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***Individual Organizational Behaviour in Non-profit Organizations:
A Volunteers' Management Analysis***

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How selfish soever man be supposed,
there are evidently some principles in his nature,
which interest him in the fortune of others,
and render their happiness necessary to him,
though he derives nothing from it,
except the pleasure of seeing it.

Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1969, p. 47)

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General introduction

Organizational Behaviour (OB) is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various disciplines and fields of study, forming a tapestry of interconnected ideas. At its core, OB revolves around understanding and analysing the behaviour of individuals and groups within the complex framework of an organization (Smith, 2020). The beauty of OB lies in its versatility, as different academic disciplines employ unique approaches to unravel its intricacies.

In the field of psychology, OB delves into the intricate behaviours exhibited by individuals and groups. This psychological lens allows researchers to dissect the underlying motives and dynamics that shape OB. Sociology, on the other hand, extends OB beyond individual actions and emphasizes the multidisciplinary nature of the subject within a broader social context. Meanwhile, the management perspective zeroes in on organizations, scrutinizing their structures and functions to comprehend the intricate dance of individuals and groups within them. For the purpose of this thesis, the managerial approach is adopted, concentrating on the functioning of a specific type of organization – non-profit entities.

Recent years have witnessed a surge of interest in OB literature, particularly in the context of non-profit organizations. Numerous studies have sought to adapt theories originally crafted for the for-profit sector to the unique landscape of non-profits. In the field of non-profit management literature, a prevailing trend involves attempting to transpose theories developed for the for-profit sector to the non-profit realm. While OB in the non-profit field shares similarities with for-profit organizations, it also boasts unique aspects and theories germane to the non-profit sector. Specifically for this essay, the theoretical background will include three main theories: the functional approach, the social exchange theory, and the life-course perspective.

The functional approach asserts that people can and do perform the same actions in the service of different psychological functions (Clary et al., 1998). The work of Clary, Snyder & Stukas aims to apply the functional approach to the voluntary field. The researchers assert that the core propositions of a functional analysis of volunteerism are that acts of volunteerism that appear to be quite similar on the surface may reflect markedly different underlying motivational processes (Clary et al., 1996).

Instead, the social exchange theory posits that individuals engage in interactions guided by self-interest, aiming to maximize rewards while minimizing costs (Thibaut, J. W. & Kelley, 1959). This concept is used in the volunteer literature to justify why the volunteers are involved in performing certain activities with no remuneration, and which different rewards they are looking for (Kulik et al., 2016).

Lastly, the life-course perspective posits that individuals of different age groups encounter distinct life tasks, leading to varied motivations for engaging in volunteer work (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Within the vast landscape of OB, various levels exist, each interacting with and influencing the others. These levels include the individual, the group, the organization, and the environment. This study, however, directs its focus towards the individual level. In particular, it delves into the crucial role played by individuals, emphasizing the dichotomy between those working as paid employees and those serving as volunteers.

Within this nuanced landscape, the present research scrutinizes the significant differences that arise when applying managerial assumptions to ordinary employees versus volunteers in non-profit organizations. Volunteers, driven by a different set of motivations, present a distinctive challenge for organizational behaviour theorists and practitioners. Recognizing these distinctions becomes imperative for crafting effective management strategies tailored to the

intricacies of the non-profit sector, where the commitment and engagement of volunteers play a pivotal role in organizational success.

This thesis comprises three distinct papers, each delving into various facets of volunteer behaviour within non-profit organizations. The central focus across all papers is the exploration of volunteers' motivations and commitment, with each paper examining these concepts from a unique perspective while remaining within the overarching umbrella of OB. In the first paper, an in-depth analysis will be conducted on the diverse levels of motivation observed in a volunteer population. This investigation aims to determine whether varying levels of motivation contribute to differences in the perceived level of organizational support. The second paper employs social exchange theory to investigate the correlation between motivation to volunteer and organizational commitment within non-profit organizations, utilizing the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) index to analyse sociodemographic data and motivations to volunteer dimensions, aiming to uncover the impact of various motivations to volunteer dimensions on loyalty, devotion, and choosiness while contributing insights for scholars and practitioners to enhance human resources practices for volunteers. The final paper zeroes in on the demographic characteristics of volunteers, evaluating how individual traits may alter motivations to volunteer. This comprehensive assessment considers various personal aspects to discern whether they exert an influence on an individual's motivation to perform voluntary work.

What unifies these three papers is not only their thematic connection but also their shared methodological approach. Employing an empirical perspective, each study utilizes different statistical tools while anchoring the analysis in robust variables already tested in existing literature. This ensures a rigorous examination of the research questions posed in each paper.

The overarching goal of this thesis is to elevate the significance of volunteers and their contributions. Traditionally, literature in this field has often drawn concepts from the for-profit sector. However, this thesis seeks to underscore the unique importance of volunteerism within non-profit organizations, striving to enhance existing literature and deepen the understanding of OB within the context of volunteering in NPOs. By doing so, it aims to contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive comprehension of the intricacies involved in this form of service.

The subject of the study: the volunteer

The volunteer is the central theme of the study. To better understand the behaviour of the people who are involved in voluntary work, it is compulsory to deepen the concept of who is the volunteer.

Various studies have presented diverse definitions of who constitutes a volunteer, ranging from expansive interpretations to more nuanced delineations of volunteer activity boundaries.

A pivotal contribution in this regard comes from the work of Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996), which endeavours to establish the parameters of the term "volunteer." Through an exhaustive literature review and subsequent content analysis, the researchers identify four key dimensions that form the basis for evaluating and comparing different definitions and situations involving volunteers.

The first dimension revolves around the voluntariness of the act, encompassing three distinct dimensions: (1) exercising free will, (2) acting with relative lack of coercion, and (3) having an obligation to volunteer.

The second dimension delves into the nature of the reward, delineating four types of remuneration: (1) no remuneration at all, (2) no expected remuneration, (3) reimbursement of expenses, and (4) receiving a stipend or low pay.

The third dimension characterizes the context in which individuals engage in volunteering, recognizing two structural types: (1) formal and (2) informal.

The final dimension addresses the beneficiaries of voluntary activities, categorizing them into three groups: (1) benefiting/helping others or strangers, (2) benefiting/helping friends or relatives, and (3) benefiting oneself (Cnaan et al., 1996).

In the current literature, researchers in volunteer management tend to follow a similar trend in their studies. Examining various typologies of volunteering definitions, some few researchers encompass a broader scope of the phenomenon, while others are more selective. Aligning with the dimensions highlighted by Cnaan et al. (1996), other authors contribute their perspectives, shaping the discourse around the four key dimensions and related categories.

Freeman (1996), for instance, asserts that "volunteer activity is work performed without monetary recompense" eliminating the concept of remuneration from voluntary work entirely. Brown's study (1999) distinguishes between personal network activities and voluntary work, emphasizing the importance of organizational mediation in the latter. Gesthuizen et al. (2012) classify volunteering into formal and informal structures, analysing for their study exclusively formal contexts. Orłowski and Wicker (2015) identify volunteers as those working without wages in formal organizations where members are the primary beneficiaries. Akintayo et al. (2016) reiterate the concepts of free choice, no remuneration, and benefits beyond immediate family in their definition. Toraldo et al. (2016) emphasize altruistic components, social factors, and economic perspectives in defining voluntary work.

From the inception of the volunteering characteristic codified by Cnaan et al. (1996), subsequent definitions have increasingly narrowed the scope, excluding situations that give volunteering a broader dimension. Consequently, the prevailing concept of a volunteer is an individual engaging in an activity of their own free will, without remuneration, within a

formal structure, and for the purpose of helping others or strangers. This study aligns with this definition, using it as the foundation to explore and investigate the OB of volunteers.

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**Motivation to Volunteer and Perceived Organizational Support:
Insights from Diverse Volunteer Clusters**

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the correlation between volunteers' motivation to engage (MTV) and their perceived organizational support (POS). Grounded in functionalist theory (Clary et al., 1998), this theory posits that individuals undertake voluntary activities to fulfil diverse needs. Once involved in a nonprofit organization (NPO), their perception of organizational support could be explained by different motivational dimensions.

A total of 615 volunteers participated in an online survey. Subsequently, a two-step cluster analysis identified two primary clusters: highly motivated volunteers and moderately motivated volunteers. For each cluster, a linear regression was conducted to discern the pivotal MTV dimensions.

The findings reveal that volunteers with elevated MTV and POS primarily seek satisfaction in the social dimension. Conversely, volunteers with moderate levels of MTV and POS need to fulfil multiple MTV dimensions.

The primary objective of this paper is to conduct a more thorough analysis of the relatively understudied connection between MTV and POS, particularly within the realm of volunteer contexts. The significance of this study extends to practitioners, as it contributes to an enhanced comprehension of the crucial role of supporting volunteers.

Keywords: perceived organizational support, motivations to volunteer, nonprofit organizations, volunteering

Motivation to Volunteer and Perceived Organizational Support: Insights from Diverse Volunteer Clusters

Currently, volunteering has achieved great relevance in people's daily lives, and it plays a crucial role in civil society. An increasing number of people invest part of their time and skills to put themselves at the service of the community. Individuals dedicate their time to performing voluntary work in various areas such as sports and leisure, health, education, and social care: all aspects of civil society are permeated by voluntary work (Downward et al., 2020). In fact, nonprofit organizations can rely heavily on volunteers, who are valuable assets, as a significant component of their workforce (Englert & Helmig, 2018).

More precisely, in Europe, 19.3% of the population practices formal voluntary work, and 22.2% of the population instead is involved in informal volunteering (Eurostat). Even if heterogeneity between countries is considered in the Netherlands, volunteering participation in formal activities reaches 40.3%, followed by Sweden and Finland with 35.5% and 34.1% respectively of the population practising formal voluntary work. In contrast, in Italy, only 12% of Italians participate in voluntary activities, and in Spain, only 10.7% of the population engages in formal volunteering (Eurostat). The percentages change when informal volunteering is also considered. In Iceland, 32.8% of the population practiced formal volunteering, while 64.8% practiced informal volunteering. Moreover, in Portugal, 9% of the population perform formal voluntary activities, in contrast, 20.5% of Portuguese individuals participate in informal volunteering (Eurostat). Once more, these data show how widespread is voluntary work.

Since volunteers are an invaluable resource for organizations, it is essential that not-for-profit organizations adopt appropriate strategies to attract and motivate them (Cruz et al., 2022; Malinen et al., 2020).

Several managers still lack a comprehensive understanding of how crucial positive employee-employer relations are in decreasing absenteeism, enhancing commitment to organizational objectives, and boosting performance (Eisenberger et al., 2016). This is also true for volunteers and the nonprofit field. According to Blau's social exchange theory (1964), the employee-employer relationship is based on desired rewards. Indeed, people tend to assist others because they anticipate receiving some form of social benefit in return. The aforementioned benefit is frequently associated with the favourable responses of other individuals to one's actions, and in the absence of such reactions, the impetus to offer assistance may not be present (Mitchell & Clark, 2021). These concepts are also applicable to the voluntary field, where both the volunteer and the organization involved in the social exchange relationship should provide a certain benefit to the other (Allen & Prange, 2021).

The concept of perceived organizational support (POS) is perfectly suitable for evaluating the perception of this benefit, by assessing how much the individual perceives the support provided by the organization. In fact, the POS assesses the level of perception that the individual has of the support provided by the organization for which he/she executes his/her activities (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 1986). Again, social exchange theory suggests that individuals are driven by the anticipated advantages they will receive in return for offering sustained, mutually beneficial assistance to the organization that supports them (Prismakova & Lallatin, 2023). Therefore, to understand whether a person is willing to help others, it is necessary to assess the degree of support perceived through POS. Therefore, a clear understanding of the role of POS is essential for improving the management of volunteers within organizations.

According to several scholars, to effectively manage an NPO, it is necessary to conduct a thorough analysis of the motivations of the volunteers involved (Zollo et al., 2022b).

People do not only pursue a single motivation to volunteer. More precisely, according to the functional approach (Clary & Snyder, 1999), individuals who have various reasons for volunteering may experience diverse positive outcomes (Nykiel et al., 2023). Research on volunteers' positive outcomes has demonstrated that highly motivated individuals show greater satisfaction with volunteering and a greater desire to stay in the organization (Englert & Helmig, 2018; Lorente-Ayala et al., 2020; Zollo et al., 2022a). Additionally, when the roles in which individuals volunteer align with their motivations for volunteering, it leads to favourable results as volunteering is perceived as purposeful behaviour that is personally significant (Nykiel et al., 2023; Stukas, Arthur A. et al., 2009). Consequently, for a better comprehension of volunteers' managerial practices, a study that focuses on MTV is needed.

While there have been a handful of studies examining the correlation between motivation and POS in the profit field, the exploration of this relationship in the nonprofit sector, particularly among volunteers, is notably scarce (Malinen et al., 2020; Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023; Usadolo et al., 2022). Within the for-profit field, Bui et al. (2016) demonstrated that job motivation has a positive effect on the POS. In their study, Gillet et al. (2013) prove that POS is positively related to self-determined work motivation. However, it is crucial to comprehensively explore the role of POS in individuals' organizational behaviour, including in the nonprofit field. Since POS is based on individual perception, it is essential to investigate whether POS can be explained by varying levels of MTV.

Based on this theoretical foundation, our hypothesis posits that, in line with functional theory, distinct volunteer groups exhibit varied facets of MTV that can elucidate their perception of POS. When volunteers possess elevated MTV levels, their inclination toward a positive interpretation of organizational support is heightened. Essentially, the diverse needs of individuals contribute to this understanding of organizational support. The robust motivation and inherent desire to volunteer among this group foster a more favourable view

of the organization's support. Volunteers feel esteemed, acknowledged, and assisted in their roles, amplifying their perception of organizational support. Consequently, volunteers with substantial MTV may manifest more positive behaviours, including active engagement, fostering a sustained commitment to the nonprofit organization. Conversely, volunteers with moderate to lower MTV levels may harbour a less favourable POS perception. In cases where motivation and intrinsic drive are diminished, these volunteers may not fully grasp or acknowledge the organization's support. Their engagement tends to be more transactional, centered on meeting basic requirements without cultivating a profound connection to the organization or its support structures. As a result, their actions are less likely to be driven by a sense of commitment and active involvement.

Theoretical background

Perceived organizational support

The concept of POS has been extensively studied within the for-profit sector (Won et al., 2021). It refers to employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their organizations care about their well-being and value their contributions (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 1986). Originally, the concept of POS was introduced in the for-profit context to understand the dynamics of reciprocity within the employee-employer relationship (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). However, in recent years, scholars have begun adapting and applying the concept of POS to the nonprofit field, specifically in relation to the relationship between volunteers and NPOs (Aisbett & Hoye, 2014; Aisbett & Hoye, 2015; Bang et al., 2022; Won et al., 2021). Eisenberger's concept of reciprocity (1997), is highly applicable to the context of voluntary work. When a volunteer receives support from the organization in performing their tasks, both the individual and the NPO experience positive outcomes (Aisbett et al., 2015). This reciprocal exchange of support is closely linked to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Thibaut, J. W. & Kelley, 1959), which defines social exchange as a mutually beneficial

relationship in which everyone expects rewards (Thibaut, J. W. & Kelley, 1959). Specifically, POS suggests that the anticipated reward in the volunteer context is the gratification of knowing that the organization values the participants' contributions and cares about their well-being.

