



“Eyes for eyes, teeth for teeth”: Positive and negative reciprocity in NPOs

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3 ABSTRACT:
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6 positive reciprocity “ individuals feel obligated to reciprocate whenever they receive benefits from
7 others “ but neglected the possible role of negative reciprocity, the tendency to retaliate in case
8 of mistreatments. Based on motivational functions theory and the norm of reciprocity, this paper
9 proposes a framework assessing other-oriented motives and self-oriented motives as the main
10 antecedents of volunteers’ intention to stay in non-profit organizations (NPOs).
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12
13 Covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) and the PROCESS macro were used to
14 empirically validate and test the hypothesized conceptual model on a sample of 379 volunteers
15 actively involved in Italian NPOs.
16

17 Positive reciprocity partially mediated the relationships between volunteers’ other-oriented
18 motives and self-oriented motives and their intention to stay. Instead, negative reciprocity fully
19 mediated the relationship between self-oriented motives and intention to stay, but not the
20 relationship between other-oriented motives and intention to stay.
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23 CUST_RESEARCH_LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS__(LIMIT_100_WORDS) :No data available.
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25 Managers and marketers of NPOs should pay more attention to volunteers’ attitudinal and
26 behavioral signals to encourage within-organization positive reciprocal attitudes and discourage
27 negative reciprocal attitudes. This represents a strategic lever to prevent volunteers from quitting
28 the organization “ which is one of the most critical challenges for NPOs’ management “ and
29 improve their intention to stay.
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34 This is one of the first studies that simultaneously investigates the mediating role of both positive
35 and negative reciprocity of volunteers actively involved in NPOs. Moreover, the constructs of other-
36 oriented and self-oriented motivations are statistically validated as two separate psychological
37 dimensions impacting on volunteers’ turnover. Finally, the study has been conducted in the
38 Region of Tuscany (Italy) which, despite its centuries-old tradition of volunteerism, has received
39 scant attention by non-profit scholars.
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“Eyes for eyes, teeth for teeth”: Positive and negative reciprocity in NPOs

Abstract

Purpose – Management scholars investigated the motivational aspects of volunteers, mainly focusing on their positive reciprocity – individuals feel obligated to reciprocate whenever they receive benefits from others – but neglected the possible role of negative reciprocity, the tendency to retaliate in case of mistreatments. Based on motivational functions theory and the norm of reciprocity, this paper proposes a framework assessing other-oriented motives and self-oriented motives as the main antecedents of volunteers’ intention to stay in non-profit organizations (NPOs).

Design/methodology/approach – Covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) and the PROCESS macro were used to empirically validate and test the hypothesized conceptual model on a sample of 379 volunteers actively involved in Italian NPOs.

Findings – Positive reciprocity partially mediated the relationships between volunteers’ other-oriented motives and self-oriented motives and their intention to stay. Instead, negative reciprocity fully mediated the relationship between self-oriented motives and intention to stay, but not the relationship between other-oriented motives and intention to stay.

Practical implications – Managers and marketers of NPOs should pay more attention to volunteers’ attitudinal and behavioral signals to encourage within-organization positive reciprocal attitudes and discourage negative reciprocal attitudes. This represents a strategic lever to prevent volunteers from quitting the organization – which is one of the most critical challenges for NPOs’ management – and improve their intention to stay.

Originality/value – This is one of the first studies that simultaneously investigates the mediating role of both positive and negative reciprocity of volunteers actively involved in NPOs. Moreover, the constructs of other-oriented and self-oriented motivations are

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4 *turnover. Finally, the study has been conducted in the Region of Tuscany (Italy) which,*
5 *despite its centuries-old tradition of volunteerism, has received scant attention by non-profit*
6 *scholars.*

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14 **Keywords:** intention to stay; non-profit organizations; motivation; reciprocity; turnover
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18 19 20 21 22 23 **1. Introduction**

