreover, participants reported greater decision difficulty when presented with 30 than 10 options, $t(204) = -2.27, p = .02$ (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10. Study 5. Items, α 's and means for Deferment Likelihood and Decision Difficulty scales

DV	Items	α	Low Choice	High Choice
			M (SD)	M (SD)
Deferment Likelihood	If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would? ^b	-	-.41 (1.88)	.14 (2.02)
Decision Difficulty	Did you find it difficult to make your decision? ^b How certain are you that you made the right choice? (reversed) ^b How frustrated did you feel when making the choice ^b	.66	-1.42 (1.12)	-1.04 (1.29)

^a Presented on a scale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

^b Presented on a scale ranging from -3 (not at all) to +3 (extremely)

As with Study 4 a regression analysis was carried out to examine the extent to which decision difficulty mediated the effect of choice amount on deferment likelihood (see Table 3.11). The first two steps are analogous to the two t -tests presented above. Supporting H2, when both variables were entered in Step 3, the effect of choice amount was reduced to non-significance while that of decision difficulty was highly significant (see Table 3.11 and Figure 3.7).

Table 3.11. Study 5: Summary of the unstandardised Bs (Standard Errors), and standardised beta weights and p values for Choice Amount and Decision Difficulty regressed against Deferment Likelihood

	Step1 (Predicting Deferment)			Step 2 (Predicting Difficulty)			Step 3 (Predicting Deferment)		
	B (SE)	β	p	B (SE)	β	p	B (SE)	β	p
Choice amount	.54 (.27)	.14	.05	.38 (.17)	.16	.02	.28 (.25)	.07	.26
Decision Difficulty	-	-	-	-	-	-	.69 (.10)	.43	<.001
F	4.00			5.14			25.24		
R^2_{adjusted}	.01			.02			.19		

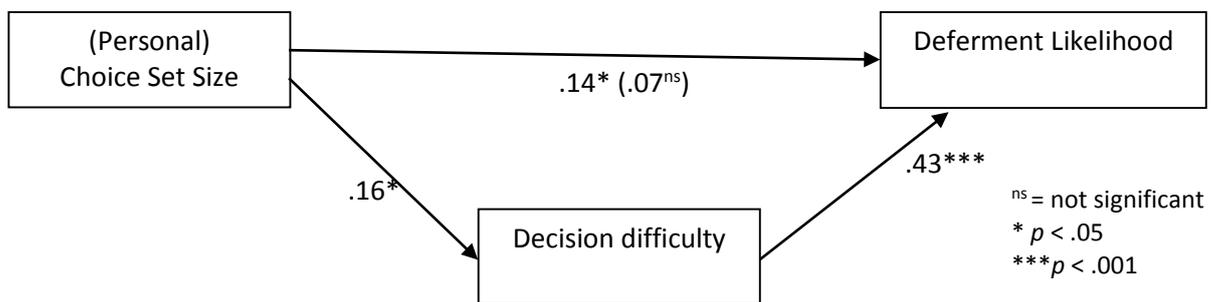


Figure 3.7. Study 5: Regression models predicting Deferment Likelihood for volunteering

3.3.10.2 Individual item exploratory analyses

The complete means and standard deviations for all items asked after participants had made their choice (for the final time in the case of participants in the reversible choice condition) for all conditions can be seen in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12. Study 5: Questions presented after second choice Exposure and the means and standard deviations of responses for all conditions.

Question	Condition	Mean	SD	N	
How much did you enjoy making your choice? ^a	Low	Reversible	.58	1.26	52
		Non-reversible	.43	1.49	51
	High	Reversible	.35	1.57	52
		Non-reversible	.55	1.59	51
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a	Low	Reversible	1.42	1.30	52
		Non-reversible	1.43	1.27	51
	High	Reversible	1.35	1.36	52
		Non-reversible	1.29	1.39	51
Did you find it difficult to make your decision? ^a	Low	Reversible	-.73	1.85	52
		Non-reversible	-1.06	1.63	51
	High	Reversible	-.21	1.85	52
		Non-reversible	-.57	2.02	51
If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would? ^a	Low	Reversible	-.62	1.83	52
		Non-reversible	-.20	1.93	51
	High	Reversible	.10	2.11	52
		Non-reversible	.18	1.95	51
How frustrated did you feel when making the choice? ^a	Low	Reversible	-1.98	1.26	52
		Non-reversible	-1.92	1.52	51
	High	Reversible	-1.33	1.67	52
		Non-reversible	-1.51	1.62	51
How satisfied do you think you would be if you volunteered with your chosen organisation? ^a	Low	Reversible	1.94	.85	52
		Non-reversible	1.49	1.30	51
	High	Reversible	1.87	.93	52
		Non-reversible	1.67	1.21	51
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would satisfy you? ^a	Low	Reversible	1.77	1.00	52
		Non-reversible	1.31	1.54	51
	High	Reversible	1.60	1.27	52
		Non-reversible	1.57	1.12	51
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would be amongst the best you could have chosen? ^a	Low	Reversible	1.13	1.27	52
		Non-reversible	1.33	1.32	51
	High	Reversible	1.21	1.35	52
		Non-reversible	.98	1.45	51
Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked? ^a	Low	Reversible	1.00	1.36	52
		Non-reversible	.90	1.51	51
	High	Reversible	.96	1.47	52
		Non-reversible	.51	1.80	51

How much do you regret choosing the volunteering organisation that you did? ^b	Low	Reversible	-2.12	1.17	52
		Non-reversible	-2.16	1.17	51
	High	Reversible	-2.29	.85	52
		Non-reversible	-2.10	1.33	51
Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better? ^c	Low	Reversible	-1.08	1.64	52
		Non-reversible	-1.20	1.51	51
	High	Reversible	-1.31	1.29	52
		Non-reversible	-.39	1.60	51

^aScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)

^bScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)

^cScale ranging from -3 (No, not at all) to +3 (Yes, completely)

^dScale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

3.3.10.3 Effect of choice amount

The means and standard deviations for all items as a result of choice amount can be seen in Table 3.13. ANOVAs were conducted to test for any differences as a result of choice amount. A bonferroni correction was performed to take into account the increased chances of obtaining a type 1 error as a result of running multiple comparisons. There were no significant differences as a result of choice amount.

3.3.10.4 Effect of reversibility

The means and standard deviations for all items as a result of choice reversibility can be seen in Table 3.14. ANOVAs were conducted to test for any differences as a result of choice reversibility. A bonferroni correction was performed to take into account the increased chances of obtaining a type 1 error as a result of running multiple comparisons. There were no significant differences due to the reversibility of a decision and as such H3 was refuted.

Table 3.13. Study 5: The effect of choice amount on post choice thoughts (Low choice n = 103, High choice n = 103)

Question	Low choice		High choice		df	F	p	η_p^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
How much did you enjoy making your choice? ^a	.50	1.37	.45	1.58	1	.08	.777	.000
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a	1.43	1.28	1.32	1.37	1	.34	.563	.002
Did you find it difficult to make your decision? ^a	-.89	1.74	-.39	1.94	1	3.87	.051	.019
If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would? ^a	-.41	1.88	.14	2.02	1	3.40	.047	.019
How frustrated did you feel when making the choice? ^a	-1.95	1.39	-1.42	1.64	1	6.38	.012	.030
How satisfied do you think you would be if you volunteered with your chosen organisation? ^a	1.72	1.12	1.77	1.08	1	.10	.751	.000
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would satisfy you? ^a	1.54	1.31	1.58	1.19	1	.05	.824	.000
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would be amongst the best you could have chosen? ^a	1.23	1.29	1.10	1.40	1	.53	.469	.003
Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked? ^a	.95	1.43	.74	1.65	1	.99	.322	.005
How much do you regret choosing the volunteering organisation that you did? ^b	-2.14	1.16	-2.19	1.11	1	.14	.714	.001
Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better? ^c	-1.14	1.57	-.85	1.52	1	1.71	.192	.008

^aScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)

^bScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)

^cScale ranging from -3 (No, not at all) to +3 (Yes, completely)

^dScale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

Note: Adjusted alpha level with Bonferroni correction: .005

Table 3.14. Study 5: The effect of reversibility on post choice thoughts (Reversible n = 104, Non-reversible = 102). Df = 1,204

Question	Reversible		Non-reversible		df	F	p	η_p^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
How much did you enjoy making your choice? ^a	.46	1.42	.49	1.53	1	.02	.889	.00
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a	1.38	1.32	1.36	1.33	1	.01	.906	.00
Did you find it difficult to make your decision? ^a	-.47	1.86	-.81	1.84	1	1.76	.186	.01
If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would? ^a	-.26	2.00	-.01	1.94	1	.83	.363	.00
How frustrated did you feel when making the choice? ^a	-1.65	1.51	-1.72	1.58	1	.08	.774	.00
How satisfied do you think you would be if you volunteered with your chosen organisation? ^a	1.90	.89	1.58	1.25	1	4.64	.032	.02
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would satisfy you? ^a	1.68	1.14	1.44	1.35	1	1.93	.166	.01
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would be amongst the best you could have chosen? ^a	1.17	1.30	1.16	1.39	1	.01	.931	.00
Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked? ^a	.98	1.41	.71	1.67	1	1.64	.202	.01
How much do you regret choosing the volunteering organisation that you did? ^b	-2.20	1.02	-2.13	1.25	1	.22	.639	.00
Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better? ^c	-1.19	1.48	-.79	1.60	1	3.45	.065	.02

^aScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)

^bScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)

^cScale ranging from -3 (No, not at all) to +3 (Yes, completely)

^dScale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

Note: Adjusted alpha level with Bonferroni correction: .005

3.3.10.4.1 Interaction between choice amount and reversibility

There were no significant interactions between choice amount and reversibility when a bonferroni correction was applied to the multiple comparisons. The significance values for interactions between choice amount and reversibility for all items can be seen in Table 3.15.

Table 3.15. Study 5: The interaction between choice amount and reversibility. Df = 1,202

Question	df	F	p	η_p^2
How much did you enjoy making your choice? ^a	1	.71	.400	.00
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a	1	.03	.871	.00
Did you find it difficult to make your decision? ^a	1	.00	.955	.00
If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would? ^a	1	.39	.535	.00
How frustrated did you feel when making the choice? ^a	1	.33	.569	.00
How satisfied do you think you would be if you volunteered with your chosen organisation? ^a	1	.70	.404	.00
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would satisfy you? ^a	1	1.51	.220	.01
How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would be amongst the best you could have chosen? ^a	1	1.31	.254	.01
Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked? ^a	1	.68	.412	.00
How much do you regret choosing the volunteering organisation that you did? ^b	1	.53	.467	.00
Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better? ^c	1	5.99	.015	.03

^aScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Extremely)

^bScale ranging from -3 (Not at all) to +3 (Completely)

^cScale ranging from -3 (No, not at all) to +3 (Yes, completely)

^dScale ranging from -3 (I felt that I had too few options to choose from) to +3 (I felt that I had too many options to choose from)

Note: Adjusted alpha level with Bonferroni correction: .005

3.3.11 Additional analyses

3.3.11.1.1 Time taken

The time taken for participants to choose the organisation they would most like to volunteer for the first time they were presented with the options is considered here. An outlier analysis revealed that there were eleven participants that took longer than 3 standard deviations from the mean time for their condition to make their decision. Therefore, these eleven people's time taken will be excluded from time analyses only. The time taken to make a decision for all conditions can be seen in Table 3.16.

There was a significant main effect of choice amount on how long it took people to make their decision; people in the low choice conditions took less time ($M = 80.21$, $SD = 36.14s$) than people in the high choice conditions ($M = 108.58s$, $SD = 46.06s$), $F(1, 191) = 21.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. There was no effect of reversibility on the time taken to make a decision, $F(1, 191) = .35$, $p = .553$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, nor an interaction between choice amount and reversibility, $F(1, 191) = 1.95$, $p = .164$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$.

Table 3.16. Study 5. Time taken to choose organisation to volunteer with for all conditions. Df = 1, 191

High or low choice		Mean (secs)	SD (secs)	N
Low	Reversible	75.06	33.40	52
	Non-reversible	86.81	38.21	50
	Total	80.21	36.14	102
High	Reversible	110.87	50.21	48
	Non-reversible	106.13	41.61	45
	Total	108.58	46.06	93
Total	Reversible	92.25	45.77	100
	Non-reversible	95.96	40.81	95
	Total	94.06	43.31	195

3.3.11.1.2 Open ended responses

As with Study 4, participants' responses as to how their choices could have been made easier indicated the problems of choosing from unstructured choice sets, similar options and large numbers of options. Intriguingly these issues were raised in both the relatively low and high choice conditions.

3.3.12 Discussion

Study 5 provided further evidence that the too-much choice effect exists for volunteering decisions. In a more controlled laboratory study which manipulated choice set sizes I found that choosing from a large array of options caused people to experience difficulty during the decision making process and this in turn led them to be more likely to defer a decision rather than choose an organisation to volunteer with, compared to choosing from a small array of options. The findings also suggest (which Study 4 could not have been certain of) that choosing from a greater number of options leads to greater decision difficulty (rather than the other way round). The findings from Study 5 highlight that the extensive amount of voluntary organisations for people to choose from could be potential problem for recruiting new volunteers. People may experience difficulty in choosing an organisation to volunteer for and end up deferring a decision. People's responses as to how their choices could have been made easier again indicated the difficulties of choosing from unstructured choice sets, similar options and large numbers of options.

Whether a persons' decision was reversible or not did not affect their decision making experience, nor their feelings towards any choice made. One possible reason for the reversibility of a decision not having the effect that I predicted could be that the time spent

doing the colour sorting task (3 minutes) was not enough time to elicit the PIS and for participants to ruminate about their decision and possible options. Also, as this study involved participants making a hypothetical choice, they did not actually experience volunteering with their chosen organisation. Because there were no real direct consequences/outcomes to the participant as a result of the decision they made, perhaps the reversibility manipulation was irrelevant. Participants may have treated the conditions as the same because in both conditions their choice had little impact on their lives. They did not have to volunteer with their chosen organisation as a result. If participants had been made to actually volunteer with their chosen organisation this could have triggered the PIS system and participants may have responded differently according to the reversibility of their decision.

3.3.13 General discussion

The findings from Study 4 suggested that the too-much-choice effect may extend to volunteering decisions. People that considered a greater number of organisations to volunteer for found making a decision more difficult than those that considered a smaller amount of options. This increased level of difficulty experienced led people to be more likely to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for. Study 5 experimentally tested the too-much-choice effect and was the first to find evidence of the too-much-choice effect in the domain of volunteering decisions, specifically which organisation to volunteer for. Both studies add to the limited body of research investigating the effects of choosing from different choice amounts for experiential rather than material choices and also for a more important/consequential decision than the majority of the choice literature to date. The main finding from studies 4 and 5 was that people were more

likely to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer with if they choose from a large choice set (e.g., Study 5: 30 options) than a small choice set. The findings suggest that choosing an organisation to volunteer with is a complex decision made more difficult as a result of the sheer number of volunteering possibilities. The more volunteer organisations individuals consider, the less likely they may be to firmly commit to any of them. Since people often fail to revisit deferred decisions (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002), this could have significant implications for volunteer recruitment. Given that increasing volunteer numbers is a crucial part of the policy for delivering public services, the current growth rate of the voluntary sector may actually be self-defeating. Not only may it be splitting the volunteer community thinly across even more organisations but it may also discourage others from volunteering altogether.

However, despite the consistency of the findings across the two studies a number of limitations should be recognised. Firstly, all of the participants in Study 4 and most in Study 5 were students and it remains to be seen whether other potential sectors of the volunteering community would show similar effects. As noted in Section 1.6.9 however, students are an important part of the volunteer community so the use of students in this research seems justifiable. I also recognise that it may not simply be the number of organisations, but the number of features relating to each organisation that may be important for decision difficulty and deferment (Greifeneder, Scheibehenne & Kleber, 2010).

The choice in these studies was hypothetical (participants did not go on to actually experience volunteering with their chosen organisation); it may be that in the case of a real decision the difficulties experienced may be greater as the final option chosen will have real consequences. To further increase the ecological validity of these findings, choice set sizes in further studies should be increased to investigate whether when presented with an even larger number of options the too-much-choice effect occurs to a greater extent than for the

two studies presented in this chapter, and to aim to closer replicate the sheer number of volunteering opportunities that are available to potential volunteers in real life.

People were aware of the benefits of aids to facilitate decisions when faced with extensive choice. They indicated the importance of structure and guidance to help them make their decision. Categorisation has been shown to help guide decisions yet preserve the perception of variety from which to choose (Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar, 2008). Categorisation of potential volunteering opportunities needs to be easily understandable and effective at directing people towards organisations that would interest them whilst ensuring categorisation was good enough to ensure that only a smaller more manageable number of options were seen in the chosen category. Given the importance of this issue, the effect of categorisation as a facilitator for decisions with extensive choice is investigated in Study 6 (see Section 4.1). People also indicated the importance of social norms when making decisions; they wanted to know the experiences of others to assist them in making their decision (social norms are discussed briefly in Section 1.5.2.3).

Given that I did indeed find evidence of the too-much-choice effect in the context of choosing an organisation to volunteer with, from hereon in the focus of my research switched to investigating choice architectures that could be implemented to facilitate decisions with an extensive array of volunteering options from which to choose.

4 Potential Choice Architectures for Choosing from an Extensive Choice Set

Studies 4 and 5 confirmed that choosing from an extensive set of options, at least within an ‘online’ context, led people to be more likely to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for, ultimately undermining volunteer recruitment. A simple solution to the problem would be to reduce the choice set size to encourage people to choose an option rather than defer their decision (and possibly never return to it; Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002). For consumer decisions this is plausible. For example product brands could reduce the selection of options in their product range and see an increase in their overall sales as a result (e.g., Procter & Gamble, as cited in Iyengar, 2006). This is not possible in the case of volunteering though. There are over 171,000 voluntary organisations in the UK (The UK Civil Society Almanac, 2009) all providing valuable services. Every one of these organisations relies on volunteers to ensure they can run effectively and provide the services they offer, and as such are competing against one another for active members. They all have to advertise and campaign for new members constantly. Volunteering ‘comparison’ websites such as (www.do-it.org) enable organisations to promote themselves whilst also being an easily accessible central source of information for potential volunteers to search through possible volunteering opportunities. On sites such as www.do-it.org or at volunteering events such as the volunteering induction evening in Study 3 (see Section 2.1.4) the number of organisations cannot be reduced as clearly this would be detrimental in terms of volunteer recruitment for the organisations that were not able to promote their volunteering opportunities to potential volunteers.

As potential volunteers searching for an organisation are likely to have to choose from an extensive set of organisations they may experience the too-much-choice effect and as a result may be tempted to put off a decision undermining the recruitment of new volunteers. Therefore it is important to investigate choice architectures that could be put in place to make the decision easier for potential volunteers. Three potential facilitators of choosing from extensive choice sets are considered in the following chapter, specifically: option categorisation (Study 6, see Section 4.1), presentation format (box vs. list; Study 7, see Section 4.2) and option familiarity (familiar vs. non-familiar; Study 8, see Section 4.3). The aim, in each case, was to see whether a choice architecture could be developed to reduce the degree to which potential volunteers who use comparison websites to choose an organisation to volunteer with, might defer a decision because of choice overload as a result of having been faced with an extensive choice set.

Studies 4 and 5 demonstrated that for volunteering decisions, choosing from an extensive choice set is more difficult than choosing from a limited choice set, and that this greater the level of difficulty led to a greater likelihood of decision deferment. The findings of these studies provided evidence of the too-much-choice effect, manifested by an increase in deferment likelihood, in the novel context of volunteering. Given that the too-much-choice effect may exist for volunteering decisions, and that the number of possible outlets for which people to volunteer with is an extensive choice that is unlikely to reduce in size, the focus of the thesis from this point switches from investigating the effects of choosing from low vs. high choice sets to investigating potential choice architectures that may facilitate decision making in the face of extensive choice (with the exception of Study 8 which did also include a high vs. low choice manipulation).

4.1 Study 6 – The Effect of Categorisation on Volunteering

Decisions

The too-much-choice effect was demonstrated in Studies 4 and 5 manifested as an increased incidence of deferment likelihood as a result of increased decision difficulty during the decision making process when choosing from an extensive set of options in an online context. These negative effects of choosing an organisation from a set of extensive organisations were exhibited when choosing from a relatively large choice set consisting of 30 options in Study 5 (see Section 3.3). As mentioned previously though, the number of options potential volunteers may come across during their search for an organisation to volunteer for is likely to be much greater (often over 100; see Section 1.7.3) and as a result of the greater complexity of the decision, the negative consequences of the too-much-choice effect may be even more debilitating and increase deferment likelihood further still. Therefore the remaining studies presented in this thesis increase the number of voluntary organisations presented to 70. This was an attempt to more closely replicate the decision making process a potential volunteer may experience (in terms of choice amount) in a real life situation, but also for methodological reasons in designing the studies and their choice architectures (e.g., Study 6, see Section 4.1: to ensure a sufficient number of categories and number of options within categories; Study 7, see Section 4.2: to ensure participants had to scroll down and change pages to see all the options available in Study 7, see Section 4.3; and to assign participants to a familiar or unfamiliar choice set as a result of their prior familiarity with organisations, whilst still ensuring there was a low vs. high choice set to compare).

4.1.1 Rationale

Study 6 was the first of my studies to investigate the effects manipulating the choice architecture in line with theoretical insights into what factors might facilitate decisions from extensive choice sets. Specifically the study aimed to investigate whether providing categories of option (or types of organisation) might reduce the likelihood of the too-much-choice effect occurring. Mogilner, et al., (2008) showed through field and laboratory studies a mere categorisation effect on the satisfaction with chosen options in the context of consumer purchases (magazines and coffee). People were more satisfied with their choice if the choice set was divided into categories. They claim that satisfaction with chosen options may be attributed to perceived differences among options rather than the objective number of options available and that satisfaction levels differed for preference constructors (people that were unfamiliar with the options and had to establish their preferences as they compared the options and made their decision) and preference matchers (people that were familiar with the options and effectively just had to search for their desired option or its closest alternative).

Preference constructors were more satisfied with their choices and perceived the choice set as more varied when the choice set was highly categorised (18 categories) than when there were few (3) categories. This effect was mediated by perceived variety. There was no effect of categorisation on preference matchers, although preference matchers were generally more satisfied with their choices than preference constructors (Mogilner, et al., 2008). The difference in choosing for preference constructing and preferences matching is investigated in more detail in Study 8, see Section 4.3 where participants were allocated to a choice set based on their familiarity with the options. Mogilner et al. (2008) also suggest that having more categories (rather than few) may facilitate a choosers' (particularly when constructing preferences) differentiation between options leading them to feel

greater satisfaction with their choice. They then suggest that the categorisation of options may be an alternative to reducing choice overload without having to reduce the number of options in a choice set. It is this aspect that Study 6 aimed to investigate for volunteering decisions.

4.1.2 Hypotheses

My main hypothesis (H1) was that categorising options (e.g., into volunteering sectors such as 'environmental', 'adult health care', 'arts' etc.) would facilitate decision making, resulting in an extensive choice set being made more manageable and reducing decision difficulty.

My secondary hypothesis (H2) was that this would result in a decrease in decision deferment.

My third hypothesis (H3) was that these effects would be greater, the greater the number of categories used to divide the options and the smaller the option set size within categories.

My final hypothesis (H4) was that categorisation of options would result in greater satisfaction with a chosen option.

4.1.3 Participants

Ninety-two participants took part in the study (33 male, 59 female) aged between 16 and 69 ($M = 34.36$ yrs) based mainly in the South-west of England (e.g., Devon, Cornwall, Wiltshire) but with one participant in Manchester, one in Scotland, and one in Germany. The majority of participants were recruited via word of mouth; people were encouraged to pass on the website link for other people to participate. Some participants were students at the

University of Plymouth and took part in the study in return for a participation point as part of the Psychology department's participation point scheme.

In total, thirty-seven participants were students. The majority studied at Plymouth University (29), but 8 Universities/colleges were represented in total. Of these 37 students, the majority were Psychology students (26). Other courses studied were Environmental sciences (1), 18th century methods (1) and law (1) amongst others. Ten were in their first year of study, 23 in their second year and 4 in their third year of study.

Fifty-five participants were employed. The occupations represented were varied and included an accountant, a civil engineer, teachers and a technical manager.

4.1.4 Design

The study was a 3(Option categorisation: 0/5/10) factorial design. All participants were presented with a high number of options (70) from which to select an organisation to volunteer for. In one condition, participants were simply presented with all 70 options with no categorisation (equivalent to Study 5). In a second condition organisations were grouped into 10 categories (7 options each) and in a third condition, organisations were grouped into 5 categories (14 options each). There were thus three conditions with different levels of categorisation.

4.1.5 Materials

The study was computer based and was programmed by Anthony Mee, a Senior Technician/Programmer in the School of Psychology at the University of Plymouth. The study could be accessed online from the following link:

www.psy.plymouth.ac.uk/onlineresearch/LCCaVAB. Participants were allocated to a condition at the time of them clicking the link to take part in the study.

4.1.5.1 Voluntary organisations, categories and the number of options presented

The volunteering organisations presented in the study were real organisations. The volunteering opportunity details were constructed from information on each volunteering organisation's website and standardised as much as possible in terms of content and length. Where this was not possible (for instance local dog and cat kennels specific to areas, rather than nationally known organisations), generic volunteering opportunities were created based on specific organisations, and participants were told that they could volunteer at their 'local centre'.

To ensure variability within the choice set 10 categories were created: Environment, Conservation, Arts, Heritage, Adult health care, Adult social care, Child health care, Child social care, Animal protection, and Animal care. There were seven volunteering opportunities within each category. The categories and organisations within them can be seen in Appendix F.

4.1.5.2 Items

The items used in Study 6 can be seen in Table 4.1. The majority of the items are identical to those used in Study 5. There were a few changes however. The items "How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would satisfy you?" and "How confident are you that this organisation would be amongst the best you could have chosen?" were dropped for

three reasons, 1) as there were no differences as a result of choice amount in Study 5, 2) Iyengar and Lepper (2000) also found insignificant findings with these items, and 3) people's decision strategy (e.g., maximising vs. satisficing) was not the main focus of my research. "Do you feel you made a well informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked?" was also dropped for the same reasons. "Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better?" (Study 5) was replaced with "Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options" as I felt it was a better item to measure counterfactual thinking (e.g., Hafner et al, 2012). Also, an additional item to measure deferment likelihood was added in Study 6: "Ideally I'd like more time to make my decision" to add reliability to any findings.

Table 4.1. Study 6: Items used

Question
How much did you enjoy it? ^a
How frustrated did you feel? ^a
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a
The number of options I saw was... ^b
Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^c
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^d
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^a
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^e
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^d
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a
How interested are you in volunteering? ^a

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

^b-4 (too few) to +4 (too many)

^c-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^e-4 (not at all) to +4 (completely)

Once again, composite measures of deferment likelihood and decision difficulty were computed using the same items as Study 5 (with the addition of "Ideally I'd like more time

to think before making my decision” added for deferment likelihood). The internal scale consistencies were reliable, see Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Study 6: Item groupings and scale reliabilities

DV	Items	α
Deferment Likelihood	Ideally I’d like more time to think before making my decision If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would?	.86
Decision Difficulty	Did you find it difficult to make your decision? How certain are you that you made the right choice? (reversed) How frustrated did you feel when making the choice	.58

4.1.5.3 Spread of organisations chosen

The spread of organisations chosen was good and can be seen in Figure 4.1. Out of the 70 possible organisations to pick from, 43 were ranked number 1 (as the organisation people would most like to volunteer with) at least once.

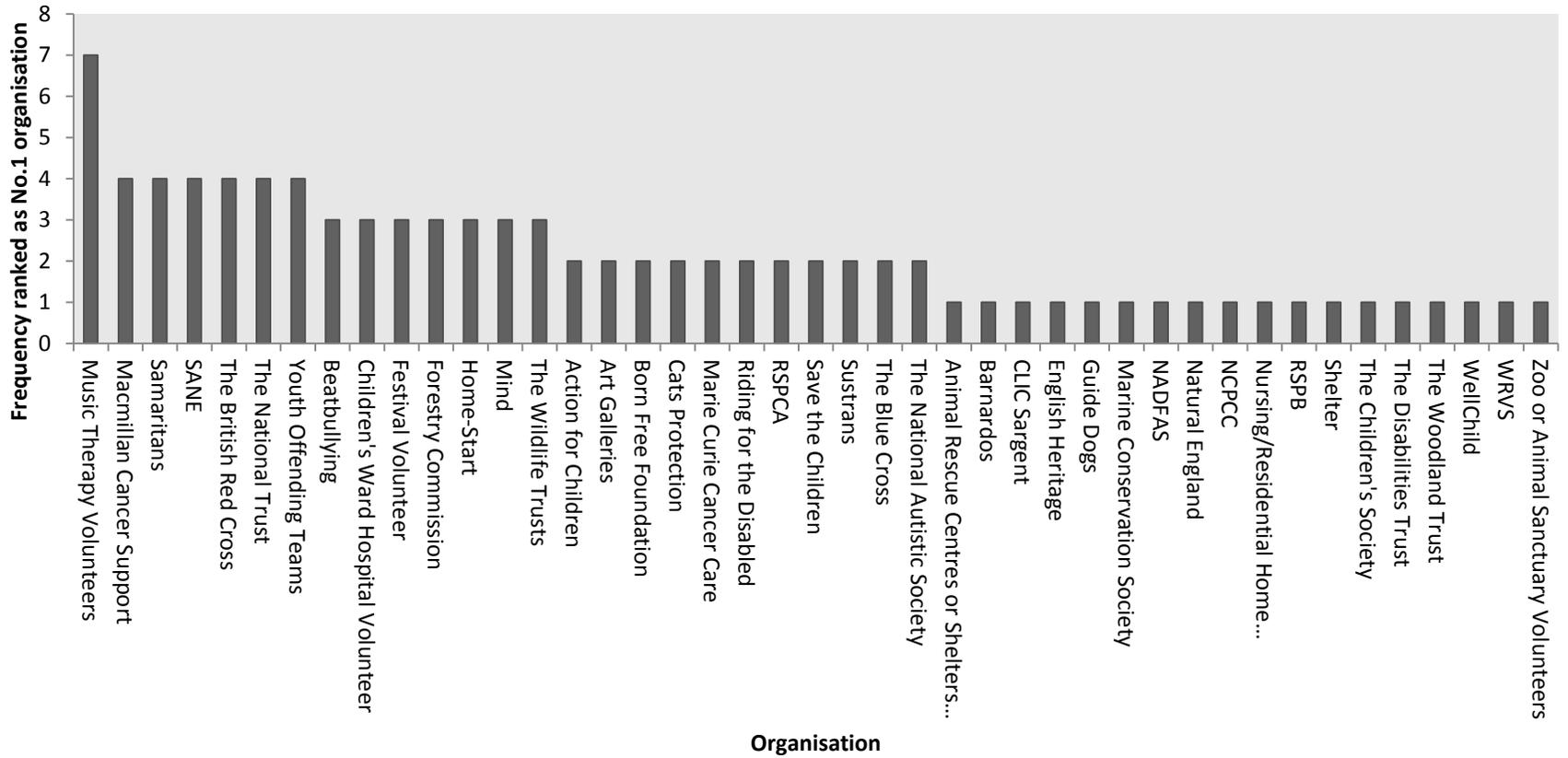


Figure 4.1. Study 6. The frequency of no.1 rankings for organisations

4.1.6 Procedure

Participants clicked on the web link to the study. They were presented with a written brief outlining the study and what they would be required to do. They clicked to continue if they still wanted to take part in the study.

Firstly, participants were asked whether they were currently undertaking any volunteering activities, and if they were, roughly how many hours they spent volunteering a month. They were also asked at this point how interested they were in volunteering on a scale from -4 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). Participants then read three short paragraphs of information about the benefits of volunteering, some quotes from volunteers and service users, and how someone might go about making a decision about which organisation to volunteer with.

Participants were then asked to imagine that they had four hours a week spare that they had decided to spend volunteering. They were asked to behave as if they were making a decision about which organisation to volunteer with as they would in real life and were told that they would have as long as they liked to look through volunteering options and rank the top five organisations they would most like to volunteer with. They were made aware that they could look at as many options as they liked, as many times as they liked (relook at organisation details). Following this, participants were presented with the option screens for them to make their choices. These screens varied dependent on the condition that they were in, but every participant was presented with all 70 organisations.

Participants in the no category condition saw all the options uncategorised and presented in a random order on one screen (see Figure 4.2).

Recap: Look through the voluntary organisations and rank your top five organisations in order (1 = Top choice). Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity – a pop-up box will appear. From here you can select where you'd like to rank that organisation.

WRVS	RSPB	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation	Forestry Commission	Museums
NADFAS	Bat Conservation Trust	The Children's Society	Sustrans	Action for Children
Marie Curie Cancer Care	Guide Dogs	Animal Aid	CLIC Sargent	The Churches Conservation Trust
Cats Protection	The Disabilities Trust	Marine Conservation Society	Art Fund	Mind
Children's Ward Hospital Volunteer	Music Therapy Volunteers	Natural England	The National Autistic Society	Oral History Society
SANE	The Wildlife Trusts	Shelter	Samaritans	Greenpeace
The National Trust	Council for British Archaeology	Environmental Justice Foundation	Whizz-Kidz	Macmillan Cancer Support
Barnardos	The Prince's Trust	WellChild	Dog and Cat Kennels	The Blue Cross
Art Galleries	PDSA	Crisis	Festival Volunteer	WWF
Youth Offending Teams	Sea Watch Foundation	Animal Rescue Centres or Shelters volunteers	NCPC	BTCV
RSPCA	Rethink	Save the Children	The British Red Cross	Environmental Investigation Agency
The Woodland Trust	Nursing/Residential Home Volunteers	Born Free Foundation	Cathedral Camps	National Animal Welfare Trust
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament	Friends of the Earth	Hospital Radio	Home-Start	Library Volunteer
English Heritage	Riding for the Disabled	Beatbullying	Envision	Zoo or Animal Sanctuary Volunteers

Top Five Choices

You can change the order of your rankings by clicking on the up/down arrows next to your choices. You can also delete your choices by clicking the red 'x'.

1

2

3

4

5

Figure 4.2. Study 6. Screenshot of no category condition option screen

Participants in the five category condition saw the five category names in boxes on the screen in a random order (see Figure 4.3). These category boxes could be clicked on to take participants to the option screen for each individual category (see Figure 4.4). Here participants saw the 14 options for each category presented in a random order. They could return to the categories screen at any time and could look at options from any category they wished as many times as they liked.

Recap: Look through the voluntary organisations and rank your top five organisations in order (1 = Top choice). Click on a category name to see volunteering opportunities within that category. Then click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity – a pop-up box will appear. From here you can select where you'd like to rank that organisation.

Environment and Conservation Arts and Heritage Animal Welfare

Child Health and Social Care Adult Health and Social Care

Top Five Choices

You can change the order of your rankings by clicking on the up/down arrows next to your choices.

You can also delete your choices by clicking the red 'x'.

1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="↑"/>
<input type="button" value="x"/>		<input type="button" value="↓"/>
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="↑"/>
<input type="button" value="x"/>		<input type="button" value="↓"/>
3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="↑"/>
<input type="button" value="x"/>		<input type="button" value="↓"/>
4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="↑"/>
<input type="button" value="x"/>		<input type="button" value="↓"/>
5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="↑"/>
<input type="button" value="x"/>		<input type="button" value="↓"/>

Figure 4.3. Study 6. Five category screenshot

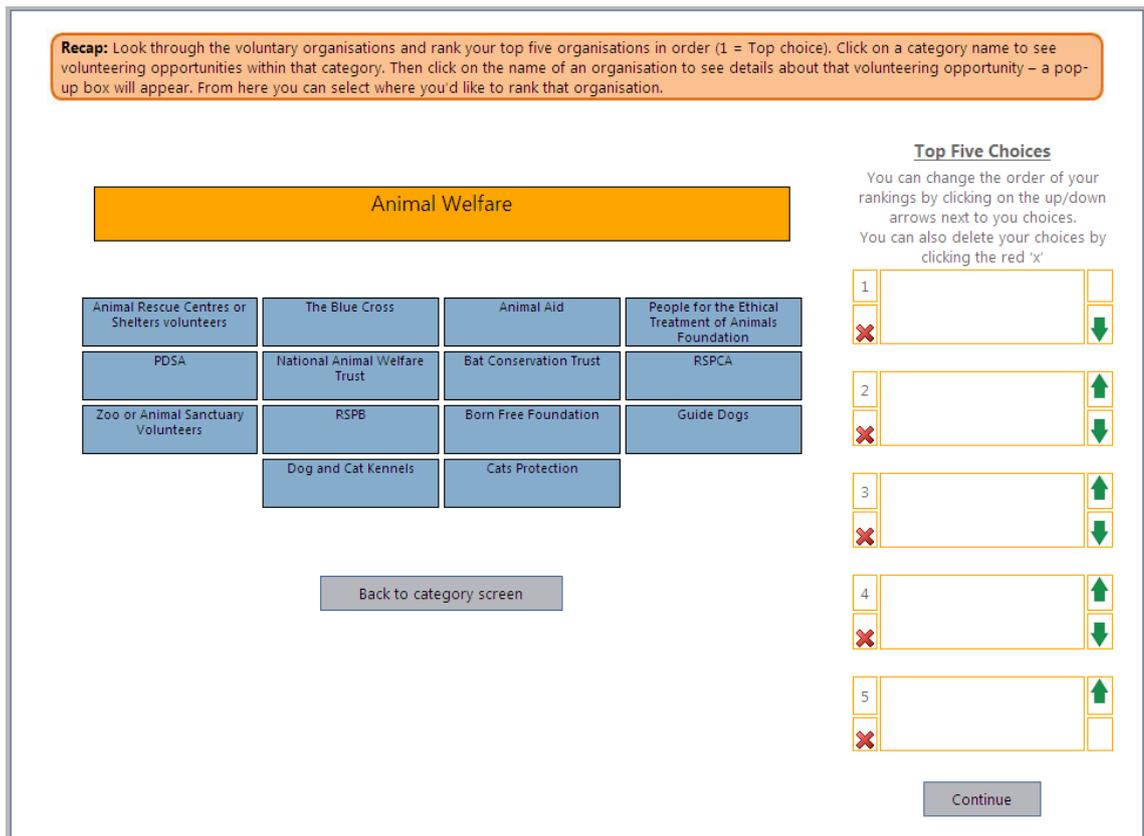


Figure 4.4. Study 6. Five category condition, individual category options screenshot

Participants in the ten category condition saw the ten category names in boxes on the screen in a random order (see

Figure 4.5. Study 6. Ten category screenshot

). As with the five category condition, these boxes could be clicked on to take participants to the option screen for each individual category which contained 7 organisations presented in a random order (see Figure 4.6). They could return to the categories screen at any time and

could look at options from any category they wished as many times as they liked.