Despite some scholars beginning to focus on the use of POS in the nonprofit field, there is still limited awareness and understanding of POS within NPOs (Malinen & Harju, 2017). In particular, there is a lack of knowledge regarding which volunteer attitudes might explain the perception of organizational support. Further research is needed to delve into this area and shed light on the factors that contribute to the perception of organizational support among volunteers in NPOs.

Motivation to volunteer

In the late nineties, researchers began exploring the application of the functional approach to understanding volunteer motivation (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Stukas, Arthur A. et al., 1999). They sought to clarify that individuals engage in voluntary work to fulfil social and psychological goals. Importantly, different volunteers may participate in similar activities but have different underlying motivations (Clary et al., 1996).

Over the past few decades, numerous studies have investigated MTV and have developed various models to explain this concept. Initially, scholars worked with a unidimensional model that was closely tied to the notion of altruism (Tapp & Spanier, 1973). However, they later shifted to a bipartite model (Frisch & Gerrard, 1981) and then to a one-factor model (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Currently, the literature predominantly employs multifactorial models, such as those proposed by Clary, Snyder, Ridge et al. (Clary et al., 1998; Ferreira et al., 2012).

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al., 1998) is the most widely validated instrument for assessing motivations to volunteer within NPOs. The VFI comprises six dimensions (Clary et al., 1998):

1. Protective dimension: This dimension is closely linked to individuals' ego functioning and their perception of themselves.
2. Value dimension: It encompasses altruistic behaviours directed at helping others.
3. Career dimension: This dimension considers the benefits of volunteering that can be applied within the labour market.
4. Social dimension: This dimension relates to the relationships and opportunities to form new community bonds through volunteering.
5. Understanding dimension: This dimension encompasses the opportunities for volunteers to acquire new skills and apply their knowledge.
6. Enhancement dimension: It focuses on the positive impact that volunteering can have on self-esteem.

By examining these dimensions, the VFI provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of volunteer motivation and its various underlying factors (Zhou & Kodama Muscente, 2022).

Methods

Participants

In this study, data were collected through a structured online questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions. The survey was specifically designed to gather information from individuals in the Italian population who engage in voluntary activities for NPOs in Italy. The data collection period spanned approximately two months, commencing in the middle of

January 2023 and ending in the middle of March 2023. The final sample consisted of 615 completed answers.

To target the desired sample of individuals involved in volunteer work for Italian NPOs, the researchers employed the snowball technique to distribute the questionnaire. This technique involves initially reaching out to a group of volunteers and then asking them to invite their colleagues and acquaintances who are engaged in similar activities to participate in the survey. By utilizing this approach, researchers aimed to access a network of individuals who were actively involved in NPOs, facilitating the collection of data from a diverse range of participants (Johansson et al., 2018).

To ensure accuracy and comprehensibility for the target population, all survey items were translated into Italian by the researcher. Additionally, the items were subsequently translated from Italian to English to ensure accuracy. This two-step translation process aimed to maintain the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire across languages.

With respect to the respondents' privacy and to ensure confidentiality, the researcher guaranteed the anonymity of the participants. Consequently, no personal identifying information, such as names or any other sensitive details, was requested from the respondents. This approach aimed to create a safe and secure environment for participants to provide their responses without concerns about their personal information being disclosed.

Measures

In this study, the concept of volunteer motivation was assessed using a set of 30 items measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The measurement scale utilized in this study was derived from the work of Clary et al. (Clary et al., 1996) and was adapted to the specific Italian context by Marta et al. (2006). These items were designed to capture the various purposes and motivations individuals seek to fulfil

through their volunteering activities. The range of items included statements such as "I feel compassion toward people in need" and "Volunteering experience will look good on my resume", providing a comprehensive assessment of the underlying motives behind individuals' engagement in voluntary work.

POS was measured using a set of 8 items on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The measurement scale for POS was originally developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and was adapted to the Italian context by Battistelli et al. (Battistelli, 2011). These items aimed to evaluate how volunteers perceive the extent to which their efforts and well-being are valued and acknowledged by the organization for which they volunteer. The range of items included statements such as "The organization cares about my opinions" and "The organization shows very little concern for me," providing insights into the perceived level of support and appreciation from the organization.

In addition to measuring MTV and POS, the study considered various sociodemographic variables. These variables were assessed using single-item questions that covered a range of factors including age, gender, educational level, income level, marital status, religious beliefs, and political interest.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 describes some of the sample characteristics. The survey results indicate that a significant majority of the respondents were women, accounting for 64.23% of the total (n=395). Furthermore, the data revealed that a considerable portion of these women were aged between 50 and 64 years, accounting for 33.66% of the respondents (n=207). When considering educational background, the survey revealed that a majority of the respondents had a high school degree, with 52.52% (n=323) falling into this category. Additionally, a noteworthy proportion of the participants reported having a monthly income exceeding 3000€, constituting 34.80% (n=214) of the total. In terms of marital status, the

survey results indicate that a significant portion of the respondents were married, accounting for 57.40% (n=353). Moreover, the majority of the participants identified as Catholic, with 61.79% (n=380) aligning themselves with this religious affiliation. Finally, the data reveal that a substantial number of respondents expressed a strong interest in politics, with 42.93% (n=264) indicating their interest in political matters.

Table 1 - Demographic data

Sociodemographic characteristic	Full sample	
	n	%
Gender		
Female	395	64.23
Male	216	35.12
I do not want to answer	4	.65
Age		
18-34	106	17.23
35-49	157	25.53
50-64	207	33.66
65+	145	23.58
Marital status		
Single	173	28.13
Married/partnered	353	57.40
Divorced/Separated	60	9.76
Widowed	29	4.72
Educational level		
Middle school	46	7.48
High school	323	52.52
University degree	178	28.94
Postgraduate degree	68	11.06
Net monthly household income		
Up to 1.000€	31	5.04
From 1.001€ to 2.000€	187	30.41
From 2.001€ to 3.000€	183	29.76
Over 3.001€	214	34.80
Religious faith		
Catholic	380	61.79
Protestant	6	.98
Other Christian religion	.	.
Jewish	.	.
Muslim	2	.33
Hindu	1	.16
Buddhist	8	1.30

Other religion	1	.16
I do not recognize myself in any religious faith	162	26.34
I prefer not to answer	55	8.94
Level of political interest		
Very interested	85	13.82
Quite interested	264	42.93
Not very interested	176	28.62
Not interested at all	58	9.43
I prefer not to answer	32	5.20

Results

The initial phase of the analysis focused on examining the internal consistency reliability of the survey instrument. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed for assessing the internal consistency reliability of each dimension undergoing analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient serves as a widely acknowledged metric to evaluate the internal consistency of a set of survey items, gauging their coherence and alignment with the intended construct. The calculation is based on the average correlation among the items, providing insights into their collective interrelatedness and the survey's efficacy in measuring the intended constructs.

All the constructs scrutinized in the analysis exhibited substantial internal consistency, as evidenced by their respective Cronbach's alpha coefficients surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.7. The individual Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for each construct are as follows: understanding ($\alpha= 0.825$), enhancement ($\alpha= 0.826$), values ($\alpha= 0.717086$), protective ($\alpha= 0.834041$), career ($\alpha= 0.858$), social ($\alpha= 0.81853$), and POS ($\alpha= 0.79$). These coefficients indicate strong correlations among the items within each construct, confirming the reliability of the measurement of their respective constructs.

Following the evaluation of internal consistency, the analysis progressed to assess the internal correlation among the 8 items constituting the POS. Spearman's correlation coefficient was utilized for this purpose, and a corresponding statistical test was conducted. Within this analysis, it was noted that item POS6 exhibited weak correlations with the remaining POS items. In light of the significance of maintaining robust internal consistency

within the construct, POS6 was excluded from further analysis. Comprehensive details regarding the outcomes of Spearman's correlation coefficient are available in Table 2. The removal of POS6 improved in the internal consistency of the POS construct. The recalculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient, subsequent to the exclusion of POS6 was $\alpha = 0.816$. This value indicates a considerable level of internal consistency within the construct, aligning with Cronbach's (1951) guidelines and substantiated by subsequent research.

Table 2 – Correlation matrix of the Perceived Organizational Support index

	POS1	POS2	POS3	POS4	POS5	POS6	POS7	POS8
POS1	-							
POS2	,614**	-						
POS3	,607**	,651**	-					
POS4	,420**	,526**	,488**	-				
POS5	,374**	,356**	,430**	,475**	-			
POS6	-0,025	-0,085	0,007	0,049	-0,001	-		
POS7	-,481**	-,427**	-,443**	-,318**	-,252**	,190**	-	
POS8	,191**	,250**	,296**	,486**	,426**	,165**	-0,107	-

(** p-value < 0.05)

Subsequently, a factorial analysis was conducted on the seven remaining items to derive factor loadings for each item. The analysis focused on a single factor and employed the principal component analysis (PCA) extraction method. Prior to the analysis, Bartlett's tests of sphericity were administered, revealing a statistically significant result with a p-value less than 0.001. Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yielded a value of 0.846, indicating the suitability of the correlation matrix for factor analysis. Moreover, the significant chi-square value (p-value < 0.001) further supported the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis.

This methodology facilitates the identification of items strongly associated with the underlying construct under examination. Through an examination of factor loadings, an assessment can be made regarding the extent to which each item contributes to the focal construct. Utilizing the factor loadings derived from the analysis, the total score for the

variable of interest, denoted as POS (the dependent variable in the regressions), was calculated using the following formula:

$$YPOS = 0.787 * POS1 + 0.83 * POS2 + 0.825 * POS3 + 0.747 * POS4 + 0.627 * POS5 - 0.591 * POS7 + 0.492 * POS8.$$

This equation assigns weights to individual items based on their respective factor loadings, yielding a composite score that provides a singular measure capturing the overall level of the assessed construct.

An identical methodology was applied across all dimensions of the VFI. In the case of the social dimensions, the PCA results indicated a KMO value of 0.827, suggesting that the data are reasonably suitable for factor analysis. A statistically significant chi-square value (984.216) with an exceedingly low p-value (< 0.001) implies a significant correlation among variables, supporting the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. The composite weightings for the five items constituting the social dimension are expressed as follows: $social1 * 0.734 + social2 * 0.713 + social3 * 0.801 + social4 * 0.777 + social5 * 0.783$.

Similarly, for the career dimensions, the PCA results indicated a KMO value of 0.845, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. The significant chi-square value (1456.654) with a very low p-value (< 0.001) further affirms the correlation among variables, justifying the application of factor analysis. The composite weightings for the career dimension's five items are represented as follows: $career1 * 0.673 + career2 * 0.835 + career3 * 0.886 + career4 * 0.859 + career5 * 0.752$.

For the protective dimensions, the PCA results yielded a KMO value of 0.826, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. The significant chi-square value (1165.8) with a very low p-value (< 0.001) supports the assumption of significant variable correlation, validating the application of factor analysis. The composite weightings for the five items of

the protective dimension are expressed as follows: $\text{protective1} * 0.793 + \text{protective2} * 0.811 + \text{protective3} * 0.612 + \text{protective4} * 0.819 + \text{protective5} * 0.829$.

For the value dimensions, the PCA results indicated a KMO value of 0.738, confirming the data's adequacy for factor analysis. The significant chi-square value (652.885) with a very low p-value (< 0.001) underscores the substantial correlation among variables, justifying the utilization of factor analysis. The composite weightings for five items of the value dimension are presented as follows: $\text{value1} * 0.794 + \text{value2} * 0.555 + \text{value3} * 0.679 + \text{value4} * 0.783 + \text{value5} * 0.659$.

Likewise, in the enhancement dimensions, the PCA results demonstrated a KMO value of 0.806, indicating the data's appropriateness for factor analysis. The significant chi-square value (1101.498) with a very low p-value (< 0.001) supports the assumption of significant variable correlation, validating the application of factor analysis. The composite weightings for the five items of the enhancement dimension are expressed as follows:

$\text{enhancement1} * 0.721 + \text{enhancement2} * 0.831 + \text{enhancement3} * 0.805 + \text{enhancement4} * 0.796 + \text{enhancement5} * 0.691$.

Finally, in the understanding dimensions, the PCA results yielded a KMO value of 0.846, confirming the data's suitability for factor analysis. The significant chi-square value (1066.679) with a very low p-value (< 0.001) established a significant variable correlation, justifying the use of factor analysis. The composite weightings for the understanding dimension's five items are represented as follows: $\text{understanding1} * 0.663 + \text{understanding2} * 0.769 + \text{understanding3} * 0.824 + \text{understanding4} * 0.799 + \text{understanding5} * 0.8$.

The focal point of the investigation undertaken in this study revolved around examining whether diverse levels of motivation could yield varied interpretations of POS. In

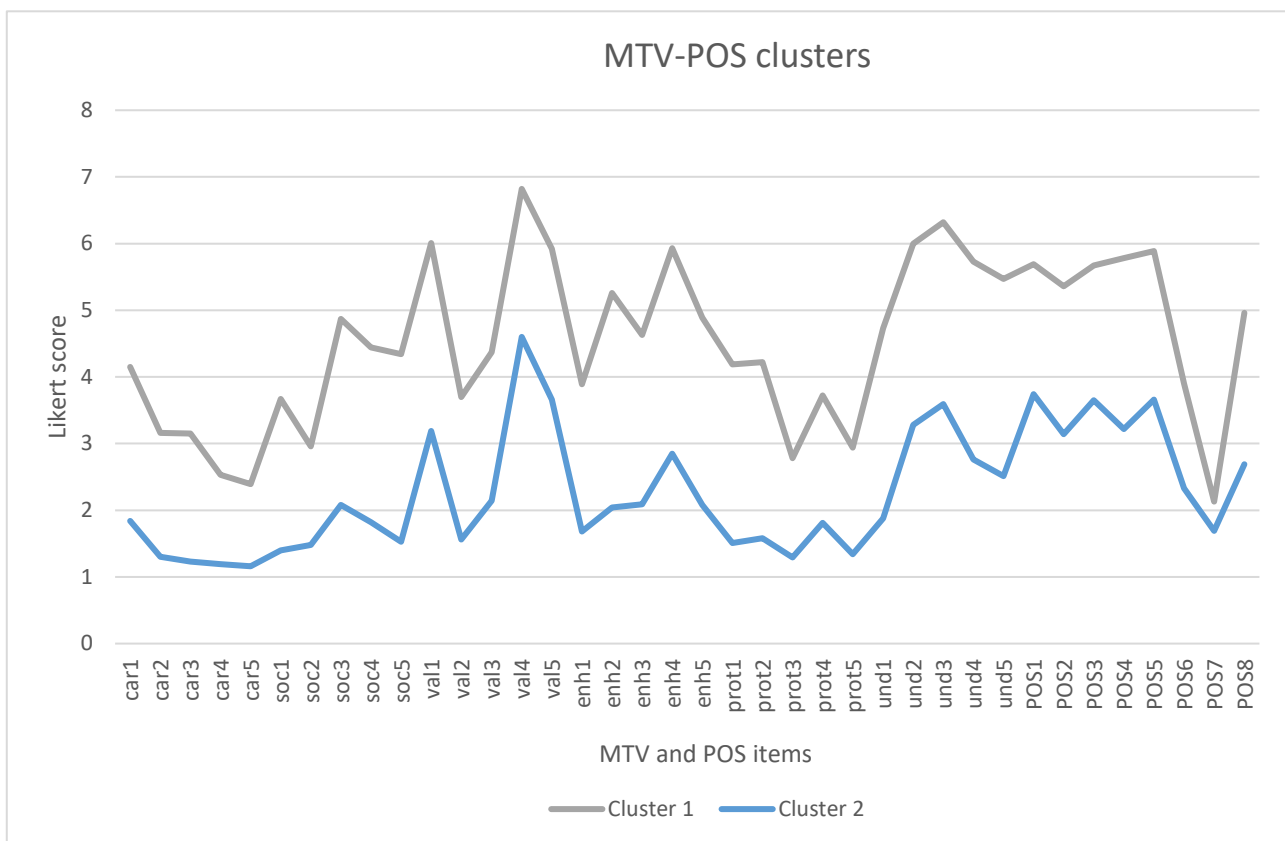
pursuit of this objective, our initial aim was to delineate distinct cohorts of volunteers based on their MTV. This necessitated the utilization of a two-step clustering analysis.

The questionnaire employed for data collection featured Likert-scale items and garnered responses from a total of 615 participants. Given the considerable number of Likert-scale items and the magnitude of the dataset, the adoption of a two-step cluster analysis was deemed not only suitable but also imperative. This methodological choice facilitated the identification of discrete clusters within the participant pool, predicated on their responses to the questionnaire. Additionally, it demonstrated a high degree of efficiency in handling the voluminous dataset at our disposal.

Throughout the execution of the two-step cluster analysis, careful consideration was given to various distance measures to ascertain the most appropriate clustering approach. The evaluation encompassed measures such as log-likelihood and the Bayesian information criterion (BIC). Moreover, outlier treatment techniques were incorporated into the analysis to enhance the robustness and precision of the clustering outcomes. These methodological considerations played a pivotal role in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the clusters identified.

Through the implementation of this comprehensive approach, two discrete clusters of volunteers were successfully delineated, each emblematic of distinct levels of motivation, as visually depicted in Graphic 1. Subsequently, for each identified cluster, a linear regression analysis was conducted to gain a nuanced understanding of which dimensions of the MTV could elucidate variations in the POS.

Graphic 1 – Distribution of individuals in the two clusters



Linear regression for cluster 1

The objective of the regression analysis was to investigate the impact of MTV dimensions on POS for volunteers within cluster 1. Using a linear regression model, the results, as presented in Table 3, revealed that only the social dimension exhibited statistical significance. The analysis yielded several noteworthy findings of significance. Specifically, the coefficient associated with the social dimension was determined to be 0.254, indicating a positive correlation between the social dimension and POS. The standard error for this coefficient was computed as 0.072. These findings strongly suggest that enhancements in the social dimension contribute significantly to fostering a heightened perception of organizational support among individuals.

The statistical analysis further substantiated the significance of the social dimension coefficient. This was evidenced by a t-value of 3.509 and an associated p-value of less than

0.001. These results suggest that the observed relationship between social support and POS is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.

To mitigate potential concerns regarding multicollinearity, collinearity statistics were meticulously examined. The derived tolerance value of 0.92, coupled with a variance inflation factor (VIF) of 1.087, indicated an absence of significant concerns. This finding implies that social support does not exhibit strong correlations with other predictor variables in the model. Consequently, confidence in attributing the observed effects on POS specifically to the social dimension is strengthened.

The computed R-square value, amounting to 0.237, signifies that approximately 23.7% of the variation in perceived organizational support can be explained by the factors considered within the model. Importantly, the overall fit of the model was confirmed to be statistically significant ($F = 23,059$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the predictive efficacy of the regression model for the dependent variable.

Table 3 – OLS regression for cluster 1

	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	10.766	2.451	4.392	<.001
Value	.278	.026	10.643	.233
Career	.013	.021	.644	.519
Social	.254	.072	3.509	<.001
Protective	-.133	.027	-4.863	.154
Understanding	.166	.027	6.094	.876
Enhancement	.112	.029	3.899	.298

Linear regression for cluster 2

The focal point of this second step of the analysis centres on a regression model designed to predict the variable POS, specifically within the context of the second cluster. As illustrated in Table 4, the model scrutinizes the impact of various predictor variables on POS, specifically the six dimensions of the VFI. The outcomes of the regression analysis highlight

that five variables collectively contribute significantly to the variance in POS: career, value, social, protective, and enhancement.

Upon examining the coefficients, it becomes apparent that each predictor variable exerts a distinct influence on POS. The value dimension manifests a positive coefficient of 0.588, signifying that higher perceived values by employees are associated with heightened levels of organizational support. Likewise, the social and protective dimensions demonstrate positive coefficients of 0.562 and 0.687, respectively, implying that elevated ratings in these domains correlate with increased perceived organizational support.

Conversely, the career and enhancement dimensions exhibit negative coefficients of -0.857 and -0.465, respectively. These coefficients suggest that higher career and enhancement values are linked to lower levels of perceived organizational support. Consequently, it is evident that employees' perceptions of organizational support are adversely influenced by career-related aspects and enhancement initiatives.

The statistical significance of the coefficients is evaluated through t-values and corresponding p-values. Notably, the p-values for value, career, social, and protective are all less than 0.05, underscoring their substantial impact on POS. The p-value for enhancement is marginally significant at 0.039, indicating a weaker but still noteworthy influence on POS. The model summary reveals that the regression model attains an adjusted R-square value of 0.645, implying that approximately 64.5% of the variation in POS can be explained by the included predictor variables. This underscores the substantial role played by the selected variables in shaping employees' perceptions of organizational support. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson statistic, registering at 2.217, indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, as a value close to 2 suggests.

Collinearity diagnostics are deployed to assess multicollinearity among the predictor variables. Remarkably, the tolerance values for all dimensions exceed 0.1, and the VIFs are

below 10. These outcomes suggest that multicollinearity does not pose a substantial concern in this model, thereby allowing for more reliable attributions of effects on POS to the respective predictor variables.

Table 4 – OLS regression for cluster 2

	Estimate	SE	t	p-value
Intercept	.166	2.414	.069	.945
Value	.588	.16	3.68	<.001
Career	-.857	.274	-3.127	.003
Social	.562	.237	2.372	.02
Protective	.687	.253	2.72	.008
Understanding	.534	.211	2.545	.129
Enhancement	-.465	.221	-2.107	.039

Discussion

Our comprehensive analysis revealed two major clusters in our study: the highly motivated volunteer cluster (cluster 1) and the moderately motivated volunteer cluster (cluster 2).

Cluster 1 – highly motivated volunteers

Within the highly motivated volunteer cluster, a group of individuals who possess an unwavering passion for actively engaging in all activities organized by NPOs is identified. These volunteers consistently demonstrated exceptional scores across various dimensions, with a particularly notable performance in the understanding dimension. Their average score of 5.65 on a 7-point Likert scale indicates their strong willingness to volunteer to apply their knowledge and skills, which may not find practical applications in their everyday lives. Moreover, the value dimension of this cluster has high scores, reaching 5.36 points on a 7-point Likert scale. By defining the value dimension as altruistic behaviour, we come to understand that these highly motivated volunteers strongly resonate with the core values upheld by NPOs. Their commitment and dedication stem from a genuine belief in the importance of the causes they support. Notably, the highest score in the value dimension is

represented by the item that explicitly states, "I feel it is important to help others". This finding highlights the selfless nature of these volunteers' motivations and their sincere desire to contribute to the betterment of society.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the majority of volunteers belonging to this cluster, comprising 60.40% of the total, were over 50 years old. This demographic insight offers a potential explanation for the lower score observed in the career dimension among all the dimensions of motivation to volunteer. Individuals with extensive professional experience may no longer view volunteer activities as a means to develop career skills. Instead, their motivations are driven by a deeper sense of purpose and a desire to make a positive impact on their communities.

In our sample, this cluster represents individuals who want to volunteer driven by the desire to help others and use their skills to perform skilled work.

Cluster 2 – moderately motivated volunteers

Cluster 2 consisted of volunteers with moderate levels of motivation. The individuals in this cluster exhibit lower motivation than those in Cluster 1, indicating a less intense drive to volunteer. When evaluating all 6 items of the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI), the average scores across the dimensions were relatively low. The value dimension, however, stands out with the highest average score of 3.03 on a 7-point Likert scale. This suggests that the volunteers in this cluster find intrinsic value and fulfilment in their volunteer work, aligning with the altruistic ideals upheld by nonprofit organizations.

In contrast, three dimensions — career, social, and protective — fall below the threshold of two points on average. This indicates that volunteers in Cluster 2 may not prioritize career advancement or social interaction as significant motivations for their volunteer involvement. Instead, their primary focus lies in the inherent value and sense of purpose derived from contributing to meaningful causes.

The demographic composition of this cluster sheds light on the motivations and preferences of its members. The majority, comprising 71.30% of the volunteers, were individuals above the age of 50. Interestingly, only a small percentage, approximately 7.50%, fell within the age range of 18 to 34 years. This age distribution reveals a greater representation of older volunteers in this cluster, while younger individuals are less prevalent. This demographic distribution could explain why, within this cluster, individuals may exhibit lower career orientation. Comparatively, cluster 1 which has a greater percentage of younger volunteers may score better in the career dimension, as younger individuals may perceive volunteer work as a means to develop career-related skills and gain experience (Omoto et al., 2000).

The primary driver of volunteering with moderate motivation lies within the value dimension. This finding suggests that fulfilling their altruistic aspirations and contributing to the greater good are the needs that these volunteers seek to satisfy through their volunteer work. While their motivation may not be as strong as that of highly motivated volunteers in Cluster 1, the value dimension remains a prominent factor in driving their involvement in volunteer activities.

How MTV dimensions explain the POS for highly motivated volunteers

For volunteers with high motivation to volunteer the social dimension plays a crucial role in understanding the high levels of MTV and POS. When we discuss the social dimension, we refer to the relationships and the opportunities it presents for forming new community bonds through volunteering (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Essentially, this means that individuals who have a high level of MTV also possess a deep sense of community. Volunteers who exhibit a strong drive to engage in voluntary activities are often characterized by elevated levels of both MTV and POS. This combination of high MTV and POS tends to

be correlated with a focus on caring about people. The presence of a strong network and connections with others justifies the elevated level of POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

In essence, volunteers with a strong social dimension are fuelled by a desire to make a positive impact on their communities (Marta et al., 2006). They find fulfilment in the relationships they forge and the new bonds they create through their voluntary efforts. These individuals understand the value of social connections and actively seek opportunities to engage with people to contribute meaningfully to society.

Notably, the social dimension is not only a driver of MTV, but also a source of support and validation for volunteers. By having a robust network of individuals who share their values and goals, volunteers feel a sense of belonging and empowerment. This sense of community further strengthens their commitment to volunteerism and enhances their overall experience as they work towards their altruistic objectives.

In summary, the social dimension plays a pivotal role in explaining the motivations of individuals with a strong inclination to volunteer. It encompasses the relationships formed and the community bonds established through volunteering. Volunteers with higher levels of MTV and POS often possess a strong sense of community, and their engagement in voluntary activities is driven by a desire to help others. The presence of a good network and connections with other people justifies their heightened POS reinforcing their commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of others. Highly motivated individuals volunteer mainly for people and for relationships with them, which is why they are more sensitive to the support provided by people in management.

How the MTV dimensions explain POS for moderately motivated volunteers

For moderately motivated volunteers, there are multiple dimensions that explain this specific level of MTV and POS, namely value, enhancement, social, career, and protective. This means that individuals with a moderate level of motivation to participate in voluntary

activities are driven by not only one main value but also several. In fact, when examining the factors that contribute to MTV and POS for moderately motivated volunteers, almost all the MTV dimensions come into play. Each dimension offers unique insights into the motivations and perceptions of volunteers in their participation in voluntary activities.

The protective dimension is closely tied to individuals' ego functioning and their perception of themselves (Clary et al., 1998). It reflects their desire to safeguard and support causes, communities, or individuals who may be vulnerable or marginalized. Through volunteering, individuals perceive themselves as protectors.

When individuals volunteer, they actively engage in activities that align with their personal values and beliefs. By participating in volunteer work, they feel a sense of purpose and meaning in their actions. NPOs that provide opportunities for volunteers to engage in such activities demonstrate a commitment to similar values, which creates a sense of alignment and support.

Individuals who volunteer to reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address their own personal problems can perceive greater organizational support because they have more empathy and are more sensitive. Volunteers with a greater protective dimension recognize themselves as more fortunate than anyone else, this personal self-evaluation makes them more sensible towards others. This sensibility is the key to allowing this kind of volunteer to recognize the NPOs' effort to support them while performing their tasks.

The value dimension encompasses altruistic behaviours aimed at helping others (Bezzina et al., 2015). Volunteers with a moderate level of motivation are driven by a genuine desire to make a positive impact on the lives of others. They find personal fulfilment in aligning their actions with their deeply held values.

Individuals who care about altruism often have a great perception of organizational support because they are drawn to organizations that share their values, provide opportunities

for impact, promote a supportive culture, offer recognition and appreciation, and facilitate supportive networks. These factors contribute to positive psychological connections and a sense of support within the organization, enhancing the overall perception of organizational support.

The career dimension takes into account the benefits of volunteering that can be applied within the labour market (Clary et al., 1996). Moderately motivated volunteers recognize that their voluntary activities can enhance their professional development. They see volunteering as an opportunity to acquire relevant skills, expand their network, and enhance their employability.

Volunteers who care about developing career skills may have a better perception of organizational support when the organization offers skill development opportunities, provides mentorship and guidance, facilitates networking opportunities, recognizes volunteers' contributions, and offers personalized development plans. These factors contribute to volunteers' belief that the organization supports their career goals and enhances their overall perception of organizational support.

The social dimension emphasizes the relationships and opportunities to form new community bonds through volunteering. Moderately motivated volunteers value the connections they establish with like-minded individuals and the sense of community that emerges from their collective efforts. For highly motivated volunteers, strong social relationships and informal social gatherings contribute to a higher level of POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

Finally, the enhancement dimension focuses on the positive impact that volunteering can have on self-esteem. Moderately motivated volunteers derive a sense of personal fulfilment and self-worth from their voluntary activities. They believe that their contributions make a difference, which enhances their self-esteem. Volunteers who feel that their efforts have meaningful impacts on the organization experience a sense of accomplishment and

fulfilment. When they perceive that their work is valued and appreciated, they are more likely to believe that the organization supports them and their goals.