Recap: Look through the voluntary organisations and rank your top five organisations in order (1 = Top choice). Click on a category name to see volunteering opportunities within that category. Then click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity – a pop-up box will appear. From here you can select where you'd like to rank that organisation.

Child Social Care **Adult Social Care** **Animal Care**

Animal Protection **Arts** **Heritage**

Conservation **Adult Health Care** **Environment**

Child Health Care

Top Five Choices
You can change the order of your rankings by clicking on the up/down arrows next to your choices. You can also delete your choices by clicking the red 'x'

1

2

3

4

5

Figure 4.5. Study 6. Ten category screenshot

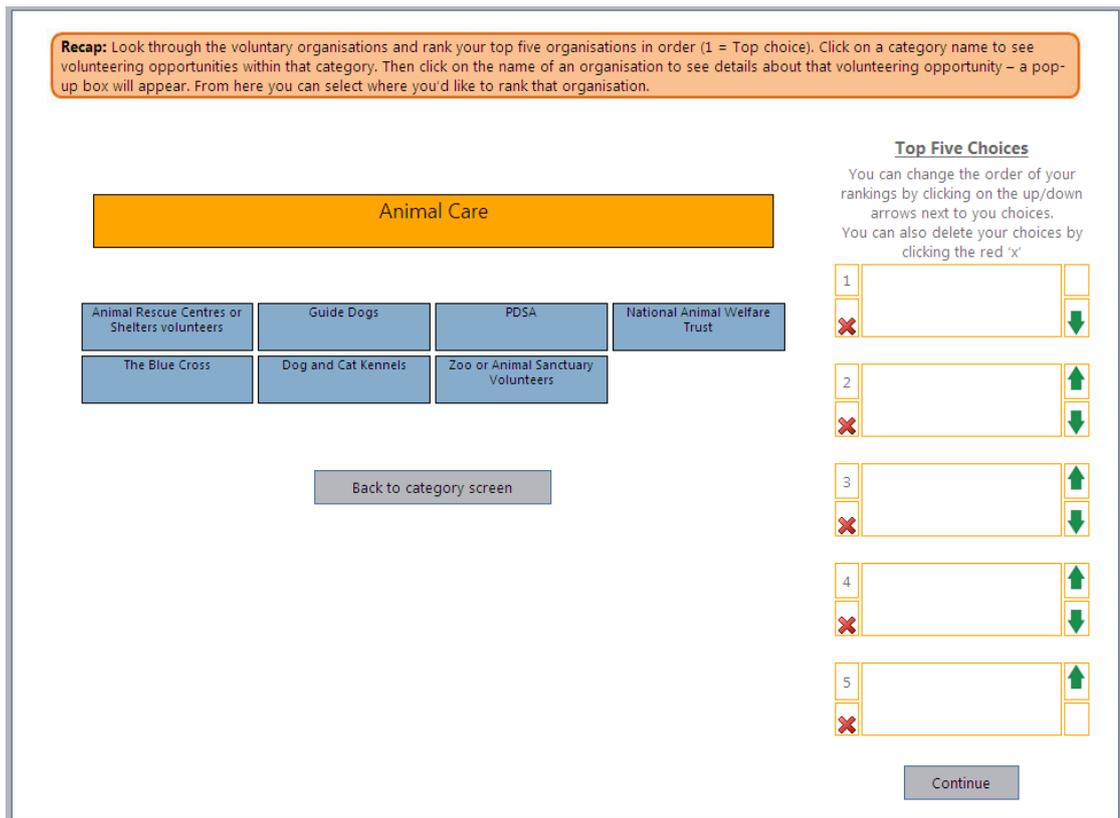


Figure 4.6. Study 6. Ten category condition, individual category options screenshot

For all conditions, the boxes with the names of organisations could be clicked on to bring up a pop-up box containing specific volunteering details and information for that organisation. From here a ranking for the organisation could be selected and could be viewed at the right hand side of the screen (this ranking section was present on every screen during participants' choosing process). Organisations that had been ranked in the top five could be removed from the top five of their ranking or changed at any time using the controls on the right hand side of the screen. Participants were required to rank their top five organisations from 1 (their most favoured organisation to volunteer with) to 5 (their fifth most favoured organisation to volunteer with). Participants could also re-view the volunteering information for the organisations they had given a ranking selection to. They could not continue with the experiment until they had ranked their top five organisations.

Once they had made their decisions and submitted their choices, participants were informed that there were volunteering places available at their top ranked organisation and they should imagine that they had been given a volunteering place at that organisation. They were reminded which organisation they had ranked number one and the details of that volunteering opportunity.

Participants were then asked a series of questions about their decision making process and the choice they made. The questions asked can be seen in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Study 6. Questions asked to participants

Question
How much did you enjoy it? ^a
How frustrated did you feel? ^a
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a
The number of options I saw was... ^b
Even though I've made my first choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^c
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^d
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^a
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^e
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^d
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a
How interested are you in volunteering? ^a

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

^b-4 (too few) to +4 (too many)

^c-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^e-4 (not at all) to +4 (completely)

Following this they were asked several demographic questions including, age, gender, current location and whether they were a student or not. If they were a student they were asked which college/University they attended, which course they studied and which year of study they were in. If they were not a student they were asked what their occupation was.

Lastly, they were asked whether they would like to see the contact details of the organisation they had ranked number one. If they answered 'yes' they were presented with

a link to that organisation's website and then an onscreen debrief. If they answered 'no' they were presented with an onscreen debrief.

4.1.6.1 Parametric changes from Study 5

I changed two methodological aspects of the experimental design from Study 5 for the present study to add ecological validity. Firstly, participants chose which organisation they would most like to volunteer with from real organisations (rather than hypothetical ones) in which they could actually volunteer with in real life should they wish and may have encountered prior to the study. Secondly, I presented participants with 70 organisations from which to choose as this reflects more closely the number of organisations that potential volunteers would be likely to face when searching online for an organisation to volunteer for.

Secondly, something to note from Study 5 was how little time it took participants to make their decision about which organisation they would most like to volunteer with; less than two minutes. Although the choice participants made was hypothetical and did not have any direct consequences for them or their lives, I would have expected that choosing an organisation to volunteer with would have been regarded as a more important decision than many consumer decisions, so perhaps would have expected participants to take longer deliberating over their choice than they did. Although Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo and Reutskaja (2010) reported that people spent less than 3 minutes to decide which hospital they should receive treatment in for an imagined problem in their study. Therefore, in order to try and change perceptions regarding the importance of the decision I included several screens prior to choice exposure that participants were required to read. These highlighted the benefits of volunteering for the individual and the community and included hypothetical

quotes from volunteers and voluntary organisation services users as to the impact it had had on their lives. I hoped that this would encourage participants to treat their decision more as if they were making the decision in real life and as a result may spend longer deliberating and coming to a final decision about which organisation to volunteer with. This in turn may lead them to be more likely to experience the negative consequences of the too-much-choice-effect. Another change that I implemented to try and encourage participants to spend longer making their decisions was requiring them to rank their top five organisations rather than just choosing the one organisation that they would most like to volunteer for. This was intended to encourage participants to look at more of the organisations in the selection and have to weigh up the costs and benefits of various volunteering alternatives to arrive at their eventual number one ranked organisation.

4.1.7 Results

As with Study 5 my key dependant variables; decision difficulty and deferment likelihood are investigated initially in line with my hypotheses, before additional exploratory analyses into the effect of option categorisation on choosing from extensive choice sets are carried out on each individual item used in the study.

4.1.7.1 Participants' perceived amount of choice

As expected, and in line with the too-much-choice effect for volunteering demonstrated in the previous chapter, participants in all conditions thought that the number of options (70) was 'too many' (No categories: $M = 1.38$, $SD = 2.28$; 5 categories: $M = 1.06$, $SD = 1.50$; 10 categories: $M = .31$, $SD = 1.45$). However, only those in the no categories condition $t(23) =$

3.00, $p = .007$ and the 5 categories condition $t(32) = 4.07, p < .001$ were significantly higher than 0 (a neutral response) indicating that people in the 10 categories condition viewed the choice set as about right (neutral), $t(34) = 1.28, p = .209$ even though the number of options participants could look through was the same (70) for all conditions. This highlights that the way in which organisations are groups can affect perceptions of choice amount.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a marginally significant effect of condition (categorisation) on the perceived amount of choice, $F(2, 91) = 3.07, p = .052$. An LSD post hoc test showed that the effect was driven by a difference in the perception of choice amount between the no categories condition and the 10 categories condition ($p = .022$). There was a marginally significant difference in choice perception between the 5 categories condition and the 10 categories condition ($p = .077$) but there was no difference in choice perception between the no categories condition and the 5 categories condition ($p = .497$).

4.1.7.2 Effect of categorisation

For the means and standard deviations of all items discussed in this subsection, see Table 4.4.

Contrary to H1, and despite perceptions of the number of options as too many, there was no effect of categorisation on decision difficulty, $F(2, 89) = 1.28, p = .284, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Participants in all conditions did not find choosing an organisation to volunteer for difficult.

There was also no effect of the categorisation of options on deferment likelihood contrary to H2, $F(2, 89) = .75, p = .473, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Participants in all conditions reported that they would not defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for. As there were no

effects of categorisation on either decision difficulty or deferment likelihood H3 was also not supported.

Contrary to H4, there was no effect of the categorisation of options on decision satisfaction (measured by the single item “How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?”), $F(2, 89) = 1.14, p = .326, \eta_p^2 = .03$. Participants in all conditions reported feeling satisfied with their decision and the organisation they chose (0 categories: $M = 1.63, SD = 1.74$; 5 categories: $M = 2.30, SD = 1.49$; 10 categories: $M = 2.11, SD = 1.86$).

Table 4.4. Study 6: Items, α 's and Means for Deferment Likelihood, Decision Difficulty and Decision Satisfaction scales

DV	Items	α	No categories		5 categories		10 categories	
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Deferment Likelihood	Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision	.86	-.08	2.59	-.86	2.66	-.76	2.31
	If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would?							
Decision Difficulty	Did you find it difficult to make your decision?	.58	-.86	1.35	-1.53	1.61	-1.17	1.65
	How certain are you that you made the right choice? (reversed)							
	How frustrated did you feel when making the choice							

4.1.7.3 Exploratory Individual item analysis

A multivariate ANOVA and a bonferroni correction revealed that there were no significant effects of the categorisation of options on any of the individual items asked in the study. The means, standard deviations and significance values for all the individual items asked in the study for all conditions can be seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Study 6. Questions, means, standard deviations and differences of responses as a result of categorisation

Question	No categories (n = 24)		5 categories (n = 33)		10 categories (n = 35)		df	F	p	η_p^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
How much did you enjoy it? ^a	1.13	1.30	1.09	1.91	1.03	2.06	2	.02	.979	.00
How frustrated did you feel? ^a	-1.17	2.12	-1.52	2.22	-1.14	2.10	2	.30	.740	.01
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a	-.38	2.32	-.91	2.26	-.54	2.36	2	.41	.664	.01
Even though I've made my first choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^b	-.21	2.73	-.94	2.18	-.29	2.35	2	.87	.421	.02
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^c	.00	2.81	-.94	2.51	-.89	2.49	2	1.11	.335	.02
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^a	1.63	1.74	2.30	1.49	2.11	1.86	2	1.14	.326	.03
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^a	1.04	1.73	2.15	1.82	1.83	2.11	2	2.40	.097	.05
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^d	-2.33	1.86	-3.00	1.71	-2.94	1.64	2	1.22	.301	.03
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^c	-.17	2.75	-.79	3.07	-.63	2.47	2	.36	.696	.01
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a	-.42	1.91	-.33	2.64	-.20	2.22	2	.07	.936	.00
How interested are you in volunteering? ^a	.79	1.98	.64	2.75	.86	2.25	2	.08	.927	.00

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

^b-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^c-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (completely)

Adjusted alpha with bonferroni correction: .005

(Note "how interested are you volunteering?" not included in multiple comparisons)

4.1.7.4 Additional analyses

4.1.7.4.1 Volunteering status and interest level

Of the 92 people that took part in the study, 22 (23.9%) were current volunteers (70, 76.1% were not). Those that were volunteering were spending between 2 and 75 hours a month volunteering ($M = 17.73$, $SD = 20.66$).

At the start of the study, overall people reported a neutral level of interest in volunteering ($M = .25$, $SD = 2.31$) as when compared to 0 (an indication of a neutral interest in volunteering) the difference was not significant, $p = .302$. However, people's interest levels in volunteering varied considerably, see Figure 4.7.

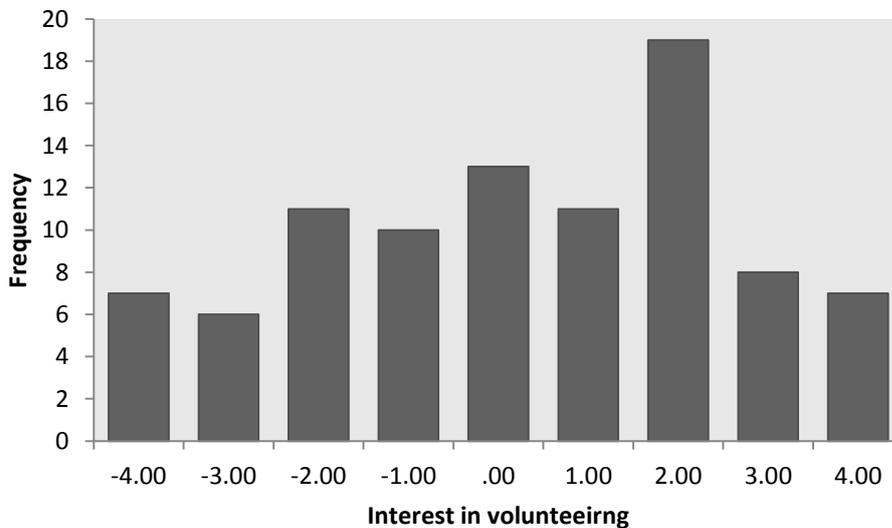


Figure 4.7. Study 6. Level of interest in volunteering at the start of the study

A paired samples t -test revealed that there was an exposure effect of taking part in the study (and therefore having seen some possible volunteering outlets) on interest level in

volunteering (Start of study: $M = .25$, $SD = 2.31$; End of study: $M = .76$, $SD = 2.36$), $t(91) = -3.55$, $p < .001$.

4.1.7.4.2 Number of options looked at

A multivariate ANOVA showed that there were no differences in the number of organisations looked at, $F(2, 89) = .74$, $p = .479$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, nor the total number of organisations looked at (including relooks), $F(2, 89) = .90$, $p = .410$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$ as result of how the options were categorised. The exact figures can be seen in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Study 6. Means and standard deviations of the number of organisations viewed and the total number of organisations viewed including re-looks

	No categories		5 categories		10 categories	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Number of organisations viewed	9.71	5.15	8.76	4.31	10.26	5.74
Total number of organisations viewed (including re-looks)	10.54	5.67	9.97	5.46	11.94	7.17

4.1.7.4.3 Time taken

An outlier analysis determined that there were six participants that took longer than three standard deviations above the mean time for their condition to reach a decision. Therefore these six participants' data will be excluded from time analyses only.

A univariate ANOVA revealed that there was no difference as a result of how the options were categorised in the time taken for participants to reach their decision, $F(2, 83) = 1.74$, $p = .18$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. When the 70 organisations were split into 5 categories people took on average 255.29secs, ($SD = 182.42$), followed by when the options were not categorised at

all ($M = 267.82\text{secs}$, $SD = 158.01$). Though not significant, people took longest to reach their decision when the organisations were split into 10 categories ($M = 342.88\text{secs}$, $SD = 238.32$).

4.1.7.4.4 Volunteering intentions

59.8% of people clicked to see the contact details of the organisation they chose in the study. 40.2% did not. A chi-square test of independence showed that the percentage of people that chose to see the contact details of their chosen organisation differed marginally significantly as a result of how the options were categorised, $\chi^2(2, N = 92) = 5.13, p = .077$.

In the no categories condition 54.2% of people clicked to see the contact details of their chosen organisation compared to 48.5% in the 5 categories condition but in the 10 category condition some 74.3% clicked to see the details of their chosen organisation possibly indicating a greater intention to volunteer as a result of how the options were categorised.

4.1.7.4.5 Differences between students and non-students

There was some indication that option categorisation may have affected students and non-students differently, with students potentially benefitting from options being categorised. However, when a bonferroni correction was applied to the data these potential differences were not significant. As it is not central to my thesis, nor supported by strong statistical findings, an overview of the potential differences in students and non-students responses to option categorisation can be seen in Appendix G.

4.1.8 Discussion

Study 6 focussed on choosing an organisation to volunteer for from an extensive choice set (confirmed by the participants that took part that stated the number of options for them to choose from was “too much”). Objectively, the number of options presented to participants in all conditions was the same (70). However, when they were arranged in 10 categories (thereby reducing the choice set size within each category to seven organisations) people perceived the choice amount as significantly less than when the options were not categorised.

The categorisation of options did not appear to affect people’s choice making process. Contrary to predictions, the categorisation of options did not appear to facilitate the decision making process. In fact participants reported that choosing which organisation to volunteer with was relatively easy even though they were choosing from an extensive choice set. There was also no effect of the categorisation of options on deferment likelihood nor decision satisfaction.

Again, the time that people took to reach their decision about the top five organisations they would like to volunteer with was very short considering the amount of information they were presented with (Overall $M = 288.66$ secs to choose from 70 options irrespective of how they were categorised). This finding in itself could be a manifestation of the too-much-choice effect. People may feel overwhelmed with the number of options from which they have to choose and may realise that it would be unlikely that they would rationally be able to compare all of the possible alternatives to arrive at the best choice/outcome. People only looked at (including re-looks) a relatively small subset of the 70 options when making their choice ($M = 10.82$ across all conditions). Perhaps people adopted a strategy to pick the best option from the subset of options that they looked at (Güth, 2010) rather than try to compare all the possible options which they may have been

able to do when faced with a smaller choice set, which may have attenuated the too-much-choice effect.

As shown in my previous studies, again there was an effect of taking part in the study on interest in volunteering. People were significantly more interested in volunteering after they had taken part in the study and seen some of the volunteering opportunities that were on offer. This finding suggests that volunteer organisations should advertise their opportunities for volunteers as people's interest in volunteering may increase and could in turn lead them to engage in volunteering. The majority of participants clicked to see the contact details of their chosen organisation at the end of the study even though they did not have to. One interpretation of this could be that these people may have had real intentions to volunteer or at least to find out how they could contact the organisation to go about volunteering. However, it was not possible to measure this as follow-up contact with participants did not occur.

4.2 Study 7 – The Effect of Option Presentation Format on Decisions to Volunteer

During Study 6 I realised that the organisations in my series of experimental studies (Studies 4, 5 and 6) were presented to participants in a different manner than they would typically experience in a real life internet volunteering organisation search. In order for the number of organisations people looked at to be recorded in my studies, just the names of each organisation were presented on one screen that could be clicked on to bring up details of that particular volunteering opportunity. It occurred to me that on websites (e.g., Volunteering England – the website used in Study 4 and www.do-it.org) the volunteering

opportunities are usually presented in a 'list' format (i.e., volunteering organisations and their volunteering details presented one after each other vertically down a screen that often requires scrolling to see more options). This difference in how options are presented may affect how choice sets are perceived by choosers and also how much information they look at in their search for an organisation to volunteer for (for instance, all of the details about volunteering opportunities are on display in list format choice sets whereas in a box format the amount of information on screen is limited to the names of the organisations unless clicked on by a chooser to reveal specific details).

Study 4, used www.volunteering.org.uk as a basis for the study and required participants to look through the 115 volunteering opportunities presented in a list format (separated into categories) on the website and choose the organisation that they would most like to volunteer with. The findings demonstrated that the too-much-choice effect may exist for volunteering decisions. The more options people considered, the more likely they were to want to defer making a decision. This was mediated by decision difficulty; the more volunteering options people considered, the more difficult they found the decision making process and the more likely they were to want to put off making any decision. Study 5 found evidence for the too-much-choice effect when the options were presented in a 'box' format. However, in the no categories condition in Study 6, despite having 70 organisations to choose from, people did not appear to experience the difficulties associated with choosing from an extensive choice set (e.g., increased decision difficulty and deferment likelihood as exhibited by people in the high choice condition in Study 5). Study 4 demonstrated increased decision difficulty and deferment likelihood when a greater number of options was looked at despite the organisations being categorised. This may have been as a result of the options being presented in a list rather than a box format. Therefore, I thought it was important to investigate the effect of presentation format on volunteering decisions.

One possible reason as to why I did not find the negative effects of choosing from an extensive choice set I had expected in the uncategorised condition in Study 6 could have been due to differences in how the volunteering opportunities were presented to participants. In Study 4, opportunities were presented in a list format (as with most volunteering websites in the real world), however, in Studies 5 and 6 when choice amount was manipulated, I presented all the opportunities in a 'box' format in order to facilitate the computer programming and enable me to record how many times participants looked at the different organisations' details. This meant that all the volunteering organisations' names were presented on one screen, each one on a 'box' in a grid format. There was no need for participants to scroll down to see all the options on a page, nor for them to have to switch between different pages of options. The boxes with the names of the volunteering organisations on could be clicked on to reveal a pop-up which contained that specific volunteering organisations' information (aims and details of what volunteers could expect to be doing if they chose to volunteer with that organisation).

The way in which the options were presented (a box format rather than the usual list format) may have attenuated the negative effects of choosing from an extensive choice set. The fact that all the different organisations could be seen on one screen, and only when the chooser clicked on the name of an organisation were the details of that volunteering opportunity brought up may not have required as much cognitive processing or been perceived as difficult or overwhelming by participants as if the options were presented in a list format. Unwittingly, in study 6 I may have presented participants with an extensive choice amount (70 volunteering opportunities) in such a format that facilitated the choice process and attenuated any negative effects of choice overload.

4.2.1 Rationale

There are now several leading volunteering websites (e.g., www.do-it.org and www.vinspired.com) that act as the main information sources for people searching online for an organisation to volunteer with as they collate numerous volunteering opportunities together on one website. They provide the details of multiple (sometimes hundreds) volunteering organisations and their contact details. The volunteering organisations themselves usually provide the information to the website and give the descriptions of available opportunities and what volunteers could expect to undertake if they were to volunteer with that specific organisation. Central to this study though, the format of how volunteering opportunities are presented on the websites is very similar. The norm is in a list fashion, in which the name of an organisation or volunteering title role is presented in a bold font and then the details for that organisation or volunteering opportunity are presented immediately below, followed by their contact details. The volunteering opportunities matching the potential volunteer's search criteria or those within a certain category or subsection of volunteering are usually presented sequentially (either in alphabetical order or randomly) one after another. This may take up a considerable amount of space often requiring the need for choosers to scroll down to the bottom of pages or click to switch to alternate pages of options. Typically the number of volunteering opportunities presented to a potential volunteer would be classed as an extensive choice set as they can sometimes contain over 100 volunteering opportunities.

There is limited literature investigating the effects of presentation format on decision making (see Section 1.5.2.7), but it suggests that option presentation format does affect people's decision making in an online environment (Lohse & Spiller, 1998). Chen & Pu (2010) state that a grid or box presentation format facilitates decision making more than a list presentation format, as people are more likely to look at a greater number of options

and in greater detail, and that they are easier to navigate online (Chen & Tsoi, 2011).

However, Flavián et al. (2009) found no differences in perceptions or behaviour as a result of presentation format (box vs. list) and Hong et al., (2004) claim that people were more positive when choosing from a list format and made their decisions quicker. Flavián et al., (2009) noted though that this was for decisions involving a small choice set and that the differences in the ease of decision making as a result of option presentation format may become apparent when choosing from large choice sets (as is the case with volunteering decisions). They state that for small choice sets, list formats may be preferred as the options are close together and choosers do not need to make an effort for see all the options. But that as choice set size increases, so does the distance between the options on screen (first to last). This requires choosers to actively scroll down (usually) to see all of the options. Whereas in grid presentation formats more options can be seen on the screen at any one time as they usually take up less space. The authors postulate therefore that for extensive choice sets, grid formats require less cognitive effort and may facilitate the ease of decision making.

The format in which volunteering opportunities are presented online on volunteering database websites is perhaps the simplest choice architecture to implement yet may affect ease of decision making. Therefore, this study investigated whether one option presentation format (box vs. list) may be easier for choosers to navigate and ultimately assist them to choose an organisation that they are happy with in the presence of extensive choice.

The easiest way to alleviate the negative effects of choosing from an extensive choice set would be to reduce the number of options presented to choosers. In the case of volunteering decisions though this would be unethical and unfair to volunteering organisations and potential volunteers alike. Therefore, I was also interested to discover whether the addition of a 'basket' for people to store a shortlist of organisations for

consideration during their search for an organisation may facilitate decisions by inadvertently creating a smaller subset of organisations from which to choose. I was interested as to whether the basket would create a smaller, more manageable sub choice set from which the participants would then make their choice and therefore reduce the level of difficulty experienced during the choice making process.

4.2.2 Hypotheses

My main hypothesis (H1) was that people would be more likely to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer with under extensive choice when the options were presented in a list format rather than a box/grid format.

My secondary hypothesis (H2) was this effect would be mediated by decision difficulty. I thought that choosing an organisation to volunteer for when the options were presented in a grid/box format would be easier than choosing from options presented in a list format. Choosing an option from a grid format should be less effortful than choosing from a list, because there is no need for scrolling or clicking to switch between pages. I believed that the appearance of the options in a grid format would appear more manageable and that as a result participants would perceive it as easier to come to a decision about which organisation to volunteer for than when choosing from a list of organisations.

My third hypothesis (H3) was that the presence of a 'basket' for people to store up to 5 organisations at a time (interchangeably) would facilitate volunteering decisions. I thought that participants with the basket facility would find the decision more manageable because they would have a tool to easily reduce their consideration choice set size. Once participants had looked through the organisations that they wished to and moved the ones

they were interested in to the basket they could then easily retrieve the volunteering details of the organisations that were in the basket without having to remember the original organisations' location on screen. The options stored in the basket would form a 'shortlist' of organisations a participant was interested in which their focus would shift to. Therefore at the time of making their decision about which organisation to volunteer with, they would not be exposed to an extensive choice set. This may alleviate any negative consequences of the choosing from an extensive choice set. Therefore, I expected that the condition in which participants would find it easiest to come to a decision about which organisation to volunteer for would be the box/basket condition and the condition in which participants found it most difficult to make their decision would be the list/no basket condition.

4.2.3 Participants

169 participants (52 Male, 112 female, 5 unknown due to a technical recording error) aged between 18 and 37 ($M = 21.04$) took part in the study. Most were undergraduate Psychology students recruited via the University's Psychology participation points system and took part in the study in return for course credit. In order to recruit enough participants before the end of term I also used opportunistic sampling around the campus and recruited some students from other disciplines that took part as a gesture of good will.

4.2.4 Materials

The study was programmed by senior technicians in the Psychology department of Plymouth University; Lynne James and Anthony Mee. For the most part, the study took place in a laboratory in the Psychology department of the University on standard PCs with internet access. The study was programmed to be administered online and could be

accessed at the following website address: www.psy.plymouth.ac.uk/onlineresearch/LCCa5.

Due to time limitations and participant availability, towards the end of data collection the link to the study was emailed to some participants and they were free to take part in the study at their leisure.

4.2.5 Design

The study was a 2(Presentation Format: Box/List) x 2(Basket presence: Basket/no basket) factorial design.

4.2.6 Procedure

Participants entered the laboratory and were seated at a computer. They were presented with an on screen brief outlining what they could expect to do during the experiment.

Screen shots of the full experiment (including brief, instructions, items and response scales) can be seen in Appendix H. The computer programme allocated participants to a condition upon commencement of the study. Participants initially answered three questions: “Do you currently volunteer?”, “If yes, about how many hours a month?” and “How interested are you in volunteering?” on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from -3 (not at all) to +3 (extremely).

Participants were then asked to imagine that they had four hours spare a week that they decided they would like to spend volunteering.

All participants were presented with the same 70 real organisations to choose from (these were the same varied organisations that were used in Study 6, see Appendix F). Half the participants saw the organisations presented in a box/grid format whereas half the participants saw the organisations in a list format. Further still, half the participants had a

'basket' that they could use during their decision making to store and shortlist potential options, and half the participants did not. In order to compare presentation formats and attempt to replicate the experience of choosing from an existing volunteering website, the organisations in the list format were displayed with their descriptions immediately underneath (unlike in previous studies which required participants to click on an option to reveal more detailed attributes about that option). This meant that there were seven pages of options that participants had to click to switch between, that each contained ten volunteering options and required participants to scroll down each page to see all of the options on each page (see Figure 4.8). In the grid condition, the names of the organisations appeared on boxes arranged in a 5 x 14 grid formation that fitted onto one screen of the computer. The names of the organisations could then be clicked on to bring up a pop-up box containing each specific organisation's volunteering details (see Figure 4.9). 'Baskets' were on the right hand side of the screen on which the volunteering options were presented (see Figure 4.8). They could be used to store up to 5 organisations at a time (interchangeably) for ease of retrieval of their details (the names could be clicked on from within the basket to bring up the pop-up with the organisations volunteering details) and comparison between stored organisations.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the page tabs to change pages and use the scroll bar to scroll down through the opportunities on each page. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity.

Greenpeace
Greenpeace are passionate about protecting the Earth – the only life support system we have. Greenpeace investigate, document and expose the causes of environmental destruction. We work to bring about change through politically lobbying, citizen action and consumer pressure. And we will take peaceful direct action to protect this fragile planet and promote the solutions for a green and peaceful future. Our vision is to transform the world by fundamentally changing the way people think about it. We want governments, industry and each and every person to stop viewing the Earth as an inexhaustible resource and start treating it as something precious that needs our protection and careful management. We all need a planet that is ecologically healthy and able to nurture life in all its diversity. Voluntary opportunities range from helping with administrative tasks, mail outs, data entry, data analysis, translations, design and editing, research projects, assisting with events coordination, painting, sewing, carpentry, and many more.

[Click here to add to basket](#)

The British Red Cross
The British Red Cross gives skilled and impartial care to people in need and crisis - in their homes and in the community, at home and abroad, in peace and war. In the UK the British Red Cross's primary purpose is to support statutory services, by providing care in crisis situations. The British Red Cross provides valuable short-term support to vulnerable people in the UK, whether they're recovering from an operation, need a wheelchair or just need help coping around the house. There are a range of volunteering roles within The British Red Cross from being trained to be an emergency response and first aid volunteer for various events or situations, being a home volunteer visiting people in their home for a couple of hours, helping with practical tasks like shopping or basic cooking to help people regain their independence and confidence, driving patients to hospital appointments, helping burn victims or people with disfigurements learn to apply skin camouflage, to giving therapeutic massages.

[Click here to add to basket](#)

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) opposes all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction: their development, manufacture, testing, deployment and use or threatened use by any country. Our external strategic objectives are: the elimination of British nuclear weapons and global abolition of nuclear weapons; abolition of other threats of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect: a nuclear-free, less militarised and more secure Europe; and the closure of the nuclear power industry. We aim to change Government policies to bring about the elimination of British nuclear weapons as a major contribution to global abolition. We stimulate wide public debate on the need for alternatives both to the nuclear cycle and to military attempts to resolve conflict. We empower people to engage actively in the political process and to work for a nuclear-free and peaceful future. As a British campaign we concentrate first and foremost on British nuclear weapons but we also work with anti-nuclear groups

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Your Shortlist:

(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

X

X

X

X

X

Once you have made your choice:

[Continue](#)

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Figure 4.8. Study 7. Screen shot of list presentation format

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity

Festival Volunteer	CLIC Sargent	Samaritans	Mind	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation
Environmental Investigation Agency	Music Therapy Volunteers	Oral History Society	Greenpeace	Environmental Justice Foundation
NIADFAS	The National Trust	Art Galleries	Riding for the Disabled	Museums
The Children's Society	NCPC	Sea Watch Foundation	Marine Conservation Society	The Prince's Trust
Action for Children	BTCV	Suztrans	The British Red Cross	
The Churches Conservation Trust	Zoo or Animal Sanctuary Volunteers	Council for British Archaeology	Macmillan Cancer Support	
WWF	Art Fund	Envision	Bat Conservation	
Save the Children	SAHE	Youth Offending Teams	Library Volunteers	
WRVS	The National Autistic Society	Home-Start	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament	
Animal Aid	Crisis	Animal Rescue Centres or Shelters volunteers	Cats Protection	
RSPB	Friends of the Earth	Barnados	The Disabilities Trust	
The Wildlife Trusts	Natural England	RSPCA	Forestry Commission	
Children's Ward Hospital Volunteer	Dog and Cat Kennels	Born Free Foundation	National Animal Welfare Trust	
The Blue Cross	Guide Dogs	Hospital Radio	Marie Curie Cancer Care	

Your Shortlist:

(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

X

Once you have made your choice:

[Continue](#)

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Samaritans X

Samaritans provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. Apart from being a 24-hour source of support on the telephone, by email, by letter or face to face, we also work in the local community, visiting: Workplaces; providing a wide number of courses to businesses; helping staff deal with customer conflicts and internal issues; Schools; reaching large numbers of young people from a range of backgrounds on various subjects and prisons, offering number of ways for prisoners to get the support they need from volunteers visiting prisons to the Listener scheme, which trains prisoners to offer confidential emotional support to their fellow inmates. For volunteers, the listening role is our most front line role and will carry out the very service that Samaritans is all about. You will be listening through the phone, emails, letters, face to face or by text (depending on the branch you're in) and providing real help to the thousands of people who make contact with the Samaritans each year. Shifts can be during the day or night. Due to the nature of the work, volunteers need to attend extensive training sessions before volunteering. Full training and support are provided. There are non-listening volunteer roles too, such as assisting in the day to day running of the branch, fundraising, finance management, and raising Samaritans profile by giving talks in schools, the community, and organisations.

Once you have made your choice:

[Continue](#)

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Figure 4.9. Study 7. Screenshot of box presentation format and 'pop-out' organisations' details function

Half of the participants that did have a basket to shortlist their potential options and half the participants that did not have a basket to shortlist their options (so half of the total participants) saw a single screen that consisted of series of boxes containing the names of each volunteering organisation set out on a 5x14 grid of boxes containing the 70 possible organisations (see Figure 4.10). Each box with the name of the organisation on could be clicked on to bring up specific details of that volunteering opportunity (derived from information found on each organisations' official website, or in the case of generic volunteering opportunities, from specific opportunities and then reworded to become generic, see Figure 4.11). Participants could click on as many or as few of the possible volunteering opportunities as they liked and could click to re-look at the volunteering descriptions as many times as they liked.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity

Festival Volunteer	CLIC Sargent	Samaritans	Mind	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation
Environmental Investigation Agency	Music Therapy Volunteers	Oral History Society	Greenpeace	Environmental Justice Foundation
NADFAS	The National Trust	Art Galleries	Riding for the Disabled	Museums
The Children's Society	NCPCC	Sea Watch Foundation	Marine Conservation Society	The Prince's Trust
Action for Children	BTCV	Sustrans	The British Red Cross	WellChild
The Churches Conservation Trust	Zoo or Animal Sanctuary Volunteers	Council for British Archaeology	Macmillan Cancer Support	Shelter
WWF	Art Fund	Envision	Bat Conservation Trust	PDSA
Save the Children	SANE	Youth Offending Teams	Library Volunteer	Cathedral Camps
WRVS	The National Autistic Society	Home-Start	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament	Beatbullying
Animal Aid	Crisis	Animal Rescue Centres or Shelters volunteers	Cats Protection	Nursing/Residential Home Volunteers
RSPB	Friends of the Earth	Barnardos	The Disabilities Trust	English Heritage
The Wildlife Trusts	Natural England	RSPCA	Forestry Commission	Whizz-Kidz
Children's Ward Hospital Volunteer	Dog and Cat Kennels	Born Free Foundation	National Animal Welfare Trust	The Woodland Trust
The Blue Cross	Guide Dogs	Hospital Radio	Marie Curie Cancer Care	Rethink

Your Shortlist: 

(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

PDSA

The National Autistic Society

Once you have made your choice:

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Figure 4.10. Study 7. Screenshot of the option screen for participants in the 'box' condition. (Note that participants in the 'no basket' condition would not have seen the shortlist function on the right).

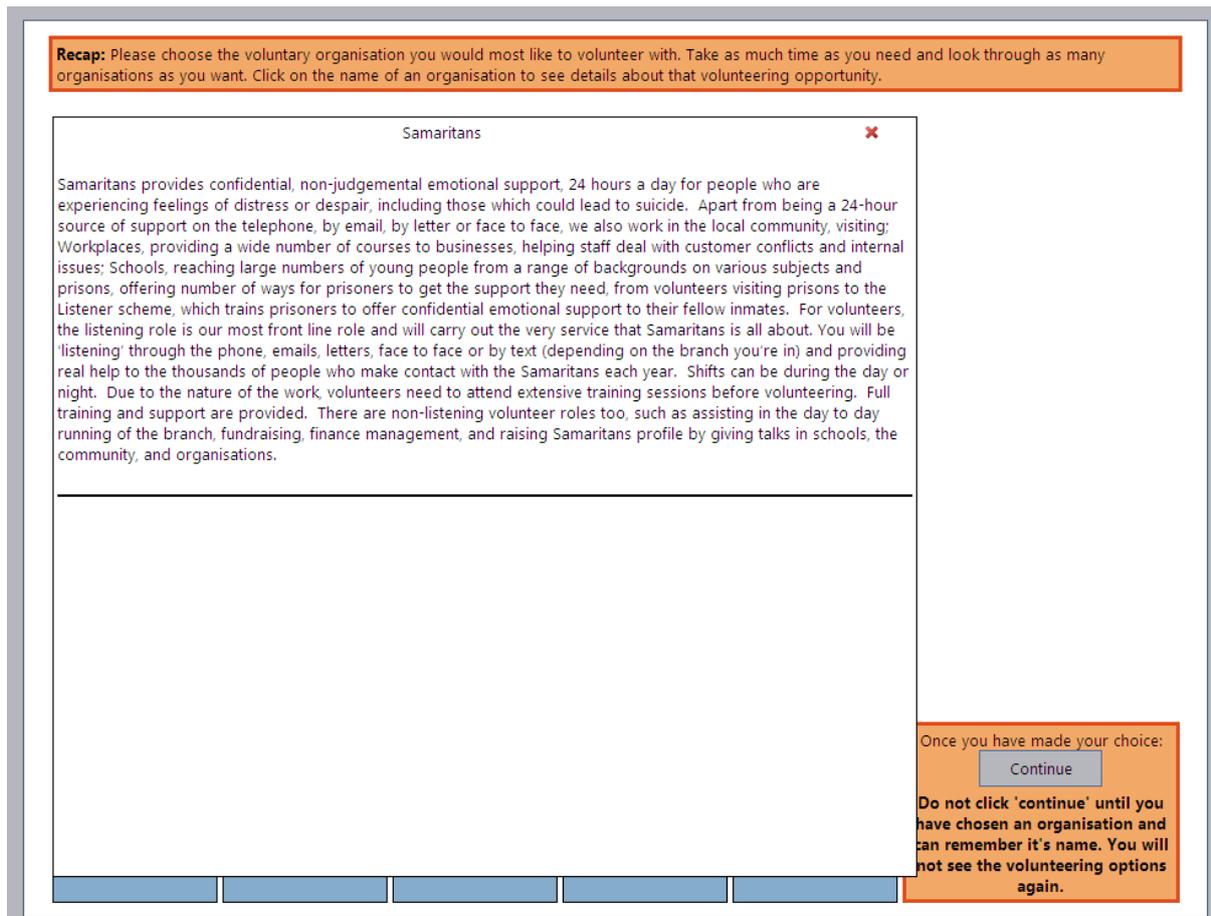


Figure 4.11. Study 7. Screen shot of a volunteering organisation description (after its name had been clicked on).

The other half of the participants (again half with the ‘basket’ shortlist function and half without) were presented with a screen that had a scroll bar down the side and seven page tabs at the bottom (See Figure 4.12). The 70 organisations were presented in a list form, with their names in bold and the full description of the organisation and what volunteering with that organisation would entail beneath them (note that these descriptions were identical to the descriptions used in the box conditions). In order to simulate current volunteering websites and their functionality, there were 10 organisations presented per page tab. Therefore, participants had to use the scroll bar to see all of the organisations on each page as on average (depending on the length of organisation descriptions) only three could be seen at one time. They also had to click the page tabs at the bottom of the screen

to go to another page that contained another 10 options. Again, participants were free to take as long as they liked to look through the descriptions, could jump back and forth through the volunteering pages and could re-read as many descriptions as they liked (although unlike for the box condition the number of times a description was read or re-read could not be recorded).

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the page tabs to change pages and use the scroll bar to scroll down through the opportunities on each page. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity.

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[Click here to add to basket](#)

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Your Shortlist: 
(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

Once you have made your choice:
[Continue](#)

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

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Figure 4.12. Study 7. Screenshot of option screen for participants in the 'list' conditions. Note that participants in the 'no basket' condition would not have seen the shortlist.

Participants that were in one of the two 'basket' conditions also saw a box to the right of the screen with 'your shortlist' written in it. This was structured to simulate the type of 'basket' or short-listing facility that is available on many online commercial retailers' websites (E.g., Amazon). For these participants there was an option under each organisation's description

that enabled them to store that organisation in their basket, up to a maximum of 5 organisations. Once in the ‘basket’ or shortlist organisations could be added or removed or replaced from the basket short-list at any time. Organisations that were in the basket were easily accessible and visible to participants. The details of organisations in the basket and their descriptions could be revisited easily by simply clicking on the name of the organisation in the basket rather than searching back through all of the other organisations to find and compare their favoured options.

Once participants (in all conditions) had come to a decision regarding the organisation they would most like to volunteer with, they typed in the name of their chosen organisation into a given space on screen. They were then asked a series of questions regarding their decision making process and their choice (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Study 7. Questions asked

Item
How much did you enjoy it?
How frustrated did you feel?
How difficult was it to make a decision?
It was easy to navigate the options
I feel I had a clear overview of the options available
How many options do you think there were?
The number of options I saw was:
Even though I’ve made my choice I can’t stop thinking about some of the other options
Ideally, I’d like more time to think before making this decision
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?
How certain are you that you made the right choice?
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did?
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later?
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation?

Before demographic details were gathered regarding age, gender, course studied and year of study, participants again indicated their response to the question “prior to this study, had

you heard of the volunteering organisation you eventually chose?" on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from -3 (not at all) to +3 (definitely).

Finally, participants were asked "would you like to see how you could contact your chosen organisation to see how you could go about volunteering with them?" They could answer yes or no to this question. If they answered yes then they were presented with the link to the website address of their chosen organisation or advised to contact their local volunteering outlet for the type of organisation they chose if they had chosen a generic volunteering opportunity. They were also debriefed online on this screen. If they answered no to wanting to see contact details of their chosen organisation they did not see the website address for their chosen organisation and were debriefed online on the following screen. This was the end of the study.

4.2.7 Items

The items used in Study 7 can be seen in Table 4.7. These items were identical to those used in Study 6 with the addition of three items relation to the manipulation of the presentation of the volunteering opportunities: "It was easy to navigate the options", "I feel I had a clear overview of the options available" and "How many options do you think there were?".

As with previous studies the items 'Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision' and 'If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would?' were combined to form 'deferment likelihood'. The correlation between the two items was acceptable ($r = .51$) and a scale reliability analysis revealed that they could be combined to form an acceptably reliable scale ($\alpha = .67$) termed 'deferment likelihood'. Similarly, 'How difficult was it to make your decision?', 'How certain are you that you made

the right choice? (Reversed)', and 'How frustrated did you feel when making the choice?' were combined to form the item 'decision difficulty'. The Cronbach's α for the scale was .58 and decreased if any item was removed from the scale. The correlations between items were; frustration-difficulty ($r = .39$), frustration-certainty (reversed) ($r = .21$), and difficulty-certainty (reversed) ($r = .36$).

4.2.7.1 Parametric changes from Study 6

Aside from the presentation format of the options and the presence (or not) of a basket to shortlist options, the only change between the two experiments was that participants did not read the few screens with quotes from hypothetical volunteers and service users that participants read at the start of Study 6. Everything else remained the same (e.g., unlimited time to make decision, rank ordering of top 5 choices, the same 70 real volunteering organisations and descriptions etc.).

4.2.8 Results

As has been done for my previous studies, the findings in relation to my hypotheses are presented first, followed by exploratory analyses of all items used in the study.

4.2.8.1 Spread of organisations chosen

The spread of organisations chosen was good (see Figure 4.13) with 50 out of the 70 organisations chosen as the organisation people would most like to volunteer with by at least one participant. Twenty organisations were not chosen by anyone.

4.2.8.1 Perceived number of options

The way in which the options were presented affected people's perceptions of the number of options, $F(1, 165) = 9.52, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .06$. Despite participants in all conditions seeing 70 options, people underestimated the number of options they saw, more so in the list condition ($M = 35.04, SD = 17.18$) than the box condition ($M = 44.73, SD = 22.75$).

4.2.8.2 Thoughts about choice amount

There was a marginal effect of presentation format on whether people viewed the number of options on offer as 'too few' or 'too many', $F(1, 165) = 2.93, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Supporting the too-much-choice effect for 70 options, people in all conditions viewed the number of options as 'too many'. However, this effect was, as predicted, greater in the list ($M = 1.12, SD = 1.34$) than the box ($M = .74, SD = 1.17$) condition.

4.2.8.3 Number of options looked at

Due to the design of the study only the number of organisations looked at by people in the box condition could be recorded (as they were required to click on the organisation's names to see the details of the volunteering opportunities whereas in the list condition the information was readily available to people. There was no way of recording which organisation's details they looked at).

On average, people ($n = 74$) looked at the details of 6.88 organisations ($SD = 6.27$). There was no effect of the presence of a basket as to how many organisations' details were looked at, $F(1, 72) = 1.49, p = .226, \eta_p^2 = .02$. People in the box condition with a basket ($M =$

7.72, $SD = 5.46$) did not look at significantly more organisation's details than people in the box condition without a basket ($M = 5.94$, $SD = 7.02$).

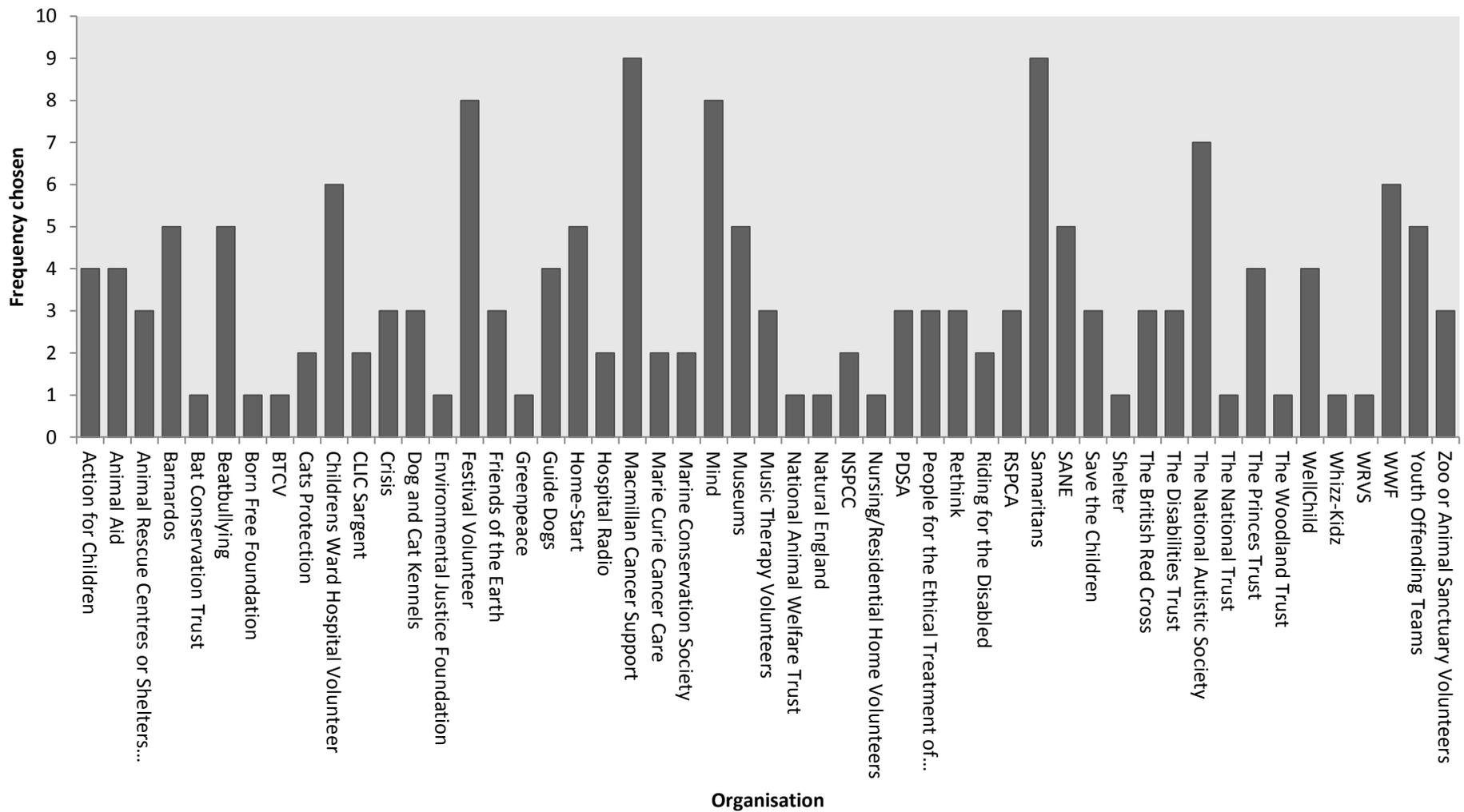


Figure 4.13. Study 7. The spread of organisations chosen

4.2.8.4 Effect of option presentation format (H1)

ANOVAs were carried out and revealed that, Supporting H1, participants choosing which organisation they would most like to volunteer for from options presented in a list format were more likely to want to defer their decision ($M = .00$, $SD = 1.42$; although this was a neutral response regarding deferment likelihood) than participants that chose from options presented in a box format ($M = -.50$, $SD = 1.59$) who stated that they would not want to defer their decision, $F(1, 167) = 4.66$, $p = .032$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. There was no effect of presentation format on decision difficulty, $F(1, 167) = .12$, $p = .735$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. People that chose from options presented in a box format ($M = -.72$, $SD = 1.25$) and list format ($M = -.66$, $SD = 1.21$) reported not finding choosing an organisation to volunteer for difficult. As presentation format did not affect decision difficulty there was no effect to mediate and therefore H2 was refuted. There were no interactions between presentation format and the presence of a basket for deferment likelihood, $F(1, 165) = .15$, $p = .701$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$; decision difficulty, $F(1, 165) = .89$, $p = .347$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, nor decision satisfaction, $F(1, 165) = .75$, $p = .387$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The means and standard deviations can be seen in Table 4.8.

H3 was not supported. There were no differences as a result of whether or not people had a basket present during their decision making process with regard to deferment likelihood, $F(1, 167) = .33$, $p = .565$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$ or decision difficulty, $F(1, 167) = .93$, $p = .337$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. People reported that they would not want to defer their decision and did not find choosing an organisation to volunteer for difficult.

Additional analyses

4.2.8.5 Exploratory analysis of individual items

The means, standard deviations and differences for the individual items asked in the study as a result of presentation format can be seen in Table 4.8. A bonferroni correction was applied as thirteen items were analysed at the same time. Prior to the bonferroni adjustment being applied there were several significant differences as a result of option presentation format, however once the correction was applied the only item that's difference remained significant was people's perception of the amount of choice they saw (discussed above).

The means, standard deviations and differences for the individual items asked in the study as a result of the presence of a basket (or not) during the decision process can be seen in Table 4.9. There were no significant differences that met the adjusted alpha level as a result of the bonferroni correction.

Table 4.8. Study 7. Means, standard deviations and differences as a result of option presentation format (Box vs. list)

Item	Presentation format				df	F	p	η_p^2
	Box		List					
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)				
Deferment likelihood	-.50	(1.59)	.00	(1.42)	1	4.66	.032	.03
Decision difficulty	-.72	(1.25)	-.66	(1.21)	1	.12	.735	.00
Decision satisfaction	1.74	(1.00)	1.68	(.91)	1	.15	.695	.00
How much did you enjoy it?	.54	(1.05)	.17	(1.24)	1	4.26	.041	.03
How frustrated did you feel?	-1.09	(1.82)	-.76	(1.79)	1	1.45	.231	.01
How difficult was it to make a decision?	.28	(1.88)	.20	(1.85)	1	.08	.772	.00
It was easy to navigate the options	1.45	(1.39)	1.14	(1.59)	1	1.76	.187	.01
I feel I had a clear overview of the options available	1.64	(1.17)	1.17	(1.59)	1	4.50	.035	.03
How many options do you think there were?	44.73	(22.75)	35.04	(17.18)	1	9.95	.002	.06
The number of options I saw was:	.74	(1.17)	1.12	(1.34)	1	3.60	.060	.02
Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options	.58	(1.79)	.38	(1.97)	1	.47	.493	.00
Ideally, I'd like more time to think before making this decision	-.41	(1.81)	.12	(1.67)	1	3.76	.054	.02
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?	1.77	(1.04)	1.67	(.95)	1	.40	.530	.00
How certain are you that you made the right choice?	1.35	(1.29)	1.41	(1.21)	1	.09	.759	.00
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did?	-2.09	(1.12)	-1.96	(1.17)	1	.59	.444	.00
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later?	-.59	(1.79)	-.12	(1.67)	1	3.21	.075	.02
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation?	.03	(1.71)	-.07	(1.51)	1	.16	.686	.00

Adjusted alpha for bonferroni correction: .003. Bold font denotes a significant difference at this level

Table 4.9. Study 7. Means, standard deviations and differences as a result of the presence of a basket or not

Item	Basket		No Basket		df	F	p	η_p^2
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)				
Deferment likelihood	-.29	(1.38)	-.16	(1.61)	1	.33	.565	.00
Decision difficulty	-.78	(1.13)	-.60	(1.30)	1	.93	.337	.01
Decision satisfaction	1.67	(.93)	1.74	(.97)	1	.24	.623	.00
How much did you enjoy it?	.32	(1.07)	.34	(1.26)	1	.01	.946	.00
How frustrated did you feel?	-1.09	(1.66)	-.75	(1.91)	1	1.50	.223	.01
How difficult was it to make a decision?	.12	(1.80)	.34	(1.91)	1	.59	.445	.00
It was easy to navigate the options	1.32	(1.41)	1.23	(1.59)	1	.17	.680	.00
I feel I had a clear overview of the options available	1.14	(1.62)	1.57	(1.23)	1	3.69	.056	.02
How many options do you think there were?	39.90	(18.64)	38.77	(21.73)	1	.13	.721	.00
The number of options I saw was:	.83	(1.25)	1.05	(1.30)	1	1.28	.258	.01
Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options	.14	(1.73)	.74	(1.99)	1	4.24	.041	.03
Ideally, I'd like more time to think before making this decision	-.26	(1.56)	.01	(1.89)	1	1.01	.317	.01
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?	1.60	(1.04)	1.82	(.94)	1	2.05	.160	.01
How certain are you that you made the right choice?	1.38	(1.20)	1.39	(1.27)	1	.01	.939	.00
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did?	-2.03	(1.03)	-2.01	(1.24)	1	.01	.932	.00
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later?	-.32	(1.65)	-.33	(1.81)	1	.00	.996	.00
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation?	-.14	(1.67)	.07	(1.54)	1	.71	.401	.00

Adjusted alpha level for bonferroni correction: .003

4.2.8.6 Volunteering status and interest level

Twenty-seven participants were volunteering at the time of the study (142 were not). Those that were volunteering were spending between 2 and 30 hours a month volunteering ($M = 10.33, SD = 7.13$).

Overall people stated that they were slightly interested in volunteering ($M = .75, SD = 1.42$) although interest levels varied considerably. See Figure 4.14.

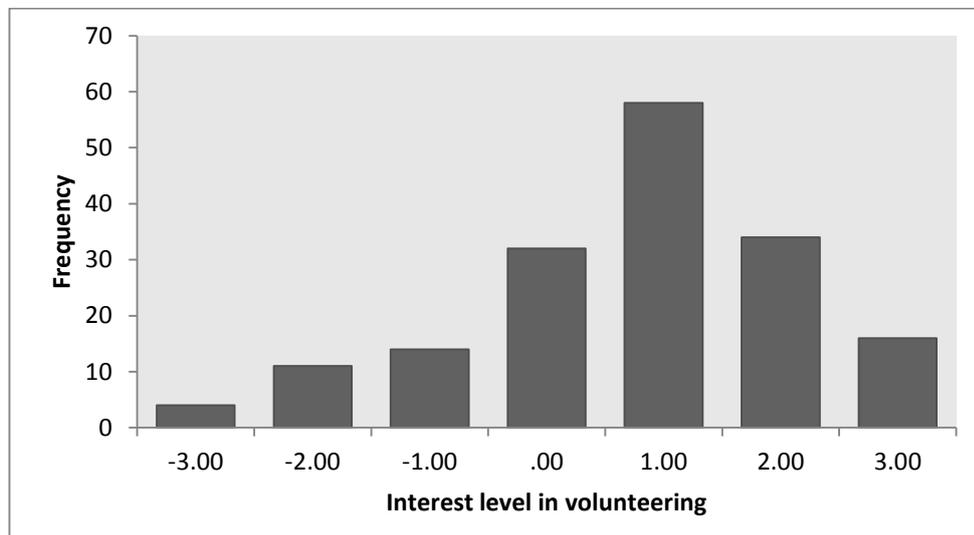


Figure 4.14. Study 8. Interest level in volunteering

There was no effect of taking part in the study (and therefore seeing some potential volunteering opportunities) on people's level of interest in volunteering, $t(168) = -.75, p = .456$. People were interested in volunteering to the same extent at the end of the study ($M = .80, SD = 1.53$) as they were at the start of the study ($M = .75, SD = 1.42$).

4.2.8.7 Time taken

An outlier analysis on the time taken for participants to make their decision revealed that there were nine participants that took greater than three standard deviations above the mean time taken for people to make their decision. Therefore, these nine people were removed from the time analysis only.

There was no effect of presentation format on the time taken to make a decision, $F(1, 156) = 1.90, p = .170, \eta_p^2 = .01$. The time people took in the box condition ($M = 174.15\text{secs}, SD = 121.43$) and list condition ($M = 143.40\text{secs}, SD = 100.77$) to make their decision was not significantly different. There was an effect of whether a basket was present during their decision making on how long people took to make their decision, $F(1, 156) = 10.35, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .06$. People with a basket ($M = 188.30\text{secs}, SD = 107.06$) took longer to make their decision than people that did not have a basket ($M = 130.16, SD = 108.03$). There was no interaction between presentation format and presence of a basket, $F(1, 156) = .10, p = .749, \eta_p^2 = .00$ on the time taken to make their decision.

4.2.8.1 Volunteering intentions

53% of participants clicked to see how they could go about contacting the organisation they chose to volunteer with (47% did not). A chi-square test of independence showed that the percentage of people that chose to see the contact details of their chosen organisation did not differ as a result of the format in which the options were presented and whether there was a basket present during their decision making or not, $\chi^2(3, N = 164) = .157, p = .666$. 57.6% of people in the box/no basket condition clicked to see the contact details of their

chosen organisation, compared to 46.2% of people in the box/basket condition, 57.4% of people in the list/no basket condition and 50.0% of people in the list/basket condition.

4.2.8.2 Familiarity with chosen organisation

Once people had made their choice they were asked whether they were familiar with the organisation they had chosen prior to taking part in the study. This was to try to assess whether people may resort to choosing an organisation that they are already familiar with in the face of extensive choice rather than seek and compare new information about unknown organisations. No baseline level of people's familiarity to the options used in the study was measured in this study⁸.

25% of people had not heard of the organisation they chose to volunteer with prior to taking part in the study. 5.49% of people were not sure, and 69.51% had heard of their chosen organisation prior to taking part in the study. The majority (52.4%) were extremely familiar with the organisation they chose.

4.2.8.3 Reasons for choosing

Participants were asked near the end of the study why they had chosen the volunteering organisation that they did. Their open ended responses were then coded into categories.

⁸ However, Study 8 investigated choosing from familiar vs. unfamiliar voluntary organisations using the same participant demographic as the current study, and the same 70 organisations. In Study 8 people were familiar with almost half of the voluntary organisations ($M = 30.11$, $SD = 10.99$) prior to having the opportunity to peruse the volunteering organisations and their descriptions, so it is likely that people's level of familiarity with the options in the current study would have been of a similar level (and therefore not just more likely to pick an organisation they were previously familiar with based on probability).

The categories of reasons and the percentage of participants' responses that fell within each category can be seen in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Study 7. Categorised reasons for choosing the organisation and the percentage of participants' responses that fell within each category.

Reasons for choosing chosen organisation	Percentage (%)
Worthwhile organisation	24.7
Interest	23.7
Personal reasons	12.9
Future career	9.7
Other	6.5
Make a difference/give something back	3.2
Rewarding	3.2
Enjoyment	3.2
Help with course	2.2
Help others	2.2
Beliefs	2.2
Could be of most help/felt needed help the most	1.1
Something different	1.1
Would like to	1.1
Time constraints	1.1
To learn	1.1
Similar to what done before	1.1

4.2.8.4 How decision could have been made easier

The open ended responses that participants gave as to how their decision could have been made easier were coded into categories. These categories and the percentage of participants whose response fell within each category can be seen in Table 4.11. The most common response was that if there were fewer options to choose from, followed by if the options were categorised. Other suggestions included altering the way that the options were presented to help facilitate the decision making process.

Table 4.11. Study 7. Categorised explanations as to how the decision could have been made easier and the percentage of participant's responses that fell within each category

How decision could have been made easier	Percentage (%)
Less choice	26.9
Categories	18.3
N/A (It couldn't)	10.8
Other	7.5
See brief descriptions and then choose which organisations would like to see more detailed information	4.3
Bullet points	4.3
Less choice and categories	4.3
Less similar organisations	3.2
Visual aids	3.2
If you could choose more than one	2.2
List the charities with a brief summary of each	2.2
Location information	2.2
More time	2.2
Search criteria system	1.1
If the specific organisation wanted to volunteer was an option	1.1
Less text	1.1
Re-structured descriptions	1.1
Clearer info on how to volunteer	1.1
More information + images	1.1
List of other volunteers and their reasons for volunteering	1.1
Less choice, categories and list	1.1

4.2.9 Discussion

The aim of this study was to try to reduce the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set (as demonstrated in Study 5) by manipulating the format in which the possible volunteering organisations were presented.

As predicted, people that chose from options presented in a list format were significantly more likely to defer their decision than people that chose from options presented in a box format. This could have negative consequences with regard to volunteering uptake in real life as often people do not revisit decisions they intend to defer (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002). Normally (especially on websites), volunteering

opportunities/organisations are presented to potential volunteers in a list format (the same format for the list presentation format in the current study). The findings from this study suggest that the way in which volunteering opportunities are presented to potential volunteers could actually be undermining volunteering recruitment despite intentions to promote it. The reasons for this difference in deferment likelihood between options presented in a list format compared to options presented in a box format is likely to be as a result of how the volunteering information looked on screen to participants and the effort they had to go to to make their choice. 70 options and their descriptions spread across numerous webpages with the need to scroll and click to peruse all the options may be more overwhelming and effortful than seeing the names of all 70 organisations on one screen with the need to click only in the names of the organisations that are of interest. My findings suggest that this may be the case and also support those of Chen & Pu (2010) and Chen & Tsoi (2011).

The presence of a basket during the decision making process did not facilitate people's decisions. This attempt to assist people to create their own shortlist of options for consideration (and as such reducing the choice set size to a manageable number) had no effect on how difficult people found making the decision and whether or not they would defer their decision. This was surprising given the large numbers of options from which to choose. I expected that reducing the choice set size would have facilitated people's decisions.

People were not very good at estimating the number of options they had seen. People were unaware of just how many options they had to choose from, with participants in all conditions considerably underestimating the number of options presented to them (half of the actual number of options). When making their decision, participants looked at the details of 6.88 organisations in the box conditions. This is in line with the suggested optimum number of options for fast food meal choices (Johns, et al., 2013), although fewer than the optimal number of options for pens (Shah & Wolford, 2007) but similar to the

number of options presented in the small choice sets in the literature (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Malhotra, 1982; Hong et al., 2004). Once again, the time that participants took to reach their decision was relatively short (less than 3 minutes) given the number of options to consider, although perhaps not unexpected (Boyce, et al., 2010). People that had a basket present to shortlist options whilst they were making their choice took longer to reach their decision than those that did not have a basket. They did make use of the basket (often using all five available spaces in it to store organisations) suggesting that they may have found the provision of a basket of use and used it to assist them in making their decision, although this was not supported by the rating in the items used here.

People's qualitative responses about their decision process highlighted the difficulties experienced as a result of choosing from an extensive choice set (despite the quantitative data indicating that people did not find making their choice too difficult) as they encountered several similar organisations or too many organisations in a particular sector of volunteering that they considered volunteering for. They stated that they would have found the decision easier if they had less choice, if the options were arranged into categories and if the descriptions of the organisations were shortened. Participants' open-ended statements provided further evidence that they may have experienced difficulty in choosing from an extensive choice set, and that they believed that the categorisation of options into volunteering sectors would have made their decision easier.

The majority of people (69.51%) ended up choosing an organisation that they were already familiar with prior to the study. This supports the findings of Scheibehenne, Greifeneder and Todd (2009) who found that people were more likely to donate money to better known charities. In my study a mix of well and lesser known organisations was presented so it was unlikely that participants would have been familiar with all of them. One possible reason for people to tend towards options which they recognise could be the use of the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) which favours options which are

recognised. In my study, due to the extensive number of organisations presented to them participants could have ruled out those organisations that they were unfamiliar with in order to reduce the choice set size. They may also have felt more confident in their decision if they were already familiar with the organisation they chose (Park & Lessig, 1981) as they could be assured that the organisation was reputable for instance.

A person's familiarity with the options in a choice set could have an effect on the extent to which the too-much-choice may be elicited. Therefore, the final study in my research set out to investigate the effect of option familiarity on volunteering decisions.

4.3 Study 8 – The Effect of Choice Amount and Familiarity of Options on Decisions to Volunteer

4.3.1 Rationale

I was interested as to why the negative effects of choosing from an extensive choice set that I found in Studies 4 and 5 were not amplified in Study 6 when I increased the choice set size further to include an uncategorised option set of 70 organisations. Instead, people appeared not to suffer ill effects of choosing from this extensive choice set. One possibility could have been that as a result of being faced with such an extensive choice set, people changed their decision making strategy. It is probable that when people saw the number of organisations there were to choose from that they did not think it would be possible to fully consider and

compare all of the options and so used heuristics to reduce the number of options to consider and simplify their decision.

One such heuristic, the availability heuristic (coined by Tversky & Kahneman in 1974), posits that people use the degree of their familiarity with options to aid their decision making and evaluate the options, and tend to choose options that they have encountered previously. In the case of volunteering organisations, the most widely recognised organisations are large, longstanding and have built up good reputations over the years for providing a valuable good quality service or making a difference. Therefore, perhaps the recognition of an organisation name is associated with these positive attributes. People are more likely to feel assured that their donation of money or time would be put to good use in a well-reputed voluntary organisation. When faced with a large choice set from which to choose people may rely on their prior familiarity with organisations in order to reduce the choice set to a more manageable size by only considering those organisations that they have previously heard of (as these they know are likely to be reputable organisations and have a long history of volunteers working with them), rather than having to research and compare organisations which they had not previously heard of to attain the same knowledge and confidence that they feel when they think about organisations which they are already familiar with. This explanation appears probable given the finding from Study 7 (in which people were required to choose from 70 organisations) that found that 69.51% of people opted to volunteer with an organisation that they were familiar with prior to taking part in the study (and that the majority 52.4% were extremely familiar with the organisation they chose).

Other studies have looked at the effect of familiarity on choosing; Park and Lessig (1981) found that choosing from products that are unfamiliar is difficult and that people feel more confident about their decisions the more familiar they are with the options. Choosing from an extensive choice set has more negative consequences for choosers that are

unfamiliar with the choice set than choosers that are familiar and have prior preferences (Chernev, 2003). People also seem to favour options that are familiar to them; Scheibehenne et al. (2009) and Soyer and Hogarth (2011) found that people are more likely to donate (or donate more) money to a charity the more well-known it is, and as such, less likely to donate if they are unfamiliar with an organisation. A choosers' familiarity with options has been shown to affect different types of people in different ways. For instance, Mogilner, et al., (2008) found that categories had no effect on choosers' satisfaction with their choice if they were preference matching (e.g., they were familiar with the choice set and had pre-existing preferences regarding the options) but did have an effect when preference constructing (e.g., they were not familiar with the option set and did not have prior preferences regarding the options). When categories were present, preference matchers were more satisfied than preference constructors, perhaps because the categories enabled the preference matchers to navigate towards their preferred option with ease whereas for preference constructors it was more beneficial for them to peruse a wide selection of organisation domains in order to determine their preferences.

Therefore, in Study 6, where I increased the choice set size to 70 organisations, people may have used the familiarity heuristic to make their decision easier and feel better and more confident about their choice, simply by eliminating a substantial amount of options based on not having heard of them before. As a result of this, they could also have reduced any negative consequences to the decision making process or choice evaluation that would have been present as a result of choosing from an extensive choice set. Typically in the papers that have demonstrated the existence of the too-much-choice effect the authors have used choice sets with options that people are unfamiliar with (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Scheibehenne et al., 2010).

The current study aimed to remove the possibility that people may be using their level of familiarity with organisations to assist them in their choice by forcing participants

into choosing from a set of organisations that they were either familiar or unfamiliar with based on their responses to whether they recognised the organisation's names at the beginning of the study.

4.3.2 Hypotheses

There were two main hypotheses for this study. The first (H1), was based on the findings from Study 5: that people would be more likely to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for when choosing from an extensive choice set (40 organisations) compared to a limited choice set (10 organisations). It was predicted that this effect would be mediated by decision difficulty (H2).

The second (H3) was that people would be more likely to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for if they were unfamiliar with the organisations they had to choose from than if they were familiar with the organisations they had to choose from. Again it was predicted that this effect would be mediated by decision difficulty (H4).

4.3.3 Participants

160 participants (25 Male, 109 female, 26 unknown due to a technical error in recording the demographic details for some participants) aged between 18 and 53 ($M = 24.12$) took part in the study. Most were undergraduate Psychology students (all were students) and took part in the study in return for course credit. The remainder of the participants were recruited via opportunist sampling on campus and then an incentivised snowballing scheme in which people that had taken part in the study were encouraged to pass on the website address of

the study to other students and were rewarded with a £20 Amazon gift voucher if they recruited the most participants (this was recorded via participants recording the email address of the person that sent them the link to the study (if anyone) as part of the final questions of the study).

4.3.4 Design

This study was a 2(Choice amount: Low/High) x 2(Option familiarity: Familiar/Unfamiliar) factorial design.

4.3.5 Materials

The study was programmed by senior technician in the Psychology department of Plymouth University; Lynne James. For the most part, the study took place in a laboratory in the Psychology department of the University on standard PCs with internet access. The study was programmed to be administered online and could be accessed at the following website address: www.psy.plymouth.ac.uk/onlineresearch/LCCa6. Due to time limitations and participant availability, towards the end of data collection the link to the study was emailed to some participants and they were free to take part in the study at their leisure.

During this study, there were several problems with the programming that caused the study to crash whilst people were taking part. Therefore a considerable amount of data could not be used due to incomplete data sets. However, the data sets that were complete, with the exception of the demographic information (collected at the end of the study) were kept and analysed in the study due to the fact that I had already lost a considerable number

of data sets and participants were becoming harder to recruit. This means that the demographic information for 27 participants is missing.

4.3.6 Procedure

Participants entered the laboratory and were seated at a computer. They were presented with an on screen brief outlining what they could expect to do during the study. Participants initially answered four questions: “Do you currently volunteer?”, “If yes, about how many ideas a month?”, “How interested are you in volunteering?” on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from -3 (not at all) to +3 (extremely) and “some people like to stick to what they know whereas others like to try new things. What about you?” on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from -3 (stick to what I know) to +3 (try new things).

They were then shown the names of 70 volunteering organisations or generic volunteering opportunities (these were the same organisations as previously used in Studies 6 and 7) and asked “Have you heard of [insert organisation name]?”. Each of the 70 organisation names were sequentially presented to participants in a random order.

Participants had to respond by clicking either the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ button as to whether they had heard of that organisation or specific volunteering opportunity before. The number of ‘yes’ responses that participants gave to the familiarity questions determined what condition the computer programme would allocate them to. If they responded ‘yes’ between 0 and 30 times (inclusive) they would be allocated to the unfamiliar high choice condition (consisting of a subset of 40 organisations randomly selected by the programme from the organisations they had stated they had not heard of). If they responded ‘yes’ between 31 and 39 times (inclusive) they would be allocated either to the unfamiliar low choice condition (consisting of a subset of 10 organisations randomly selected by the programme from the organisations they had said they had not heard of) or the familiar low choice condition (consisting of a

subset of 10 organisations randomly selected by the programme from the organisations they had stated they had heard of). If they responded ‘yes’ between 40 and 70 times (inclusive) they would be allocated to the familiar high choice condition (consisting of a subset of 40 organisations randomly selected by the programme from the organisations they had stated they had heard of), see Figure 4.15.