In summary, for moderately motivated volunteers, several dimensions contribute to their POS. The desire to protect and support, the altruistic nature of their actions, their career benefits, their sense of community, their opportunities for personal growth, and their positive impact on their self-esteem all play a role in shaping their POS.

Conclusion

According to Blau's social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), individuals engage in volunteering because they are driven by the advantages that they anticipate to gain from this activity (Hyejin et al., 2013). The perception of organizational support plays a crucial role in this relationship dynamic.

Initially, individuals with specific motivations embark on volunteering. Once they become actively involved in volunteer activities, they have the opportunity to assess and express their perception of the support they receive from the NPO. If they feel satisfied with the support they receive, they are more likely to continue volunteering, thus fostering a long-term commitment to the NPO (Prysmakova & Lallatin, 2023). On the other hand, meeting the initial needs that motivate individuals to volunteer aligns with the principles of functionalist theory (Clary et al., 1998), which forms the basis of the MTV framework. It is essential for the volunteer to meet the needs for which he or she begins to participate actively in the field of volunteering. If people are motivated to play their part in the voluntary field, they will align and empathize with the NPO. People with a certain level of motivation are more or less sensitive to the support provided by the NPO.

Therefore, understanding MTV is valuable for comprehending the specific POS levels at play.

By differentiating MTVs into two distinct clusters, we gained a deeper understanding of how the various dimensions of the MTV can explain different levels of POS. This differentiation aids in grasping how different types of volunteers, with their unique MTV, perceive and experience organizational support. Individuals with higher levels of MTV and POS should satisfy their social needs. Conversely, volunteers with moderate levels of MTV and POS need to fulfil multiple motivations, including social, protective, value, enhancement, and career-related factors.

This analysis allows us to discern the diverse perspectives and experiences of volunteers based on their MTV and POS. Understanding these variations is essential for NPOs and managers responsible for volunteer management. Tailoring support mechanisms and strategies to cater to the specific needs and motivations of different volunteer clusters can help foster a more positive perception of organizational support, enhancing long-term commitment.

In essence, social exchange theory, coupled with the examination of MTV and POS, sheds light on the intricate dynamics between volunteers and NPOs. By understanding the distinct clusters of MTV and their impact on POS, organizations can effectively design strategies to nurture a supportive environment that meets the diverse needs and motivations of volunteers, ultimately fostering a more engaged and committed volunteer base.

Practical implications

The significance of this research extends beyond its value for researchers; it also holds great importance for managers responsible for overseeing volunteer management (Malinen et al., 2020). Prysmakova and Lallatin (2023) conducted a study that revealed a noteworthy finding: individuals who perceive a greater level of support from their organization demonstrate a greater inclination to actively engage in activities that yield long-term benefits for the organization.

This finding has profound implications for NPOs and their managers, highlighting the critical need to delve deeply into understanding how individuals perceive the support provided by their organization. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of how volunteers perceive organizational support, managers can effectively shape their recruitment strategies (Traeger et al., 2023). This, in turn, facilitates the recruitment of volunteers who are more likely to contribute actively and consistently to the organization's long-term goals. Alternatively, managers should also focus on motivating volunteers who may have moderate levels of motivation, aiming to enhance their existing motivation and foster improvement.

Moreover, acquiring a profound understanding of the motivations that drive individuals to perceive organizational support more positively can immensely assist managers throughout the recruitment process. Equipped with this knowledge, managers can tailor their recruitment efforts to effectively tap into these motivations and allocate each volunteer to a specific task that aligns with their motivation or needs.

In essence, the research findings emphasize the crucial role of understanding both the perception of organizational support and the underlying motivations in volunteer management. This knowledge empowers NPO managers to craft effective long-term plans, recruit suitable volunteers, and establish a supportive environment that fosters active and sustained engagement. Ultimately, this contributes to the success and growth of the organization.

Limitations and Further Research

This study is not without its limitations. First, the issue of generalizability arises due to the specific context in which the data were collected. It is important to note that the data were collected solely in Italy during the first month of 2023. Although the sample included volunteers of various ages, genders, and social backgrounds, and was designed to be representative of the Italian population, the descriptive results revealed a notable

predominance of older individuals. Consequently, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other populations or cultural contexts.

Furthermore, cultural factors play a significant role in shaping individuals' behaviours and perceptions. In the case of this study, certain aspects of the cultural background, exhibit lower variability within the Italian cultural system. It is crucial to consider the potential influence of cultural nuances and variations when attempting to apply these findings to different cultural settings.

To mitigate the limitations associated with generalizability, future research could adopt a more diverse and geographically expansive sampling approach, encompassing multiple countries or regions. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how perceptions of organizational support and volunteer engagement may vary across different cultural contexts. Moreover, exploring additional demographic variables and cultural factors that could influence the findings would further enhance the applicability and generalizability of the study's conclusions.

In summary, while this study provides valuable insights into the topic at hand, it is important to acknowledge and address its limitations regarding generalizability. Future research endeavours should strive to incorporate more diverse samples and consider cultural variations to enrich our understanding of the dynamics between organizational support and volunteer management beyond the confines of a specific time and cultural context.

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**Does the Motivation to Volunteer Affect Organizational Commitment? An Empirical
Analysis within Nonprofit Organizations**

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to comprehensively examine the correlation between Motivation to Volunteer (MTV) and Organizational Commitment (OC). The literature on volunteer management has not delved into the intricate dynamics among various MTV and OC dimensions. Within the social exchange theory (SET), this investigation assesses how volunteers actively engage in activities while expecting rewards. Furthermore, the theoretical framework adopted for the examination of MTV aligns with functionalist theory (Snyder, 1993). Consistent with these theoretical perspectives, this investigation delves into the examination of rewards derived from the concurrent fulfilment of various motivations.

Using an original dataset that encompasses sociodemographic data and MTV dimensions, measured according to the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) index (Clary et al., 1996), this paper aims to determine whether MTV can account for variations in OC within the context of nonprofit organizations (NPOs).

The empirical analysis of the data enables an assessment of whether, in the absence of the influence of other characteristics, values, social, protective, understanding, enhancement, and career considerations effectively influence OC within NPOs. This research serves scholars by revealing the divergent findings in the previous literature. Additionally, for scholars, it serves to disentangle the divergent results of the previous literature. For practitioners, it is an opportunity to improve the human resources practices specifically addressed to volunteers.

Keywords: organizational commitment, motivations to volunteer, nonprofit organizations, volunteering

Does the Motivation to Volunteer Affect Organizational Commitment? An Empirical Analysis within Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) play an integral and multifaceted role across diverse global sectors, exemplified by the widespread presence of 12.3 million NPOs worldwide, as reported by The Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies (2018). The definition of NPOs encompasses a broad spectrum of entities, ranging from grassroots community initiatives to expansive international non-governmental organizations (Salamon & Haddock, 2018). This diversity in organizational structure and purpose is further emphasized when considering the unique characteristics of NPOs in different countries.

In the United States, for instance, the environmental and animal subsector emerged as the largest among nonprofit organizations, constituting 22.82% of the participating organizations in a given year. The education and arts, culture, and humanities sectors closely followed, contributing 20.35 and 14.7%, respectively, to the nonprofit landscape (BKD; 2021). These statistics underscore the varied emphases and priorities of NPOs within the American context. To underscore the societal impact of NPOs, it is noteworthy that in Australia, the total revenue generated by the nonprofit sector reached 1174.3 billion Australian dollars in 2021 (Australian Communities, 2021). This financial magnitude illuminates the substantial role NPOs play in addressing societal needs and fostering community well-being. Examining the landscape in Italy reveals a notable surge in the number of NPOs in recent years. According to ISTAT (2021), the number of NPOs in Italy expanded from 301,000 in 2011 to 363,499 in 2020. This growth signifies an evolving and dynamic sector that is adapting to changing societal demands and challenges.

In summary, the global panorama of nonprofit organizations is characterized by its richness and complexity, with entities serving as crucial contributors to social welfare and community development. Whether in the United States, Australia, or Italy, NPOs demonstrate

a capacity for adaptability and resilience, responding to evolving needs and contributing significantly to the betterment of societies on a global scale.

Building on the social exchange theory (SET), the present works investigated the relationships between sociodemographic variables and MTV dimensions.

SET is a comprehensive framework in social psychology and sociology, that elucidates the intricate processes of social change and stability through negotiated exchanges between parties. At its core, SET posits that individuals engage in interactions guided by self-interest, aiming to maximize rewards while minimizing costs (Blau, 1964). Rooted in the seminal work of Thibaut and Kelley (1959), this theory emphasizes the nature of relationships between volunteers, suggesting that individuals enter social exchanges with the expectation of reciprocal rewards. This concept is particularly pertinent for understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships within the nonprofit sector, where volunteers play a crucial role. The application of SET to volunteerism implies that organizations fostering a positive environment and effectively fulfilling volunteers' needs will, in turn, enhance volunteers' sense of reward (Kao et al., 2023). Consequently, this positive impact may integrate organizational membership into volunteers' social identity, as proposed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), further influencing the stability and growth of nonprofit organizations.

Volunteer commitment is intricately linked to reciprocal interactions between volunteers and organizations (Güntert et al., 2022). Specifically, individuals exhibit heightened commitment to an organization when their personal interests align with the organization's goals and requirements (Sherr, 2004). The allegiance of individuals within NPOs is intertwined with the psychological contract and the framework of social exchange between volunteers and the organization (Kao et al., 2023). Furthermore, a volunteer's satisfaction during the execution of activities results in a perceived comprehensive reward for the time invested in volunteering. Achieving completeness in the SET circle contributes to an

augmented loyalty dimension in commitment (Garcia et al., 2021). Given these considerations, it is imperative to scrutinize the concept of Organizational Commitment (OC) within the SET framework.

Moreover, SET is helpful for elucidating the dynamics of MTV. Specifically, scholars posit that individuals lack motivation to engage in volunteer activities solely because of the altruistic satisfaction of contributing to the greater good (Sekar, 2021). Rather, individuals are driven by the desire to fulfil personal needs or expectations, such as acquiring new skills, advancing their professional prospects, and cultivating or establishing relationships (Lanero et al., 2017). Consequently, self-oriented motives emerge as a significant impetus influencing employees' involvement in volunteering programs (Do Paço & Cláudia Nave, 2013). In this sense, individuals engage in voluntary work due to the anticipation of receiving a reward. It is essential for the motivations propelling them through voluntary efforts to be fulfilled to ensure sustained collaboration.

The establishment of the SET forms a crucial framework for the emergence of the relationship between the MTV and OC. While the literature has examined the nature of this connection, only four studies have empirically analysed the MTV-OC relationship (Brockner et al., 2014; Erdurmazli, 2019a; Lo Presti, 2013; Zhou & Kodama Muscente, 2022). Notably, these studies predominantly concentrate on the OC, exploring its variations in affective, normative, and continuance dimensions (Meyer et al., 1993). In contrast, the current study seeks to enhance our comprehension of how the MTV dimension influences OC, specifically in terms of loyalty, choosiness, and devotion.

In the study by Erdurmazli (2019b), the author found that an increase in MTV results in higher affective and normative commitment levels. More precisely, the author underlines that a rise in the understanding dimension of MTV correlates with an increase in affective commitment. In contrast, an increase in the career dimension of MTV leads to a decrease in

OC (Eser Erdurmazli, 2019a). Additionally, Lo Presti's research supports this finding by revealing a negative association between the career dimension of MTV and OC (Lo Presti, 2013). Considering all six dimensions of the VFI, one's career will differ from the other. The career dimension is less focused on altruism and less oriented toward volunteering as part of a helping behaviour (Siti Nazilah et al., 2012; Wilson, 2000).

Further exploration by Brockner et al. (2014) indicated that four out of the six dimensions of MTV are positively related to OC. These dimensions are value, understanding, social, and enhancement, but only the values function attained significance. Finally, Zhou and Kodama Muscente (2022) expanded upon these studies and confirmed the positive relationship between the MTV and OC.

The present paper seeks to generate a thorough assessment of the impact of all six dimensions of MTV on the different components of OC, addressing a topic that has been inadequately covered in the literature on volunteer management (Erdurmazli, 2019b). The significance of this study extends beyond its pivotal role in comprehending the motives and mechanisms underlying individuals' commitment to voluntary work. It also holds relevance in expanding the scope of the sample to include volunteers —indispensable contributors who assume unpaid roles essential for the effective functioning of NPOs (Nazilah et al., 2016). This study endeavours to bridge this gap, by providing valuable insights into the dynamics of volunteer commitment and motivations within the nonprofit landscape.

Theoretical background

Organizational commitment and volunteering

When individuals actively engage in their roles within an organization, a profound emotional attachment to the organization develops. In addition, they start to perceive the burden of the commitment required to stay with the organization and also consider the

potential costs associated with leaving (Meyer et al., 1993). This comprehensive understanding of organizational commitment demonstrates that it is a multidimensional factor.

Drawing on the work of Hustinx (Hustinx, 2010; Hustinx et al., 2010) the dedication displayed by volunteers can be envisioned as a multilayered concept that encompasses diverse approaches to volunteering, characterized by loyalty, devotion, and choosiness. *Loyalty*, as a core aspect, signifies the volunteers' strong self-identification with the NPO, fostering a sense of belonging and allegiance. The element of *devotion* highlights the unwavering commitment of volunteers who wholeheartedly embrace the NPO's mission, showing unwavering dedication to its cause. *Choosiness* emerges as a crucial dimension, portraying volunteers' readiness to actively participate in all activities of the NPO, irrespective of their personal interests or preferences. This demonstrates their genuine enthusiasm to contribute to the organization's overall objectives, supporting and engaging with every aspect of its endeavours.

The approach formalized by Hustinx (Hustinx, 2005) is the theoretical approach used for discerning the OC within the volunteers' individual behaviour in the NPOs for this study. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of OC and the varying dimensions of volunteers' dedication, researchers and practitioners can gain valuable insights into fostering strong, sustainable bonds between individuals and the organizations they serve.

Motivation to volunteer

In recent literature, there has been a considerable focus on understanding the motivations driving individuals to engage in volunteer activities (Bang et al., 2022; Burns et al., 2011; Dunn et al., 2022; Erasmus & Morey, 2016; Ferreira et al., 2012; Hameiri, 2018; Tiraeyari & Krauss, 2018; Vocino et al., 2015). Despite this attention, further research is needed to fully comprehend the role of the MTV within OC.

Ferreira et al. (2015) define motivation as a fundamental psychological process or need that triggers specific behaviours. This process involves the initiation, guidance, and maintenance of goal-oriented actions resulting from interactions between individuals and their environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Gaining insight into the motivations behind volunteers' actions could significantly benefit the management practices of NPOs (Zollo et al., 2020).