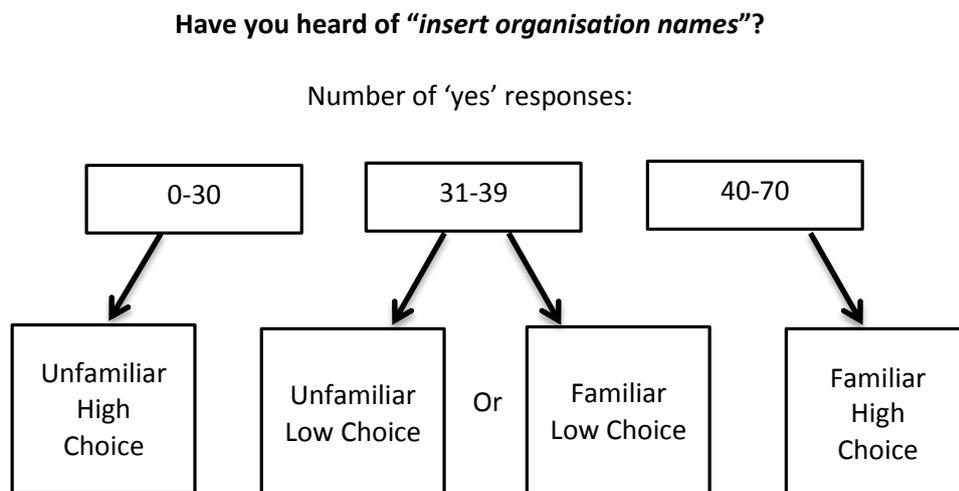


Figure 4.15. Study 8. Allocation of participants to conditions as a result of their familiarity with options

Once participants had responded as to whether or not they had heard of all 70 organisations they proceeded to the next screen on which they received the following instructions:

“Imagine that you have a spare four hours a week that you have decided to spend volunteering. On the next screen you will see the names of a range of voluntary organisations that you can choose to volunteer with. You can see the aims of the organisations and what activities volunteers could expect to do by clicking on the name of an organisation – a box will then pop up containing the information. Please choose the organisation that you would most like to volunteer with. Please take as much time as you like to look through the options and make your decision. This is the only choice you will have

to make during the whole study. You will be asked questions about your choice and decision later in the experiment”.

Participants then saw the option screen containing the organisations. As with previous studies (5 and 6), the organisation names were presented in boxes in a grid formation. The names of the organisations could be clicked on to bring up a pop-up containing details of that organisation and what activities volunteers could expect if they volunteered with that organisation. Depending on the condition they were allocated to, participants either saw a subset of 40 (high choice set; see Figure 4.16) or 10 (relatively small choice set; see Figure 4.17) organisations from the 70 organisations that were either familiar to them (they had responded ‘yes’ to having heard of them earlier in the study) or unfamiliar to them (they had responded ‘no’ to having heard of them earlier in the study).

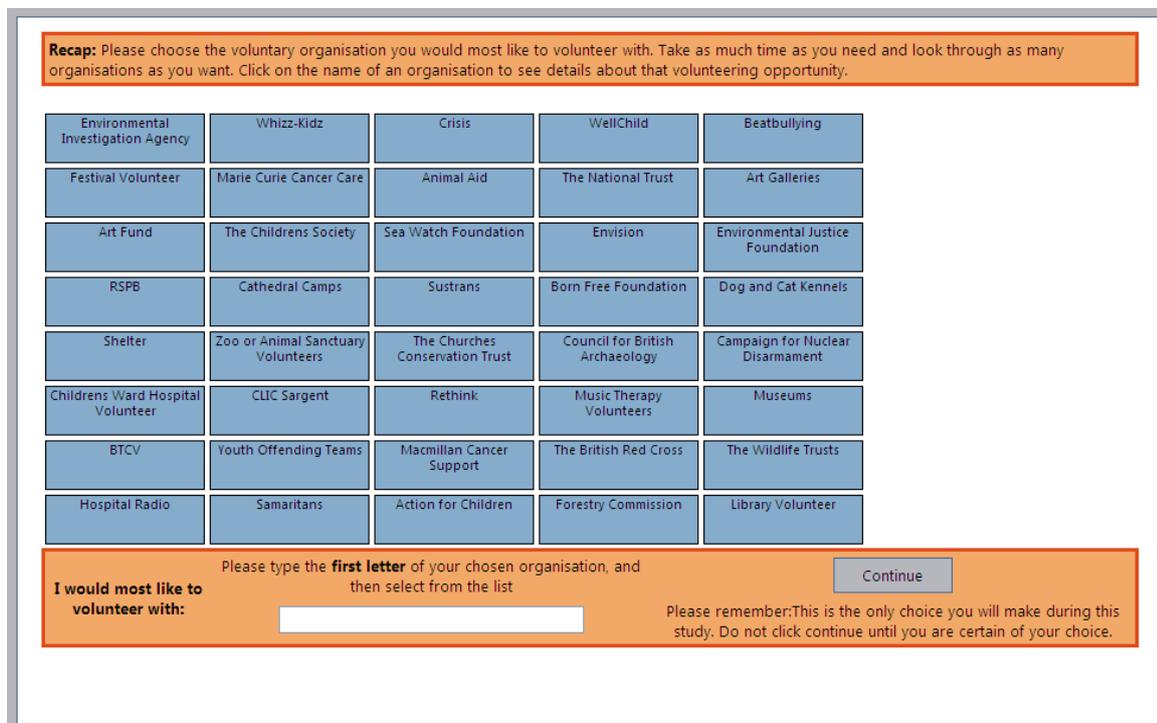


Figure 4.16. Study 8. Screen shot of a high choice option set

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity.

BTCV	Oral History Society	WRVS	The Childrens Society	Forestry Commission
Beatbullying	English Heritage	Library Volunteer	Samaritans	Cats Protection

Please type the **first letter** of your chosen organisation, and then select from the list

I would most like to volunteer with:

Please remember: This is the only choice you will make during this study. Do not click continue until you are certain of your choice.

Figure 4.17. Study 8. Screen shot of a low choice option set

Participants had as much time as they liked to look through the organisations and pick the one which they would most like to volunteer with. The number of times they clicked to see an organisations' details was recorded as well as any repeat looks at an organisations' details.

Once participants had come to a decision regarding the organisation they would most like to volunteer with, they typed in the name of their chosen organisation (or chose it from a drop down list once they had typed in the first letter of their chosen organisation). They were then asked a series of questions regarding their decision making process and their choice (see Table 4.13 for items). Demographic details were then gathered regarding age, gender, course studied and year of study.

Finally, participants were asked "would you like to see how you could contact your chosen organisation to see how you could go about volunteering with them?" They could answer yes or no to this question. If they answered 'yes' then they were presented with the link to the website address of their chosen organisation or advised to contact their local volunteering outlet for the type of organisation they chose if they had chosen a generic volunteering opportunity. They were also debriefed online on this screen. If they answered

'no' to wanting to see contact details of their chosen organisation then they were just presented with the debrief on screen. This was the end of the study.

4.3.6.1 Items

The items used in Study 8 were identical to those used in studies 7 (but without the items used in Study 7 specifically associated with option presentation format), 6, and 5 (without the measures of maximising or satisficing choice strategy and level of information that were dropped from inclusion from Study 6 onwards).

As with previous studies a scale reliability analysis revealed that the items 'Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision' and 'If you could put off a decision until a later date, how likely is it that you would?' could be combined to form a reliable scale termed 'deferment likelihood' ($r = .53$, $\alpha = .69$). Similarly, 'How difficult was it to make your decision?', 'How certain are you that you made the right choice? (Reversed)', and 'How frustrated did you feel when making your choice?' also combined to form an acceptable scale ($\alpha = .54$) termed 'decision difficulty' that only decreased if any of the items were removed from it. The correlations between items were: difficulty-certainty (reversed) ($r = .34$), difficulty-frustration ($r = .25$) and certainty (reversed)-frustrated ($r = .28$).

4.3.7 Results

4.3.7.1 Spread of organisations chosen

The spread of organisations chosen was good (see Figure 4.18). Of the 70 organisations, 52 were chosen by at least one participant as the organisation they would most like to volunteer with. 18 organisations were not chosen by anyone. The organisations that were

chosen most frequently were the people focused support organisations such as 'Mind' which was to be expected given the course studied by the majority of students that took part (psychology) and the interests associated with this.

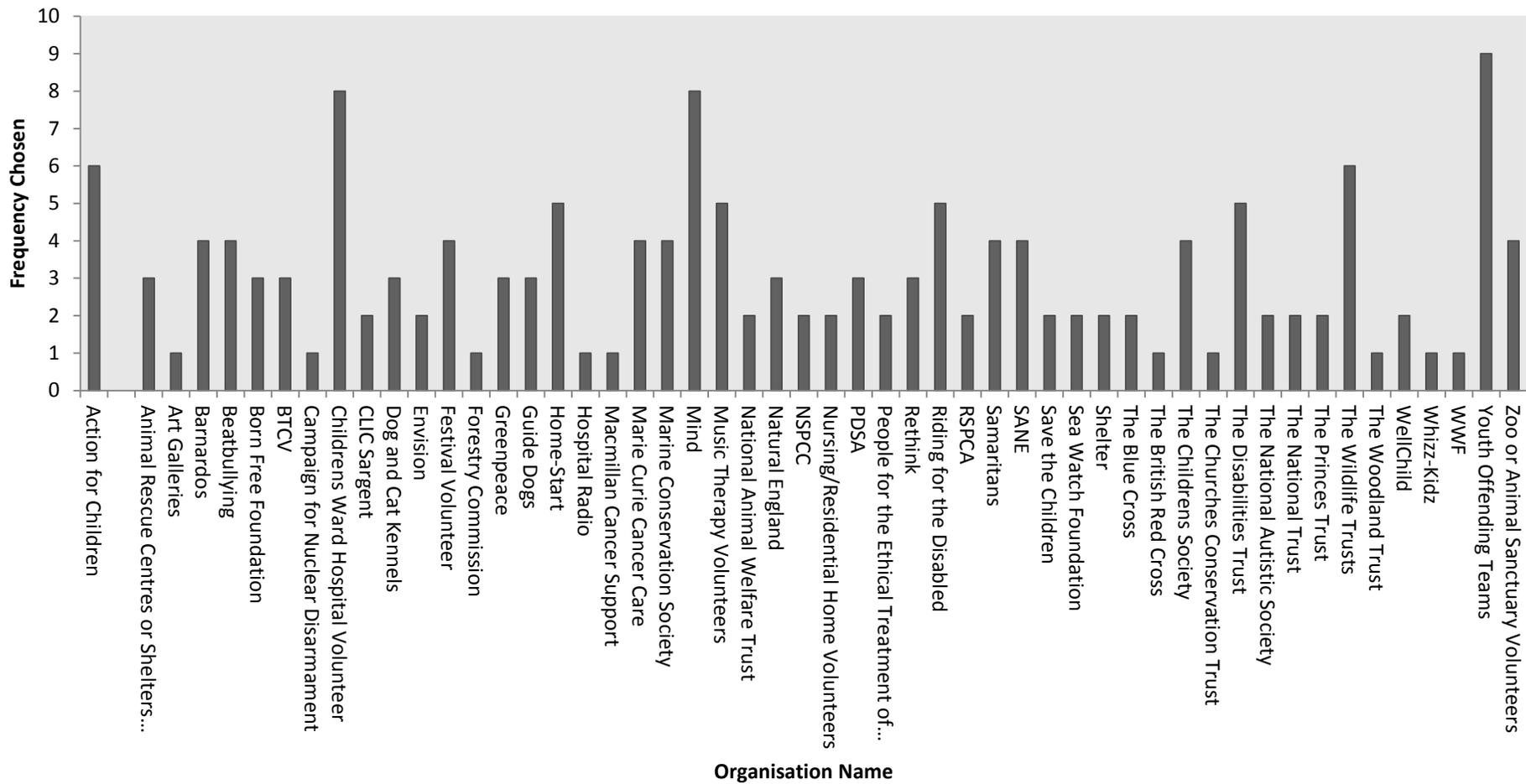


Figure 4.18. Study 8. The spread of organisations chosen

4.3.7.2 Manipulation checks

4.3.7.2.1 Levels of familiarity

When presented with the names of the 70 organisations at the beginning of the study, overall participants indicated that they were familiar with between 5 and 58 organisations ($M = 30.11, SD = 10.99$). Participants were allocated to a condition as a result of how many organisations they responded that they were familiar/unfamiliar with (as described in Section 4.3.6). Participants therefore only chose from organisations they had heard of before or organisations that they had not heard of before (not a mix of familiar and unfamiliar organisations). The allocation of conditions dependent on participants' level of familiarity with the organisations in the study resulted in 40 participants in the 'familiar, low choice' condition, 35 in the 'unfamiliar, low choice' condition, 33 in the 'familiar, high choice' condition and 52 in the 'unfamiliar, high' condition.

4.3.7.2.2 Choice amount

There were 75 participants in the low choice (10) condition and 85 participants in the high choice (40) condition. There was a significant effect of the number of options on people's thoughts about the number of options they had to choose from, $F(1, 158) = 72.17, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$. Participants that had 10 options to choose from thought the choice amount was 'too few' ($M = -.44, SD = 1.27$), a significantly lower response from a neutral response of 0, $t(74) = -3.01, p = .004$. Whereas participants that chose from 40 option viewed this number of options as 'too many' ($M = .91, SD = 1.37$), a significantly higher response than a neutral response 0, $t(84) = 6.10, p < .001$.

4.3.7.3 Effect of choice amount (H1)

Contrary to H1, there was no effect of choice amount on deferment likelihood, $F(1, 158) = .24, p = .625, \eta^2 = .00$. People that chose from 10 options ($M = -.27, SD = 1.49$) and people that chose from 40 options ($M = -.15, SD = 1.58$) stated that they would not want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer with. As H1 was not supported H2 was also refuted as there was no effect to mediate. Choice amount also did not have an effect on how difficult people found making their decision, $F(1, 158) = .43, p = .513, \eta^2 = .00$. People that chose from 10 options ($M = -.88, SD = 1.16$) and people that chose from 40 options ($M = -.77, SD = 1.07$) reported not finding the decision making process difficult.

4.3.7.4 Effect of familiarity with organisations (H3)

Contrary to H3, there was no effect of familiarity level with organisations on how likely people were to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for, $F(1, 158) = .02, p = .89, \eta^2 = .00$. People that were familiar with all the organisations they had to choose from ($M = -.18, SD = 1.63$) and people that were not familiar with the organisations they had to choose from ($M = -.20, SD = 1.54$) all reported that they would not defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer for. As H3 was refuted, this also meant that H4 was not supported as there was no effect to mediate. There was no effect of the familiarity of options on decision difficulty, $F(1, 158) = .04, p = .842, \eta^2 = .00$. People that chose from organisations that they were familiar with ($M = -.80, SD = 1.25$) and people that chose from organisations they were not familiar with ($M = -.84, SD = .99$) all did not experience difficulties making their decision.

4.3.7.5 Interactions between choice amount and option familiarity

The means and standard deviations for all interactions between choice amount and option familiarity can be seen in Table 4.12. There was no interaction between choice amount and option familiarity on deferment likelihood, $F(1, 156) = 2.59, p = .110, \eta^2 = .02$, or decision difficulty, $F(1, 156) = .03, p = .860, \eta^2 = .00$.

Table 4.12. Study 8. Means and standard deviations for deferment likelihood, decision difficulty and decision satisfaction as a result of choice amount and option familiarity

	Choice amount	Option familiarity			
		Familiar		Unfamiliar	
		M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Deferment Likelihood	Low	-.05	(1.64)	-.51	(1.26)
	High	-.35	(1.62)	-.02	(1.56)
Decision Difficulty	Low	-.88	(1.24)	-.90	(1.08)
	High	-.72	(1.27)	-.80	(.94)

4.3.7.6 Additional exploratory analyses

4.3.7.6.1 Individual items

The means, standard deviations and differences as a result of choice amount for all items can be seen in Table 4.13. The alpha level required to indicate a significant result was adjusted to take into account the chance of getting a type 1 error as a result of running multiple tests. As a result the only difference that remained significant when the adjustment was made was There was a significant effect of choice amount on people's counterfactual generation (how much they thought about the other organisations), $F(1, 158) = 9.75, p = .002, \eta^2 = .06$. People that chose from 40 options were more likely to think about the other organisations ($M = .15, SD = 1.95$) than people that chose from 10 options ($M = -.77, SD = 1.78$).

The means, standard deviations and differences as a result of option familiarity for individual items can be seen in Table 4.14. Also taking into account a bonferroni correction, the only significant effect was option familiarity on how likely people were to say that they would go on to volunteer with the organisation they chose in real life, $F(1, 158) = 16.57, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$. People were more likely to say that they would go on to volunteer with their chosen organisation in real life when they were familiar with the organisations they had to choose from ($M = .01, SD = 1.74$) than when they were unfamiliar with the organisations they had to choose from ($M = -1.03, SD = 1.52$).

Table 4.13. Study 8. Means, standard deviations and differences for items as a result of choice amount (10 vs. 40)

Item	Choice amount				df	F	p	η_p^2
	Low (10)		High (40)					
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)				
Deferment likelihood	-.27	(1.49)	-.15	(1.58)	1	.24	.625	.00
Decision difficulty	-.88	(1.16)	-.77	(1.07)	1	.43	.513	.00
Decision satisfaction	1.42	(1.09)	1.71	(.92)	1	3.20	.076	.02
How much did you enjoy it?	.29	(1.43)	.27	(1.43)	1	.01	.920	.00
How frustrated did you feel?	-1.13	(1.64)	-1.27	(1.55)	1	.30	.588	.00
How difficult was it to make a decision?	-.33	(1.61)	.22	(1.63)	1	4.70	.032	.03
Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options	-.77	(1.78)	.15	(1.95)	1	9.75	.002	.06
Ideally, I'd like more time to think before making this decision	-.31	(1.70)	-.18	(1.87)	1	.21	.647	.00
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?	1.31	(1.14)	1.74	(1.01)	1	6.52	.012	.04
How certain are you that you made the right choice?	1.19	(1.22)	1.26	(1.25)	1	.14	.713	.00
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did?	-1.77	(1.26)	-2.12	(1.02)	1	3.66	.058	.02
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later?	-.23	(1.78)	-.12	(1.76)	1	.15	.697	.00
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation?	-.63	(1.77)	-.49	(1.64)	1	.24	.624	.00

Adjusted alpha level with bonferroni correction: .005. Bold font denotes significant difference at this level

Table 4.14. Study 8. Means, standard deviations and differences for items as a result of option familiarity (familiar vs. unfamiliar)

Item	Option familiarity				df	F	p	η_p^2
	Familiar		Unfamiliar					
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)				
Deferment likelihood	-0.18	(1.63)	-0.22	(1.46)	1	.02	.891	.00
Decision difficulty	-0.80	(1.25)	-0.84	(.99)	1	.04	.842	.00
Decision satisfaction	1.61	(1.11)	1.54	(.92)	1	.16	.694	.00
How much did you enjoy it?	.27	(1.51)	.29	(1.36)	1	.00	.953	.00
How frustrated did you feel?	-1.11	(1.69)	-1.29	(1.51)	1	.49	.483	.00
How difficult was it to make a decision?	-0.03	(1.74)	-0.05	(1.56)	1	.01	.943	.00
Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options	-0.27	(2.07)	-0.29	(1.80)	1	.00	.965	.00
Ideally, I'd like more time to think before making this decision	-0.16	(1.90)	-0.30	(1.70)	1	.22	.637	.00
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?	1.62	(1.14)	1.47	(1.05)	1	.70	.404	.00
How certain are you that you made the right choice?	1.27	(1.38)	1.18	(1.11)	1	.21	.647	.00
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did?	-1.93	(1.16)	-1.98	(1.14)	1	.06	.803	.00
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later?	-0.21	(1.82)	-0.14	(1.72)	1	.06	.810	.00
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation?	.01	(1.74)	-1.03	(1.52)	1	16.57	< .001	.10

Adjusted alpha level with bonferroni correction: .005. Bold font denotes significant difference at this level

4.3.7.7 Number of organisations looked at

The means and standard deviations of the number of organisations looked at as a result of choice amount and option familiarity can be seen in Table 4.15.

There was a significant effect of choice amount on the number of options looked, $F(1, 156) = 7.33, p = .008, \eta^2 = .05$. People looked at the details of more organisations when choosing from 40 options ($M = 4.34, SD = 4.14$) than 10 options ($M = 2.53, SD = 2.86$). This also occurred for the total number of organisations looked at including re-looks, $F(1, 156) = 6.29, p = .013, \eta^2 = .04$. Again people looked at the details of more organisations when choosing from 40 options ($M = 4.95, SD = 4.91$) than when choosing from 10 options ($M = 2.93, SD = 3.45$).

There was also a significant effect of option familiarity on how many organisations people looked at, $F(1, 156) = 11.67, p = .001, \eta^2 = .07$. People looked at more organisations if they chose from unfamiliar organisations ($M = 4.47, SD = 4.13$) than if they chose from familiar organisations ($M = 2.33, SD = 2.69$). This also occurred for the total number of organisations looked at including relooks, $F(1, 156) = 11.03, p = .001, \eta^2 = .07$. People looked at more organisations (including re-looks) if they chose from unfamiliar options ($M = 5.14, SD = 4.94$) than if they chose from familiar options ($M = 2.66, SD = 3.18$).

The interactions between choice amount and option familiarity for the number of organisations looked at, $F(1, 156) = .10, p = .748, \eta^2 = .00$ and the number of organisations looked at (including relooks), $F(1, 156) = .11, p = .738, \eta^2 = .00$ were not significant.

Table 4.15. Study 8. Means and standard deviations of the number of organisations looked at as a result of choice amount and option familiarity

	Choice amount	Familiarity level			
		Familiar		Unfamiliar	
		M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Number of organisations looked at	Low	1.73	(2.14)	3.46	(3.30)
	High	3.06	(3.11)	5.15	(4.51)
Total number of organisations looked at including relooks	Low	2.00	(2.54)	4.00	(4.04)
	High	3.45	(3.69)	5.90	(5.37)

4.3.7.8 Time taken

An outlier analysis on the time taken for participants to make their decision revealed that there were 11 participants that took longer than 3 standard deviations above the mean time taken to make a decision for their condition. Therefore, for the purposes of accuracy, these 11 people were removed from the time analyses only.

The means and standard deviations of the time taken to make a decision as a result of choice amount and option familiarity can be seen in Table 4.16. There was a significant effect of choice amount on the time taken to make a decision, $F(1, 145) = 17.29, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$. People that chose from 40 organisations took longer to make their decision about which organisation to volunteer with ($M = 101.63\text{secs}, SD = 59.27\text{secs}$) than people that chose from 10 organisations ($M = 62.60\text{secs}, SD = 42.84\text{secs}$).

The extent of familiarity of options also had a significant effect on the time taken to make a decision, $F(1, 145) = 4.75, p = .031, \eta^2 = .03$. People that were unfamiliar with the organisations they had to choose from took longer ($M = 94.58\text{secs}, SD = 57.13\text{secs}$) to make their decision than people that were familiar with the organisations they had to choose from ($M = 69.85\text{secs}, SD = 50.90\text{secs}$).

There was no interaction of choice amount and option familiarity on how long people took to make their decision, $F(1, 145) = .02, p = .885, \eta^2 = .00$.

Table 4.16. Study 8. Means and standard deviations of the time taken to make a decision (secs)

	Choice amount	Familiarity level			
		Familiar		Unfamiliar	
		Msecs	(SDsecs)	Msecs	(SDsecs)
Time taken	Low	54.58	(41.81)	72.13	(42.74)
	High	89.20	(55.34)	109.24	(60.86)

4.3.7.9 Volunteering intentions

When given the option to see the contact details of the organisation they chose as the organisation they would most like to volunteer with, 41.9% of people clicked to see the organisation's details, 40.6% did not, and for 17.6% people it was not possible to record their decision due to a technical fault. A chi-square test of independence showed that the percentage of people that chose to see the contact details of their chosen organisation did not differ as a result of condition, $\chi^2(6, N = 154) = 10.28, p = .113$. 26.9% of people in the familiar/low choice condition clicked to see their chosen organisations' contact details, compared with 20.9% in the unfamiliar/low choice condition, 23.9% in the familiar/high choice condition and 28.4% in the unfamiliar/high choice condition.

4.3.7.10 How decision could have been made easier

Participants' open-ended responses to this question were coded into categories, see Figure 4.19. The most frequent response was to have fewer options to choose from, or fewer options that were similar to one another in the choice set. The second most frequent response was to have more information; such as more specific details about volunteering day to day duties, experiences from volunteers, the locations of the organisations or photos or logos of the organisation. The third most frequent response was 'other'; this included step by step elimination of options, the use of defaults, or individual reasons. Other

suggestions as to how the decision could have been made easier included the use of categories to group organisations by the type of volunteer work undertaken, or a change in layout of how the options were presented to participants (e.g., the use of bullet points or more structured descriptions).

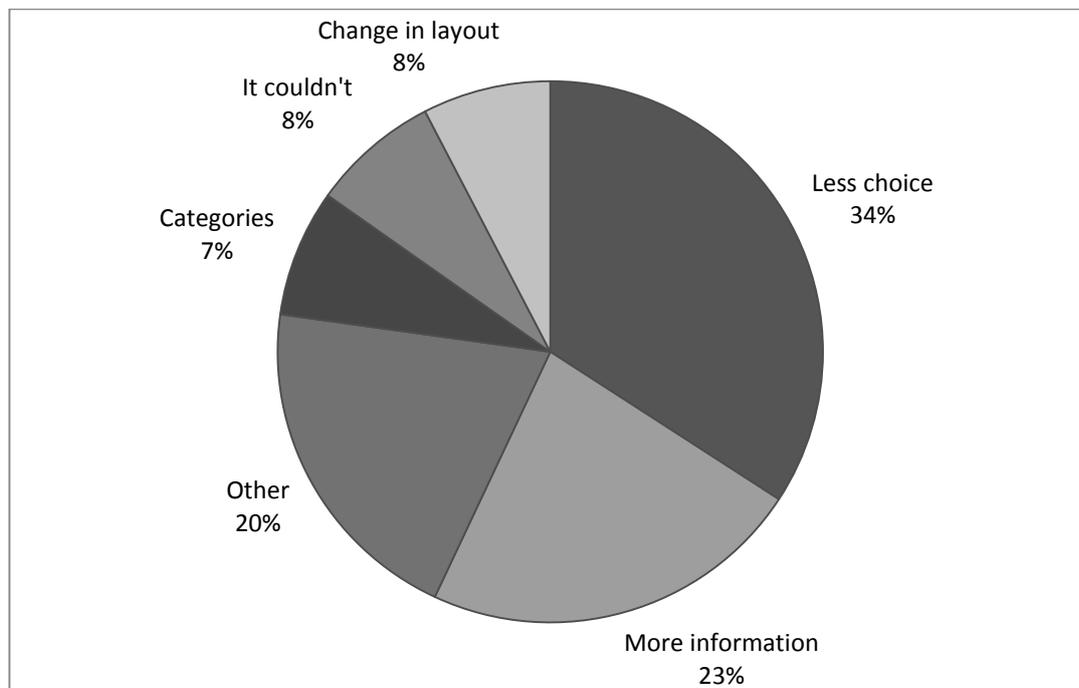


Figure 4.19. Study 8. How decision could have been made easier for all participants (%'s)

4.3.8 Discussion

Contrary to expectations, there was no difference in deferment likelihood as a result of choice amount (choosing from 10 vs. 40 options). In both instances people reported that they would not defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer with. An extensive choice amount (40 options) also did not prove difficult for participants making their decision. These findings contradict the results of Study 5 that found that choosing from an extensive choice set led to an increased likelihood of decision deferment likelihood as a result of the difficulties experienced whilst making the decision. There were several

methodological differences between the two studies however, most notably, the organisations people were required to choose from in Study 4 were hypothetical and the organisations in the current study were real organisations (although one could argue that the hypothetical options in Study 4 and the unfamiliar option sets in the current study may be similar as people in both cases were choosing from an unfamiliar set of options [the options in Study 4 did not exist so people could not have been familiar with them]).

The findings do provide some support for the too-much-choice effect however. People that chose from a high choice set of 40 options thought more about the options they had forgone when they chose from 40 options compared to 10. Also, participant's open ended responses when asked how their decision could have been made easier indicated that choosing from an extensive choice set could have been easier (as in all previous studies) as when only the responses of those that had chosen from a high choice were looked at, nearly half of them stated that fewer options would have made the decision easier. This further substantiated previous findings and highlighted that 40 options is too many for people to cope with and choose an option with ease from a choice set. Perhaps there are very specific conditions that need to be met in order for the too-much-choice effect to manifest itself consistently. There were many other extraneous variables in the current study and previous studies that could not be controlled for yet could have had an impact on the extent to which the too-much-choice effect was found (individual differences for example).

People's familiarity with the organisations in the option set they had to choose from also had no effect on deferment likelihood, decision difficulty or decision satisfaction. This was not expected as I predicted that people would have found choosing an organisation to volunteer with more difficult if they were choosing from a set of options they were unfamiliar with, as they would have to research the details of each organisation in order to be able to effectively compare and contrast the potential options and arrive at their most favoured organisation and could not rely on prior knowledge to assist them in their decision

or assure themselves they were making a reputable choice. There is further support for this null effect. Since this study was conducted, a paper by Park and Jang (2013) was published that investigated the effect of choice amount on holiday destination decisions. They also found that option familiarity did not moderate the relationship between choice amount and deferment likelihood, despite their predictions.

However, for the current study, familiarity of the eventual chosen organisation did appear to be an important factor in decision making however, as people were much more likely to state that they would actually go on to volunteer with their chosen organisation when they had chosen from a familiar choice set (and as such were already familiar with the organisation they chose). This supports the findings of Study 7 and Scheibehenne et al., (2009) and Soyer and Hogarth (2011) with regards to monetary donations. The findings from the current study and Study 7 extend the phenomenon to donations of time. Possible reasons for this could be because their prior familiarity is associated with large, established organisations that have a long history and good reputations so therefore they can feel assured that they would be well trained, treated and have a positive impact through volunteering. It is important to note that the levels of familiarity and unfamiliarity within the choice sets in the current study would have fluctuated. I only asked people whether they had heard of each organisation; people could have used different criteria levels to answer the question. This could have affected people's decision making strategies and subsequent feelings about their choice; perhaps a more stringent way of separating participants into familiar or unfamiliar choice sets may have elicited stronger or more effects of familiarity levels on decision making. Also, this study was not completely experimental in that participants' allocation to a condition was dependent on their pre-existing familiarity with the organisations in the study. Although participant's allocation to choice conditions was as random as possible (based on how many organisations they reported being familiar with) the people that ended up in certain conditions may have had similarities amongst those in the same condition as themselves, but differences from those in other conditions. For

example, people that reported being familiar with a large number of organisations (and as a result ended up in the familiar/high choice condition) may have been more interested in volunteering, or have done more research than those that were familiar with fewer organisations and may have found it easier to make their decision. This could have attenuated any effects of choice amount on option familiarity.

Choice amount and option familiarity did affect how many organisations' details people chose to look at whilst making their decision. People in the high choice conditions looked at more organisations than people in the low choice conditions and people that chose from unfamiliar organisations looked at more organisations than people that were familiar with them. The number of organisations looked at (around 4 in the high choice conditions and around 2 in the low choice conditions) was lower than in previous studies (e.g., Study 5) however and is lower than the suggested optimal number of options of around 7-10 (Hong, et al., 2004; Shah & Wolford, 2007) and could have suggested that participants perhaps were not taking their decision as seriously as they would have if it had had direct consequences to them. This was a hypothetical decision; people didn't then go on to actually volunteer with the organisation they chose.

Overall, the evidence of some of the individual item's data for this study as well as people's qualitative responses do provide further evidence to suggest that the too-much-choice effect may exist for volunteering decisions, yet the overall null effect of choice amount on deferment likelihood adds to the body of literature that has emerged that does not find evidence of a too-much-choice effect (e.g., Scheibehenne et al., 2009). These mixed findings highlight the complexity of the too-much-choice effect and the conditions in which it is likely to occur.

5 General Discussion

5.1 Research Summary

The series of studies presented in this thesis have added to the body of literature investigating the effect of choice amount on decision making and possible choice architectures that may facilitate choosing from extensive choice sets. In particular, they add to the very limited research into the effect of choice amount for an experiential choice rather than a material choice. To my knowledge they are the first set of studies that have looked at the effect of choice amount on decisions about which organisation to volunteer for. An overview of the studies presented in this thesis and their main findings can be seen in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Summary of studies presented in the thesis

Study	Details	Main Findings
1: The Effect of an Opt-in or Opt-out Default on Compliance with a Request	A 2(Default: opt-in/opt-out) factorial design field study. To assess the willingness of people that had shown an interest in volunteering to be contacted for future research as a result of whether the request was opt-in or opt-out	People were much more likely to agree to be contacted for future research when the request was framed in an opt-out fashion (93.5% vs. 55.8%)
2: The Discrepancy between Intentions and Actions	Field Study. To gain information about the convergence rate of students' intentions to volunteer compared to actual volunteering rates. To find out why students may not have volunteered and what students that had volunteered thought of the decision process and their experiences volunteering	47.3% of respondents had taken part in some volunteering. They did not find choosing an organisation to volunteer with hard, and were happy with the organisation they chose. They got what they wanted to out of volunteering, and more. 52.7% of respondents had not done any volunteering. Their main reasons were due to a 'lack of time' (44.8%) or 'lack of contact from organisations' (20.7%)
3: Evaluation of Volunteer Induction Evenings 2009 and 2010	2 x field studies at the 2009 and 2010 volunteer induction evenings at Plymouth University. To assess students' motivations to volunteer, and their perceptions of having over 30 organisations (an extensive choice set) to choose from	88.3% attendees signed up to volunteer. Main motivation to volunteer was 'to help/give something back' (30.6%). The evening was a useful tool in assisting students to choose an organisation to volunteer with. Students did not find it difficult to choose an organisation to volunteer for and were satisfied with their choice(s) despite having an extensive choice set from which to choose
4: The Association between Number of Options Considered and Decision Deferral for Real Volunteer Organisations	Pre-post choice study. First investigation into the relationship of choice amount and choosing an organisation to volunteer with based on Volunteering England - an actual volunteering website	The greater the number of organisations looked at, the greater likelihood of decision deferral. This was mediated by decision difficulty; the more difficult the decision was the greater likelihood of decision deferral. People were unaware of the number of available volunteering organisations or of how complex the decision would be before being faced with the options and making a choice.

5: Deferment Likelihood for Few Versus Many Hypothetical Volunteer Organisations	2(Choice amount: 10/30) x 2(Reversibility: Reversible/Non-reversible) factorial design. A more controlled experimental laboratory study into the effects of choice amount and reversibility on deferment likelihood and decision satisfaction	People were more likely to want to defer a decision about which organisation to volunteer with if they had chosen from a large choice set compared to a small choice set. Again, this effect was mediated by decision difficulty; the more difficult the decision the more likely choosers were to want to defer their decision. People were more satisfied if their decision was reversible. No other effects of reversibility
6: The Effect of Categorisation on Volunteering Decisions	3(categories: 0/5/10) factorial design. Included non-students. Increasing the choice set size to 70 options and testing categorisation of options as a potential moderator of the too-much-choice effect	Overall, no effect of the categorisation of options on decision difficulty, deferment likelihood or decision satisfaction. No evidence of the too-much-choice effect when choosing from 70 options.
7: The Effect of Option Presentation Format on Decisions to Volunteer	2(Presentation format: Box/List) x 2(Basket facility: Basket/No Basket) factorial design. Testing option presentation format and a basket facility as potential moderators of the too-much-choice effect	People were more likely to want to defer their decision about which organisation to volunteer for when options were presented in a list format compared to a box format although there was no effect on decision difficulty or decision satisfaction. Having a 'basket' present during decision making had no effect on deferment likelihood, decision difficulty or decision satisfaction.
8: The Effect of Choice Amount and Familiarity of Options on Decisions to Volunteer	2(Choice amount: 10/40) x 2 (Option familiarity: Familiar/unfamiliar) factorial design. Testing option familiarity as a potential moderator of the too-much-choice effect	No effect of choice amount on deferment likelihood, decision difficulty. No effect of option familiarity on deferment likelihood, decision difficulty or decision satisfaction.

5.2 Does the Too-Much-Choice Effect Exist for Volunteering Decisions?

The findings from my research are mixed. Study 5 found evidence for the too-much-choice effect. It showed that when choosing from an extensive set of options people were more likely to defer a decision about which organisation to choose. This was a result of the increased difficulty experienced during the decision making process; the more difficult the decision making experience was, the more likely a person would want to defer making a decision. However, this increased level of difficulty whilst making a choice and increased deferment likelihood when choosing from an extensive choice set in Study 5 did not emerge in subsequent studies in which participants were required to choose from the same (Study 8) an even greater number of options (Studies 6 and 7). Although the too-much-choice effect was often alluded to in people's qualitative open-ended responses about what would have made their decision easier (for example, "fewer options", "less choice", "if the options were categorised") and was hinted at in some support variables, the effect was not consistently found amongst my primary dependant variables; deferment likelihood and decision difficulty. It would appear that in some cases the existence of the too-much-choice effect may depend on how tightly one defines the too-much-choice effect. The mixed findings from my studies highlight that the too-much choice phenomenon is complex and there may be many factors that affect the likelihood of its occurrence.

The studies that found the too-much-effect add to the body of literature that has demonstrated that choosing from an extensive set leads to a greater incidence of decision paralysis and deferment likelihood (e.g., Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Redelmeier & Shafir, 1995; Jessop et al., 2009; Arunachalam et al., 2009; Dhar, 1997; Huberman & Jiang, 2004; Tversky & Shafir, 1992). That the effect only sometimes emerged also echoed Scheibehenne et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis, which concluded that the effect is not always consistent in the

literature. Nevertheless, a key addition of my research is that it is to my knowledge, only the second piece of work to date, following Park and Jiang (2013) that has found the existence of the too-much-choice effect, at least in some instances, for an experiential choice rather than a material one. Scheibehenne et al's (2010) meta-analysis and the discovery of many unpublished papers with no evidence of the too-much-choice effect occurring suggests that the effect may not be as prevalent as first thought. Also, my studies were based around Iyengar and Lepper's (2000) work. They found evidence for the too-much-choice effect but in their analysis they do not adjust their alpha levels to account for an increased likelihood of getting a false positive significant result (type 1 error) as a result of running multiple comparisons. I too would have had a greater number of significant findings (although not to the extent that they did) if I had not applied the bonferroni correction to my analyses.