The functional theory proves invaluable in comprehending the reasons driving individuals to engage in volunteering activities (Clary et al., 1998). According to this theory, people can perform the same actions in support of several psychological functions or to satisfy various drives (Aranda et al., 2019). The fundamental tenets of a functional examination of volunteerism posit that ostensibly similar acts of volunteerism may be underpinned by disparate motivational factors and that the purposes fulfilled by volunteerism manifest in the evolving dynamics of initiating and sustaining voluntary assistance (Stukas, Arthur et al., 2015). It is evident that volunteers with diverse motivations may experience varying positive outcomes (Nykiel et al., 2023).

To better assess the nuanced aspects of MTV, an index called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) with six distinct dimensions has been identified (Clary & Snyder, 1999):

- **Protective Dimension:** This dimension is closely related to individuals' ego functioning and how they perceive themselves. Volunteers driven by this aspect may seek personal growth and self-improvement through their actions.
- **Value Dimension:** Encompassing altruistic behaviours aimed at helping others, this dimension reflects the desire to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need or less fortunate.

- **Career Dimension:** Volunteers may recognize the potential benefits of their volunteering experiences in the labour market, seeking to acquire valuable skills and experiences that can enhance their professional development.
- **Social Dimension:** This dimension highlights the importance of forming meaningful relationships and establishing new community bonds through volunteering, fostering a sense of belonging and social integration.
- **Understanding Dimension:** Emphasizing the opportunities for volunteers to acquire new skills and apply their knowledge, this dimension promotes personal growth and continuous learning.
- **Enhancement Dimension:** Focusing on the positive impact that volunteering can have on self-esteem and self-worth, volunteers may find a sense of fulfilment and purpose through their contributions.

By considering these six dimensions, researchers and practitioners can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the various motivations and outcomes associated with volunteering. NPOs can leverage this knowledge to design more effective recruitment strategies, tailor volunteer programs, and foster a supportive environment that addresses the diverse motivations of volunteers and maximizes their impact on the organization and society at large (Malinen et al., 2020).

Methods

Sampling and procedure

The data utilized in this study constitute a subset of a larger dataset created as part of a research initiative focusing on the organizational behaviour of volunteers in NPOs. The data were collected via a structured online questionnaire featuring closed-ended questions. The survey specifically targeted individuals in the Italian population engaged in voluntary activities for nonprofit organizations in Italy. The data collection spanned approximately four

months, commencing in January 2023, and ending in mid-April 2023. Ultimately, the final dataset comprised 1,223 fully completed responses.

To ensure accuracy and clarity for the target audience, survey items were initially translated into Italian by the researcher. Subsequently, a second translation from Italian to English was conducted to guarantee consistency and precision, following a two-step translation process (Brislin, 1970). The pre-test of the questionnaire involved a group of 20 individuals engaged in volunteering activities within the same organization, and their responses were excluded from the final sample. No modifications were deemed necessary to the survey based on this feedback.

Efforts to mitigate social desirability bias and common method variance included emphasizing the questionnaire's coverage of anonymity and implementing privacy assurance strategies for volunteers' data, following the recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2012). Additionally, in alignment with Podsakoff et al.'s (2012) suggestions, the items of the independent variables were separated from those of the dependent variables.

To attract the desired group of volunteers involved in Italian NPOs, researchers employed the snowball technique. Initially, a group of volunteers was contacted and requested to invite their peers and associates engaged in similar activities to participate in the survey. This methodology aimed to tap into a network of active nonprofit organization participants, enhancing the diversity of the participant pool (Johansson et al., 2018).

Descriptive analysis

The final sample is composed of 1223 observations. In Table 1 some of the sociodemographic characteristics are presented.

Table 1 – Descriptive analysis

	n	%
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	475	38.84
<i>Female</i>	741	60.59

<i>No answer</i>		7	0.57
	total	1223	100
<i>Age</i>			
<i>18-34</i>		165	13.49
<i>35-49</i>		261	21.34
<i>50-64</i>		409	33.44
<i>65-74</i>		305	24.94
<i>75+</i>		83	6.79
	total	1223	100
<i>Educational level</i>			
<i>Middle school</i>		119	9.73
<i>High school</i>		620	50.70
<i>University</i>		357	29.19
<i>Postgraduate</i>		127	10.38
	total	1223	100
<i>Net monthly household income</i>			
<i>Up to 1.000€</i>		57	4.66
<i>1.001€ - 2.000€</i>		370	30.25
<i>2.001€ - 3.000€</i>		364	29.76
<i>Over 3.001€</i>		432	35.32
	total	1223	100
<i>Marital status</i>			
<i>Single</i>		300	24.53
<i>Married-Cohabiting</i>		739	60.43
<i>Divorced - Separate</i>		111	9.08
<i>Widower</i>		73	5.97
	total	1223	100

The survey results indicate that a significant majority of the respondents were women, accounting for 60,59% of the total (n=741). Many of the respondents were between 50 and 64-year-old, 33,445 (n=409). In terms of educational background, the survey revealed that a 50,70% (n=620) of the respondents had a high school diploma. Additionally, a noteworthy proportion of the participants reported having a monthly income exceeding 3000€, constituting 35,32% (n=432) of the total. Finally, in terms of marital status, the survey results indicate that a significant portion of the respondents were married, accounting for 60,43% (n=739).

Measures

Independent variables

This study evaluated volunteer motivation using a set of 30 items that were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The measurement approach employed in this research was based on the framework introduced by Clary et al. (1996) and was customized for the specific Italian context by Marta et al. (2006). These items were strategically designed to encompass the diverse intentions and driving factors that prompt individuals to participate in volunteer activities. The range of statements included statements such as "I feel compassion toward people in need" and "Volunteering experience will look good on my resume" providing a comprehensive evaluation of the underlying incentives that steer individuals' involvement in voluntary endeavours.

To reduce the dimensionality of the dataset while retaining maximum variability, a principal component analysis (PCA) based on the correlation matrix was performed. The outcomes of the PCA align with prior scholarly literature (Clary et al., 1996), corroborating the existence of one item per dimension. Specifically, for each of the six dimensions within the VFI, all items exhibit loadings surpassing the threshold of 0.4. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2- PCA of VFI factors

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	KMO	p-value
Career	.677	.844	.888	.856	.780	.848	<0.001
Social	.746	.732	.798	.789	.763	.822	<0.001
Value	.806	.574	.667	.799	.637	.733	<0.001
Enhancement	.727	.832	.805	.801	.717	.822	<0.001
Understanding	.679	.802	.826	.798	.805	.848	<0.001
Protective	.786	.799	.637	.808	.822	.821	<0.001

Dependent variable

The measurement of OC was conducted using the scale devised by Hustinx (2005), which had already undergone testing in the context of Italian volunteer work by Zollo et al. (2019) These items were designed to assess the extent of individuals' dedication displayed during volunteer engagement. The set of 15 items was rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging

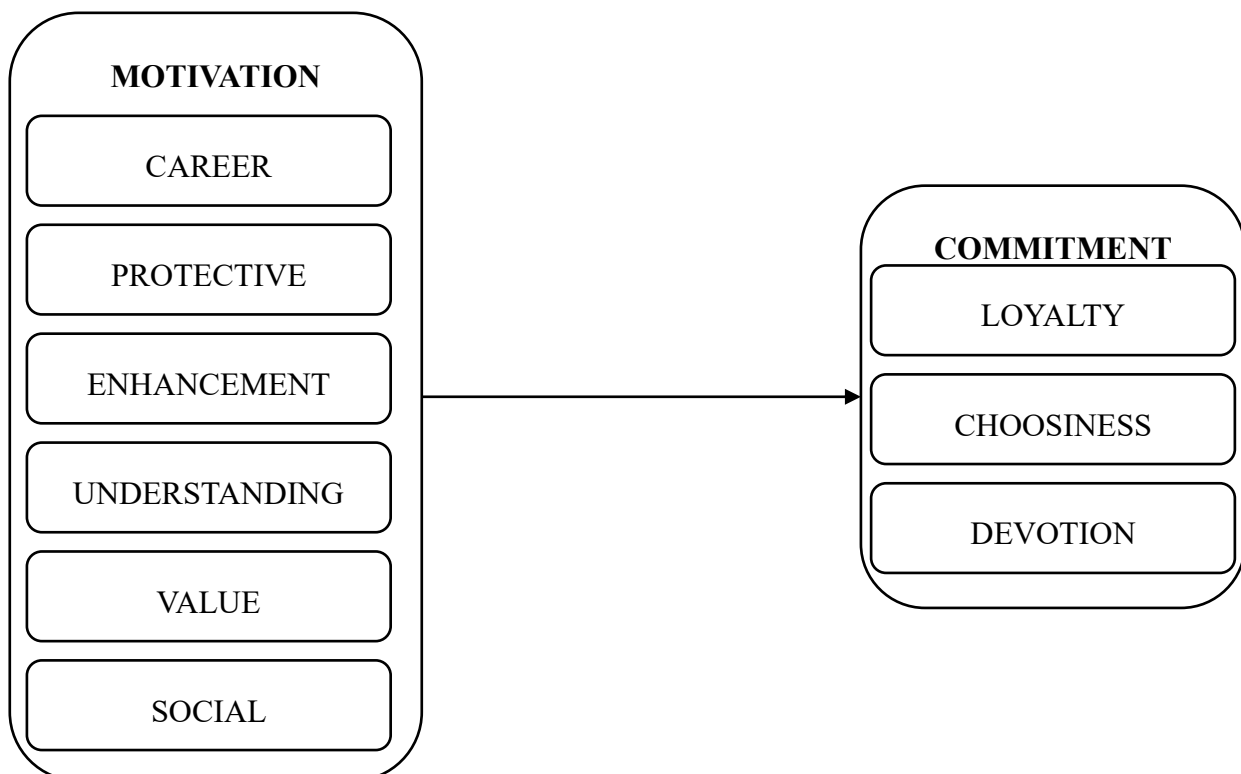
from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The assortment of statements encompassed expressions such as "I usually choose the tasks that interest me. Whether or not the organization benefits from them are less important" and "As a volunteer, I use every means necessary to ensure the continued existence of the organization to which I belong" thereby shedding light on the level of commitment exhibited by volunteers.

Moreover, a PCA was conducted for the OC using a correlation matrix. Consistent with the existing scholarly literature (Hustinx, 2005), the results of the PCA affirm the presence of one item per dimension in the OC. To elaborate, all items across the three components of the OC demonstrated loadings exceeding the 0.4 threshold. The detailed results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3 – PCA of OC components

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	KMO	p-value
Loyalty	.750	.826	.830	.820	.716	.780	.862	<0.001
Choosiness	.696	.752	.787	.797	.726	-	.838	<0.001
Devotion	.847	.805	.831	-	-	-	.694	<0.001

Figure 1 – MTV-OC relationship model



The model illustrated in Figure 1 depicts the distinct variables and their respective dimensions and the relationships tested through the analysis.

Results

To investigate how several independent factors (career, protective, value, enhancement, understanding, and social) jointly influence the dependent variable OC and its dimensions (loyalty, devotion, and choosiness), multiple regression analysis is applied. In Table 4 for each of the OC dimensions two models are analysed. The first model evaluates the control variables, and the second model analyses the control variables and the six MTV dimensions.

Table 4 – OLS regression analysis of the MTV/OC relationship

	<i>Loyalty</i>		<i>Choosiness</i>		<i>Devotion</i>	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
Control variables						
Age	.084** (.026)	.116** (.021)	-.070* (.026)	.024 (.027)	-.011 (.026)	-.078** (.027)
Gender	-.092 (.059)	-.101* (.044)	.050 (.059)	.037 (.056)	.229** (.059)	.161** (.056)
Income	.008 (.031)	-.022 (.023)	-.047 (.032)	-.038 (.029)	.082** (.031)	.052 (.029)
MTV dimension						
Career		-.034 (.028)		.184** (.036)		-.312** (.036)
Value		.324** (.028)		-.017 (.037)		.105** (.037)
Protective		-.118** (.032)		-.017 (.041)		-.082* (.041)
Enhancement		.272** (.036)		.067 (.047)		.052 (.047)
Understanding		.186** (.034)		.220** (.044)		.016 (.044)
Social		.115** (.028)		.034 (.036)		-.144** (.036)
Intercept	-.208 (.126)	-.208* (.096)	.311* (.127)	.021 (.125)	-.351** (.126)	-.026 (.124)
Adjusted R ²	.009	.490	.007	.148	.015	.149

*p-value <0.05 - **p-value <0.01

The adjusted R^2 exhibits variations between Model 1 and Model 2, indicating that a greater portion of the OC can be accounted for by motivational factors. All models demonstrated statistical significance with p-value less than 0.001. However, it is noteworthy that only select variables within each model proved to be statistically significant predictors of OC dimensions.

Specifically, the loyalty dimension was significantly influenced by the MTV dimensions of value, protective, enhancement, understanding, and social. Within the choosiness dimension, only the career and understanding dimensions exhibited statistical significance. Finally, for the devotion dimension, the career, value, protective, and social dimensions were identified as statistically significant.

Notably, in the MTV dimension, career dimension had a negative impact on choosiness (coefficient = -0.184, $p < 0.01$) and a positive impact on devotion (coefficient = 0.312, $p < 0.01$). Value demonstrated a substantial positive impact on loyalty (coefficient = 0.324, $p < 0.01$) and a positive impact on devotion (coefficient = 0.105, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, protective had a negative impact on both loyalty (coefficient = -0.118, $p < 0.01$) and devotion (coefficient = -0.082, $p < 0.05$). Enhancement positively influenced loyalty (coefficient = 0.272, $p < 0.01$), while understanding had a positive impact on both loyalty (coefficient = 0.185, $p < 0.01$) and choosiness (coefficient = 0.220, $p < 0.01$). Finally, social dimension positively affected loyalty (coefficient = 0.115, $p < 0.01$) but negatively influenced devotion (coefficient = 0.144, $p < 0.01$).

Discussion

The results of the present study are in line with the preceding literature (Zhou & Kodama Muscente, 2022). In fact, a robust correlation between the MTV and OC has been established. Therefore, this study aimed to unravel how the various dimensions of the MTV impact the various components of the OC, creating a new comprehensive framework. The

results confirm that there is a relationship between the MTV and OC, but this relationship changes depending on the various components of the OC from time to time.

Notably, within each dimension of OC, not all dimensions of MTV exhibited statistically significant associations. Specifically, concerning the loyalty dimension, five out of six MTV dimensions exert a noteworthy influence, while the career dimension does not significantly impact loyalty. The loyalty dimension, as defined by Hustinx (2005), reflects how volunteers identify with the mission of NPOs. Conversely, the career dimension signifies an individual's engagement in voluntary activities to enhance their professional trajectory (Clary & Snyder, 1999). These two dimensions exhibit a subtle contrast, as active participation in NPOs for career-related motives may not align with the altruistic values typically embedded in the mission of NPOs. NPO missions are typically oriented toward altruism and lack the fundamental concept of work performance, posing a potential incongruence when volunteers engage for career-oriented reasons.