5.3 What Factors May Affect the Occurrence and Extent of the Too-Much-Choice Effect?

As noted above, the findings from my studies were not as clear cut with regard to the too-much-choice effect as was expected. The mixed findings of my studies with regard to choice amount and its effect on deferment likelihood, decision difficulty and decision satisfaction supports Scheibehenne et al.'s (2010) claim that it has been difficult to date to establish the conditions under which the too-much-choice effect reliably occurs. There may be a multitude of factors that contribute to determine whether a chooser will experience the too-much-choice effect.

5.3.1 Volunteering Recruitment Method

Perhaps the too-much-choice effect (or difficulties associated from choosing from an extensive choice set) in the context of volunteering may be found in certain volunteer recruitment settings but not others. Something to note was the way in which the recruitment methods of potential volunteers differ. In my first three studies (Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3) I focussed on 'events' that had been organised by the volunteering department at the University to make students aware of the possible volunteering opportunities on offer and assist them to make contact with volunteering organisations. In contrast, the latter five studies in my research (Study 4, Study 5, Study 6, Study 7 and Study 8) focussed on the internet (or a laboratory replication of it) as a recruitment method for volunteers. Although choice set size was not manipulated in all of my studies it is important to note the differences between these two recruitment methods. Volunteering 'events' (the sports and societies fair and the volunteer induction evening) are likely to attract people that have definitely decided that they would like to engage in some volunteering, whereas internet searches are likely to be conducted by people that may be more undecided about whether they want to volunteer or not. People are likely to spend a lot more time considering potential volunteering opportunities in an event setting as they have made an effort to travel there, and once there they are encouraged to spend time perusing the information available and talking to volunteer representatives, whereas, the perusal of potential volunteering opportunities via an internet search may be much shorter. Different recruitment strategies (e.g., volunteering event – longer, more interaction; Online – shorter, no interaction), and the people they encourage to use them (more/less committed to volunteering) may lead to different decision making experiences which in turn could lead to differing decision outcomes (e.g., deferment likelihood, decision difficulty and decision satisfaction). At volunteering events it may be easier to tailor a search for an organisation quickly. There is richer information available to a potential volunteer such as the type of

person representing specific organisations, the organisations that other people appear to be attracted to and whether they are similar to oneself. These possibilities may explain the contrasting findings of Studies 2 and 3 that did not find evidence to support the too-much-choice effect (people did not find it difficult choosing from an extensive choice set) despite having what would be considered an extensive set of options to choose from, and Studies 4 (although choice set size was not experimentally manipulated) and 5 that did find evidence of the too-much-choice effect for volunteering decisions.

On a similar note, the volunteering induction evening was effectively still just an opportunity for students to register their interest in volunteering (like at the sports and societies fair), but for specific organisations rather than volunteering in general. Students were able to sign up to as many organisations as they wished to. Therefore they did not have to commit to a singular choice (as is often the case in choice experiments). This could have reduced any feelings of difficulty or uncertainty during the decision making process if they were deliberating between options as they were able to sign up to multiple organisations. Similarly, if they had chosen more than one organisation they may have been less likely to experience regret at having forgone an alternative organisation (because they will have chosen it also) and therefore their satisfaction levels with their chosen organisations may have been greater than if they had to have committed to just one organisation. With regard to Study 3 and the volunteering induction evening, perhaps the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set may have occurred after the event when a student may realise they only have a limited time in which they can volunteer and may at that point have to choose between two (or more) attractive organisations. This is just speculation however, as there was no follow-up to ascertain actual volunteering rates with the organisations that people chose to sign up to volunteer with.

5.3.2 Time Pressure

I was concerned in my studies (particularly study 5) that participants were not taking enough time to make their decision and perhaps were not taking the task seriously enough, or considering all the options as fully as they would if they were making a real life decision. In the studies in which people had as much time as they liked to make their decision (Study 5, 6, 7 and 8) people typically only took around 2 minutes to make their choice. This appears to be a very short amount of time considering the number of options on offer (especially in Studies 6 and 7). However, other research has found that even for important decisions like choosing which hospital to receive treatment at people make their decisions in very short amounts of time (e.g., for a serious non-urgent knee problem needing surgery, people only took 2.7 minutes to reach a decision regarding which hospital to receive treatment from; Boyce, Dixon, Fasolo and Reutskaja, 2010). Similarly, for other decisions such as choosing a microwave (Park and Lessig, 1981) the time to make a decision was around 2 minutes.

Time pressure has been shown to reduce the occurrence of deferment likelihood (Dhar & Nowlis, 1999). Although time pressure was never systematically manipulated, in general participants in my studies did not take long to make their decision. This may have been because they did not find the task very interesting or because they wanted to complete the study quickly. The majority of participants in my studies were psychology students and took part in the studies for course credit. They may have wanted to complete the study and get their credit in as little time as possible and as such imposed a time limit on themselves. They may have chosen under a self-inflicted time constraint which may according to Dhar and Nowlis (1999) have made them more likely to make a decision and reduce deferment likelihood, reducing the effects of too-much-choice.

5.3.3 Decision Strategy

However, the short time it took for participants to make a decision about which organisation to volunteer for in my studies may in itself have been a behavioural manifestation of the too-much-choice effect, or difficulties experiences when choosing from an extensive choice set. Perhaps as a result of the extensive number of options that they were faced with people may have deemed it not possible to satisfactorily compare and contrast all the available options and therefore not spend their time trying to. People may have switched to a quicker and simpler heuristic based strategy to make their decision which may have reduced their susceptibility to the negative effects of the too-much-choice effect (see Section 1.3.2) or adopted a satisficing strategy and simply selected the best option from a smaller subset of the options available (Güth, 2010), as people did not look at a relatively large number of organisations before making their decision.

5.3.4 Choice Complexity

As discussed in section 1.3.5, the complexity of a decision has been shown to affect satisfaction with chosen options. Greifeneder, et al., (2010) found that when choosing from large choice sets, satisfaction with options was similar if the options only differed on one attribute, but less if the options differed on six attributes. With regard to my studies, perhaps when choosing an organisation to volunteer for, people may only actually focus on the volunteering domain (e.g., animals, child care, conservation etc.) rather than specifics (varying attributes) such as the location of the volunteering opportunity, travel costs, volunteering days/hours amongst others. In my studies these realistic considerations were not mentioned, and the choice was a hypothetical one so participants did not need to factor them into their decision. This may have resulted in their decision being easier than it would

have been for them if they were choosing an organisation to volunteer with for real.

Perhaps these additional considerations that potential volunteers will have to make may increase the complexity of the decision (as a result of the options being compared on multiple attributes) and as a result the occurrence of the too-much-choice effect.

Decision time is likely to increase as decision difficulty increases up until a point at which the decision becomes considerably difficult, from which decision time decreases as difficulty increases (Kiesler, 1966; Pollay, 1970). If decision time decreases people may be less likely to experience the too-much-choice effect (see Section 1.5.2.1).

5.3.5 Individual Differences

Individual differences (several of which were discussed in Section 1.5.1) may affect the likelihood and extent to which a chooser may experience the too-much-choice effect.

People's values and priorities are varied. What might be an important decision for one person may not be for another. A person's current life situation may affect how they treat different decisions and respond to choice amounts and choice architectures (e.g., the increased satisfaction for students but not non-students as a result of the categorisation of options in Study 6) perhaps based on the importance or possible consequences of a decision.

Therefore, the decision domain and context may play a part in how susceptible a chooser is to experience the too-much-choice effect.

The extent to which a person is a maximiser or a satisficer may also affect how they approach choices, how they subsequently feel having made a choice and how likely they are to experience the too-much-choice effect (see Section 1.5.1.2).

5.4 What Choice Architectures Facilitate Volunteering Choice in the Face of Extensive Options?

The findings from my studies have confirmed that the effects of choice amount on choosing are extremely complex. It is very difficult to separate the potential factors that could contribute to the existence or non-existence of the effect as many of the factors are likely to work in conjunction with one another and some, such as individual differences are beyond the control of a choice architect and cannot be manipulated. Potential moderators of the effect are likely to interact with one another in order to determine whether the too-much-choice effect will be experienced or not. Due to the difficulties in separating potential moderators from each other it is still unclear exactly what precursors are required in order for the too-much-choice effect to occur.

Despite difficulties choosing from extensive choice sets not being found consistently across studies, the findings of the studies that did find strong support of the existence of the effect (Studies 4 and 5) coupled with the open ended responses from participants in these and other studies as to how their decision could have been made easier suggest that people do find it difficult to choose which organisation to volunteer for when choosing from an extensive choice set (as is likely to occur in the outside world) and that potential volunteers may be less likely to sign up to volunteer with an organisation as a result. Even if the too-much-choice effect does not occur in all situations or for every individual, in order to maximise volunteer recruitment, it would be beneficial to implement choice architectures to try assist those people that *do* suffer the negative consequences from the too-much-effect in making their decision. As noted in section 1.2.2 this would be considered a Pareto efficient move. Choice architectures may make the people whose decision making is impaired as a result of choosing from an extensive choice set better off (by facilitating their decision, possibly reducing decision difficulty and deferment likelihood, whilst increasing

decision satisfaction), whilst people that perhaps extensive choice does not affect remain no worse off. This could lead to an increase in the overall number of volunteers in society, and a greater occurrence of the benefits that volunteers themselves, voluntary organisations and society would attain.

There are many likely moderators of the too-much-choice effect, or facilitators that may make choosing from extensive choice sets more manageable. I focussed on three choice architectures as potential facilitators of choosing from extensive choice sets: the categorisation of options, option presentation format and option familiarity. The categorisation of options was investigated as people indicated they wanted more structure and guidance for their decision (Study 4) and it was mentioned repeatedly in people's open ended responses about how their decision could have been made easier (Study 4, Study 5). The presentation of options was investigated after a realisation that the options in my studies were presented in a box format and that on volunteering websites options were typically presented in a list format. Option familiarity was investigated based on the possibility that people may just have been selecting options that they were familiar with from large choice sets (indicated by the short decision times) and the finding of Study 7 that found that the majority of people chose to volunteer with an organisation that they were already familiar with.

5.4.1 Option Categorisation

The qualitative open ended responses people gave across my studies as to how their decision could have been made easier demonstrated that the categorisation of options may facilitate choosing an organisation to volunteer for, even if Study 6 did not find a significant quantitative effect of the categorisation of options on deferment likelihood, decision

difficulty or decision satisfaction. There were some definite benefits of option categorisation.

Categories reduced people's feeling of "too much" choice (which was experienced when the options were not categorised) without reducing the choice set size (Study 6). This is important for situations such as volunteering where it is not ethical not realistic to reduce the number of options available to people and highlights that categories may be beneficial for extensive choice sets in order to present choosers with a large number of options and variety whilst ensuring they do not feel that the choice amount is "too much". Also, when options are arranged into lots (in my case 10) rather than few (5) categories this may increase people's intentions to volunteer. In the no categories condition 54.2% of people clicked to see the contact details of their chosen organisation compared to 48.5% in the 5 categories condition but in the 10 category condition some 74.3% clicked to see the details of their chosen organisation possibly indicating a greater intention to volunteer as a result of how the options were categorised. This could be beneficial in terms of volunteer recruitment.

5.4.2 Box/Grid Option presentation Format

Study 7 showed that people were significantly more likely to want to defer their decision when the volunteering organisations were presented onscreen in a 'list' format compared to a 'box/grid' format. This is such a simple architecture that can be implemented for online choices, yet could have real positive differences in terms of decision making and the reduction of decision paralysis and deferment likelihood. People may be more likely to make a choice of options are presented in a box rather than a list format.

5.4.3 Option Familiarity

A choosers' level of familiarity with the options in the choice set (see Section 1.5.1.3) did not appear to affect their susceptibility to the too-much-choice effect (see Study 8) contradicting the findings of Chernev (2003) but supporting the findings of Park and Jiang (2013).

5.5 Limitations of the Current Research

The main limitation of my studies (Studies 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) was that the choice people made about which organisation they would most like to volunteer with was a hypothetical one. People never actually went on to experience volunteering with their chosen organisation. This could have affected how seriously participants took the decision (and subsequent reports of decision difficulty and decision satisfaction) as they knew that there would be no real direct consequences of them making a 'bad' choice or not picking the 'best' option. However, Scheibehenne et al. (2010) found from their meta-analysis that the effect size of the too-much-choice effect did not depend on whether the choice was hypothetical or real.

Moreover, in Studies 1-3, all participants were clearly interested in volunteering so for them the decision was more than hypothetical in the sense that they really were trying to find an organisation to volunteer with or at least consider.

A further possible limitation of my studies was that the majority of participants were students (aside from half the participants in Study 6) and so it is questionable whether the too-much-choice effect demonstrated here would generalise to the general population. However, as mentioned in section 1.6.9, students are a very important demographic to study with regard to volunteering as they are at a stage in their life when many people begin

volunteering (Holdsworth, 2010) and the benefits to them of volunteering could be potentially greater than non-students in terms of skills and experience development and job prospects. Also, previous studies into the too-much-choice effect have used students as their participants (e.g., Chernev, 2003; Fasolo et al., 2009; Haynes, 2009; Kahn & Wansink, 2004; Lin & Wu, 2006; Mogilner et al., 2008; Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009; Scheibehenne et al., 2009; Shah & Wolford, 2007; White & Hoffrage, 2009).

Another limitation of my research was that I did not measure individual differences. This was because I was interested in what choice architectures could be controlled and manipulated for decisions involving extensive choice that may facilitate decision making for all individuals (or just a selection) irrespective of individual differences. Although I acknowledge that individual differences (see Section 1.5.1) are likely to moderate the too-much-choice effect to some extent. Schwartz (2004) showed that maximisers are more prone to experience the too-much-choice effect than satisficers. It is possible (although unlikely) that participants in the studies in which I found evidence for the too-much-choice effect were maximisers and the participants in the studies that did not find evidence of the effect were satisficers.

Also, during the series of studies presented in this thesis there were quite a few parametric and stimuli changes made throughout. Although this was intended due to the applied nature of the work and my intention to investigate volunteering choice amount and potential choice architectural decision facilitators in a manner that was as similar as possible to a scenario that may occur in a real life setting, cross study comparisons should be treated with caution as these parametric changes may have attributed to any differences found between studies and even the occurrence of difficulties (or not) as a result of choosing from an extensive choice set. Having said that, the basic aspects of the choosing process for participants remained predominately consistent throughout.

5.6 Implications for Volunteer Recruitment

The context of my studies has focussed on the choice of a potential volunteer about which voluntary organisation to choose. As mentioned previously, for a potential volunteer that has no previous knowledge or preferences about which organisation they would like to volunteer with they are likely to search on the internet to find out about available volunteering organisations and opportunities in their area. There are currently several websites dedicated to providing a database of volunteering opportunities for people to compare and contrast that are obviously competing with one another for internet traffic and views. Based on the too-much-choice literature it would make sense that they should offer fewer volunteering opportunities to choose from compared to their competitors as this may result in a potential volunteer choosing to decide to volunteer with an organisation rather than to put off a decision until a later date or not make a decision at all. However, based on the findings of Berger, Dranganska and Simonson (2007) reducing the number of options on offer may have the opposite effect and people may be more likely to view a competitor's site because they offer more options and a finer distinction among options which a potential volunteer may associate with greater knowledge and expertise. Although a potential volunteer may ultimately not choose an organisation to volunteer with as a result of the too-much-choice effect, if they do, it will have been through a competitors website based on the assumption of greater expertise purely due to the number of options offered. Also, as mentioned in section 1.7.2 it is not ethical nor a realistic possibility to reduce the number of volunteering opportunities available for potential volunteers to choose from, and for reasons mentioned above volunteering websites may not want to streamline the volunteering options they present (although Volunteering England did just this). Therefore, a potential volunteer deciding which organisation to volunteer for is likely to come across an extensive choice set. Yet, it may be possible to structure the way that options are presented so that choosers are guided towards/away from certain options so

they do not have to search each option to attain a suitable match. The findings from my series of studies provide some suggestions that volunteering websites and organisations could implement or change that may facilitate volunteering decisions for some potential volunteers which could possibly lead to an increase in people volunteering. These are discussed below.

Study 1 suggested that if volunteering organisations want to encourage people to act on their initial intention to volunteer, that they should frame requests for contact details in an opt-out rather than an opt-in fashion to elicit the greatest level of compliance with a request for information and the greatest number of contact details.

The contrasting findings regarding the existence of negative consequences when choosing from extensive choice sets for volunteering decisions between Studies 2 and 3 (volunteering recruitment events which did not find the effects) and Studies 4 and 5 (volunteering recruitment website replication which did find the effects) suggests that volunteering organisations should try to get involved with volunteering events such as the volunteer induction evening at Plymouth University (Study 3). Although not tested under laboratory settings, the attendees of the events did not appear to suffer the negative consequences of choosing from an extensive choice set that the people choosing from options on a computer (online replication) did.

Study 7 showed that people preferred choosing options (organisations) that they were already familiar with, in line with previous research (e.g., Scheibehenne et al., 2009; Soyer and Hogarth, 2011). This highlights the importance of advertising campaigns by voluntary organisations to increase awareness and familiarity, thereby increasing the likelihood that potential volunteers will choose to volunteer with that organisation. Similarly, increased awareness of volunteering opportunities may increase people's interest in volunteering as Study 4 demonstrated that simply taking part in the study (and looking through potential volunteering opportunities) increased people's interest in volunteering. Organisations should also try to highlight the benefits that individuals get from volunteering

(see section 1.6.5), and that volunteering may actually exceed their expectations in terms of what they will get out of it (Study 2).

The findings from Study 7 suggest that perhaps volunteering websites that provide internet searchers with numerous (usually extensive) volunteering organisations and opportunities to peruse should re-consider the way in which they present the various options. Usually the options are presented in a list format, but the findings of Study 7 suggest that presenting options in a box/grid format may facilitate volunteering decisions. People were less likely to want to defer a decision when the options were presented in a box/grid format. This would be a simple intervention that volunteering websites could implement, yet may have beneficial consequences with regard to volunteer recruitment.

Selected findings from Study 6 and people's suggestions as to how their choice could be made easier suggest that categorising options may facilitate volunteering decisions; People wanted structure and guidance when choosing and for volunteering organisations to be arranged into volunteering sectors. Option categorisation could also be beneficial as it was shown to reduce people's feelings of having too much choice to choose from (when choosing from 70 options) despite not actually reducing the choice set size.

Volunteering websites and organisations should consider some of these choice architectural suggestions as they may assist some potential volunteers that may be susceptible to the too-much-choice effect to bridge the gap between intention to volunteer and actually volunteering, whilst probably not hindering those that may not be susceptible.

5.7 Implications for Other Experiential Choices

The findings from my studies may be relevant to other experiential choices. Although the findings of my studies overall are unclear with regards to whether the too-much-choice effect exists for volunteering decisions, some aspects of them may be of use to develop or

investigate further in other experiential choice contexts. My findings could be of particular use for experiential choices that happen online. For example, perhaps choosing a holiday destination, recreational activity or medical treatment. For these experiential decisions also it is likely that a chooser may face an extensive choice set from which to choose. Websites advertising these experiences may want to consider categorising options so that choosers receive structure and guidance to assist them with their choice, or presenting their options in a box format rather than a list format. Extensive choice may be a potential reason that many people end up revisiting holiday destinations rather than going to new ones (or sticking to other experiences that they know), because the number of alternatives is large, the choice may be difficult and for fear of their choice of being as good as their previous one.

The inconsistencies in findings from my studies from some of those found in the consumer choice literature (e.g., Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Shah & Wolford, 2007) may indicate that choice amount affects material and experiential choices differently. Replication of Park & Jiang's (2013) recent findings suggest that the findings of Study 5 regarding deferment likelihood and Study 8 regarding option familiarity may be applicable to additional experiential choices.

5.8 Future Research

There are still many questions that remain regarding the effect of choice amount on decisions to volunteer (and also decisions in general). If I were to continue to investigate the too-much-choice effect and its potential moderators in the context of volunteering I would carry out a longitudinal study on people that had decided they wanted to volunteer following them throughout their search process, decision making process (these could take place in a laboratory setting to allow for the manipulation of choice amount), whether they

went on to volunteer with their chosen organisation, and their thoughts about their choice and their experiences volunteering. Targeting people that are genuinely considering volunteering and carrying out laboratory manipulations that replicate a real life volunteering search as much possible whilst manipulating various factors similar to those presented in this series of research (e.g., choice amount, categories) would provide a much more realistic and reliable indication as to the occurrence and extent of the too-much-choice effect. I would expect that people seriously considering which organisation to volunteer with may be more susceptible to the too-much-choice effect.

I would increase the choice set size even further to more truly replicate the amount of options a potential volunteer that engages in an internet search may encounter. Perhaps as there is a vast and varied array of volunteering options for potential volunteers to consider the point at which the too-much-choice effect occurs (the satiation point at which adding additional options does not increase the variability within a choice set and options become more and more similar to one another) may be greater than for consumer decisions? It would be interesting to know whether this was the case and if increasing the choice set size further may accentuate the negative consequences of the too-much-choice effect. I would also try to ascertain in more detail people's decision making strategies (probably through qualitative data) as choice amount increased to investigate whether people changed their strategies from a more complex one to a more simple one as the number of options increased.

I would investigate additional choice architectural decision facilitators in the presence of extensive choice such as providing choosers with social norm information (e.g., which organisations others like them chose to volunteer with) or creating default options for choosers based on their answers to a short 'personality questionnaire'. I would also try to simplify further studies as much as possible to try and establish the effects of specific moderators of the too-much-choice effect. Several of my studies were 2x2 factorial designs and as such it was difficult to establish the true extent of any moderating effects of a single

possible moderator (e.g., such as reversibility). I would try to control for (or take into account) individual difference variables (such as the extent to which a chooser was a maximiser or a satisficer) to ascertain the extent to which they may moderate the too-much-choice effect alone, and in the presence of choice architectural moderators and how the effects of the too-much-effect may vary between individuals. Similarly, I would carry out studies on the general population in addition to students to establish whether the findings presented in the current research may generalise to the general population or a specific to a student population.

Future longitudinal research could be carried out to investigate the effect of choosing from an extensive set of voluntary organisations on volunteer retention. Choice set size may affect subsequent satisfaction with organisations chosen, in addition to deferment likelihood. When choosing an organisation to volunteer with, a potential volunteer must consider the possible options against one another and predict the experiences that they will have from volunteering with particular options. If once they have made their choice and have begun volunteering they are dissatisfied with their experience (and therefore their choice) they may be less likely to continue volunteering. As discussed in section 1.3.4, the larger a choice set, the greater people's expectations become (Diehl and Poynor, 2010), and as discussed in section 1.3.7, the larger a choice set is, the greater likelihood of counterfactual generation (thinking about options forgone) which can decrease satisfaction with a chosen option (Hafner, et al., 2011; Sagi & Friedland, 2007; Iyengar et al., 2006).

5.9 Overall Summary

The current thesis explored the issue of the too-much-choice effect and possible choice architectures that may facilitate choosing from extensive choice sets in the context of

volunteering across eight studies; three field studies and five experiments. The main findings were that volunteering was a positive experience for students (Study 2), but that choosing from extensive choice sets may lead people to experience difficulty when choosing an organisation to volunteer for which in turn may lead them to put off their decision (Studies 4 & 5). Volunteering events were a useful tool in the recruitment of new student volunteers (Studies 1 & 3) and option categorisation appeared to be a useful tool in facilitating volunteering decisions. Categories reduced the feeling of 'too much choice' when choosing from an extensive choice set whilst not reducing the choice set size. Option presentation also affected volunteering decisions. Study 7 showed that people were more likely to want to defer their decision if the options were presented in a list format, suggesting that in order to reduce deferment likelihood options should be presented in a box/grid format as opposed to how options are normally presented on real world volunteering websites. Chooser's familiarity with options did not appear to affect the decision making process (Study 8), although people tended to ultimately choose an option that they were already familiar with when familiar and unfamiliar options were mixed (Study 7).

The main limitation of the research was that the decision about which organisation to volunteer for was a hypothetical one and choosers did not actually go onto volunteer with their chosen organisation. Had people actually gone on to experience their choice for real the findings may have been different and effects more pronounced. The findings have shed further light on the existence of the too-much-choice effect for a novel, experiential decision whilst posing many questions into the occurrence of the effect and possible moderators which further research should investigate.

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7 Appendices

Appendix A

Study 3. Questionnaire for the 2009 and 2010 volunteer induction evenings

Volunteer Induction Evening

01. How useful did you find the evening? Not at all Very

02. Before today, how much had you looked into volunteering opportunities? Not at all A lot

03. What are your reasons for wanting to volunteer?
.....
.....

04. Are you/have you ever volunteered through the University before? Yes No

05. a) Have you signed up to volunteer? Yes No No, but maybe at a later date

b) If no, why not? (then go to Q9)

c) If yes, who for and why?
.....
.....

06. Did you know before today who you were going to sign up with? Yes No

07. How satisfied are you with your choice? Not at all Very

08. How sure are you that you made the right choice?

09. How hard was it to choose who to volunteer for?

10. Were you confused over who to volunteer for?

11. The number of projects to choose from was: Not enough Just right Too many

12. Did the evening help you decide who to volunteer with? Yes No

13. Please explain:.....
.....

14. a) Do you think your decision could have been made easier? Yes No

b) If so, how?

15. How do you think the evening could be improved?.....
.....
.....

Please continue overleaf

☺ Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire ☺

10. I would appreciate guidance when choosing a volunteer place

11. I want as much choice as possible when it comes to volunteering

12. I want to see all the information before I make a decision

13. Too much choice is confusing

Now imagine you have made a choice and signed up for an organisation. How do you think you'd feel?

Totally disagree Neither agree/disagree Totally agree

14. I would feel quite uncertain whether this is the right choice

15. I would continue looking at other options

16. I would feel extremely committed

17. I would feel guilty if I changed my mind

Appendix C

Study 4. Volunteer search information questionnaire

Participant Number:	<u>Choice in volunteering – Website</u>
<p>1. What organisation did you choose to volunteer for?</p>	
<p>2. Which of these categories did you look at? (tick all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Animal Welfare<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Heritage volunteering<input type="checkbox"/> Campaign volunteering<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and conservation volunteering<input type="checkbox"/> Residential volunteering opportunities in the UK<input type="checkbox"/> Sports volunteering<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering in health and social care<input type="checkbox"/> Young people<input type="checkbox"/> Other ideas	
<p>3. Which categories did you spend the most time looking at?</p> <p>1: (most).....</p> <p>2:</p>	
<p>4. Which categories did you spend the least time looking at?</p> <p>1: (least).....</p> <p>2:</p>	
<p>5. Which category were you most interested in?</p>	
<p>6. Which category were you least interested in?</p>	

7. In the category you were **most** interested in, about how many options did you consider? 0-3 3-5 5-8 8-10 10-15 15+

8. In the category you were **least** interested in, about how many options did you consider? 0-3 3-5 5-8 8-10 10-15 15+

9. Altogether, roughly how many organisations did you look at?
1-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 20-30 30-40
40-50 50-60 60-70 70-80 80-90 90+

10. About how many organisations did you shortlist?
0-3 3-5 5-8 8-10 10-15 15+

11. How easy did you find making your choice? Not at all Very

12. How satisfied with your choice are you?

13. How certain are you that you made the right choice?

14. Ideally, how much time would you have liked to look at the website for? Much less Same Much more

15. Ideally, how many options would you have liked to have seen?

16. How do you think your decision could have been made easier?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix D

Study 5. Volunteering categories, hypothetical organisations and their details

Volunteering Category	Organisation names	Organisation details
Animal Welfare	Live Wild	Live Wild aims to preserve the wildlife in local rural areas. Volunteers will monitor the numbers and types of different wildlife in a particular area and try to make their environment better for them.
	Walkies	Walkies is a service aimed at people with dogs but who are unable to walk them for various reasons. Volunteers would visit people's houses and take their dogs for a walk.
	Zoo Hands	Zoo hands provides voluntary support to the members of staff in zoos. Duties can vary depending on what is needed to be done but can include preparing animals food, cleaning out of enclosures and building new enclosures. For safety reasons there would be no physical contact with animals.
Campaigning	Community Council	Community council volunteers work with local residents to try to address problems in the local area. Volunteers need to attend local council meetings, speak to residents as well as helping implement resident's wishes.
	Right to Rights	Right to Rights campaigns for human and civil rights. Volunteers are needed to campaign, lobby, fundraise and publicise human rights issues in their local area.
	Refugee Refuge	Refugee Refuge provides support, advice and guidance for refugees or asylum seekers. Volunteers are needed in local community centres to discuss any problems refugees or asylum seekers may have and provide free advice and information.
Charity	Charity Fundraising	Charity fundraising is vital for charities. Volunteers are needed to go into their local town centres to try and collect charitable donations. Volunteers will talk to passers-by about the charity and its work and either stand holding a collecting tin or approach people asking them to donate a small amount each month
	Charity Shop	Charity shops are a vital source of income for many charities. Volunteers are required to staff the shops, sort donated goods, arrange shop displays and handle cash.
	Charity Stall	Charity stall enables charities to sell goods at smaller stalls rather than shops to generate an income for the charity. Volunteers are needed to source donated items and run a weekly charity stall in their local area.
Companionship	Grandfather's Clock	Grandfather's clock volunteers devote time to elderly people living in residential homes. Often the home staff are busy with other duties so cannot devote much time purely to individuals and some residents do not have

		many visits from family or friends. Volunteers go into residential homes and spend time with either individuals or groups doing what the residents would like to do.
	Happier Hospices	Happier Hospices aims to make hospices a happier place for residents. Hospices can normally be places associated with sadness and death so volunteers are needed to provide entertainment, fun and games for the residents.
	Mentors	Mentors aims to match a person experiencing life difficulties with someone to act as their mentor. Volunteers are needed that are prepared to spend time each week with the person they are matched with doing their chosen activities and chatting through problems.
Disability	Fun For All	Fun for All provides recreation and socialisation time for disabled children. Volunteers are needed to support the children during activities and during break and lunchtimes.
	Hamish Centre	Hamish centres across the country aim to teach life skills to disabled adults. Volunteers are needed to support adults during activities and during break and lunch times.
	Listen Up	Listen Up provides free music sessions for children with severe physical or mental difficulties. Different styles of music and different instruments are investigated. Volunteers are needed to help the children engage in the session. Activities include helping children to play instruments, encouraging them and helping them move to the music.
English Heritage	English Heritage	English Heritage volunteers ensure that historic houses can be maintained and be open for visitors. Volunteers are needed to take entry money, run the gift shops and keep the buildings and grounds clean and tidy.
	Heart for Art	Volunteers with Heart for Art give their time to art galleries and museums in their town. Volunteers could work in the gift shop, provide guided tours to visitors or look after certain areas of the museum or gallery providing information to visitors when asked.
	Marine Heritage	Marine Heritage aims to preserve local marine heritage history. Volunteers are needed to greet guests, answer questions about the area, conduct tours and assist with exhibits.
Environmental	Cleaner Coasts	Cleaner Coasts aims to improve the appearance of Britain's coasts. Volunteers meet to clean up a certain area to make the coast a safer and more attractive place.
	Green Trees	Green Trees aims to ensure the survival of green spaces and encourage new green growth. Volunteers maintain existing green areas, tend to trees and plants and collect and plant seeds to encourage new growth.
	Tidy Town	Tidy town aims to make sure towns and cities look their best. Volunteers meet to clean up litter and remove graffiti to restore places.

Food	Fast Food	Fast Food provides a free delivery service to people who are unable to leave their house to go shopping or find preparing meals difficult. Volunteer drivers are required to deliver pre-prepared frozen meals to people's houses. A car during volunteering hours is provided.
	Foodies	Foodies aims to help people from underprivileged backgrounds improve their cooking skills and potentially develop a new career. Volunteers are needed to come along to weekly sessions bringing their culinary knowledge and creations with them to assist the learners in the kitchen.
	The Soup Kitchen	The Soup Kitchen provides much needed hot meals to homeless people. Volunteers help to prepare the meals and then distribute them to homeless people.
Support	Call for Help	Call for help provides telephone support to callers for many issues. Volunteers are needed around the clock to ensure that phones are staffed 24 hours a day. Callers can phone up about any subject and we act as a listening service for them. Full training is provided.
	Drop In	Drop in provides a face to face support service. People can come along to their local community centre to talk about any issues that they would like advice about or just a chat. Volunteers are needed to listen to people's problems and give advice. Full training will be given.
	Help@Home	Help @ Home volunteers provide online support for anyone on the internet. Full training is provided to volunteers to ensure they are capable of providing support to internet users on a number of issues. Volunteers log-in to the support site in their own time and chat to internet users wanting confidential anonymous support.
Young people	Active8	Active8 provides free sports coaching sessions for young people. Volunteers would help out at local leisure facilities for their preferred sport and help coach weekly sports sessions.
	Back to School	Back to school encourages volunteers to go 'back to school' to provide classroom support to the teaching staff. Activities would vary depending on the school, age of the children and the teacher in charge but include assisting children one-to-one with their work, working with small groups, escorting children on out of school visits as well as assisting the teacher with general duties.
	Early Birds	Early Birds provides free childcare before school for underprivileged families in which both parents work. Volunteers are required to supervise children at a centre for a couple of hours in the morning during breakfast and other activities.

Appendix E

Study 5. Experiment screen shots

Thank you for expressing an interest in this experiment. It is a computer based experiment investigating people's volunteering choices.

The experiment consists of 3 parts:

- 1: You will be asked to imagine a scenario and then to look through possible volunteering opportunities
- 2: You will be required to perform a sorting task for 3 minutes
- 3: You will be required to answer some questions about the previous tasks

You are free to withdraw from the study at anytime and your data will be confidential and anonymous. You will only be identifiable via a participant number. Please retain your number if you wish to withdraw your data from the study at a later date.

Please indicate you are happy to continue with the experiment.

I am happy to continue

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering.

Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

This is only a **preliminary choice**. You will have the opportunity at the end of the experiment to re-look through the options and **can change your mind then if you'd like**.

Continue

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering.

Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

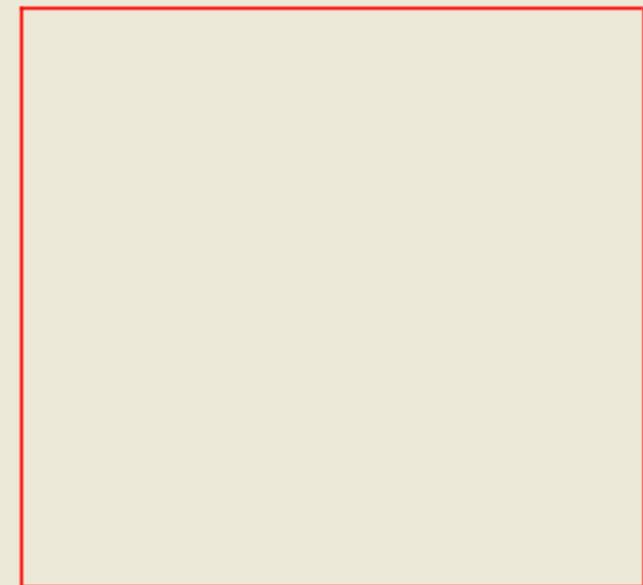
This will be your **final choice**. You will have the opportunity at the end of the experiment to re-look through the options but you **will not be able to change your mind**.

Continue

Remember you have 4 hours a week to volunteer. Please look through the volunteering options below for as long as you like and then indicate which you would choose to volunteer for. This is only a preliminary choice. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment and can change your mind if you want.

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- Drop In
- Charity Stall
- Listen Up
- Right to Rights
- Tidy Town
- English Heritage
- The Soup Kitchen
- Happier Hospices
- Live Wild
- Back to School



Click in the circle next to the option you choose.

This is only a preliminary choice. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment and can change your mind if you want

Confirm preliminary choice

Remember you have **4 hours** a week to **volunteer**. Please look through the volunteering options below for as long as you like and then indicate which you would choose to volunteer for. This is your **final choice**. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment but **you can't change your mind**.

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Mentors | <input type="radio"/> Zoo hands |
| <input type="radio"/> Refugee Refuge | <input type="radio"/> Back to School |
| <input type="radio"/> Green Trees | <input type="radio"/> Call for help |
| <input type="radio"/> Charity Shop | <input type="radio"/> Help @ Home |
| <input type="radio"/> Community Council | <input type="radio"/> Charity Stall |
| <input type="radio"/> The Soup Kitchen | <input type="radio"/> Right to Rights |
| <input type="radio"/> Listen Up | <input type="radio"/> Happier Hospices |
| <input type="radio"/> English Heritage | <input type="radio"/> Cleaner Coasts |
| <input type="radio"/> Live Wild | <input type="radio"/> Grandfather's Clock |
| <input type="radio"/> Hamish Centre | <input type="radio"/> Charity Fundraising |
| <input type="radio"/> Fun for All | <input type="radio"/> Fast Food |
| <input type="radio"/> Walkies | <input type="radio"/> Active8 |
| <input type="radio"/> Tidy Town | <input type="radio"/> Heart for Art |
| <input type="radio"/> Marine Heritage | <input type="radio"/> Foodies |
| <input type="radio"/> Drop In | <input type="radio"/> Early Birds |



Click in the circle next to the option you choose.

This is your final choice. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment but you can't change your mind.

Confirm choice

Remember you have **4 hours** a week to **volunteer**. Please look through the volunteering options below for as long as you like and then indicate which you would choose to volunteer for. This is only a **preliminary choice**. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment and **can change your mind if you want**.

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- Grandfather's Clock
- Cleaner Coasts
- Listen Up
- Fun for All
- Heart for Art
- Help @ Home
- Live Wild
- Tidy Town
- Active8
- Right to Rights



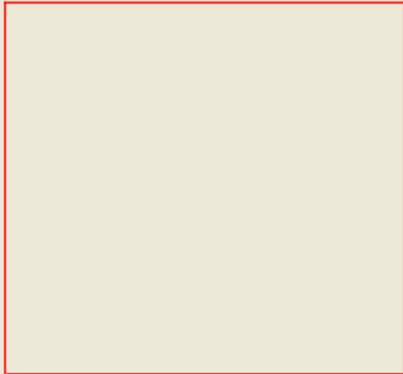
Click in the circle next to the option you choose.

This is only a preliminary choice. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment and can change your mind if you want

Confirm Preliminary Choice

Look through the volunteering options below for as long as you like and then indicate which is your **final choice**. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment but

(Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →



Click in the circle next to the option you choose.

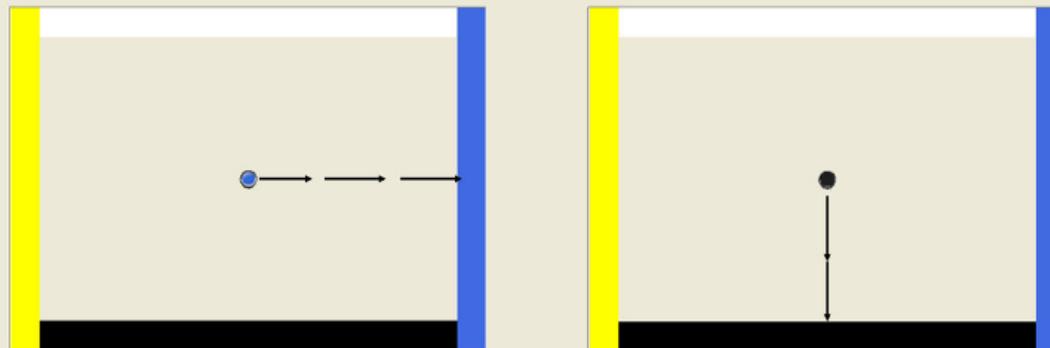
This is your final choice. You will be shown the options again later in the experiment but you can't change your mind.

Confirm choice

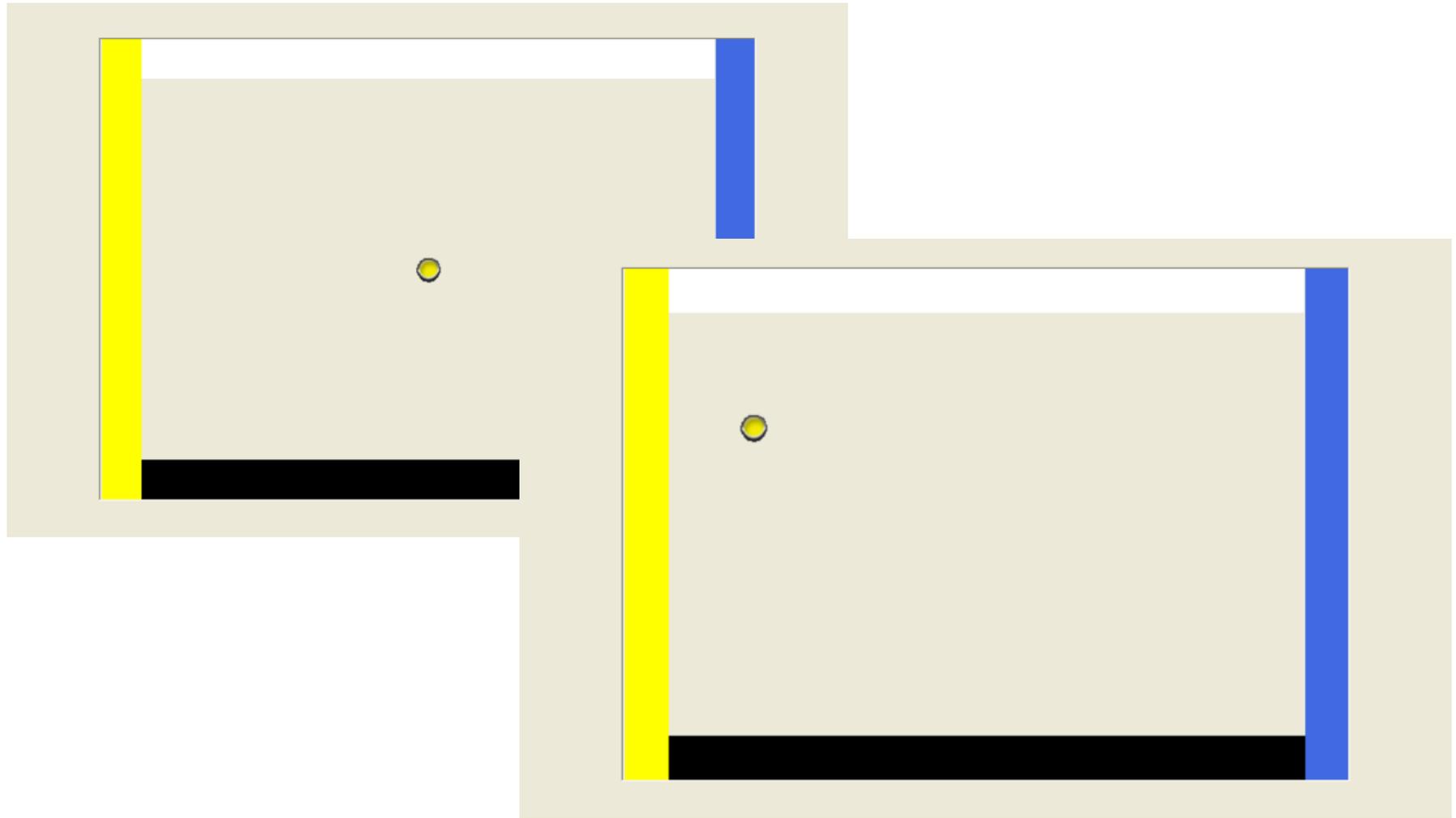
You will now be required to sort virtual coloured balls into their matching coloured side. This task will last 3 minutes.

Example

Using your mouse, click on the coloured ball in the centre of the screen and drag it to the side matching its colour.



Click to begin task



Another look at the volunteering options from Part 1

Scenario

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering.
Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

You preliminarily chose **Tidy Town**

You can now re-look through the volunteering organisations and then make your final choice.

Continue

Another look at the volunteering options from Part 1

Scenario

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering.
Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

You chose **Grandfather's Clock**

You can now re-look through the volunteering organisations but
cannot change your mind

Continue

Scenario

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering. Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

You have preliminarily chosen **Tidy Town**

You can now re-look through the volunteering organisations and then make your **final** choice.

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- Drop In
- Charity Stall
- Listen Up
- Right to Rights
- Tidy Town
- English Heritage
- The Soup Kitchen
- Happier Hospices
- Live Wild
- Back to School

Scenario

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering. Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

You chose **Fast Food**

You can now re-look through the volunteering organisations but **cannot change your mind.**

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- Hamish Centre
- Walkies
- Happier Hospices
- Fast Food
- Heart for Art
- Community Council
- Charity Fundraising
- Help @ Home
- Cleaner Coasts
- Back to School

Continue

Scenario

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering. Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

You chose **Grandfather's Clock**

You can now re-look through the volunteering organisations but you **cannot change your mind**.

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- Mentors
- Refugee Refuge
- Green Trees
- Charity Shop
- Community Council
- The Soup Kitchen
- Listen Up
- English Heritage
- Live Wild
- Hamish Centre
- Fun for All
- Walkies
- Tidy Town
- Marine Heritage
- Drop In
- Zoo hands
- Back to School
- Call for help
- Help @ Home
- Charity Stall
- Right to Rights
- Happier Hospices
- Cleaner Coasts
- Grandfather's Clock
- Charity Fundraising
- Fast Food
- Active8
- Heart for Art
- Foodies
- Early Birds

Scenario

Imagine you have 4 hours spare time each week that you have decided you would like to spend volunteering. Look through the volunteering opportunities for as long as you like, and make a decision about which organisation you'd like to volunteer with.

You have preliminarily chosen **Help @ Home**

You can now re-look through the volunteering organisations and then make your **final** choice.

Options: (Click name to see details of volunteering opportunity) →

- Heart for Art
- Drop In
- Happier Hospices
- English Heritage
- Call for help
- Grandfather's Clock
- Charity Stall
- Marine Heritage
- Active8
- Hamish Centre
- Mentors
- Cleaner Coasts
- Listen Up
- Zoo hands
- Tidy Town
- Charity Fundraising
- Live Wild
- Help @ Home
- Green Trees
- Fun for All
- The Soup Kitchen
- Right to Rights
- Walkies
- Refugee Refuge
- Back to School
- Charity Shop
- Foodies
- Community Council
- Fast Food
- Early Birds

Click in the circle next to the option you choose.

Confirm choice

8) How confident are you that this volunteering opportunity would be among the best you could have chosen? Not at all Extremely

9) Do you feel that you made a well-informed decision on the volunteering organisation you picked? Not at all Extremely

10) How much do you regret choosing the volunteering organisations that you did? Not at all Completely

11) Do you think there were other volunteering organisations that were much better? No, not at all Yes, completely

12) Thinking about the number of options you saw:

I felt that I had too few to choose from I felt that I had the right number of options to choose from I felt that I had too many to choose from

13) Has this experiment made you anymore interested in volunteering in real life? Yes No

If Yes, why?

Continue

Thank you for taking part in this experiment.

Your participant number is : test

It was investigating satisfaction with volunteering choice when presented with a limited or extensive choice set. You will have been randomly assigned to a condition.

You are reminded that all data is confidential and anonymous. If you have any questions regarding the experiment please contact the experimenter lauren.carroll@plymouth.ac.uk or the project supervisor mathew.white@plymouth.ac.uk.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Click to end programme

Appendix F

Study 6, 7 & 8: Categories (5 and 10) of volunteering type, volunteering organisations, volunteering details and website information

Category Name (5)	Category Name (10)	Organisation Name	Organisation Details	Website
Environment and Conservation	Environment	Friends of the Earth	The Friends of the Earth slogan is, "Making life better for people by inspiring solutions to environmental problems". Friends of the Earth campaigns for the protection of the environment and proposes alternatives to environmentally damaging policies and practices. Friends of the Earth believe in living within the limits of the natural world to ensure we can continue living, and aims to change government rules so that the economy works for people and the environment rather than pitting one against the other. Volunteers join one of over 200 Friends of the Earth groups across the UK working on various and diverse issues. Being part of a group usually means working on national campaigns such as 'fix the food chain', 'International climate' and 'Get serious about CO2' with the help of Friends of the Earth staff. Local campaigns include issues like public transport, planning applications, recycling services, local food or waste disposal. Other volunteering activities include lobbying councillors and MPs to win support, helping on street stalls or at festivals/fairs to get local people engaged in the issues, writing press releases and staging media stunts, organising public meetings, film screenings, green fairs or fundraising events as well as administrative support work from helping with mail outs and press cuttings to assist with research and information gathering.	www.foe.co.uk
		Greenpeace	Greenpeace are passionate about protecting the Earth – the only life support system we have. Greenpeace investigate, document and expose the causes of environmental destruction. We work to bring about change through politically lobbying, citizen action and consumer pressure. And we will take peaceful direct action to protect this fragile planet and promote the solutions for a green and peaceful future. Our vision is to transform the world by fundamentally changing the way people think about it. We want governments, industry and each and every person to stop viewing the Earth as an inexhaustible resource and start treating it as something precious that needs our protection and careful management. We all need a planet that is ecologically healthy and able to nurture life in all its diversity. Voluntary opportunities range from helping with administrative tasks, mail outs, data entry, data analysis, translations, design and editing, research projects, assisting with events coordination, painting, sewing, carpentry, and many more.	www.greenpeace.org.uk
		World Wildlife Fund	The World Wildlife Fund addresses global threats to people and nature such as climate change, the peril to endangered species and habitats, and the unsustainable consumption of the world's natural resources. We do this by influencing how governments, businesses and people think, learn and act in relation to the world around us, and by working with local communities to improve their livelihoods and the environment upon which we all depend. WWF uses its practical experience, knowledge and credibility to create long-term solutions for the planet's	www.wwf.org.uk

			environment. Volunteers are needed to campaign and raise awareness to ensure a sustainable future for the environment, take part in events such as sporting races, and fundraising.	
		Environmental Investigation Agency	The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) is an independent campaigning organisation committed to bringing about change that protects the natural world from environmental crime and abuse. For the past 25 years the EIA has been protecting the environment through undercover investigations and persistent campaigns that have exposed this trade and helped to protect the lives of thousands of wild animals and their habitat. EIA works to protect tigers, elephants, whales, dolphins and other endangered species. We also expose environmental crimes such as illegal logging and the illegal trade in ozone depleting substances. However, it is only through the generosity of people who share our concern for the environment, that we are able to achieve outstanding results year after year. EIA relies on public support to keep going. We need volunteers to assist us with various activities such as festival and event organising and setting-up, selling lottery tickets, research and stuffing envelopes. Also participating in a sponsored event is a great way to raise money and a fun way to engage your friends, family and colleagues in your passion to protect the natural world.	www.eia-international.org
		Sustrans	Sustrans is a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in. Sustrans' call to action - 'More Haste, Less Speed' - calls on national, regional and local government to up the pace to achieve a cost-effective transition to sustainable local travel by 2020. We're a catalyst to make smarter travel choices possible, we campaign to make smarter travel choices desirable and we influence to make smarter travel choices inevitable. Sustrans provides creative, innovative and practical solutions to the transport challenges affecting us all. We run a range of activities across the UK, including bike loan, health walks, cycle rides, workplace events, cycle training, and bike maintenance classes and our friendly local staff can provide expert information and advice about the best ways to get about by foot and by bike. Sustrans works with artists, schools and local communities to create and explore landmarks, environments and ideas that celebrate the surrounding areas. There are a wide range of volunteering opportunities including, fundraising (cake sales, BBQs, sponsored rides and walks to bungee jumps), helping promote Sustrans and active travel with your group of young people, becoming a wildlife champion and helping Sustrans to monitor wildlife and conduct biodiversity audits on the National Cycle Network, helping Sustrans promote active travel in your local area by co-coordinating a series of public walks or cycle rides with your local Sustrans volunteer group, office and administration support, becoming a group co-coordinator and help coordinate your local Sustrans volunteer group, help promote Sustrans by co-coordinating media coverage for your local Sustrans volunteer group; organising and helping at events such as stalls and talks and finding local outlets for our literature, or becoming a volunteer ranger helping to look after a section of the National Cycle Network near your home, and encourage more people to walk and cycle.	www.sustrans.org.uk

	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament	<p>Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) opposes all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction: their development, manufacture, testing, deployment and use or threatened use by any country. Our external strategic objectives are: the elimination of British nuclear weapons and global abolition of nuclear weapons; abolition of other threats of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect; a nuclear-free, less militarised and more secure Europe; and the closure of the nuclear power industry. We aim to change Government policies to bring about the elimination of British nuclear weapons as a major contribution to global abolition. We stimulate wide public debate on the need for alternatives both to the nuclear cycle and to military attempts to resolve conflict. We empower people to engage actively in the political process and to work for a nuclear-free and peaceful future. As a British campaign, we concentrate first and foremost on British nuclear weapons but we also work with anti-nuclear groups in other countries to eliminate the global threat. CND is also present at the United Nations and other international disarmament conferences. We need volunteers to help to prepare letters and forms for mail-outs, help with mailings to our members, membership data entry, looking after our merchandise sales, working the switchboard, fulfilling and dispatching orders, assisting with queries and stock maintenance, photocopying and making corrections to the database. The CND also needs volunteers to regularly contact their local MPs, send out letters and put forward our point of view, attend local surgeries and write stories in local newspapers.</p>	www.cnduk.org
	Environmental Justice Foundation	<p>Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) is a registered charity established in 2000 to empower people who suffer most from environmental abuses to find peaceful ways of preventing them. EJF provides film and advocacy training to individuals and grassroots organisations in the global south, enabling them to document, expose and create long term solutions to environmental abuses. EJF campaigns internationally to raise awareness of the issues our grassroots partners are working to solve locally. Today EJF has a team of campaigners and film-makers based in London, and works internationally with partners in Brazil, Vietnam, Mali, Sierra Leone, Uzbekistan, Mauritius and Indonesia. EJF believes that protecting the environment is not just about quality of life, it is a question of life and death for the world's poorest people. We believe that environmental security is a human right. For millions of people around the world, the result of a degraded environment is hunger, brutal poverty and vulnerability. From the highest levels of the United Nations to villages in Cambodia we have witnessed how dedicated individuals can change our world for the better. This is why EJF was established - to act as a catalyst for change. Volunteers are always needed. We have very limited office space for volunteers who want to help with general administrative work. There are many ways that you can volunteer though; helping with translation, event fundraising, PR, ad hoc campaign support (mails outs etc), internet and IT, writing and placing articles in the media and getting out and about to raise awareness of EJF and our work protecting the environment and human rights. Other activities volunteers take on include organising EJF film screenings and local fundraising events from pub quizzes to t-shirt sales.</p>	www.ejfoundation.org
Conservat	BTCV	<p>BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) aims to create a more sustainable future by inspiring people and improving places. It is one of the largest practical conservation charities in the UK working with many smaller conservation organisations and groups. BTCV's key values include sustained environmental improvement and increased biodiversity whilst promoting individual and community empowerment focusing on inclusiveness,</p>	www2.btcv.org.uk

			<p>accessibility, choice and support to enable everyone to volunteer and fulfil their potential with development opportunities. BTCV allows able bodied and disabled people to work together on conservation projects. BTCV volunteers work ‘hands on’ to create a healthy environment and improved biodiversity across various conservation activities. No one day is the same as another in BTCV; we work on thousands of sites so volunteers get the chance to go to a variety of beautiful locations. Volunteers get involved in a variety of hands-on tasks depending on the projects being worked on. These could be long term projects or just one day events. Tasks could include tree planting, dry stone walling, footpath construction, creating wildlife habitats and much more.</p>	
		Forestry Commission	<p>The Forestry Commission in England is recognised and respected as an international leader in sustainable forestry looking after nearly a million hectares of land including some of our best loved and most spectacular landscapes. Two-thirds of the estate lies within National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. As well as timber forests we successfully manage native woodlands and other important habitats for wildlife and conservation such as heath lands and bogs. We provide grants, licences and advice to private woodland owners to encourage new tree planting and to help keep private forests and woodland under active and sustainable management. We protect species, improve habitats and protect historical sites. We take degraded land no one else wants and turn it into green space for the benefit of all. We offer visitors many thousands of way marked walks and trails, cycle routes and bridle paths, open every day and free of charge. Whatever your age, ability, or fitness level there are plenty of opportunities for volunteering. There are various tasks such as tree planting and clearing scrub, helping out with events, doing surveys, or helping with office work.</p>	<p>www.forestry.gov.uk</p>
		The Wildlife Trusts	<p>The Wildlife Trusts are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the full range of the UK’s habitats and species, whether they be in the countryside, in cities or at sea. We manage around 2,300 nature reserves covering more than 90,000 hectares. We advise landowners on wildlife-friendly land management and every year we work with thousands of schools. We stand up for wildlife and inspire people about the natural world and we foster sustainable living. Our volunteers do a wide range of tasks from running community gardening, species surveying and looking after nature reserves to running Wildlife Watch groups enabling young people to discover and explore their local environment. Opportunities don't have to be outdoors either - you could find yourself making good use of your organisational, IT, administrative or financial skills too.</p>	<p>www.wildlifetrusts.org</p>
		Sea Watch Foundation	<p>Sea Watch is a national marine conservation research charity dedicated to the protection of whales, dolphins and porpoises (cetaceans) around the UK. Each year, cetaceans face depletion in their numbers and even possible local extinction due to continuing threats such as capture and drowning in fishing gear, sound disturbance, pollution, over-fishing, and climate change. Sea Watch scientists regularly monitor and study whale and dolphin populations, gaining knowledge and understanding of their status, numbers and distribution as well as the condition of their marine habitats. This enables Sea Watch to alert government, industry and environmental organisations to any problems, and prompt practical measures to help protect them from existing and impending threats. Volunteering roles include assisting in on-going research and education projects, organizing and analysing data collected during the previous field season, processing cetacean sightings for our UK national cetacean sightings database, and</p>	<p>www.seawatcfoundation.org.uk</p>

			developing from these data scientific reports and public education materials. We also need help with updating the Cardigan Bay photo-identification catalogue, organising other photo-identification data from all around the UK and sorting images for the photo-library and the Europhlukes catalogue. You could also join your regional co-ordinator for a land-based watch for whales, dolphins and porpoises; or become a Sea Watch observer recording what you do and don't see when you're at sea or by the coast.	
		Marine Conservation Society	Marine Conservation Society's vision is for seas rich in wildlife, abundant fish stocks and pollution free beaches and bathing waters – seas that are fit for wildlife to thrive in and for people to enjoy and seas that will support future generations with abundant resources. We champion the need for marine wildlife protection, sustainable fisheries and clean seas and beaches. We are campaigning for marine protected areas in the UK, studying the amazing wildlife in our seas, and working on frontline conservation projects involving local people in the stewardship of their marine resources, both in the UK and abroad, with our coral reef projects. Our many successes and campaigns to date include the introduction of Marine Acts to better protect our seas and marine life, and influencing sustainable seafood choices by major retailers and consumers through the Good Fish Guide. We have also brought together thousands of volunteers in Beachwatch to clean our beaches of litter, and campaigned for "Marine Reserves Now!" to create safe havens for wildlife and fish populations to recover. You can help by spreading our message - displaying posters and leaflets, representing us at events, keeping collection boxes, fundraising research, fundraising, secret shopping (seeing whether shops are listening to our requests on product labelling etc), data entry, packing cuddly turtles, sending out letters and filing or getting active and joining the army of MCS volunteers who are helping the tide on marine litter taking part in beach cleans.	www.mcsuk.org
		The Woodland Trust	The Woodland Trust wants to see a country rich in native woods and trees enjoyed and valued by everyone. Since the Trust was founded in 1972, we've been actively acquiring and protecting woods and we now have more than 1,000 woodland sites within our care. We have also developed a range of projects (past and present) to help support this work. We work with others to plant more trees, have set up schemes to make it easier to plant trees, inspired nearly 2 million children to plant more than 7 million trees, are planting the forests of the future and are planting Britain's largest new native forest near London. We protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future by campaigning to protect woodland and trees under threat, lobbying governments and councils to save hundreds of woods, fighting to replace non-native conifers planted in ancient forests with native trees and locating more than 41,000 ancient trees so we can help protect them. We also inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees, by providing loads of activities, games and free days out for children and by having information, pictures and interactive maps for each of our woods. There are many volunteering roles available including; Specialist Research Consultants that engage with staff as coaches and mentors; volunteer photographers who provide a large proportion of our best images which the Trust uses on a daily basis to promote its work; Volunteer Speakers who help us to take our conservation messages out to a wide audience, Office volunteers who do tasks such as data processing, media monitoring, assisting in the post room and the Woodland Trust Picture Library; Practical conservation volunteers who monitor sites, litter pick, monitor birds, dormice or bats; Event volunteers who assist	www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

			with setting up, car park marshalling, reception, general organisation duties and much more; and promoters who promote the work and campaigns of the Trust by distributing and placing leaflets and posters throughout the UK.	
		Natural England	Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment. Our purpose is to conserve and enhance England's natural environment - including its landscapes, biodiversity, geology and soils, natural resources, cultural heritage and other features of the built and natural environment. Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. We provide practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Our remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is our responsibility to see that England's rich, natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy. We work with farmers and land managers; business and industry; planners and developers; national, regional and local government; interest groups and local communities to help them improve their local environment. Our responsibilities include: Managing England's green farming schemes, paying nearly £400million/year to maintain two-thirds of agricultural land under agri-environment agreements; Increasing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the wonders of the natural world; Reducing the decline of biodiversity and licensing of protected species across England; Designating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Managing most National Nature Reserves and notifying Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Our volunteers are ambassadors for nature. They help to spread the word about us and the special sites and species we protect. There are varied volunteering roles including: monitoring wildlife and recording data, conducting surveys, maintaining conservation sites, footpath maintenance, butterfly glade creation, gate and fence installation, leading mini-beast hunts for schoolchildren, giving talks to schoolchildren, providing wildlife advice to people, office administration, database updating and map producing.	www.naturalengland.org.uk
Arts and Heritage	Arts	Hospital Radio	Hospital Radio is a form of audio broadcasting produced specifically for the in-patients of hospitals to enhance their time spent in hospital. Hospital radio is delivered either through bedside units, by low-powered AM or FM licence, or over the Internet. Volunteers are usually trained by the station and take part in regular broadcasts which may include hospital news, patient song requests and interviews. Volunteers may be attached to a particular weekly programme, or may work to keep the station's record library or computer systems up-to-date. Most also visit the hospital wards, to discuss the music that patients would like to hear, providing valuable interaction with non-medical staff.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your local hospital for more information.

		NADFAS	The National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies is an arts-based charity, with over 340 local Decorative and Fine Art Societies in the UK and Mainland Europe. NADFAS believes in the advancement of arts education and appreciation and the preservation of our artistic heritage. Through a vibrant network of local societies, NADFAS opens up the world of arts to everyone. With monthly lectures on a broad range of topics as well as study days, educational visits and holidays at home and abroad, a NADFAS society is not just a great way to learn - it's a fun way of making new and lasting friendships. Our heritage volunteer roles include: In-situ conservation of books, manuscripts, archives and maps; cataloguing documents and archival listing; conservation of metalwork, cleaning and cataloguing arms and armour, medals and military silver; preventative conservation of textiles, replica work, creation of period costumes and methods of storage; guiding, stewarding in museums, historic houses or gardens; researching and recording changes in gardens, and the documentation of objects including listing and transcribing.	www.nadfas.org.uk
		Art Fund	Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for works of art and plays a major part in enriching the range and quality of art in the UK. The ability of UK museums to collect is now under serious threat as the price of art continues to rise but public funds for museum acquisitions are limited. We campaign, fundraise and give money to museums and galleries to buy and show art, and promote its enjoyment through our events and membership scheme. Volunteers can assist with administrative work, event organisation, looking after members, recruiting new members, achieving publicity and coming up with new fundraising ideas.	www.artfund.org
		Art Galleries	Art galleries are often free of charge to the public and hold collections of valuable and unique works of art by various artists. There are a range of volunteer projects; some are behind the scenes such as research projects or cataloguing of artworks but there are also a number of opportunities for volunteers to interact with visitors to enthuse and inspire them with objects from the collections that galleries care for. Volunteers can man the entrances to galleries, work in the gift shops, show visitors around on guided tours, be a room guide and provide information on works of art and can assist during any hands-on workshops or demonstrations by artists.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest Art Gallery for more information.
		Festival Volunteer	Festivals are large music events with lots of different bands billed to play at, often including several big name headline acts. Festivals attract large numbers of people to a specific place all at the same time. Numerous different music stages need to be set up and managed. The bands that are playing need to be looked after as do the people attending the festivals. Catering, hygiene and accommodation facilities need to be staffed and maintained. As festivals are often annual events, much of the festival workforce are volunteers. Volunteers are needed before, during and after the festival to carry out various activities include litter picking, cleaning and clearing, marshalling and guiding people, looking after the bands, helping backstage, running the bars and assisting with general duties.	Contact individual festivals directly or visit www.festivalvolunteer.co.uk

		Library Volunteer	Libraries predominantly provide a free of charge book borrowing service for the general public, as well as also rent out other media such as CDs or DVDs. Libraries provide a space for people to read or study and many libraries now provide computers with internet access to its users. Some libraries host or display exhibitions, museum artefacts or artwork within the library. In addition to providing the renting service, some libraries often run story telling sessions or activity groups for young children. There are various volunteering roles within the library assisting the regular members of staff with everyday duties such as re-shelving books, assisting customers, handling overdue fees and sorting and allocating new books. You can also assist during story time sessions, reading to young children or at activity sessions helping them with arts or crafts.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your local library for information.
		Music Therapy Volunteers	Music therapy works with children and adults who have a wide range of needs, including learning disabilities, physical, emotional and psychological disorders and sensory impairments. The ability to appreciate and respond to music is an inborn quality in human beings. This ability usually remains unimpaired by handicap, injury or illness, and is not dependent on music training. For people who find verbal communication an inadequate form of self-expression, music therapy offers a safe, secure space for the release of feelings. Furthermore, music therapy involves a relationship between the therapist and client in which music becomes a way of promoting change and growth. Music therapists work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, special schools, day centres, the community, the prison service and in private practice. In all work settings, music therapists function as part of the multi-disciplinary team, their observations adding greatly to the understanding of each client's needs, abilities or problems. Music is essentially a social activity involving communication, listening and sharing. These skills may be developed within the musical relationship with the therapist and, in group therapy, with other members. As a result clients may develop a greater awareness of themselves in relation to others. This can include developing greater confidence in their own ability to make relationships and to find positive ways of making their needs known. It can greatly enhance their self-esteem. Volunteers are needed to help trained music therapists run music therapy groups. Activities include interacting with the children or adults, supporting them to explore a wide range of musical instruments, percussion instruments, movement and sounds. You need to join in with all the music making and singing as well as help set-up or clear up before and after sessions.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your local music service or special school for information.

Heritage	The National Trust	The National Trusts tagline is 'Forever for Everyone'. The National Trust are looking for 'green' ways to protect and preserve Historic Buildings, Coastline and Green Spaces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland forever. We do this in a range of ways, through practical conservation, learning and discovery, and encouraging everyone to visit and enjoy their national heritage. We protect and open to the public over 350 historic houses, gardens and ancient monuments as well as looking after forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, downs, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, castles, nature reserves and villages - for ever, for everyone. We also educate people about the importance of the environment and of preserving our heritage for future generations. We contribute to important debates over the future of the economy, the development of people's skills and sense of community, and the quality of the local environment in both town and country. Volunteers play a vital role in the Trust and there are a wide range of voluntary roles, including giving house tours to guests, room guides, function assistants, activity assistants, conservation, office admin, gardeners, wardens, advertisers, promoters and online publicity management, amongst others.	www.nationaltrust.org.uk
	English Heritage	English Heritage champions our historic places and advises the Government and others to help today's generation get the best out of our heritage and ensure it is protected for the future. English Heritage restores and maintains properties and land, opens properties to the public and runs exhibitions and educational workshops. Volunteer roles are extremely varied, ranging from room stewarding, running education workshops and gardening, to curatorial cleaning and research.	www.english-heritage.org.uk
	Museums	Museum's exhibit and care for collections of artefacts of scientific, historic or artistic importance. Museums are often free of charge to the public and rely on donations and volunteers to be able to remain open. Volunteers work in the galleries with the public to enhance the visitor's understanding of the collection and their experience of the Museum. Volunteers can assist with hands-on exhibits, give visitor tours, help out at events, steward or help out in the shops. Some volunteers help in the Museum's curatorial, learning, library or administrative departments by performing clerical work or conducting Museum surveys and evaluations.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest Museum for information.

		<p>Council for British Archaeology</p>	<p>The Council for British Archaeology is an educational charity working throughout the UK to involve people in archaeology and to promote the appreciation and care of the historic environment for the benefit of present and future generations. Under the mission statement Archaeology for All, we aim to deliver our strategy through three objectives: participation (informing a widening popular audience about archaeology, promoting the development of skills and learning opportunities at a local level, engaging young people, especially those under 25 and diversifying participation), discovery (enabling and supporting research by others to advance knowledge of archaeology and publishing learning material to encourage and support greater participation) and advocacy (campaigning to ensure that archaeology has a place in education and lifelong learning, promoting care of the historic environment through key partnerships and building capacity in our networks to champion the local historic environment). There are varied voluntary roles available. Many excavations and projects welcome volunteer help, some commercial archaeological companies and units will accept volunteers and much of the listed building casework is carried out by voluntary historic building correspondents who can make site visits and assess the impact of proposals on the character and significance of the historic building and site. Young Archaeologists' Club branches rely on teams of volunteers to run them so we are always looking for new adults to get involved as Branch Leaders, Assistants and Helpers. YAC also needs volunteers to help run its popular residential holidays. Also, volunteer groups coordinate and disseminate information, advise policy makers and promote archaeology to the public.</p>	<p>www.britarch.ac.uk</p>
		<p>The Churches Conservation Trust</p>	<p>The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk. We've saved over 340 special buildings which attract more than 1.5 million visitors a year. With our help and with your support they are kept open, in use and free to all – living once again at the heart of their communities. Our estate is the largest single collection of historic churches in the country, ranging from the virtually untouched medieval in idyllic rural settings, to ornately impressive Victorian in busy town centres. It includes ten challenging inner urban churches, which will need new uses and significant funds to survive. We believe that our historic churches, though officially 'redundant', are actually important community buildings which are central to the future of our countryside, our towns and our cities. To begin with, they all remain consecrated and many are playing an increasingly important role in the parish as a special place for occasional worship - to the benefit of local people and clergy. The Trust also works with local schools to engage children and young people in the history and architecture of the special buildings on their doorstep and we invest time and energy to encourage volunteers and communities to use and care for buildings on our behalf. In some cases, that means adapting the church in a sensitive way for use in the 21st century. Volunteers help us to ensure that our buildings continue to play a vital role in the life of their local community. They also enable us to maintain our high standards of conservation, safety and visitor welcome and to fulfil the potential of these special buildings as fascinating learning resources. Volunteers help us in a broad variety of ways; church cleaning and churchyard maintenance, church opening rotas and public open days, distributing Trust literature, hosting school visits and helping with workshops and education days, giving guided tours, researching guidebooks, administrative, office-based support and providing professional assistance with specific projects. Volunteers also help with the Trust's fundraising events that are held in our churches up and down the country, usually in aid of the Trust.</p>	<p>www.visitchurches.org.uk</p>

Adult Health and Social Care		Cathedral Camps	Cathedral Camps projects provides 16-25 year olds with the opportunity to take part in the conservation of historic buildings of worship, to build awareness of their community, and make a positive and visible contribution to their environment. Often there is little funding available to maintain and restore historic buildings of worship and they can become rundown and not look their best. Cathedral Camps welcomes all young people between the ages of 16-25 to volunteer at one week summer camps, or one day events, at the historic places of faith in Britain. Volunteers with Cathedral Camps spend a week or a day camping out at a famous church or cathedral and doing their bit to protect our architectural heritage. Cathedral Camps also run ReFresh - an England wide initiative which offers young people the chance to learn more about the diversity of their communities through one-day volunteering events. Volunteering activities are varied depending on the individual needs of the historic buildings. Volunteers can carry out conservation and gardening work in the buildings' grounds, clearing and cleaning, weeding, repairing pavements, painting and pruning. There are also activities to be done inside the buildings; cleaning monuments, polishing ornamental woodwork and brass features, painting railings amongst others.	www.cathedralcamps.org.uk
		Oral History Society	The Oral History Society promotes the collection, preservation and use of recorded memories of the past. We encourage people to record their own and other people's life stories, offer practical advice and support and facilitate individuals to share ideas, experience and good practice including organising meetings of members through interesting and engaging events. We raise standards in oral history practices across a range of activities. We provide more than 300 training places each year and provide a voice for oral historians, advising and collaborating with national organisations and research councils on oral history. We support over 40 experienced oral historians as locally based Regional Networkers - a point of contact for anyone interested in oral history. We also provide information on how to get oral history work funded and publish two editions of the Oral History Journal every year. Organisations involved in oral history need volunteers to help with a variety of tasks including interviewing, archiving and transcribing. Training is often offered. Volunteering offers a good introduction to oral history if you have not had any previous experience.	www.ohs.org.uk
	Adult Health Care	The British Red Cross	The British Red Cross gives skilled and impartial care to people in need and crisis - in their homes and in the community, at home and abroad, in peace and war. In the UK the British Red Cross's primary purpose is to support statutory services, by providing care in crisis situations. The British Red Cross provides valuable short-term support to vulnerable people in the UK, whether they're recovering from an operation, need a wheelchair or just need help coping around the house. There are a range of volunteering roles within The British Red Cross from being trained to be an emergency response and first aid volunteer for various events or situations, being a home volunteer visiting people in their home for a couple of hours, helping with practical tasks like shopping or basic cooking to help people regain their independence and confidence, driving patients to hospital appointments, helping burn victims or people with disfigurements learn to apply skin camouflage, to giving therapeutic massages.	www.redcross.org.uk

		SANE	SANE is a national charity set up to improve the quality of life of anyone affected by mental illness. The problems suffered by individuals can easily have an effect on many more people. SANE aims to raise awareness and combat stigma about mental illness, educate and campaigning to improve mental health services. SANE offers emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental health problems through our helpline and email services and our online Support Forum where people share their feelings and experiences. SANE also initiates research into the causes and treatments of serious mental illness such as schizophrenia and depression. Volunteering roles include SANE services volunteers which provide emotional support and information on helpline and e-mail services and assist with moderation of our Support Forum, database volunteers which check and update information on the SANE Information Database which contains information about mental health support services in the country, and office volunteers which provide general administrative support and assist with projects and events.	www.sane.org.uk
		The Disabilities Trust	The Disabilities Trust is today one of the UK's leading national charities, offering high quality care, rehabilitation and support for people with profound physical impairments, autism (including education), acquired brain injury and learning disabilities. Our innovative services across the country include purpose-built residential accommodation, community-based housing, respite care, special education and community enabling services. Working in partnership with local authorities, health authorities, housing associations and other organisations, we have an established track record of delivering leading-edge services that meet the needs of people with complex and challenging disabilities. We are continually looking to develop new services in response to identified local needs. Volunteers can help to fundraise, take part in events, and help out at our centres using their IT skills, gardening projects, refurbishing buildings and grounds, tree planting and painting.	www.disabilities-trust.org.uk
		Rethink	Rethink is the leading national mental health membership charity helping over 48,000 people every year through offering expert advice, support and information. Our aim is to make a practical and positive difference by providing hope and empowerment through effective services, information and support to all those who need us. We believe that all those who experience severe mental illness are entitled to be treated with respect as equal citizens. We have over 330 services, 150 support groups and we actively campaign for change through greater awareness and understanding about mental illness. Volunteers can help through support groups for carers, individuals with experiences of mental illness or both to provide information, self-help and peer support. Other voluntary activities include campaigns, media work, fundraising and rethink regional committees.	www.rethink.org