Furthermore, the dimension of loyalty emerges as the most significant within the context of volunteerism, as indicated by its pronounced MTV significance. Consequently, it becomes imperative to underscore the pivotal role of motivations in elucidating the alignment of volunteers with the mission of NPOs. Consistent with functional theory, seemingly identical acts of volunteerism may, in fact, stem from diverse underlying motives, as posited by Clary et al. (1994). This underscores the nuanced nature of volunteer motivations, affirming that individuals dedicated to an NPO must fulfil a spectrum of motives. Therefore, comprehending these multifaceted motivations is integral to understanding the intricate dynamics of volunteer commitment to NPOs.

Choosiness exhibits distinct characteristics that differentiate it from the loyalty dimension. Specifically, the career and understanding dimensions within the context of MTV emerge as noteworthy predictors. As articulated by Hustinx (2005), choosiness manifests

through volunteers' willingness to actively engage in all activities of the NPO, irrespective of their individual interests or preferences. As mentioned above, the career dimension primarily focuses on the cultivation of job market skills, while the understanding dimension underscores opportunities for volunteers to acquire new skills and apply their knowledge (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Both understanding and career align closely with the assertion made by Hustinx (2005), who emphasizes active participation in NPO activities beyond personal inclinations.

It is imperative to highlight that these two MTV dimensions predominantly centre on individual development, sidelining the altruistic mission of the NPO. Volunteers who prioritize their involvement in personal career advancement or skill enhancement consistently participate in organizational activities. This underscores a self-centred motivation that may overlook the broader altruistic goals of the NPO. In essence, the choosiness dimension, particularly embodied by the career and understanding dimensions, signifies a distinctive aspect of volunteer engagement, where individual aspirations supersede the collective altruistic mission of the organization.

Finally, the dimension of devotion sets itself apart from loyalty and choosiness. Within this dimension, four out of the six dimensions exhibit statistically significant predictive relationships. In accordance with Hustinx's definitions (2005), devotion underscores the steadfast commitment of volunteers who wholeheartedly embrace the mission of the NPO, demonstrating unwavering dedication to its cause. This dimension primarily focuses on the alignment of volunteers with the NPO's mission, explaining the robust predictive power of the value dimension with a positive coefficient. Conversely, the other three significant predictors display negative coefficients, aligning seamlessly with the overarching goal of devotional commitment.

The career and protective dimensions, centred on personal fulfilment for volunteers, decrease as devotion intensifies, consistent with the inherent nature of devotional commitment.

Notably, these dimensions do not share the foundational concept inherent in values. An intriguing case is presented by the social dimension, where despite the act of volunteering aiming to establish connections with others, the final aspect, as highlighted by Phillips & Phillips (2010), reveals that the social aspect also involves gaining approval from admired individuals. This particular facet diverges from the core essence of devotional commitment. Thus, the distinct dimensions within the realm of volunteer commitment exhibit varied influences and dynamics, each contributing uniquely to the overall landscape of volunteerism within NPOs.

In conclusion, the primary objective of this analysis was to assess the diverse facets of the MTV and OC. This examination has facilitated the deconstruction of the complex notion of volunteering. On the one hand, there is an altruistic alignment with the mission of NPOs, while on the other hand, volunteerism is perceived as an act contributing to personal fulfilment, as emphasized in the SET. The significance of this analysis lies in the recognition that volunteerism should not be solely construed as a manifestation of purely altruistic activities.

Within this analysis, the relationship between devotional commitment and the valued MTV dimension represents the altruistic aspect. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that volunteerism involves a multifaceted interplay of various personal motives, aimed at satisfying the individual needs of volunteers. This perspective aligns seamlessly with the tenets of the SET, positing that volunteers actively engage with NPOs not only out of pure altruism but also with the expectation of rewards. Such rewards may encompass career advancement, the acquisition of new skills, and more.

Therefore, it is evident that volunteerism is intricately connected to a myriad of personal motivations, extending beyond altruistic tendencies. This nuanced understanding underscores the complexity of the volunteerism phenomenon, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and appreciating the diverse motivations that drive individuals to engage in voluntary activities.

Conclusion

The analysis results indicate that various motivation dimensions influence distinct commitment dimensions. Furthermore, certain dimensions within the motivational framework are identified as predictors of OC, with their positive or negative coefficients shedding light on the nuanced nature of voluntarism. This discernment allows us to discern whether the act of volunteering is purely altruistic or aligned with the SET, where individuals may anticipate a reward. The primary finding underscores the multifaceted nature of volunteerism, revealing that individuals engage in volunteering to satisfy diverse motives concurrently. Importantly, the nature of these motives varies based on the nuanced aspects of commitment.

In conclusion, the analysis highlights the intricate interplay between commitment dimensions and motivational factors in volunteering, revealing a nuanced spectrum of voluntarism that encompasses both altruistic pursuits and considerations aligned with SET.

Practical implications

Managers and practitioners responsible for overseeing volunteer management should devote considerable attention to the underlying motivations that drive individuals to contribute their time and effort to volunteering. This emphasis on understanding volunteers' motives is of paramount importance because it is evident that a motivated volunteer will exhibit a heightened commitment to the organization. This commitment, in turn, yields substantial benefits for the organization, including reduced turnover rates within the workforce (Forner et al., 2023), heightened job satisfaction (Usadolo et al., 2022), greater

intent to persist in volunteer roles (Bahat, 2021; Zhou & Kodama Muscente, 2022), and improved quality of communication between volunteers and their leaders (Benevene et al., 2020).

Therefore, it is imperative for practitioners to focus on evaluating the diverse motivations that lead individuals to engage in volunteer activities. By gaining a thorough understanding of these motivations, practitioners can tailor volunteer assignments to align with the specific needs and desires of volunteers. As stipulated by the functional theory of volunteering (Clary et al., 1998), individuals volunteer to fulfil various needs, and when managers can address and satisfy these requirements, the result is a heightened level of MTV and, consequently, an enhanced level of OC. These outcomes translate into substantial advantages for the organization, such as improved performance, greater efficiency, and a positive impact on the overall organizational climate.

Limitations and further research

Despite its contributions, this study has several noteworthy limitations that warrant consideration. First, the data collection method employed an online questionnaire, which may have restricted participation from individuals with limited internet access or those less proficient in using electronic technology. This limitation can introduce bias in the sample, potentially excluding valuable perspectives. To mitigate this issue, future research might benefit from incorporating interviews as a complementary data collection method. Conducting interviews could not only facilitate a deeper investigation but also assist respondents in better grasping the nuances of the questions posed.

Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that the data for this study were exclusively gathered in Italy during the first half of 2023. This geographical and temporal constraint could limit the generalizability of the findings, as the participants largely share a common cultural background. To enhance the external validity of the research, future studies should

consider expanding the scope to include diverse cultural backgrounds, which would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between MTV and OC within different cultural contexts.

Last, the predominant portion of respondents (35.32%) comprises individuals with a monthly family income exceeding €3,001. This finding aligns with Freeman's assertion (1996) that individuals must feel content with their financial status to effectively engage in volunteer activities. This outcome holds potential significance for future investigations, particularly in exploring the relationship between income and organizational commitment.

In summary, while this study offers valuable insights into its subject matter, it is imperative to recognize and address its limitations concerning generalizability and potential sample bias. Subsequent research efforts should strive to incorporate more diverse samples, spanning a range of cultural backgrounds and geographical locations. This will enrich our understanding of the intricate dynamics between the MTV and OC, especially when analysed across various age categories. Additionally, future research could enhance its empirical analysis by integrating qualitative methods such as interviews, offering a more holistic perspective on the phenomenon under investigation. By addressing these limitations, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the topic.

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**Exploring the Influence of Personal Characteristics on Volunteer Motivation: A Study
within the Non-Profit Sector**

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Abstract

The primary objective of this investigation was to conduct a thorough examination of the influence of sociodemographic variables on motivation to volunteer (MTV). The existing body of literature pertaining to volunteer management has not extensively explored the intricate dynamics underlying the antecedents of MTV (Zhou & Kodama Muscente, 2022). Positioned within the life-span theory (Omoto et al., 2000), this study aimed to assess which individual traits of volunteers might explain the varying levels of each dimension of MTV. The contention is that each life stage of a volunteer corresponds to a distinct level of MTV.

By utilizing an original dataset encompassing sociodemographic data and dimensions of MTV measured through the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) index (Clary et al., 1996), this paper sought to ascertain whether sociodemographic variables can explain variations in MTV levels within the domain of nonprofit organizations (NPOs). The empirical analysis of the data reveals that older individuals and those with higher levels of education are more predisposed to volunteer for altruistic motivations, while females are more inclined to volunteer to apply their knowledge.

This research contributes to scholarly understanding by offering a comprehensive depiction of the antecedents of MTV. For practitioners, it provides an opportunity to enhance human resource practices specifically tailored to volunteers.

Keywords: motivations to volunteer, nonprofit organizations, volunteering, gender, age, educational level.

Exploring the Influence of Personal Characteristics on Volunteer Motivation: A Study within the Non-Profit Sector

Individuals exhibit varying levels of participation in voluntary activities based on different life stages. Several countries have conducted surveys to analyse the demographic distribution of volunteers, shedding light on the trends prevalent within each society.

In Italy, the age group with the highest rate of voluntary engagement comprises individuals between 18 and 19 years old, accounting for an impressive 12.2% of respondents (Istat, 2020). This suggests that young adults in Italy are actively contributing to their communities and causes they care about, making a significant impact through their voluntary work. On the other hand, in England, in recent years the highest percentage of volunteers fell within the age range of 35 to 49 years, as reported by the Community Life Survey (Table D3). This indicates that middle-aged individuals in England are actively participating in voluntary activities, likely motivated by their life experiences and a desire to give back to society. Meanwhile, in the United States, the generation that demonstrates the highest propensity for volunteering is Generation X, which encompasses individuals born between 1965 and 1980, with an impressive 27.2% volunteering rate (AmeriCorps). This finding highlights the strong sense of community and social responsibility among individuals in this age group. In Japan, individuals aged between 65 and 69 years have the highest percentage of volunteering, constituting 23.4% of the population (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications - Japan, 2022). This reveals a prevalent culture of active senior engagement and highlights the invaluable contribution of older adults to community-driven initiatives in Japan.

These data clearly reveal intriguing insights into the variations in volunteerism rates, that are significantly influenced by individuals' diverse life-stages. As people progress through their life courses, their perception of the volunteer role undergoes transformation, directly correlating with the goals they pursue through their voluntary actions. This

observation aligns perfectly with the life-course perspective, which posits that individuals of different age groups encounter distinct life tasks, leading to varied motivations for engaging in volunteer work (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

When examining this phenomenon more closely, it becomes evident that younger and older adults are motivated to volunteer for different life tasks, which subsequently leads to the diverse benefits they derive from their philanthropic contributions (Omoto et al., 2000). For instance, younger individuals might be motivated to volunteer as a means of skill development, career advancement, or exploring new interests (Clary et al., 1996). In contrast, older adults might seek volunteer opportunities to give back to their communities, foster social connections, or find purpose in their retirement years (Almog-Bar et al., 2022). The life-course perspective, as proposed by Omoto et al. (2000), emphasizes that individuals' MTV changes over the course of their lives. Specifically, different life stages correspond to different motivations for volunteering, making significant analysis of each life phase the main motive for volunteering. To better understand the chronological course of life, the main proxy highlighted in the literature is age (Almog-Bar et al., 2022).

Understanding these life-stage specific requirements is essential for optimizing volunteer management. Organizations and societies should take into account these life-course perspectives to design more meaningful and impactful volunteer experiences for individuals across the lifespan.

To summarize, the life-course perspective suggests that motivations to volunteer evolve throughout individuals' lives, leading to different levels of motivation to volunteer. In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of understanding how individuals' motivations for volunteering evolve across different life stages. Recognizing the changing nature of volunteer motivations and the impact of different life-stages on volunteerism is

critical for organizations and societies seeking to create more successful and significant volunteer experiences for people of all ages.

Theoretical background

In Wilson's (2012) exploration of voluntary work, the author identifies subjective disposition as a pivotal antecedent to volunteerism. Subjective disposition encompasses a broad spectrum of concepts, including personality traits, motives, attitudes, norms, and values—all converging on the manner in which individuals perceive themselves and the world around them, thereby meriting the term "subjective". Extensive literature underscores the multifaceted impact of personal traits on volunteers' participation and motivation to volunteer (Akintayo et al., 2016; Downward et al., 2020; Fayos Gardó et al., 2014; Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2012; Helms & McKenzie, 2014; Kulik et al., 2016; Taniguchi, 2012; Wemlinger & Berlan, 2016). Nevertheless, prevailing research predominantly focuses on conventional attributes such as age, gender, educational level, and income.

The primary objective of this paper is to fill a void within the literature on volunteer management by examining the associations between sociodemographic variables and MTV. Specifically, there has been a scarcity of empirical investigations, with a substantial amount of conjecture, regarding the variations in volunteers' motivations based on demographic factors (Zhou & Kodama Muscente, 2022). By expanding the scope beyond conventional determinants, this study aspires to provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between individual traits and voluntary work, shedding light on previously overlooked dimensions in the field of volunteerism. Through a comprehensive analysis of these less-explored factors, this research aims to enrich our comprehension of the dynamics that underlie individuals' proclivity towards voluntary activities. More precisely the characteristics included in the present study will be age, gender, family net monthly income, political interest, and educational level.

Age plays a major role in determining volunteer motivation (Almog-Bar et al., 2022). Since the MTV is based on functional theory (Clary et al., 1998) it is possible to assume that different volunteers need to satisfy different drives (Nykiel et al., 2023). At the same time, the life-course perspective reminds us that individuals' MTV changes over the course of their lives (Omoto et al., 2000). Consequently, different ages are associated with different needs to satisfy thought volunteering.

Young people are more frequently inspired to volunteer to further their careers and acquire new skills (Colman, 1999; Davila & Díaz-Morales, 2009). Those who are younger might volunteer more because they have more leisure time. This is because they might have more time for volunteering and fewer obligations to their families or jobs (Wallrodt & Thieme, 2023). Adults are preoccupied with full-time jobs and family responsibilities, so they are uninspired to volunteer. In any case, adults with a high level of education may perceive the altruistic role of volunteer work more clearly and thus be more motivated to participate (Oesterle et al., 2004).

Previous research on older individuals has demonstrated that widowhood can reduce volunteering (Downward et al., 2020) Even if older individuals mainly volunteer to enhance their social life (Tiittanen & Turjamaa, 2022) this does not increase their motivation to volunteer. While the relationship between retirement and volunteering has evolved over time, there is still a negative relationship between the two. However, when controlling for age, education, gender, and region, this association becomes nonsignificant (Henning et al., 2023). Given the above, younger people will be motivated differently than people in other age groups. This means that they have more free time, and are less constrained in performing voluntary work.