		Mind	<p>Mind is the leading mental health charity for England and Wales and is a force for change. We campaign vigorously to create a society that promotes and protects good mental health for all - a society where people with experience of mental distress are treated fairly, positively and with respect. We are both a local and national network. Through this network, we work with around 250,000 people every year. We are able to help people who experience all types of mental distress, and who may require help from one or more of our services. We listen and make sure their voices are heard by those who influence change. We demand higher standards in mental health care and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. With one in four people likely to experience a mental health problem every year, it is critical that we raise awareness and promote good mental health for the benefit of all members of society.</p> <p>Volunteers are needed to help with our work. You can take part in one, two, or all of our ongoing actions and strengthen our fight against discrimination by standing up and speaking out on the real issues that affect people every day. You can contact your MP to campaign for change, ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 1194, write a letter that complains about negative stereotypes about people with mental distress coverage in the media or become a Mind campaigner and work with us to campaign for a better deal for people with mental health problems. They are supported to speak out, publicise and take action on one or all of our current campaigns.</p>	www.mind.org.uk
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		<p>Marie Curie Cancer Care</p>	<p>Marie Curie Cancer Care’s vision is that everyone with cancer and other illnesses will have the high quality care and support they need at the end of their life in the place of their choice. This year we expect to provide care to more than 31,000 people with cancer and other terminal illnesses. More than 2,700 nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals help provide care for terminally ill patients in the community and in our hospices, along with support for their families. Research commissioned by Marie Curie Cancer Care shows that 65 per cent of people would choose to die at home. In reality, only 25 per cent achieve this. Every year, Marie Curie Nurses make that wish possible for thousands of people with terminal cancer and other illnesses across the UK. They also provide practical and emotional support for carers and families at what can be an exhausting time. We have nine Marie Curie Hospices across the UK. Each hospice offers specialist support in a relaxed, friendly and comfortable environment and no charge is ever made to patients or their families. Marie Curie Cancer Care is committed to ensuring that patients have the best possible care – and to carrying out the research and development necessary to find out what the best possible care is and how to provide it. The Marie Curie Palliative Care Research and Development Unit seeks to improve care for those affected by life-limiting illnesses through encouraging and carrying out research.</p> <p>Our work at the unit investigates a wide range of subjects and issues, including care of the dying in hospital accident and emergency departments; continuity of care for terminally ill patients; and the experiences of dementia patients and their carers. Volunteering opportunities include volunteering at one of our hospices providing companionship, doing complementary therapies, helping with activities, driving or other roles or becoming a Marie Curie Helper offering one-on-one practical and emotional support to people living with terminal illness and their carers. You could work in your local Marie Curie shop, serving customers, sorting and pricing goods, arranging attractive window displays and merchandise or help out at our offices dealing with telephone enquiries and updating database records, marketing our fundraising events and writing press releases. We always need volunteers to join our dedicated band of fundraisers who engage in numerous different fundraising activities, from looking after the collection boxes in your local area, supporting our annual Great Daffodil Appeal and organising and running local collections to organising and running events like coffee mornings, pub quizzes, balls, concerts and five-a-side football. You can also become an event steward helping out at events across the country, from sponsored walks in beautiful the countryside to exciting national events such as the London Marathon.</p>	<p>www.mariecurie.org.uk</p>
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		Macmillan Cancer Support	<p>Macmillan Cancer Support exists to help improve the lives of people affected by cancer; both those living with cancer and also their families and carers. Today, more people in the UK are living with cancer and one in three of us will get cancer at some point in our lives. Cancer affects us all and we can all help to make people's experience of it better. We will help anyone affected by cancer find their way through the system to get the help and support they need. We fund nurses and other specialist health and social care professionals; we share information; we give emotional support; we offer financial help and advice, and we provide practical help at home. We manage a number of services ourselves, such as our phone service and website. But we can't do everything alone. We work in close partnership with the NHS and a range of other organisations, such as local authorities, Citizens Advice and other cancer charities, to develop a wide range of other services too. We are also a force for change, listening to people affected by cancer and working together to improve cancer care. We innovate and develop new services, fight discrimination and campaign for changes in policy, legislation and practice. Some of these activities bring immediate support to people affected by cancer. There are a number of volunteer roles in which you can help Macmillan Cancer Support: You can join or start a local fundraising group and raise money through marathons, coffee mornings, street collections, sponsored events etc; you can support our campaigns to help improve cancer care and get a better deal for people affected by cancer; become a Macmillan Speaker and help us reach everyone living with cancer by telling more people about who we are and what we do; volunteer in your local Macmillan office helping with managing local volunteers or collections, office admin, PR and communications; volunteer at our information and support centres ensuring people can get the help and support they need. Trained volunteers can also provide a warm welcome, counselling, hairdressing, manicures and complimentary therapies. Alternatively, you can use your cancer experience to help improve the future of cancer care.</p>	www.macmillan.org.uk
	Adult Social Care	Samaritans	<p>Samaritans provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. Apart from being a 24-hour source of support on the telephone, by email, by letter or face to face, we also work in the local community, visiting; Workplaces, providing a wide number of courses to businesses, helping staff deal with customer conflicts and internal issues; Schools, reaching large numbers of young people from a range of backgrounds on various subjects and prisons, offering number of ways for prisoners to get the support they need, from volunteers visiting prisons to the Listener scheme, which trains prisoners to offer confidential emotional support to their fellow inmates. For volunteers, the listening role is our most front line role and will carry out the very service that Samaritans is all about. You will be 'listening' through the phone, emails, letters, face to face or by text (depending on the branch you're in) and providing real help to the thousands of people who make contact with the Samaritans each year. Shifts can be during the day or night. Due to the nature of the work, volunteers need to attend extensive training sessions before volunteering. Full training and support are provided. There are non-listening volunteer roles too, such as assisting in the day to day running of the branch, fundraising, finance management, and raising Samaritans profile by giving talks in schools, the community, and organisations.</p>	www.samaritans.org

		Shelter	We are one of the richest countries in the world, and yet millions of people in Britain wake up every day in housing that is run-down, overcrowded or dangerous. Many others have lost their home altogether. Bad housing robs us of security, health and a fair chance in life. Shelter believes that everyone should have a home. We help more than 170,000 people each year fight for their rights, get back on their feet, and find and keep a home. We also tackle the root causes of bad housing by campaigning for new laws, policies and solutions. Volunteering roles include working in one of our shelter shops; dealing with customers, working the tills and sorting and presenting stock or administration work. We also need volunteers to fundraise and to cheer on shelter fundraisers at various sporting events through the year.	www.shelter.org.uk
		WRVS	WRVS is an age positive charity that offers a range of practical services to help and support older people to live well, maintain their independence and play a part in their local community. WRVS helps older people across Great Britain in their homes, in the community and in hospitals. We work in partnership with other charities and organisations, local authorities and the NHS, supporting communities throughout England, Scotland and Wales to be strong and cohesive. We alleviate loneliness and help older people to get out and about, providing places to meet up, make and stay in touch with friends. Our shops, cafés and trolleys serve patients, staff and visitors - and raise funds for much needed equipment. There are a wide range of volunteering roles; you can be a 'good neighbour' visiting people in their homes for companionship, volunteer at a community lunch club, serve refreshments and lunches and organise events and activities providing information to people at WRVS community information centres and cafés, deliver meals to people's homes as a 'meals on wheels' volunteer, drive people to appointments or to meet family or friends, run our shops, volunteer in local hospitals, join an emergency service response team, provide professional support in your area of expertise or help recruit more volunteers.	www.wrvs.org.uk
		Home-Start	Home-Start believes that children need a happy and secure childhood and that parents play the key role in giving their children a good start in life and helping them to achieve their full potential. Home-Start recruits and trains over 16,461 volunteers who support families with children under five. Our families need support for many reasons including post-natal illness, disability, bereavement, the illness of a parent or child, or social isolation. We support thousands of parents who are struggling to cope. We visit families in their own homes to offer support, friendship and practical assistance whilst encouraging parent's strengths and emotional well-being and connecting them with their community and others in similar situations. A Home-Start volunteer offers time for listening and talking to parents, help with childcare, a break for parents, practical help and reassurance, a chance to meet others in similar situations and support to use local services and resources. Volunteers can also help run our local Home-Starts assisting with general business management, financial and legal issues, IT, human resources, PR and the media. Other roles include running toy libraries, being a driver for a scheme or doing voluntary fundraising.	www.home-start.org.uk

		Crisis	<p>Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people. We are dedicated to ending homelessness by delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change. Our innovative education, employment, housing and well-being services address individual needs and help people to transform their lives. We are determined campaigners, working to prevent people from becoming homeless and advocating solutions informed by research and our direct experience. We have ambitious plans for the future and are committed to help more people in more places across the UK. We know we won't end homelessness overnight or on our own. But we take a lead, collaborate with others and, together, make change happen. Our Crisis Skylight centres (award winning and accredited education, training and employment centres) offer practical and creative workshops in a supportive and inspiring environment together with formal learning opportunities that lead to qualifications and finding work. We are leading the way to achieve greater access to private rented accommodation for single homeless people and we run a National Advisory Service providing consultancy advice and support to local authorities and homelessness agencies across England and Scotland. We also hold regular health days which offer free health MOTs, eye tests, First Aid training and at Christmas we provide companionship and support to alleviate loneliness and isolation and help people to take their first steps out of homelessness. There is a range of volunteering opportunities available. You can become a mentor and offer one-to-one support to our homeless and formerly homeless clients over a 12 month period, befriend a homeless person meeting with them regularly and offering companionship. You can help out at a winter shelter providing food and services to homeless people. You can deliver classes and workshops at a Crisis Skylight centre or give talks as a Crisis Community Ambassador. You could also help out in the office at one of our accommodation support offices, manning the reception or assisting with administration duties. We also need specialist volunteers in the fields of healthcare, translation, driving, hairdressing, advice, entertainment and much more.</p>	<p>www.crisis.org.uk</p>
		Nursing/Residential Home Volunteers	<p>Nursing or residential homes provide a safe place to live for elderly adults. Residents may be independent and just use some of the facilities offered by the home such as meals and laundry services or they may require part or full care from the staff at the home. Residents are looked after throughout the day and night, are provided with meals, helped with personal hygiene needs and are given medication when it is necessary. Homes have social areas where residents can relax and meet, with some homes organising activities or days out for residents. Homes always welcome the help of volunteers to assist permanent staff members who are often stretched for time carrying out their duties, administering medication, assisting with personal hygiene and responding to emergencies. Often staff cannot spend as much time as they'd like socialising with residents. Volunteers can come into homes and provide companionship for residents who may not have regular visitors. Just spending some time with residents improves their well-being and happiness levels. Volunteers can also assist in organising and running activities and events such as days out, film afternoons, quizzes, coffee and tea sessions, flower arranging, games and much more.</p>	<p>These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest nursing/residential home for information.</p>

		<p>The National Autistic Society</p>	<p>The National Autistic Society (NAS) is the leading UK charity for people with autism (including Asperger syndrome) and their families. We are here for over half a million people affected by autism in the UK, providing information, support and pioneering services. We continue to campaign for a world where autism is understood and where everyone with autism gets to live the life they choose. We were founded in 1962, by a group of parents who were passionate about ensuring a better future for their children. Today we have over 19,000 members, 90 branches and provide; information, advice, advocacy, training and support for individuals and their families; information and training for health, education and other professionals working with people with autism and their families; specialist residential, supported living, outreach and day services for adults; specialist schools and education outreach services for children; out-of-school services for children and young people and employment training and support and social programmes for adults with autism. A local charity with a national presence, we campaign and lobby for lasting positive change for people affected by autism and provide services in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is a range of ways you can volunteer with NAS; you can become a befriender to someone with autism, meeting with your befriender once a week at their home or out and about doing whatever your befriender and you would like to do. You don't have to be an expert in autism, just friendly, reliable, willing to learn, and sensitive to other people's needs. 'Parent to Parent' is a free and confidential telephone support service for parents or carers of an adult or child with autism or Asperger syndrome. The service is provided by volunteer parents who themselves have a child or adult on the autism spectrum. Again, the volunteers are not 'experts', counsellors or advocates but bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and insight to the scheme. They have all experienced the impact of autism on their own family and are able to genuinely empathise and give support to other parents. You could also volunteer in a social group of young adults (16+) with Asperger syndrome and high-functioning autism.</p> <p>Together with staff, volunteers support group members in social activities of their choice. Our Education Rights Service is delivered by trained volunteers who offer advice over the phone from their own homes. They may be parents of children who have an autism spectrum disorder, work in education or have a legal background. They give talks to a variety of audiences and age groups, look for speaking opportunities, encourage people to raise money to support people with autism and promote the work of the NAS wherever possible.</p>	<p>www.autism.org.uk</p>
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Child Health and Social Care	Child Health Care	Whizz-Kidz	Whizz-Kidz provides disabled children with customised mobility equipment, training and advice that is not available from the NHS and gives them the independence to live a life of freedom at home, at school and at play, whilst also building their confidence at local clubs and life skills events. There are 70,000 disabled children and young people in the UK that don't have a wheelchair appropriate to their needs. That's where Whizz-Kidz comes in. By providing them with vital mobility equipment, we help to transform their lives. And with training to help them get the most out of their equipment, support to develop life skills, and opportunities to meet and have fun, we help them to be something special...a kid. Whizz-Kidz also encourages disabled children to meet and make friends at our growing network of local clubs. They're having fun whizzing around obstacle courses, knocking over skittles, doing wheelies and learning about boring but important things, like road safety at our wheelchair skills courses. They're forming campaign groups and meeting MPs, contacting the press, and designing campaign badges and posters. And because growing up can be a bit scary, they're taking part in our work placement program and building confidence at our life skills events. Volunteering roles include, wheelchair skills training volunteers to help children to get the most out of their wheelchair and build confidence and autonomy, event organisers, helping at local events and fundraising.	www.whizz-kidz.org.uk
		CLIC Sargent	CLIC Sargent is the UK's leading children's cancer charity and the only organisation to offer them all round care and support. Every day 10 families are told their child has cancer. We are here to help as many children and young people as possible survive cancer and make the most of their lives. We help the whole family cope with the trauma of cancer, life after treatment and, in some cases, with bereavement. We make sure that young people with cancer and their families can speak out about their needs and get involved in how we meet them. CLIC Sargent offers them support at every step of the way; During treatment – providing specialist nurses, play specialists, Homes from Home; In hospital & at home – offering specialist social care and support in the community – services for young people, holidays, grants, helpline; and After treatment – helping survivors, supporting those bereaved. Volunteering opportunities include working in our charity shops, office work including administration, helping with donor mailings and accountancy. Other roles include marketing, short-term research projects, organising and helping out at events (marshalling, coordinating other volunteers, offering post-race massages, cheering at race points, selling merchandise, and much more) and fundraisers are always needed to shake a bucket to collect money or support our eBay team.	www.clicsargent.org.uk

		NSPCC	<p>The NSPCC is the UK's leading charity - specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. NSPCC's vision is to end cruelty to children in the UK. We work at a national, regional and local level, influencing, mobilising and educating so child protection is at the forefront of people's minds. We campaign to change the law, provide ChildLine and the NSPCC Helpline, offer advice for adults, and much more. It is the only UK children's charity with statutory powers that enables it to take action to safeguard children at risk of abuse. We run projects in local communities that offer a range of services for children who have experienced, or are at risk of abuse. We research the issues around abuse, in order to develop services, campaigns and other new ways to end cruelty to children and we work with organisations and professional networks to help them do everything they can to protect children. If necessary we will use our authorised person status to intervene when a child's at risk. Volunteering roles include Childline counsellors (involving extensive training) who provide advice and support for young people, switchboard volunteers, office and administration volunteers, fundraisers, public speakers, event assistants, helping to run projects in the local community, campaigning for change to ensure better laws for children in the UK and schools volunteers who help children recognise all forms of abuse and make them aware of the NSPCC and Childline.</p>	www.nspcc.org.uk
		Children's Ward Hospital Volunteer	<p>Children's wards in hospitals aim to provide a friendly and safe surrounding to children needing to be hospitalised. Often hospitals can be quite daunting and scary places for children to go to, especially when they are facing treatment and perhaps a lengthy stay in hospital or many return visits. Hospital doctors and nurses are under great time pressure and so often, cannot spend as much time with children as they'd like. During lengthy stays in hospital, children can get bored and restless. Volunteers are needed to come into the children's wards and make them more fun places to be. Children recover quicker when they are having fun and it also takes their minds off why they are in hospital in the first place. Unlike doctors and nurses, volunteers can just focus on making sure the children are not feeling anxious and are having a good time. Volunteers can spend time chatting with individual children, join in playing any games, can organise group games and activities as well as providing children with someone to talk to, should they have any worries.</p>	<p>These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest hospital for information.</p>

		WellChild	<p>WellChild is the national charity for sick children. WellChild helps sick children and their families throughout the UK to manage the consequences of serious illness and complex health conditions through our programme of care, support and research. Caring for seriously ill children is at the heart of the work we do, and the WellChild Children's Nurse Programme provides a service that was not previously available to families of children and young people with long term complex health needs. Our nurses are vital in the prevention of frequent hospital re-admissions and they work closely with a wide range of other professionals and local services in the community, to ensure that families receive the support they need. WellChild's Helping Hands project is one of a kind - a unique way of providing support to sick children and their families. When you're caring for a sick child, re-decorating a room or adapting a garden can seem like climbing a mountain - there just aren't enough hours in the day. We organise hands-on projects to help sick children and their families in truly practical ways. WellChild's work to improve the health of children has a huge impact through its commitment to funding innovative research, clinicians and scientists. We also bring health issues to the attention of the public and decision makers including the Government, and campaigns aim to improve the health and quality of life of children and young people, particularly those with serious illness or complex health care needs. We are in constant need to raise funds to help sick children. Volunteers give us a helping hand at the many events we are involved in to raise funds to help sick children. Events can be big such as the London Marathon or smaller local events. We need people to help us sell programmes, marshal people, sell goods at stalls, cheer on our runners at races, host and help at events and community fundraisers and promote WellChild. You could also take part in one of our hands-on projects providing practical help to sick children and their families. You could be redecorating a room in their house, altering existing fittings in the house to meet the child's needs or adapting a garden.</p>	www.wellchild.org.uk
		Save the Children	<p>Save the Children is the world's independent children's charity. We're outraged that millions of children are still denied proper healthcare, food, education and protection. We're working flat out to get every child their rights and we're determined to make further, faster changes. Our vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. We know that being born into poverty reduces a child's chances for a brighter future and that millions of children are caught up in emergencies. Most governments promise to protect children's rights, yet they are still violated. We help the children most in need. We have an eight-step plan of action for tackling global child hunger, help children who are missing out on school get a decent education, provide access to better healthcare and food so children grow up healthier and protect children who are exploited or not properly cared for. We need volunteers to work as a team to organise events and activities that raise vital funds and increase awareness of our work - we've more than 400 supporter groups across the UK and they're always looking for new members. Fitness experts have designed a 45-minute workout class to help people of any ability get the most out of running. We need volunteers to set up and lead local weekly classes - to raise money to help save lives. We also need creative and energetic volunteers to help make our shops stand out from the competition on the high street.</p>	www.savethechildren.org.uk

		Riding for the Disabled	<p>Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is the UK's leading voluntary organisation working with horses offering opportunities for therapy, achievement and enjoyment to its community of participants and volunteers. RDA enables people with disabilities to ride or carriage drive to benefit their health and wellbeing and to achieve their goals. RDA develops and supports opportunities for therapy; increasing the resources we need to deliver meaningful and lasting therapy, producing research and information to demonstrate the impact of our work and provide education and training to our volunteers to maximise the therapeutic impact of our work. RDA develops and supports opportunities for achievement; increasing the number of opportunities for achievement that are available to participants through RDA, expanding our highly successful education programme to reach more people and being the UK's leading organisation for specialist training in equestrian activities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>RDA enables physical activity and enjoyment; expanding the opportunities for involvement in RDA activities, ensuring that every participant has the opportunity for personal enjoyment and physical activity and strengthening the range of programmes that focus on enjoyment, including the holidays programme. There are lots of volunteering opportunities available with RDA: Session volunteers provide support to riders/drivers through leading horses, side walking, aiding mounting etc; Trustee volunteers are responsible for the overall operation of the group; Volunteer Co-ordinators co-ordinate other volunteers within the group; Fundraisers help groups to raise funds; Website volunteers maintain group websites; Session organisers coordinate volunteers, horses, riders/drivers for sessions; PR volunteers promote the RDA through the media; Coaches instruct sessions and ensure safe practice during sessions; there are other volunteering roles available too.</p>	www.rda.org.uk
	Child Social Care	Beatbullying	<p>Beatbullying works with children and young people across the UK to provide them with all important opportunities to make positive and lasting changes to their lives and outlook. In particular, we work intensively with those so deeply affected by bullying that they can barely face going to school that next morning. We aim to make deep changes in attitude of those young people that bully, working with them to take responsibility and a sense of ownership over their actions, building foundations for change and improvement in their life chances and opportunities. For us, it's all about shaping attitudes and changing behaviours. We have a number of programmes through a range of programmes which have peer mentoring and peer activism at their heart. Volunteers can become a CyberMentor and mentor young people over the internet, work hands on with young people to help them discuss the issue of bullying and how to manage situations by making videos, putting together a song or assisting them with writing a script, go into schools and work with groups of young people and talk about issues such as religion and sexuality amongst others.</p>	www.beatbullying.org

		The Prince's Trust	The Prince's Trust gives practical and financial support to 14 to 30-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law. The trust helps young people to develop key workplace skills such as confidence and motivation, enabling them to move into work, education or training as well as offering money and support to help young people start up in business, a 12-week personal development course, offering work experience, qualifications, practical skills, community projects and a residential week. We have volunteering roles in a variety of shapes and sizes from fundraising, web editors, business mentors, office support, leaving prison transition mentors, leaving care transition mentors, development awards assessors, volunteer coordinators, progression mentors, 121 supporters and outreach mentors.	www.princes-trust.org.uk
		The Children's Society	The Children's Society is a leading children's charity committed to making childhood better. We take action to prevent, rescue and support children facing life trapped in a vicious circle of fear and harm; a vicious circle driven by violence, neglect, poverty and discrimination, which destroys childhood and wrecks community living. Our projects help tens of thousands of children and their families each year. Our direct action supports children in trouble with the law, children forced to run away from home or care, protecting them from abuse, crime and prostitution. We ensure disabled children are listened to and given the choices other children enjoy. We help refugee children rebuild their lives in new communities. Volunteering roles include working in our retail shops, helping with the Manchester United ground collection and taking part in the Good Children Inquiry.	www.childrensociety.org.uk
		Barnardos	Barnardos believes in children regardless of their circumstances, gender, race, disability or behaviour. Whatever the issue from drug misuse to disability; youth crime to mental health; sexual abuse to domestic violence; child poverty to homelessness; Barnardos believes we can bring out the best in every child. We do this because we believe that every child deserves the best start in life and the chance to fulfil their potential. We run 415 vital projects across the UK, including counselling for children who have been abused, fostering and adoption services, vocational training and disability inclusion groups. Activities undertaken by volunteers include befriending and mentoring, helping to run play schemes and day trips and acting as advocates, working in one of our shops or fundraising.	www.barnardos.org.uk

		<p>Action for Children</p>	<p>Action for Children is committed to helping the most vulnerable and neglected children and young people in the UK break through injustice, deprivation and inequality, so they can achieve their full potential. We help nearly 156,000 children, young people and their families through nearly 420 projects across the UK. We also promote social justice by lobbying and campaigning for change. Our children's and family centres give parenting advice, a safe space for families to play and the chance to learn new skills, subjects and information. The centres also help practically, with things like debt and housing difficulties, and offer self-help or family therapy for problems such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. Our disability services provide disabled children and their families with residential and short break care, help families deal with challenging behaviour, provide specialist education and leisure opportunities, and offer innovative programmes such as the Access to IT project, which uses information technology to enhance disabled children's confidence and their educational and social interests. Our intensive fostering services act as an alternative to custodial sentences for young people, challenging their behaviour and often enabling them ultimately to return to their birth families. We also run a growing number of small residential units for children and young people, as well as several residential schools, which are able to provide a good education and social support for children with special educational needs. There are a wide range of volunteering roles; from befriending, mentoring, or being an independent visitor to a young person; providing support during play, meetings, activities or family support sessions; supporting disabled children ; promoting Action for Children's work giving talks to classes; helping out at fundraising events; administrative duties; advertising; crèche helpers and collection box co-ordinators.</p>	<p>www.actionforchildren.org.uk</p>
		<p>Youth Offending Teams</p>	<p>Youth Offending Teams attempt to reduce the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counselling and rehabilitation to those who do offend. YOTs engage young offenders in a wide range of tasks designed to put something positive back into the local community through unpaid activities, as well as preventing them from re-offending. YOTs ensure that offenders have a lower chance of re-offending by performing checkups during the rehabilitation process, checking on their accommodation, friends, possibilities of coercion into offending or drug/alcohol use, and so on. YOTs supervise young people who have been ordered by the court to serve sentences in the community or in the secure estate. Sometimes, teams organise meetings between offenders and victims to encourage apologies and reparation. There are many different areas within the youth justice system in which you could offer your services as a volunteer; Resettlement and after care provision – helping juvenile ex-offenders when they re-enter the community after a period in a young offenders institute; Mentoring – meeting with young offenders and talking through things; Support in education and sports – coaching ex-offenders' sports teams or helping them with basic reading, writing and maths skills; Youth Offending Panel – talking to a young offender and their parents (where possible) to try to reach some kind of written agreement as to the proposed future behaviour and conduct of the youth him or herself ; Appropriate adult – supervising any police questioning of a youth in relation to a particular crime and their alleged involvement in it, if another adult (usually a parent) is not available or, in some cases, is the alleged victim.</p>	<p>These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest Youth Offending team for information.</p>

		Envision	<p>Envision provides young people with opportunities to make a difference. Envision programmes provide hands-on support for young people in schools and colleges on issues relating to citizenship, education, sustainable development and the local community. Our programmes seek to provide individuals with a powerful and rewarding experience of making a positive difference. Thereby inspired by their experience, these people will be both willing and able to continue acting as effective role models for their communities wherever they are building powerful legacies of their own. We have a wealth of experience working with groups of young people to facilitate practical projects that have a positive impact on the young people, their schools and the wider community. We also provide Active Citizenship Workshops for higher education institutions and INSET days for teachers, as well as working with businesses and community partners to support young people in building their employability skills and confidence.</p> <p>There are a range of volunteering opportunities with envision. Team Mentors work with a school team over the course of an academic year, helping them to develop an issue that they care about into a project that will make a positive difference to their school or wider community. Other opportunities include helping to organise and run events, offering fundraising support and working in the Envision offices.</p>	www.envision.org.uk
Animal Welfare	Animal Protection	RSPB	<p>The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds work is driven by a passionate belief that we all have a responsibility to protect birds and the environment. The need for an effective bird conservation organisation has never been greater. Climate change, agricultural intensification, expansion of urban areas and transport infrastructure, and over-exploitation of our seas all pose major threats to birds. We are the largest wildlife conservation organisation in Europe with over one million members. Wildlife and the environment face many threats. Our work is focussed on the species and habitats that are in the greatest danger. We own and manage 200 nature reserves where wildlife can thrive and people can be inspired, we protect, restore and manage habitats for birds and other wildlife, share our knowledge and enthusiasm, to help young and old enjoy the natural world. Volunteering opportunities include community events organiser, schools activities and talks volunteer, costume designer and maker, a date with nature assistant, beached bird surveyor, discovery centre assistant, birds of prey assistant, fundraiser, conservation assistant, gardening, members recruiter and media publicity.</p>	www.rspb.org.uk
		RSPCA	<p>The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals works to prevent and protect animals from cruelty. We rescue domestic animals and wildlife, rehabilitating those animals that can be returned to the wild and re-homing domestic animals. The RSPCA also works with the government and public to prevent cruelty, prosecute those who neglect the law, and provide mobile vets for animals that otherwise may not be treated. There are a wide range of volunteering roles including, administration, branch trustees, campaigning, charity shop assistant, computer work, fundraising, gardening and maintenance, home visitors and practical animal care such as dog walking, day to day care of animals or looking after animals in your own home until the animal finds a new home.</p>	www.rspca.org.uk

		Cats Protection	<p>Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity. We now help more than 215,000 cats and kittens every year through our network of over 250 volunteer-run branches and 29 adoption centres. We also provide an array of cat care information via our publications, website and Helpline; promote the benefits of neutering to prevent unwanted litters from being born and becoming the abandoned cats of tomorrow and seek to educate people of all ages about cats and their care. There are lots of volunteering roles available. If you want to get close to the cats and kittens in our care, you could take care of them on a day-to-day basis; transport them to their new homes or the vet. You could help with trapping ferals for our trap, neuter and release programme. Office volunteers keep the admin in order, organise events and generate those much-needed funds and establish links within the local community. Other roles include helping the general public with enquiries on your group helpline, writing regular newsletters, maintaining a website, visiting the homes of prospective new cat owners, helping at fundraising events or promoting your group to the local press and giving talks to local community groups.</p>	www.cats.org.uk
		Born Free Foundation	<p>Born Free's major international projects are devoted to animal welfare, conservation and education, and protect lions, elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, tigers, polar bears, wolves, dolphins, turtles, sharks and lots more. As human populations expand, wildlife comes under increasing threat. Born Free is determined to try to halt the race to extinction by protecting rare species in their natural habitat. Working with local communities, we find compassionate solutions so people and wildlife can live together. Educational activities inspire young and old alike to respect the wild. Our high-profile campaigns take effective action and provide animals with a voice. We capture the public imagination, change attitudes, inform and persuade decision-makers, and get results. Whether it's fighting the ivory trade and 'sport' hunting, opposing killing wild animals for 'bushmeat', or challenging the exploitation of wild animals in zoos and circuses, Born Free takes action on the front line for animals. Through our Global Initiatives project, we respond to emergency situations worldwide, participate in international coalitions such as the Species Survival Network and much more. Office based volunteers are needed to send out appeal letters, press cuttings, merchandise, collection boxes and membership packs and to catalogue and file large amounts of printed material and video tapes. Activate is Born Free's team of letter-writers who take action on a variety of animal issues. Every two months, Activators receive details about a new challenge and write personal letters to relevant decision-makers. Our emergency teams rescue vulnerable animals from appalling lives of misery in tiny cages and give them lifetime care at spacious sanctuaries. Born Free saves orphaned big cats, great apes and elephants and provides their food and care.</p>	www.bornfree.org.uk

		<p>People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation</p>	<p>The People for the Treatment of Animals (PETA) Foundation is a UK-based charity dedicated to establishing and protecting the rights of all animals. Like humans, animals are capable of suffering and have interests in leading their own lives; therefore, they are not ours to use – for food, clothing, entertainment, experimentation or any other reason. PETA and our affiliates around the world educate policy makers and the public about cruelty to animals and promote an understanding of the right of all animals to be treated with respect. PETA works through public education, research, legislation, special events, celebrity involvement and protest campaigns. PETA informs people of upcoming events and demonstrations in their area, breaking news, urgent alerts and tips for how they can improve the lives of animals every day. Volunteers are needed to take on a variety of important tasks. We're looking for people who are keen to do anything from database entry, putting together mail-outs and filing to helping out with research for our campaigns, helping out at local concerts, outreach at local fairs and festivals, attending seminars on topics such as companion animal care and wildlife rescue, participating in local demonstrations and leafleting efforts to speak up for animals, travelling for national demo tours, participating in PETA's Adopt-a-Street Program, assisting in straw delivery efforts during the winter months, responding to various articles with letters to the editor or providing a loving foster home to a displaced animal for a few days.</p>	<p>www.peta.org.uk</p>
		<p>Animal Aid</p>	<p>Animal Aid is the UK's largest animal rights group and one of the longest established in the world, having been founded in 1977. We campaign peacefully against all forms of animal abuse and promote a cruelty-free lifestyle. We investigate and expose animal cruelty, and our undercover investigations and other evidence are often used by the media, bringing these issues to public attention. We launch regular undercover investigations into factory farms, slaughterhouses, gamebird rearing operations, the horse racing industry and livestock markets, produce in-depth reports, fact sheets and leaflets to support our campaigns, lobby politicians, send out thousands of free education packs, speak in around 300 schools each year, campaign online through viral films, podcasts and networking websites, stage Britain's leading annual cruelty-free Christmas fair and offer a large range of cruelty-free mail order goods including toiletries, clothes, chocolates and books through our ethical online shop. Volunteers are needed to get involved with campaigns, demonstrations, letter writing, setting up displays and helping with street collections or by giving school talks - informing and empowering young people is one of the best ways to create a cruelty-free future. You can help by joining Animal Aid's school speaker network.</p>	<p>www.animalaid.org.uk</p>

		Bat Conservation Trust	<p>The Bat Conservation Trust is the leading NGO solely devoted to the conservation of bats and the landscapes on which they rely. Bats are unique and play a vital role in our environment but during the last century bat populations suffered severe declines. We are working to secure the future of bats in our ever changing world by tackling the threats to bats, from persecution to loss of roosts and changing land use. Since 1991 the Bat Conservation Trust has run a diverse range of projects to conserve bat populations. We are part of one of the most successful conservation movements in the world, supported by a network of members, volunteers, academics and professionals. Bats are now protected by law in Europe, and in the UK some species may already be benefitting from the positive effects of conservation, but we have a long way to go to achieve our vision of a world where bats and people thrive together in harmony. As the authoritative voice for bat conservation we work locally, nationally, across Europe and internationally to meet our objectives; to establish the capacity of the landscape to support viable populations of bats, to secure and enhance bat populations to the full capacity of the landscape and win the level of support required to achieve and maintain these bat populations. Volunteering opportunities include counting bats for our National Monitoring Programme or manning the phones to keep the Bat Helpline running during our peak summer season - this directly saves the lives of bats and protects their roosts. With the appropriate training, you could be one of the many Natural England volunteer batworkers, who provide free roost visits to householders who have bats in their home to offer advice and support.</p>	www.bats.org.uk
	Animal Care	PDSA	<p>The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) is the UK's leading veterinary charity, caring for more than 350,000 pet patients belonging to people in need. Every year PDSA will provide more than 2.2 million free treatments to sick and injured pets and more than 360,000 preventive treatments. PDSA services are run by the hard-working vets and nurses at our PetAid hospitals and cost more than £53 million in donations and volunteer support to provide. We have a fantastic variety of volunteer positions throughout the UK, from helping in one of our shops, organising and helping at local events to raise money and awareness, clerical duties, driving, general help and occasionally vacancies arise assisting the nursing staff with cleaning kennels, preparing equipment etc.</p>	www.pdsa.org.uk

		The Blue Cross	<p>The Blue Cross is a charity dedicated to improving the lives of sick and unwanted pets. We take in animals of all shapes and sizes, from hamsters to horses, care for the animals and rehabilitate them where needed, before finding them new, loving homes. We make sure thousands more get the veterinary treatment they need when their owners cannot afford to pay. Our experienced team of behaviourists give ongoing support to anyone who adopts an animal from us and they help address behavioural issues that some of the animals arrive with. We provide an extensive range of free pet care advice fact sheets and videos and our education team visits schools and youth groups to teach children about good animal care. The Pet Bereavement Support Service offers support and understanding to people who have lost a pet, whether it's through death, re-homing, or maybe enforced separation, such as going into residential care, a hostel, or hospital. Voluntary roles with animals include; walking dogs, socialising cats and kittens, socialising small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs, helping out with cleaning, bathing, grooming, grooming and feeding horses and ponies and mucking out their stables, taking photos of the animals ready for adoption for our website, driving animals to the vet, or between our centres and hospitals, fostering animals for a short while in your own home while they recover from illness, or until they are old enough to be re-homed. Other roles include foster coordinators who provide administrative support to carers in their area, helping them to re-home their animals, shop volunteers to sort and display our stock, dress the window and help customers on the shop floor, drivers to volunteer on an ad hoc basis, picking up stock from people who are unable to bring their donations to the shop, giving talks on pet care and dog safety to school children and youth groups in your local area, helping on the support line for the pet bereavement support service, getting involved in fundraising, gardening, maintenance and DIY or helping out with administration and projects.</p>	www.bluecross.org.uk
		Guide Dogs	<p>Guide Dogs provide mobility and freedom to blind and partially sighted people. Visual impairment is a fact of life for thousands of people, and with an ageing population many more will be affected by sight loss in the future. We have been expertly breeding and training guide dogs for more than 75 years, providing many thousands to blind and partially-sighted people of all ages and from all walks of life. We campaign alongside visually-impaired people for rights that most sighted people take for granted (access to services and transport, freedom of mobility, and provision of better rehabilitation services). Working closely with guide dog owners, service providers, other voluntary organisation and MPs, we've won major victories and have successfully lobbied to influence policies and legislation. We also educate the public about eye care and fund eye disease research and deliver confidence-building rehabilitation services to adults, young people and children - including long cane mobility training and communication and daily living skills. There are lots of voluntary roles available. Puppy walkers ensure pups become familiar with busy shopping centres, public transport and family life. They look after the puppy until it's just over a year old – full time commitment – and teach basic commands like 'sit', 'stay' and 'come'. We also need people to look after dogs over night and at weekends or whilst their owners go into hospital or on holiday. Volunteer drivers are needed to transport dogs, puppies, equipment and people and fundraisers are crucial, from taking up a Guide Dogs marathon to collecting on the high street.</p>	www.guidedogs.org.uk

		National Animal Welfare Trust	National Animal Welfare Trust is now one of the top 10 animal rescue and re-homing charities in England, and runs 5 rescue & re-homing centres across the country. The Trust is home to a surprisingly wide variety of animals, primarily dogs and cats, but farm animals, horses and donkeys, ducks, poultry and small domestic pets too. The Trust is a non-political and non-campaigning organisation; it simply concerns itself with looking after some of life's casualties. It receives no money from the government and relies entirely on voluntary contributions to carry out its work. The main aims of the trust is the provision of care and shelter for stray, neglected and unwanted animals of all kinds; the protection of animals of all kinds from ill-usage, cruelty and suffering; and in particular, to rescue and provide care and shelter for stray, neglected and unwanted animals of all kinds and find suitable homes for any such animals. Volunteering roles include small animal helpers, dog walkers, local animal welfare and rescue work, helping at events, fundraising, manning stalls or shops, running coffee mornings or running marathons.	www.nawt.org.uk
		Dog and Cat Kennels	Local dog and cat kennels provide short-term (sometimes long-term) care for dogs or cats when their owners are unable to look after them perhaps due to a holiday, illness or emergency. They are provided with somewhere safe to live and sleep during their stay, as well as regular meals and exercise (dogs). Often pets can feel anxious being away from their homes and so they need to be made to feel as at home as possible. Staff are often busy with other duties and so are not able to give pets the same amount of attention as they receive at home. Volunteers are needed to assist the staff, mainly spending time with the dogs and cats giving them some attention, playing and cuddles. Volunteer dog walkers are always needed to ensure dogs get adequate exercise whilst in kennels.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest dog or cat kennels for information.
		Animal Rescue Centres or Shelters volunteers	Animal Rescue Centres and Shelters are facilities that house homeless, lost or abandoned animals. In most cases these are dogs and cats but depending on the area there can also be other animals such as foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, rabbits, hares, and birds amongst others. The goal of today's animal rescue centres and shelters is to provide a safe and caring environment until the animals are either reclaimed by their owner, placed in a new home, placed with another organisation, or put back into the wild. Animals need to be treated for any injuries or illnesses whilst in the centre/shelter and cared for, as they may have suffered from a traumatic event. As well as providing animals with a safe place to stay and regular food, domestic animals need to be handled, played with, walked and cuddled as if they were at home. Wild animals need to be treated with more caution. It is the intention that these animals will be placed back into the wild after their recovery and so it is important they do not become too tame or reliant on people. In some cases being placed back into the wild is not possible and so centres try to find homes for these animals. Volunteering opportunities vary depending on your area and animal rescue centres or sanctuaries nearby. Often centres welcome the help of volunteers with general duties such as cleaning out living areas, food preparation and feeding, spending time playing and cuddling domestic animals, dog walking, rescuing animals in need of help and fundraising amongst other activities.	These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest animal rescue centre or shelter for more information.