Moreover, the previous literature shows a significant inconsistency in the gender role compared to its relationship with volunteering. For some scholars, women volunteer more

than men (Colman, 1999; Freeman, 1996; Mesch et al., 2006; Widjaja, 2010; Wymer, 2011). For others the opposite is true, namely, men volunteer more than women (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006). Finally, for other scholars there is no gender difference in volunteering (Eagly, 2009; Toccaceli et al., 2018). These positions are based on different theoretical assumptions. According to researchers (AbouAssi, 2021) women tend to be more motivated to volunteer than men, because they are more prone to caring for others. In contrast, for some other scholars, men could volunteer more due to greater financial resources that make volunteering possible (Wiepking et al., 2023). Furthermore, the former literature shows that people who view themselves as more empathic and caring are more likely to volunteer (Wilhelm & Bekkers, 2010), without any regard for gender. From these assumptions, it is clear that the role of gender is not completely understood. For these reasons, the purpose of this paper is to clarify whether gender influences MTV.

Furthermore, redirecting attention to the net monthly income of families, this variable functions as a proxy measure of familial prosperity. Its significance lies in its role as a determinant of an individual's ability to partake in voluntary endeavours. In contrast to compensated employment, voluntary work does not provide financial compensation for individual contributions (Cnaan et al., 1996). Consequently, volunteers must possess a degree of personal financial stability that enables them to meet economic obligations while dedicating some hours to voluntary organizations. In essence, a higher income is associated with an increased capacity to allocate more hours to volunteer activities (King et al., 2015; Mccann, 2017). In particular, Freeman (1996) underscores that volunteers typically enjoy higher wages and family incomes, highlighting the necessity for a robust financial foundation to sustain both familial responsibilities and voluntary commitments.

Volunteers not only do not receive remuneration for their tasks but also may incur expenses such as travel and meals, underscoring the imperative need for adequate personal income to

facilitate participation (Veal & Nichols, 2017) and thereby limiting an individual's involvement in voluntary work. Gesthuizen et al. (2012) align with this viewpoint, asserting that individuals in lower-status employment or facing unemployment are less likely to engage in volunteering compared to those in higher-status positions. Additionally, Yeung's study revealed a positive correlation between higher family income and increased participation in volunteering within cultural and work-related domains (Yeung, 2017).

As a result, personal and familial financial independence are more significant than the potential rewards associated with volunteering. The importance of a substantial income becomes evident in its role as a prerequisite for active involvement in volunteerism. Therefore, the inclusion of net family monthly income aims to assess whether a higher income corresponds to a higher level of MTV.

Political interest, a relatively underexplored facet of individual characteristics, has garnered limited scholarly attention. Nevertheless, Ambrosini et al. (2022) highlighted a crucial link between volunteering and political engagement. This underscores the need to assess whether heightened political interest correlates with elevated MTV levels. Examining such associations not only contributes to a nuanced understanding of individual attributes but also sheds light on the intricate interplay between political engagement and motivations, thereby enriching our comprehension of social dynamics within volunteerism.

Finally, several studies have highlighted a positive correlation between higher educational levels and increased volunteerism (Colman, 1999; Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2012; Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008; Wilson, 2012). A study conducted by Gesthuizen and Scheepers (2012) specifically delves into the reasons behind the greater participation of individuals with advanced education levels in volunteering activities. Their research revealed that more than half (54.3%) of the interviewed volunteers belonged to the higher educated category, as classified by the International Standard Classification of Education levels.

The findings of Gesthuizen and Scheepers (2012) suggest that the educational journey equips individuals with cognitive competencies that enhance their awareness of societal needs, particularly those addressed through volunteering efforts. Consequently, more highly educated individuals tend to develop heightened sensitivity toward engaging in volunteer activities. Moreover, participating in voluntary work provides a practical avenue for applying competencies and skills that may otherwise remain untapped. Well-educated individuals derive satisfaction from utilizing their knowledge to improve their communities, as indicated by Clary et al. (1996; 1998).

Aligned with the life-course perspective, individuals exhibit varying levels of motivation based on their educational backgrounds. Notably, those with higher levels of scholarly attainment demonstrate a greater degree of motivation.

Methods

Sampling and procedure

The data for this study were collected via an online questionnaire. The questionnaire utilized a closed-ended format, and participants were presented with predetermined response options to ensure standardized data collection. The instrument itself was meticulously structured, commencing with an introductory section dedicated to gathering demographic information, followed by a substantive segment consisting of 30 items that assess the motivations to volunteer. The data collection period spanned approximately four months, commencing in January 2023, and ending in mid-April 2023.

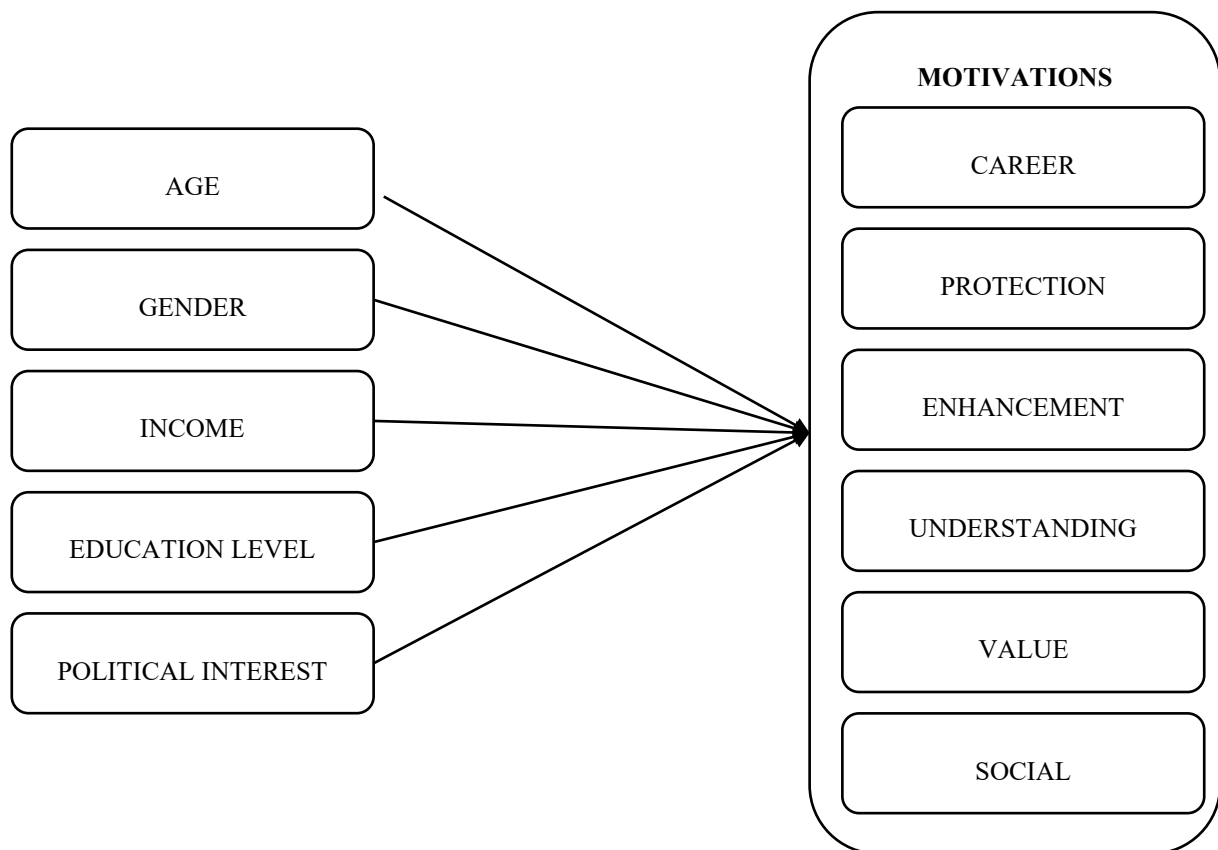
To access a representative cohort of volunteers affiliated with Italian NPOs, the snowball technique was employed. Initiated contacts with an initial group of volunteers were encouraged to disseminate survey invitations to their peers and associates engaged in similar philanthropic activities. This strategic recruitment method, as endorsed by Johansson et al.

(2018), facilitated the establishment of a diversified participant pool interconnected within the network of active nonprofit organizations.

The survey was distributed among individuals actively engaged in volunteer activities across various regions of Italy. The resultant dataset comprises responses from a total of 1,223 participants, reflecting the perspectives and experiences of this specific cohort. This approach to data collection was chosen to ensure a representative and diverse sample, thereby enhancing the validity and generalizability of the findings to the broader context of volunteerism in Italy. The survey items, which were initially formulated in English, were translated into Italian. Subsequently, a reverse translation from Italian to English was conducted to corroborate accuracy and maintain linguistic consistency (Brislin, 1970). This procedural diligence in the translation process aimed to maintain the fidelity of the questionnaire across linguistic nuances, thereby enhancing the reliability of the collected data.

To prioritize respondent privacy and confidentiality, participants' anonymity was assured. The survey did not request any personally identifiable information, ensuring that names or sensitive data were not collected. This approach aimed to create a secure and confidential environment, enabling participants to provide responses without worrying about personal information exposure (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Furthermore, in accordance with the recommendations proposed by Podsakoff et al. (2012), the items pertaining to independent variables were distinctively segregated from those associated with dependent variables. Figure 1 shows the discrete variables, their respective dimensions, and the relationships investigated through the analysis.

Figure 1 – Socio-Demographic variables/MTV interaction model



Measures

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), developed by Clary et al (1996), is a widely recognized and extensively validated tool for evaluating motivations associated with volunteering in NPOs. Considering its six dimensions, the VFI offers valuable insights into the intricate nature of volunteer motivation and its diverse underlying factors, as emphasized by Zhou and Kodama Muscente (2022). Using a set of 30 items, the VFI employs a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This measurement instrument, initially created by Clary et al. (1998), was adapted for the specific Italian context by Marta et al. (2006). The strategic design of these items ensures comprehensive coverage of

the varied intentions and motivational drivers that inspire individuals to engage in volunteer activities.

The MTV dimensions that are captured by the VFI are:

- Protective dimension: this dimension is closely related to individuals' ego functioning and how they perceive themselves. Volunteers driven by this aspect may seek personal growth and self-improvement through their actions.
- Value dimension: encompassing altruistic behaviours aimed at helping others, this dimension reflects the desire to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need or less fortunate.
- Career dimension: volunteers may recognize the potential benefits of their volunteering experiences in the labour market, seeking to acquire valuable skills and experiences that can enhance their professional development.
- Social dimension: this dimension highlights the importance of forming meaningful relationships and establishing new community bonds through volunteering, fostering a sense of belonging and social integration.
- Understanding dimension: individuals emphasize the opportunities for volunteers to acquire new skills and apply their knowledge, this dimension promotes personal growth and continuous learning.
- Enhancement dimension: focusing on the positive impact that volunteering can have on self-esteem and self-worth, volunteers may find a sense of fulfilment and purpose through their contributions.

Each dimension of the questionnaire included five items. The sequence in which these items appeared aligns with the arrangement suggested by Clary (1999).

Descriptive analysis

The final sample is composed of 1223 observations. In Table 1 some of the sociodemographic characteristics are presented.

Table 1 - Descriptive analysis

	n	%
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	475	38.84
<i>Female</i>	741	60.59
<i>I don't want to answer</i>	7	0.57
total	1223	100
<i>Age</i>		
<i>18-34</i>	165	13.49
<i>35-49</i>	261	21.34
<i>50-64</i>	409	33.44
<i>65-74</i>	305	24.94
<i>75+</i>	83	6.79
total	1223	100
<i>Educational level</i>		
<i>Middle school</i>	119	9.73
<i>High school</i>	620	50.70
<i>University</i>	357	29.19
<i>Postgraduate</i>	127	10.38
total	1223	100
<i>Net monthly household income</i>		
<i>Up to 1.000€</i>	57	4.66
<i>1.001€ - 2.000€</i>	370	30.25
<i>2.001€ - 3.000€</i>	364	29.76
<i>Over 3.001€</i>	432	35.32
total	1223	100
<i>Political interest</i>		
<i>Not very interested</i>	104	8.50
<i>Moderately interested</i>	311	25.44
<i>Very interested</i>	568	46.44
<i>Extremely interested</i>	177	14.47
<i>I don't want to answer</i>	63	5.15
total	1223	100
<i>Religious faith</i>		
<i>Yes</i>	830	67.87
<i>No</i>	285	23.30
<i>I don't want to answer</i>	108	8.83
total	1223	100

The gender distribution indicates a slight male majority at 38.84%, with females comprising 60.59%, and a negligible percentage choosing not to disclose their gender. In terms of age, the majority of the participants were aged 50-64 years (33.44%), followed by

those aged 35-49 years (21.34%). Education levels span from middle school to postgraduate education, with high school being the most prevalent at 50.70%. The distribution of net monthly household income reveals a diverse economic spectrum, ranging from earning up to 1,000€ to earning more than 3,001€. Political interest is widely distributed across categories, with a significant portion expressing a high level of interest (46.44%). The majority of participants identified with a religious faith (67.87%), while a notable percentage chose not to disclose their religious affiliation. This comprehensive demographic profile provides valuable insights into the diverse characteristics of the surveyed population, offering a foundation for further analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

Results

Principal component analysis

To reduce the dimensionality of the dataset while preserving maximum variability, a principal component analysis (PCA) based on the correlation matrix was implemented. A separate PCA analysis was performed for each dimension within the MTV framework.

Initially, the outcomes pertaining to the career dimension revealed a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.848, accompanied by a p-value of <0.001 . The loadings associated with the five items constituting the career dimension were 0.677, 0.844, 0.888, 0.856, and 0.780.

Within the social dimension, the KMO yielded a value of 0.822, with a p-value of <0.001 .

The loadings for its respective five items were 0.746, 0.732, 0.798, 0.789, and 0.763.

The value dimension exhibited a KMO of 0.733, with a p-value of <0.001 , and its corresponding loadings for the five items were 0.806, 0.574, 0.667, 0.799, and 0.637.

Concurrently, the enhancement dimension demonstrated a KMO of 0.822, with a p-value of <0.001 , and the loadings associated with its five items were 0.727, 0.832, 0.805, 0.801, and 0.717.

For the understanding dimension, the KMO value was 0.848, with a p-value of <0.001. The loadings for its five items were 0.679, 0.802, 0.826, 0.798, and 0.805. Finally, the protective dimension displayed a KMO of 0.821, with a p-value of <0.001, and the loadings for its five items were 0.786, 0.799, 0.637, 0.808, and 0.822.

Regression analysis

To gain an understanding of the collective impact of various independent factors, specifically sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, income, educational level, and political interest, on the dependent variable MTV and its distinct dimensions (career, protective, understanding, social, value, and enhancement), multiple regression analysis was employed. Table 2 presents the results of individual tests for each of the MTV dimensions, assessing the five sociodemographic variables as potential predictors.

Table 2 – OLS regression analysis of the sociodemographic/MTV relationship

	Protective	Understanding	Enhancement	Value	Social	Career
Socio-demographic variables						
Age	-.067* (.027)	-.163** (.026)	-.129** (.027)	-.011 (.027)	.120** (.027)	-.307** (.025)
Gender	.095 (.061)	.173* (.060)	.025 (.061)	.023 (.061)	-.212** (.060)	-.132* (.057)
Income	-.023 (.033)	.004 (.032)	.034 (.033)	.030 (.033)	.002 (.033)	-.056 (.031)
Educational level	-.072** (.026)	.019 (.025)	-.054* (.026)	.067* (.026)	-.025 (.026)	-.055* (.024)
Political Interest	-.054 (.037)	-.060 (.036)	-.099** (.036)	.017 (.037)	.011 (.036)	-.046 (.034)
Intercept	.547** (.161)	.476* (.157)	.684** (.160)	-.293 (.161)	-.181 (.159)	1.415** (.151)
Adjusted R ²	.015	.047	.029	.005	.030	.127

*p-value < 0,05 - ** p-value < 0.01

Focusing on age, a one-unit increment in age is linked to a reduction of 0.067 in the protective dimension. This correlation is statistically significant at the 5% level. Furthermore, age has a negative association with understanding, with statistical significance observed at

the 1% level. Similarly, in relation to enhancement, age is negatively correlated, and this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. However, age does not exhibit a statistically significant association with the value variable. Notably, older individuals tend to achieve higher scores in the social dimension, and this correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level. Additionally, age displays a negative association with career, and this relationship holds statistical significance at the 1% level.

With respect to gender, female gender exhibits a noteworthy positive correlation with a 0.173 increase in understanding, a relationship that attains statistical significance at the 5% confidence level. However, gender failed to demonstrate a statistically significant association with either the enhancement or protective dimensions. Furthermore, gender does not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with the value dimension.

Feminine gender is linked with a reduction of 0.212 in the social dimension, and this association achieves statistical significance at the 1% confidence level. Similarly, the female gender is associated with a decline of 0.132 in the career variable, with the relationship reaching statistical significance at the 5% confidence level.

Unexpectedly, none of the MTV dimensions show a statistically significant correlation with income level.

In terms of educational level, a higher level of education is linked to a significant decrease of 0.072 in the protective dimension, with statistical significance at the 1% level. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between educational level and the understanding dimension.

Moreover, an elevated educational level is correlated with a 0.054 decrease in the enhancement dimension, and this association reaches statistical significance at the 5% level. Conversely, educational level exhibits a positive association with the value dimension, with statistical significance at the 5% level. Additionally, a higher educational level is connected to

a noteworthy 0.067 increase in the social dimension, and this relationship is statistically significant at the 5% level. On the other hand, educational level shows a negative association with the career dimension, and this association is statistically significant at the 5% level.

There is no statistically significant association between political interest and the protective, understanding, value, social, and career dimensions. However, a higher level of political interest is linked to a statistically significant 0.099 decrease in the enhancement dimension, with significance observed at the 1% level.

Discussion

In relation to each dimension of MTV, various sociodemographic variables function as predictive factors.

In the context of the protective dimension, only age and educational attainment emerged as statistically significant predictors. As articulated by Clary et al. (1998), the protective dimension is intricately linked to individuals' ego functioning and their self-perception. Those volunteers driven by this dimension may actively pursue personal growth and self-improvement through their altruistic endeavours. The coefficients associated with age and educational level exhibit a negative correlation, suggesting that older individuals and those with higher educational levels tend to be less self-centred, channelling their focus towards volunteering as a means of assistance to others.

The understanding dimension involves age and gender as predictive variables. In the context of this dimension, individuals prioritize opportunities for volunteers to gain new skills and apply their knowledge, aligning with the promotion of personal growth and ongoing learning (Clary et al., 1998). The negative coefficient associated with age indicates that with each additional year, the inclination to acquire new skills through volunteering tends to decrease. Conversely, the gender variable reveals that females are more predisposed to

utilizing volunteering as a means to apply their knowledge and engage in continuous learning.

The determinants associated with the enhancement dimension include age, educational level, and political interest. Concerning enhancement, there is an emphasis on recognizing the positive impact that volunteering can have on self-esteem and self-worth, leading volunteers to derive a sense of fulfilment and purpose from their contributions (Clary et al., 1998). Similar to the patterns observed in preceding dimensions, age exhibits a negative coefficient, signifying that older individuals are less oriented towards self-focus. This trend persists for educational level, indicating that individuals with higher education are not primarily seeking a sense of fulfilment through volunteering but rather engaging in more altruistic motives. Furthermore, the variable of political interest indicates that as interest in politics intensifies, the utilization of volunteering becomes less egocentric.

In the context of the value dimension, which is conceptualized as encompassing altruistic behaviours directed towards assisting others, this dimension signifies a commitment to creating a positive impact on the lives of those who are less fortunate or in need (Clary et al., 1998). Notably, only educational level emerged as statistically significant in this regard. Furthermore, the coefficient associated with educational level is positive, aligning with earlier findings, as it suggests that volunteers with higher education levels are more aligned with the altruistic values of the nonprofit organization.

Transitioning to the social dimension, predictors include age and gender. The social dimension emphasizes the significance of cultivating meaningful relationships (Clary et al., 1998). A positive age coefficient indicates that older individuals are inclined to volunteer with the intention of forming new social ties. Additionally, feminine gender is associated with a decrease of 0.212 in the social dimension, signifying that females are not actively seeking to establish new social relationships through volunteering.

Finally, the career dimension is characterized by three significant predictors age, gender, and educational level all of which exhibit negative coefficients. The concept of the career dimension posits that volunteers may acknowledge the potential advantages of their volunteering experiences in the labour market, actively seeking to attain valuable skills and experiences that can contribute to their professional advancement (Clary et al., 1998). This indicates that older individuals do not view volunteerism as a means to facilitate job opportunities, possibly because their professional careers are already established. Furthermore, the gender variable indicates that females do not utilize volunteering as an avenue to acquire professional skills. Last, individuals with higher levels of education tend to refrain from using volunteering as a job facilitator, expressing a preference to align themselves with altruistic motives.

In conclusion, this study reveals that older individuals engage in volunteering with the primary aim of participating in a social network rather than seeking personal fulfilment. Additionally, females demonstrate a greater inclination toward volunteering with the intention of applying their knowledge, rather than focusing on establishing social relationships or pursuing career-oriented objectives. Last, individuals with higher levels of education appear to embrace the altruistic aspects of volunteering, diverging from motives centred around personal objectives.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis revealed that various sociodemographic variables influence the dimensions of MTV. Moreover, specific individual characteristics are identified as predictors of MTV, and their positive or negative coefficients offer insights into the nuanced nature of voluntarism. This discernment enables us to determine whether volunteering is oriented towards the altruistic mission of a nonprofit organization (NPO) or is more aligned with personal fulfilment. The findings demonstrate that certain significant volunteer

categories, such as individuals with higher education and elderly people, predominantly volunteer because their values align with those of the NPO. Additionally, female volunteers volunteer to apply their skills.

In summary, the analysis underscores the intricate interplay between personal characteristics and motivational factors in volunteering, revealing a nuanced spectrum of voluntarism that encompasses both altruistic pursuits and self-enhancement.

Practical implications

This investigation draws its motivation from real-world situations, specifically focusing on circumstances that have significant implications for the integration of vulnerable groups (Sánchez-García et al., 2022), such as elderly people and females. The findings underscore the critical role that volunteering plays in these specific demographic categories (Omoto et al., 2000). Moreover, this study provides valuable insights for practitioners seeking to develop effective strategies to enhance the targeted integration of all volunteers engaged in NPO activities.

This research sheds light on the profound impact volunteering has on certain groups, emphasizing its significance in fostering a sense of community and inclusion. This information serves as a valuable resource for practitioners who aim to implement tailored solutions geared towards facilitating the seamless integration of diverse volunteers within NPO initiatives. The study, therefore, not only highlights the importance of volunteerism for specific demographics but also offers practical guidance for those working to enhance the overall effectiveness of NPO initiatives through a more inclusive and targeted approach.

Limitations and further research

While this investigation has made notable contributions, it is imperative to acknowledge certain limitations that merit careful consideration. Primarily, the adjusted R^2 remains relatively low, suggesting the need for further exploration. Future research

endeavours may benefit from an examination of additional sociodemographic variables to attain a more comprehensive understanding of MTV. Additionally, the evaluation of other potential antecedents of MTV could offer valuable insights.

Furthermore, the entirety of the data-gathering process transpired within the confines of Italy during 2023. Although the outcomes derived from the sampled population may accurately reflect the characteristics of the Italian population, the extent to which these findings can be applied to other contexts may be limited. It is essential to acknowledge that the idiosyncrasies inherent in Italian culture may pose barriers, impeding the seamless applicability of these results to diverse cultural or geographical settings. Consequently, a meticulous consideration of the potential cultural variations and contextual nuances is suggested to ensure the validity and applicability of the study's findings in broader and more diverse contexts.

As a recommendation for future investigations, it is proposed that a longitudinal study be undertaken. Specifically, in accordance with life-span theory, a more refined evaluation should be attained by subjecting the sample to longitudinal analysis. Using this methodology could allow a nuanced examination of fluctuations within the same individuals over time, thus increasing the accuracy and completeness of the study.

Additionally, it is recommended to conduct a more extensive inquiry into the influence of sociodemographic factors pertaining to volunteers on various interconnected variables associated with voluntary management, including organizational commitment and perceived organizational support. Such analyses hold the potential to enhance comprehension regarding volunteer management strategies and practices. This exploration could shed light on the nuanced dynamics between the demographic characteristics of volunteers and their attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions within organizational contexts. Thus, an in-depth

investigation into these dimensions is essential for refining strategies aimed at optimizing volunteer involvement and fostering a supportive organizational environment.

To conclude, although the present study has provided valuable contributions and addressed certain limitations, the implementation of the suggested enhancements will undoubtedly contribute to the refinement and robustness of subsequent research endeavours within this domain.

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General conclusion

The significance of this empirical research extends beyond the findings it presents, encompassing a broader contribution to the scholarly exploration of volunteer management. It is noteworthy that the intricate examination of volunteer management remains underrepresented within the expansive realm of management studies. Notably, the data presented in this study underscore the exceptional value of this specific form of “work”, serving as a valuable resource for practitioners in NPOs and, more prominently, for individuals at large.

Through the examination of the three papers, a comprehensive understanding of the concept of MTV in its various nuances was achieved.

The initial paper titled "Motivation to Volunteer and Perceived Organizational Support: Insights from Diverse Volunteers Clusters" elucidates a compelling correlation between MTV and POS. This linkage significantly enhances our understanding of MTV through a functionalist lens. Clary (1998) posits that individuals engage in voluntary work to fulfill various needs, thereby reflecting the multifaceted nature of human motivation. Expounding upon this notion, the paper delves into the intricate relationship between MTV and POS, asserting that distinct motivational dimensions come into play at different levels of MTV and POS. This nuanced exploration provides valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between individual motivations and organizational support structures within the realm of volunteering.

Furthermore, this paper holds considerable relevance for practitioners engaged in volunteer management. The insights garnered from this study underscore the importance of establishing a cohesive communication strategy with volunteers. It is imperative that volunteers perceive a sense of care and appreciation from the organization, thereby fostering a conducive environment for long-term engagement and commitment. Implementing such

practices aligns with the organizational goal of cultivating a mutually beneficial relationship with volunteers, ultimately enhancing overall effectiveness in volunteer management (Prysmakova and Lallatin, 2023).

The second paper, titled "Does the Motivation to Volunteer Affect Organizational Commitment? An Empirical Analysis within Nonprofit Organizations," delves into the intricate interplay between MTV and Organizational Commitment OC. Through the lens of SET, the study reveals a spectrum of volunteer behaviors, ranging from purely altruistic motivations to those expecting tangible rewards for their efforts. This nuanced examination not only contributes to our understanding of volunteer commitment but also sheds light on the diverse roles played by MTV within this context. Moreover, the findings of this paper extend beyond the current state of knowledge by offering deeper insights into the dynamics of volunteer commitment. By aligning with functionalist theory, the study underscores the multifaceted nature of MTV and its implications for OC. This expanded understanding not only enriches theoretical discourse but also informs practical strategies for volunteer management within non-profit organizations. Furthermore, by elucidating the complex relationship between MTV and OC, this study paves the way for enhanced strategies aimed at fostering stronger bonds between volunteers and the organizations they serve.

The second paper also offers practical insights for practitioners in the field. One pressing issue that managers frequently encounter is the high turnover rate among volunteers. Addressing this challenge requires a focus on fostering a strong sense of commitment among the volunteer workforces. Building such commitment not only provides a solid foundation for the successful implementation of long-term projects but also ensures a reliable pool of skilled individuals upon whom managers can depend. The findings underscore the importance of understanding the motivations driving individuals to volunteer and tailoring volunteer assignments accordingly. By aligning tasks with volunteers' motivations, managers can

enhance commitment, thereby reducing turnover and maximizing the contributions of volunteers to organizational objectives. This emphasis on strategic task allocation based on individual motivations enhances the effectiveness of volunteer management practices, ultimately leading to improved organizational outcomes. Overall, the insights provided in this paper offer valuable guidance for practitioners seeking to optimize volunteer management strategies and maximize the potential impact of their volunteer workforce.

The latest paper, titled "Exploring the Influence of Personal Characteristics on Volunteer Motivation: A Study within the Non-Profit Sector," delves into the intricate relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and MTV. By examining how various individual attributes may influence MTV, this study contributes significantly to the current body of knowledge, particularly within the framework of the life-course perspective.

For practitioners, this paper holds considerable importance as it offers insights into designing more meaningful and impactful volunteer experiences tailored to individuals across different stages of life. Recognizing that each life stage corresponds to distinct motivations that drive individuals to engage in volunteer activities, managers are advised to carefully consider the characteristics of volunteers. Accordingly, tasks should be assigned in alignment with the unique needs and preferences of each volunteer. Expanding upon this premise, practitioners can further enhance volunteer engagement and satisfaction by implementing personalized approaches to volunteer management. By acknowledging and accommodating the diverse motivations stemming from socio-demographic characteristics, managers can foster a more inclusive and fulfilling volunteer experience. This proactive approach not only strengthens the relationship between volunteers and the organization but also maximizes the potential contributions of volunteers across various life stages. Ultimately, the findings of this paper serve as a valuable resource for practitioners seeking to optimize volunteer

management strategies and cultivate a vibrant volunteer community within the non-profit sector.

In conclusion, this essay significantly enhances our understanding of the motivations driving individuals to volunteer and explores various factors influencing organizational behavior within the voluntary sector. To gain deeper insights into volunteer management dynamics, additional analysis is warranted from an organizational perspective. This entails examining how organizations integrate voluntary work with employees' tasks, assessing the HR strategies employed to recruit and allocate voluntary personnel, and offering an overview of how practitioners consider motivation when assigning tasks to volunteers. Such comprehensive scrutiny is essential for obtaining a holistic understanding of the intricacies within the realm of volunteering. By delving into these aspects, we can illuminate the multifaceted nature of volunteerism and its implications for organizational effectiveness and social impact.

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