		<p>Zoo or Animal Sanctuary Volunteers</p>	<p>Zoos and Animal Sanctuaries provide long-term care to a diverse range of animals. The animals are kept in captivity for education purposes and the public are allowed to visit and view them. Zoo's and sanctuaries primary aims are to conduct research and breeding programmes to try and ensure the survival of species under the threat of extinction. Animals can be transported between zoos/sanctuaries for this reason. Some zoos and sanctuaries look after animals in the short-term that have been rescued with the aim to rehabilitate them into the wild. Zoo and sanctuary keepers often give animal talks to members of the public about the animals as well as demonstrations and feeding times. For health and safety reasons, volunteers often do not come into contact with animals but can assist keepers with their duties such as; cleaning out enclosures, preparing food, building enclosures, maintaining gardens and grounds, giving talks to the public, assisting in petting zoos for young children, helping with craft activities, run shops or stalls around the zoo/sanctuary, assist in the office with administration duties, design and make displays and help fundraise amongst others.</p>	<p>These volunteering opportunities vary depending on your location. Contact your nearest zoo or animal sanctuary for more information.</p>
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Appendix G

The participants for Study 6 were students ($n = 37$) aged between 16-38 years ($M = 22.60$ yrs, $SD = 4.56$) and non-students (people in employment; $n = 55$) aged between 18-69 yrs ($M = 42.57$ yrs, $SD = 13.52$).

A multivariate analysis revealed there was a significant difference as a result of whether a participant was a student or not as to how likely it would be for them to go onto volunteer with their chosen organisation, $F(1, 86) = 4.76, p = .032, \eta_p^2 = .05$. There was also a marginally significant difference between students and non-students as to how satisfied they felt with their choice, $F(1, 86) = 3.20, p = .077, \eta_p^2 = .04$. The complete means and standard deviations for all items for students and non-students and the differences between the groups can be seen in Table 7.1. There were no significant interactions between the categorisation of options and employment status (student or non-student).

I then analysed students and non-students separately. The complete means and standard deviations for students and non-students for all conditions (no categories, 5 categories and 10 categories) can be seen in Table 7.2.

Table 7.1. Study 6. Means, standard deviations and differences of responses as a result of employment status (student vs. non-student)

Question	Student		Non-student		df	F	p	η_p^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
How much did you enjoy it? ^a	1.30	1.85	.93	1.79	1	.51	.479	.01
How frustrated did you feel? ^a	-1.14	2.16	-1.38	2.13	1	.54	.464	.01
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a	-.35	2.23	-.82	2.34	1	1.29	.259	.02
Even though I've made my first choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^b	-.46	2.39	-.53	2.42	1	.00	.961	.00
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^c	-.43	2.60	-.84	2.59	1	.95	.333	.01
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^b	2.51	2.15	1.75	1.95	1	3.20	.077	.04
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^b	2.03	1.61	1.55	2.13	1	.72	.399	.01
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^d	-3.05	1.33	-2.64	1.95	1	.44	.509	.01
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^c	-.27	2.78	-.76	2.74	1	1.44	.234	.02
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a	.41	2.02	-.78	2.35	1	4.76	.032	.05

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

^b-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^c-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (complete)

Table 7.2. Study 6. Means and standard deviations for students and non-students for each condition (no categories, 5 categories, 10 categories)

Question		Student		Non-student	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
How much did you enjoy it? ^a	No Categories	.75	1.28	1.31	1.30
	5 categories	1.67	1.61	.76	2.02
	10 categories	1.29	2.23	.78	1.93
How frustrated did you feel? ^a	No Categories	-.38	2.00	-1.56	2.13
	5 categories	-1.42	2.19	-1.57	2.29
	10 categories	-1.29	2.26	-1.00	2.00
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a	No Categories	.50	2.27	-.81	2.29
	5 categories	-.58	2.27	-1.10	2.28
	10 categories	-.59	2.21	-.50	2.55
Even though I've made my first choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^b	No Categories	-.13	2.95	-.25	2.72
	5 categories	-1.25	2.01	-.76	2.30
	10 categories	-.06	2.36	-.50	2.38
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^c	No Categories	.75	2.66	-.38	2.90
	5 categories	-.67	2.81	-1.10	2.39
	10 categories	-.82	2.40	-.94	2.65
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^b	No Categories	1.63	1.06	1.63	2.03
	5 categories	2.75	.97	2.05	1.69
	10 categories	2.76	1.15	1.50	2.20
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^b	No Categories	.88	1.36	1.13	1.93
	5 categories	2.42	1.44	2.00	2.02
	10 categories	2.29	1.65	1.39	2.43
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^d	No Categories	-1.88	2.10	-2.56	1.75
	5 categories	-3.33	.89	-2.81	2.04
	10 categories	-3.41	.80	-2.50	2.09
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^c	No Categories	1.25	2.55	-.88	2.63
	5 categories	-.58	3.12	-.90	3.11
	10 categories	-.76	2.51	-.50	2.50
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a	No Categories	-.25	1.28	-.50	2.19
	5 categories	.67	2.06	-.90	2.81
	10 categories	.53	2.29	-.89	1.97

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

^b-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^c-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (completely)

7.1.1.1.1 Students and option categorisation

When the 37 students were analysed separately a multivariate ANOVA revealed that there were several significant differences as a result of how the options had been categorised. Specifically, these differences were related to how students felt about the option that they chose after they had made their decision (decision satisfaction). There were no significant differences as a result of the categorisation of options regarding the decision making process, nor deferment likelihood (see Table 7.3 for a summary of all differences).

There was a significant effect of how the options were categorised on how satisfied students were with the organisation they chose, $F(2, 34) = 3.50, p = .042, \eta_p^2 = .17$. Although students were satisfied with their choice in all conditions, they were less satisfied with their choice when the options were not categorised ($M = 1.63, SD = 1.06$), than when the options were arranged in 5 ($M = 2.75, SD = .97$) or 10 ($M = 2.76, SD = 1.15$) categories. A LSD post hoc test confirmed that the difference between students' satisfaction levels in the no categories condition was significantly lower than the 5 categories condition ($p = .028$) and the 10 categories condition ($p = .018$) but no difference between the 5 and 10 categories conditions ($p = .971$).

There was also a marginally significant effect of categorisation on how certain students felt that they had made the right choice, $F(2,34) = 2.93, p = .067, \eta_p^2 = .15$. Again, students were less certain that they had made the right choice when the options were not categorised ($M = .88, SD = 1.36$) than when arranged into 5 ($M = 2.42, SD = 1.44$) or 10 ($M = 2.29, SD = 1.64$) categories. A LSD post hoc test confirmed that the difference between students' level of certainty that they had made the right choice in the no categories condition was significantly lower than the 5 categories condition ($p = .034$) and the 10 categories condition ($p = .037$) but not between the 5 and 10 categories conditions ($p = .833$).

How the options were categorised also affected how much regret students felt about the organisation they chose, $F(2, 34) = 4.87, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .22$. Students felt more regretful about the choice they made when the options were not categorised ($M = -1.88, SD = 2.10$) than when they were arranged in 5 ($M = -3.33, SD = .89$) or 10 ($M = -3.41, SD = .80$) categories. A LSD post hoc test confirmed that the difference between students' feelings of regret about their choice in the no categories condition was significantly lower than the 5 categories condition ($p = .012$) and the 10 categories condition ($p = .005$) but not between the 5 and 10 categories conditions ($p = .864$).

The three items outlined above were the items that combined to form an overall view of decision satisfaction. Categorisation had a significant effect on students' decision satisfaction, $F(2, 34) = 5.12, p = .011, \eta_p^2 = .23$, see Figure 7.1. They were significantly less satisfied with their decision when the options were not categorised ($M = 1.46, SD = 1.33$) than when the options were arranged into 5 ($M = 2.83, SD = .90$) or 10 ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.05$) categories. A LSD post hoc test confirmed that the difference between students' decision satisfaction in the no categories condition was significantly lower than the 5 categories condition ($p = .008$) and the 10 categories condition ($p = .005$) but no difference between the 5 and 10 categories conditions ($p = .981$).

There was a very similar pattern of findings as a result of the categorisation of options with regard to students' decision deferment likelihood (although not significant, $F(2, 34) = 1.51, p = .236, \eta_p^2 = .08$). Students stated that they would defer a decision in the no categories condition ($M = 1.00, SD = 2.30$), but that they would not defer their decision in the 5 ($M = -.63, SD = 2.91$) and 10 ($M = -.79, SD = 2.27$) category conditions.

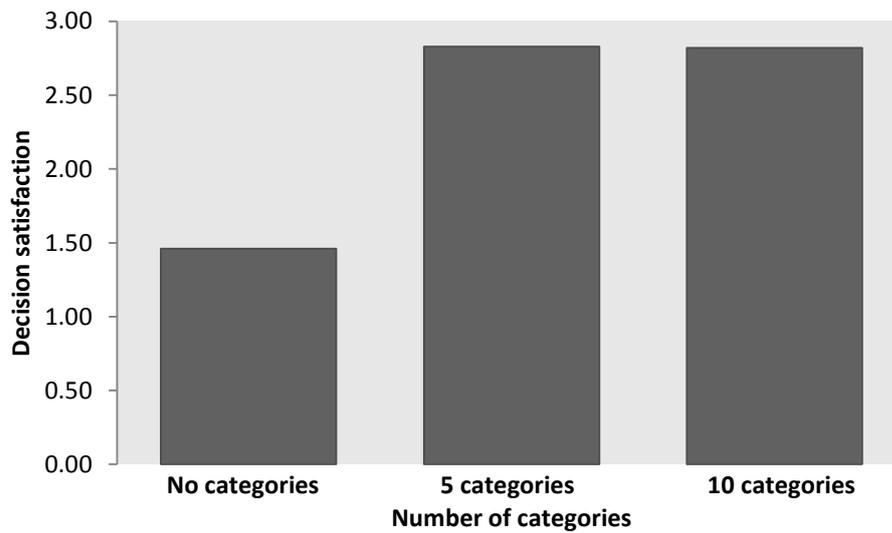


Figure 7.1. Study 6. Decision satisfaction as a result of categorisation of options

Table 7.3. Study 6. Students' differences in responses to items as a result of the categorisation of options

Question	df	F	p	η_p^2
How much did you enjoy it? ^a	2	.57	.569	.03
How frustrated did you feel? ^a	2	.63	.539	.04
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a	2	.74	.487	.04
Even though I've made my first choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^b	2	.97	.388	.05
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^c	2	1.07	.353	.06
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^b	2	3.50	.042	.17
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^b	2	2.93	.067	.15
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^d	2	4.87	.014	.22
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^c	2	1.60	.217	.09
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a	2	.54	.588	.03
Deferment likelihood	2	1.51	.236	.08
Decision difficulty	2	2.11	.137	.11
Decision satisfaction	2	5.12	.011	.23

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

^b-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^c-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (completely)

7.1.1.1.2 Non-students and option categorisation

When the 55 non-students were analysed separately a multivariate ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences as a result of how the options were categorised, see Table 7.4. Therefore, non-students will not be discussed further.

Table 7.4. Study 6. Non students' differences in responses to items as a result of the categorisation of options

Question	df	F	p	η_p^2
How much did you enjoy it? ^a	2	.51	.603	.0
How frustrated did you feel? ^a	2	.42	.659	.0
How difficult was it to make your decision? ^a	2	.31	.738	.0
Even though I've made my first choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options ^b	2	.20	.820	.0
Ideally I'd like more time to think before making my decision ^c	2	.36	.696	.0
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose? ^b	2	.42	.661	.0
How certain are you that you made the right choice? ^b	2	.83	.440	.0
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did? ^d	2	.13	.875	.0
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later? ^c	2	.12	.887	.0
How likely is it that you will actually volunteer with your chosen organisation? ^a	2	.16	.854	.0
Deferment likelihood	2	.11	.984	.0
Decision difficulty	2	.65	.525	.0
Decision satisfaction	2	.50	.610	.0

^a-4 (not at all) to +4 (extremely)

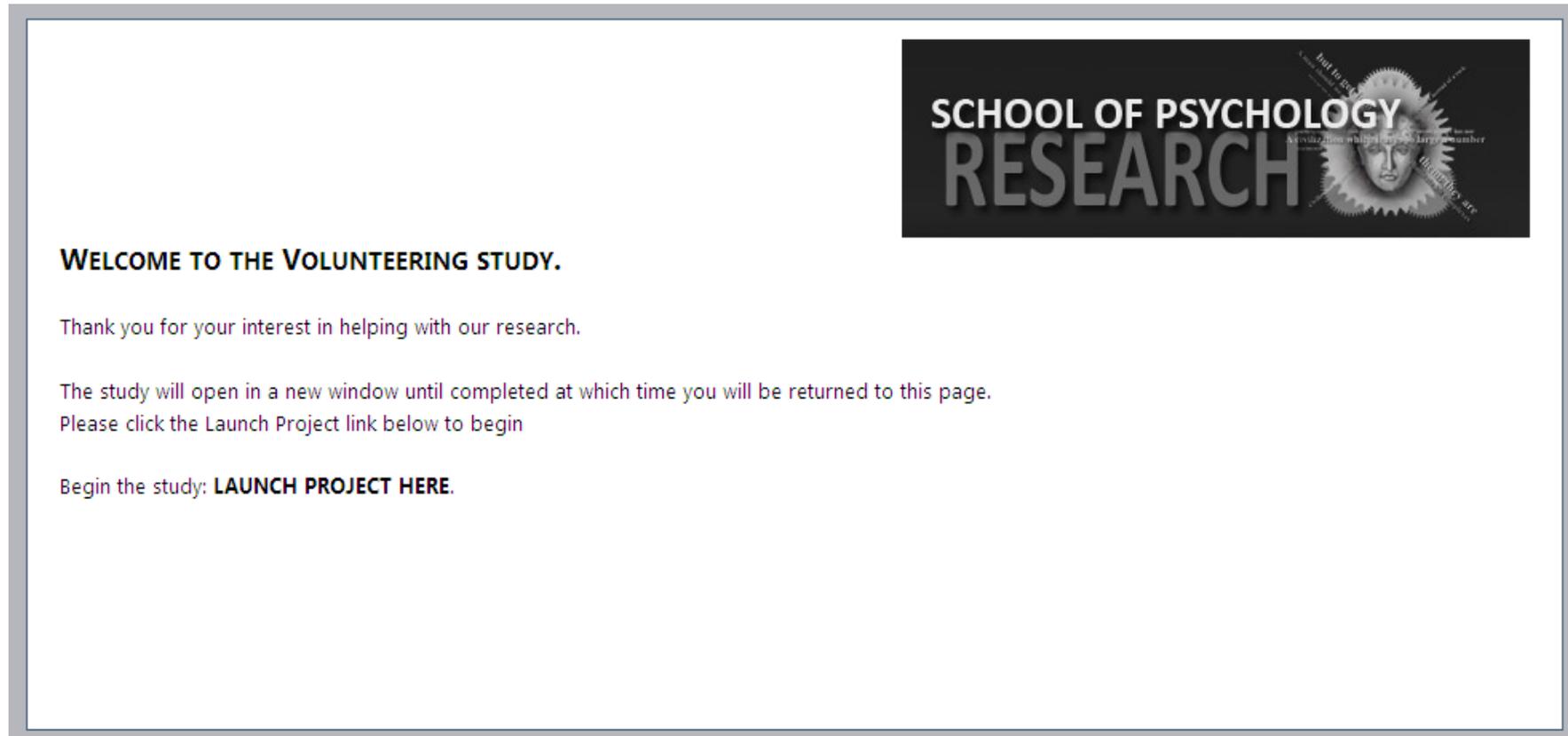
^b-4 (totally disagree) to +4 (totally agree)

^c-4 (not at all) to +4 (definitely)

^d-4 (not at all) to +4 (completely)

Appendix H

Study 7 screenshots



**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
RESEARCH**

WELCOME TO THE VOLUNTEERING STUDY.

Thank you for your interest in helping with our research.

The study will open in a new window until completed at which time you will be returned to this page.
Please click the Launch Project link below to begin

Begin the study: **LAUNCH PROJECT HERE.**

VOLUNTEERING AND CHOICE

BRIEF

Thank you for expressing an interest in this experiment. It is a computer based experiment investigating people's volunteering choices. You will only be asked to make one choice during the study.

You are free to withdraw from the study at anytime and your data will be confidential and anonymous. You will only be identifiable via a participant number. Please retain your number if you wish to withdraw your data from the study at a later date.

Please indicate you are happy to continue with the experiment.

I am happy to continue

1) Do you currently volunteer?

Yes No

2) If yes, about how many hours a month?

3) How interested are you in volunteering?

Not at all



Extremely

Continue

IMAGINE THAT YOU HAVE A SPARE 4 HOURS A WEEK THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO SPEND VOLUNTEERING.

On the next screen you will see the names of a range of voluntary organisations that you can choose to volunteer with.

You can see the aims of the organisations and what activities volunteers could expect to do by clicking on the name of an organisation – a box will then pop up containing the information.

PLEASE CHOOSE THE ORGANISATION YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO VOLUNTEER WITH.

Please take as much time as you like to look through the options and make your decision. This is the only choice you will have to make during the whole study.

You will be asked questions about your choice and decision later in the experiment.

Continue

IMAGINE THAT YOU HAVE A SPARE 4 HOURS A WEEK THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO SPEND VOLUNTEERING.

On the next screen you will be presented with various volunteering opportunities.

You can click to see the different pages of options and scroll down the page to see details of the volunteering organisations.

PLEASE CHOOSE THE ORGANISATION YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO VOLUNTEER WITH.

Please take as much time as you like to look through the options and make your decision. This is the only choice you will have to make during the whole study.

You will be asked questions about your choice and decision later in the experiment.

Continue

You have a 'basket' on the right of the screen in which you can store a shortlist of a maximum of 5 volunteering organisations to help you make your decision. If you see an organisation that you like the sound of and would consider choosing that one to volunteer with, you can click to add it to your basket. The basket helps you to see your shortlisted organisations details easily. From the basket, you can click on the names of your shortlisted organisations to see the volunteering details for that organisation again.

Please remember that after having considered the possible volunteering options, you must choose only one organisation that you would most like to volunteer with to proceed with the study.

Continue

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity.

Guide Dogs	Library Volunteer	Macmillan Cancer Support	Beatbullying	CLIC Sargent
SANE	Crisis	The National Autistic Society	Zoo or Animal Sanctuary Volunteers	Children's Ward Hospital Volunteer
Whizz-Kidz	The Disabilities Trust	WWF	The British Red Cross	Environmental Justice Foundation
Mind	Festival Volunteer	Dog and Cat Kennels	Art Galleries	PDSA
Action for Children	Rethink	Sea Watch Foundation	Council for British Archaeology	Samaritans
Music Therapy Volunteers	Cathedral Camps	WRVS	Forestry Commission	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
The Wildlife Trusts	Cats Protection	The Blue Cross	The Churches Conservation Trust	Marie Curie Cancer Care
Shelter	Save the Children	Friends of the Earth	Natural England	National Animal Welfare Trust
BTCV	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation	Nursing/Residential Home Volunteers	RSPCA	NCPC
Museums	Art Fund	Home-Start	Marine Conservation Society	NADFAS
Riding for the Disabled	RSPB	The Children's Society	The Woodland Trust	English Heritage
The National Trust	Animal Rescue Centres or Shelters volunteers	Bat Conservation Trust	Hospital Radio	Envision
Barnardos	Environmental Investigation Agency	Oral History Society	Sustrans	Youth Offending Teams
Born Free Foundation	The Prince's Trust	Animal Aid	Greenpeace	WellChild

Once you have made your choice:

Continue

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity

Festival Volunteer	CLIC Sargent	Samaritans	Mind	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation
Environmental Investigation Agency	Music Therapy Volunteers	Oral History Society	Greenpeace	Environmental Justice Foundation
NADFAS	The National Trust	Art Galleries	Riding for the Disabled	Museums
The Children's Society	NCPC	Sea Watch Foundation	Marine Conservation Society	The Prince's Trust
Action for Children	BTCV	Sustrans	The British Red Cross	WellChild
The Churches Conservation Trust	Zoo or Animal Sanctuary Volunteers	Council for British Archaeology	Macmillan Cancer Support	Shelter
WWF	Art Fund	Envision	Bat Conservation Trust	PDSA
Save the Children	SANE	Youth Offending Teams	Library Volunteer	Cathedral Camps
WRVS	The National Autistic Society	Home-Start	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament	Beatbullying
Animal Aid	Crisis	Animal Rescue Centres or Shelters volunteers	Cats Protection	Nursing/Residential Home Volunteers
RSPB	Friends of the Earth	Barnardos	The Disabilities Trust	English Heritage
The Wildlife Trusts	Natural England	RSPCA	Forestry Commission	Whizz-Kidz
Children's Ward Hospital Volunteer	Dog and Cat Kennels	Born Free Foundation	National Animal Welfare Trust	The Woodland Trust
The Blue Cross	Guide Dogs	Hospital Radio	Marie Curie Cancer Care	Rethink

Your Shortlist: 

(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

PDSA

The National Autistic Society

Once you have made your choice:

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the page tabs to change pages and use the scroll bar to scroll down through the opportunities on each page.

building their confidence at local clubs and life skills events. There are 70,000 disabled children and young people in the UK that don't have a wheelchair appropriate to their needs. That's where Whizz-Kidz comes in. By providing them with vital mobility equipment, we help to transform their lives. And with training to help them get the most out of their equipment, support to develop life skills, and opportunities to meet and have fun, we help them to be something special...a kid. Whizz-Kidz also encourages disabled children to meet and make friends at our growing network of local clubs. They're having fun whizzing around obstacle courses, knocking over skittles, doing wheelies and learning about boring but important things, like road safety at our wheelchair skills courses. They're forming campaign groups and meeting MPs, contacting the press, and designing campaign badges and posters. And because growing up can be a bit scary, they're taking part in our work placement program and building confidence at our life skills events. Volunteering roles include, wheelchair skills training volunteers to help children to get the most out of their wheelchair and build confidence and autonomy, event organisers, helping at local events and fundraising.

The British Red Cross

The British Red Cross gives skilled and impartial care to people in need and crisis - in their homes and in the community, at home and abroad, in peace and war. In the UK the British Red Cross's primary purpose is to support statutory services, by providing care in crisis situations. The British Red Cross provides valuable short-term support to vulnerable people in the UK, whether they're recovering from an operation, need a wheelchair or just need help coping around the house. There are a range of volunteering roles within The British Red Cross from being trained to be an emergency response and first aid volunteer for various events or situations, being a home volunteer visiting people in their home for a couple of hours, helping with practical tasks like shopping or basic cooking to help people regain their independence and confidence, driving patients to hospital appointments, helping burn victims or people with disfigurements learn to apply skin camouflage, to giving therapeutic massages.

Sea Watch Foundation

Sea Watch is a national marine conservation research charity dedicated to the protection of whales, dolphins and porpoises (cetaceans) around the UK. Each year, cetaceans face depletion in their numbers and even possible local extinction due to continuing threats such as capture and drowning in fishing gear, sound disturbance, pollution, over-fishing, and climate change. Sea Watch scientists regularly monitor and study whale and dolphin populations, gaining knowledge and understanding of their status, numbers and distribution as well as the condition of their marine habitats. This enables Sea Watch to alert government, industry and environmental organisations to any problems, and prompt practical measures to help protect them from existing and impending threats. Volunteering roles include assisting in ongoing research and education projects, organizing and analysing data collected during the previous field season, processing cetacean sightings for our UK national cetacean sightings database, and developing from these data scientific reports and public education materials. We also need help with updating the Cardigan Bay photo-identification catalogue, organising other photo-identification data from all around the UK and sorting images for the photo-library and the Europhlukes catalogue. You could also join your regional co-ordinator for a land-based watch for whales, dolphins and porpoises; or become a Sea Watch observer recording what you

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Once you have made your choice:

[Continue](#)

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the name of an organisation to see details about that volunteering opportunity.

Samaritans



Samaritans provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. Apart from being a 24-hour source of support on the telephone, by email, by letter or face to face, we also work in the local community, visiting; Workplaces, providing a wide number of courses to businesses, helping staff deal with customer conflicts and internal issues; Schools, reaching large numbers of young people from a range of backgrounds on various subjects and prisons, offering number of ways for prisoners to get the support they need, from volunteers visiting prisons to the Listener scheme, which trains prisoners to offer confidential emotional support to their fellow inmates. For volunteers, the listening role is our most front line role and will carry out the very service that Samaritans is all about. You will be 'listening' through the phone, emails, letters, face to face or by text (depending on the branch you're in) and providing real help to the thousands of people who make contact with the Samaritans each year. Shifts can be during the day or night. Due to the nature of the work, volunteers need to attend extensive training sessions before volunteering. Full training and support are provided. There are non-listening volunteer roles too, such as assisting in the day to day running of the branch, fundraising, finance management, and raising Samaritans profile by giving talks in schools, the community, and organisations.

Once you have made your choice:

Continue

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the page tabs to change pages and use the scroll bar to scroll down through the opportunities on each page. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity.

Greenpeace

Greenpeace are passionate about protecting the Earth – the only life support system we have. Greenpeace investigate, document and expose the causes of environmental destruction. We work to bring about change through politically lobbying, citizen action and consumer pressure. And we will take peaceful direct action to protect this fragile planet and promote the solutions for a green and peaceful future. Our vision is to transform the world by fundamentally changing the way people think about it. We want governments, industry and each and every person to stop viewing the Earth as an inexhaustible resource and start treating it as something precious that needs our protection and careful management. We all need a planet that is ecologically healthy and able to nurture life in all its diversity. Voluntary opportunities range from helping with administrative tasks, mail outs, data entry, data analysis, translations, design and editing, research projects, assisting with events coordination, painting, sewing, carpentry, and many more.

[Click here to add to basket](#)

The British Red Cross

The British Red Cross gives skilled and impartial care to people in need and crisis - in their homes and in the community, at home and abroad, in peace and war. In the UK the British Red Cross's primary purpose is to support statutory services, by providing care in crisis situations. The British Red Cross provides valuable short-term support to vulnerable people in the UK, whether they're recovering from an operation, need a wheelchair or just need help coping around the house. There are a range of volunteering roles within The British Red Cross from being trained to be an emergency response and first aid volunteer for various events or situations, being a home volunteer visiting people in their home for a couple of hours, helping with practical tasks like shopping or basic cooking to help people regain their independence and confidence, driving patients to hospital appointments, helping burn victims or people with disfigurements learn to apply skin camouflage, to giving therapeutic massages.

[Click here to add to basket](#)

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) opposes all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction: their development, manufacture, testing, deployment and use or threatened use by any country. Our external strategic objectives are: the elimination of British nuclear weapons and global abolition of nuclear weapons; abolition of other threats of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect; a nuclear-free, less militarised and more secure Europe; and the closure of the nuclear power industry. We aim to change Government policies to bring about the elimination of British nuclear weapons as a major contribution to global abolition. We stimulate wide public debate on the need for alternatives both to the nuclear cycle and to military attempts to resolve conflict. We empower people to engage actively in the political process and to work for a nuclear-free and peaceful future. As a British campaign, we concentrate first and foremost on British nuclear weapons but we also work with anti-nuclear groups

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Your Shortlist: 

(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

<input type="text"/>	X

Once you have made your choice:

[Continue](#)

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

Recap: Please choose the voluntary organisation you would most like to volunteer with. Take as much time as you need and look through as many organisations as you want. Click on the page tabs to change pages and use the scroll bar to scroll down through the opportunities on each page. You can use the 'basket' to shortlist up to 5 volunteering opportunities for consideration – here you can also click on their names to see the details of that volunteering opportunity.

Art Fund ✕

Art Fund
Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for works of art and plays a major part in enriching the range and quality of art in the UK. The ability of UK museums to collect is now under serious threat as the price of art continues to rise but public funds for museum acquisitions are limited. We campaign, fundraise and give money to museums and galleries to buy and show art, and promote its enjoyment through our events and membership scheme. Volunteers can assist with administrative work, event organisation, looking after members, recruiting new members, achieving publicity and coming up with new fundraising ideas.

Your Shortlist: 

(Click organisation name to see volunteering details or x to remove from basket)

Crisis✕

Art Fund✕

Greenpeace✕

✕

✕

Once you have made your choice:

Do not click 'continue' until you have chosen an organisation and can remember it's name. You will not see the volunteering options again.

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Please type in the name of your chosen organisation:

Continue

YOU CHOSE TO VOLUNTEER WITH: SAMARITANS

When making your choice:

How much did you enjoy it? Not at all Extremely

How frustrated did you feel? Not at all Extremely

How difficult was it to make a decision? Not at all Extremely

It was easy to navigate options Not at all Extremely

I feel I had a clear overview of the options available Not at all Extremely

Continue

YOU CHOSE TO VOLUNTEER WITH: SAMARITANS

Thinking about the options you saw:

How many options do you think there were?

The number of options I saw was:

Too few

Too many

Even though I've made my choice I can't stop thinking about some of the other options

Totally Disagree

Totally Agree

Continue

YOU CHOSE TO VOLUNTEER WITH: SAMARITANS

Thinking about your choice:

Ideally I'd like more time to think before making this decision:	Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely					
How satisfied are you with the organisation you chose?	Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely					
How certain are you that you made the right choice?	Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely					
How much do you regret choosing the organisation that you did?	Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Completely					
If you could, would you put off making a final decision about who to volunteer for until later?	Definitely Not	<input type="radio"/>	Definitely					
How likely is it that you will <u>actually volunteer</u> with your chosen organisation?	Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely					
How interested are you in volunteering?	Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Extremely					

Continue

YOU CHOSE TO VOLUNTEER WITH: SAMARITANS

Thinking about your choice:

1) What were the main reasons for you choosing the volunteering organisation that you did?

2) Please try as best as you can to describe in as much detail as possible how you came to make your decision about which organisation to volunteer with. (E.g., any steps that you took that helped you arrive at your final choice)

3) How do you think your decision could have been made easier?

Continue

3) Prior to this study, had you heard of the organisation you eventually chose?

Not at all



Definitely

Continue

Age:

Gender:

Male Female

Course studied:

Year of study:

1

Continue

Thank you, that is the end of the experiment. Thank you for taking part.

Would you like to see how you could contact your chosen organisation to see how you could go about volunteering with them?

Yes

No

www.home-start.org.uk

Thank you, that is the end of the experiment. Thank you for taking part.

Your participant number is: **241**

This experiment was investigating satisfaction with volunteering choice when the volunteering opportunities were presented in varying formats. You will have been randomly assigned to a condition

All the organisations in this experiment were real. If you are interested in volunteering you should get in touch with the organisations directly or visit the volunteering department at the university – they are based in the hive in the SU.

You are reminded that all data is confidential and anonymous. If you have any questions regarding the experiment please contact the experimenter lauren.carroll@plymouth.ac.uk or the project supervisor mathew.white@pcmd.ac.uk.

Once again, thank you for your time.

Click to end

8 Publication:

**Carroll, L. S., White, M. P., & Pahl, S. (2011). The impact of
excess choice on deferment of decisions to volunteer.**

Judgment and Decision Making, 6(7), 629-637

The impact of excess choice on deferment of decisions to volunteer

Lauren S. Carroll* Mathew P. White† Sabine Pahl‡

Abstract

Excess choice has previously been shown to have detrimental effects on decisions about consumer products. As the number of options increases, people are more likely to put off making an active choice (i.e., defer) and show less satisfaction with any purchase actually made. We extend this line of enquiry to choosing a charitable organisation to volunteer for. The issue is important because the number of voluntary organisations is enormous and the impact of such a decision may be greater than for consumer decisions in terms of time commitment and benefits to the volunteer and society. Study 1 asked students to examine a real volunteering website and record how many organisations they considered, decision difficulty and whether or not they would like to sign up for a chosen organisation or prefer to defer a decision. Study 2 presented either a relatively small (10) or large (30) choice set of hypothetical organisations and measured deferment likelihood and decision difficulty. In both studies the more options considered, the greater the likelihood to defer. This effect was mediated by decision difficulty. This research is the first to find that detrimental effects of excess choice extend to volunteering. Implications for volunteer recruitment are discussed.

Keywords: choice, volunteering, excess, defer, recruitment.

1 Introduction

Western societies place great value on the provision of extensive choice (Schwartz, 2004). Choice, it is argued, enhances the ability to match individual preferences to outcomes (Botti & Iyengar, 2004), is associated with feelings of personal autonomy and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001), and people tend to react negatively when choice is restricted (Fitzsimons, 2000). However, the benefits of extensive choice need to be considered alongside potential costs. Research suggests, for instance, that too much choice may encourage confusion and choice deferment (Arunachalam, Henneberry, Lusk & Norwood, 2009; Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Shah & Wolford, 2007; Tversky & Shafir, 1992) as well as a reduction in satisfaction with chosen options (Haynes, 2009; Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Moreover, economic theory has long recognised that as options become more similar the opportunity costs of the next best alternative foregone also rise. This tension between wanting more options but finding them difficult to deal with has been referred to as the Paradox

of Choice (Schwartz, 2004).

To date, however, much of this research has focused on consumer decision making for products such as jams, chocolates, pens, soft drinks, sweets, gift boxes and music (see Scheibehenne, Greifeneder & Todd, 2010, for a review) and we still know very little about whether the paradox of choice exists for more consequential decisions (although see Iyengar, Huberman & Jiang, 2004). The aim of the current research was to investigate whether extensive choice undermines decision making with respect to a potentially more meaningful decision context, namely choosing an organisation to volunteer for. Volunteering one's time without concern for financial gain is a serious time commitment for many individuals, which has been linked to a range of volunteer benefits such as greater life satisfaction, improved health, skill development and better job prospects (Borjonovi, 2008; Meier & Stutzer, 2008), as well as obvious benefits for others. Consequently, the implications for the individual of deciding which organisation to volunteer for are potentially much larger than for many of the consumer contexts explored previously.

Like many of these consumer contexts, however, the charity and volunteer sector is one where excess choice abounds. For example 164,000 charities are registered in the UK alone (Cabinet Office, 2008). Moreover, the National Centre for Social Research and the Institute for Volunteering Research (NCSR, 2007) estimates that the economic benefit of UK volunteering is around £40 bil-

This research forms part of the first author's PhD, funded by a University of Plymouth Faculty of Science and Technology studentship and supervised by the second and third authors. We are grateful to Lynne James and Anthony Mee for help with programming, and to Ali Evans for helping to recruit additional subjects in Study 2.

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