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Volunteers and their recruitment, retention, and commitment, have been traditionally regarded as one of the most important resources for effectively managing nonprofit organizations (NPOs) (Clary and Snyder, 1999; Clary *et al.*, 1992; Stukas *et al.*, 2016). An effective strategy to deal with this problem is focusing on volunteers' motivations and attitudes, which in turn govern their behaviors (Lorente-Ayala *et al.*, 2020; Marta *et al.*, 2006; Zollo *et al.*, 2019). The motivational functions approach (Clary *et al.*, 1998; Okun *et al.*, 1998) states that motivations are related to the satisfaction of specific needs (functions); in particular, they may orient the engagement and association with volunteering activities in the specific context of NPOs (Clary *et al.*, 1992; Marta *et al.*, 2006; Stukas *et al.*, 2016). Looking closely to this set of motivations, however, it is easy to recognize the very different nature of each of them (Cornelis *et al.*, 2013); there are both individuals' other-oriented motivations – such as social, altruistic, and spiritual motives – and self-oriented motivations – such as individualistic and career-related motives (Omoto and Snyder, 1995). However, motivations do not directly lead to the permanency within an organization, rather this is acted through a series of factors influencing the outcome behavior, such as volunteers' organizational commitment, prosocial attitude, and reciprocal attitude (Jain, 2016; Lavelle, 2010; Wilson, 2000). In particular, this

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3 study focuses on reciprocal attitude that has been already proven a valid managerial
4 mechanism through which such relations are acted upon (Booth et al., 2009; Zollo et al.,
5 2017). Although relevant, reciprocal attitude in volunteering has been mainly represented and
6 inquired in relation to *positive* aspects of volunteers' behavioral intention (Eckstein, 2001;
7 Wilson, 2000). However, also *negative* aspects are natural embedded: i) as just presented,
8 volunteers, while may be guided by altruism, may also pursue egoistic motives; ii) in
9 addition, a reciprocal attitude may also occur in reason of suffered wrongdoings, leading to a
10 type of negative reciprocity (Clary et al., 1992; Perugini et al., 2003). Consequentially, the
11 *dark side* of the relationship that ties together motivations, reciprocal attitude and
12 commitment to volunteering remain understudied (De Clerk et al., 2019).

13
14 To address these gaps, this paper builds on the functional theory (Clary et al., 1998;
15 Omoto and Snyder, 1995) and the social exchange theory (SET) (Gouldner, 1960). We argue
16 that volunteers develop a social exchange relationship with the organization they belong to,
17 where – according to SET – reciprocity plays a key role (Paraskevaidis and Andriotis, 2017).
18 This study proposes and empirically tests a framework in which positive and negative aspects
19 that link volunteers' motives and intention to stay with NPOs are simultaneously considered.
20 Specifically, the paper splits volunteers' motivations into *other-oriented* and *self-oriented*.
21 Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first attempt to inquiry simultaneously the
22 possible different influence of both positive and negative norms of reciprocity, shedding more
23 lights on the micro-mechanisms which guide volunteers. The empirical test is done on a
24 sample of NPOs operating in Italy, where the phenomenon of volunteerisms has ancient
25 history dating back to the Medieval period (Manetti et al., 2019) and NPOs completely handle
26 the whole regional emergency/urgency service system 118, similar to the North American 911
27 system (Zollo et al., 2019).
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2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Social exchange theory (SET) is a heavily-used theory when organizational behaviors are in question (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). According to SET (Cook *et al.*, 2013), a social exchange involves a chain of interaction, or better to say a series of bidirectional transactions, characterized by simultaneously obligations and gains, thus, where actors give and receive (Mauss, 1950). Each social exchange has to be voluntary, that is there is no external obligation (Kolm, 1997). Social exchanges are different from economic exchanges, where the agents are not free, but are obliged by law or third parties to comply with contract obligations. According to Blau (1994), economic exchange is impersonal in nature and it focuses on the quantifiable obligations and extrinsic benefits that the parties expect to derive from each discreet contractual transaction. In the social exchange relationship, instead, one person does a favour for another person with only a general, but vague and unenforceable, expectation that the other person will eventually reciprocate in some way.

Such interactions follow specific rules or principles, among which reciprocity is probably the best known as it describes how an individual should behave in reciprocal interactions (Gouldner, 1960). This implies that individuals have different sensibilities to reciprocation; someone more prone to promptly giving back what received and others less careful believing less in such value (Perugini *et al.*, 2003). SET has been also used to explain the relationship between volunteers and their organization (Booth *et al.*, 2009; Vantilborgh and Van Puyvelde, 2018), enriching the understanding of the embeddedness exchanged in this relationship. By doing so, reciprocity is implicitly assumed as a key mechanism (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In addition, Zollo *et al.* (2017) specifically showed how the SET theory is a valid approach to interpret the relationship that transform volunteers' motivation (Clary *et al.*, 1992) into actual willingness to stay.

2.1. Volunteers' motivations and intention to stay

Several scholars (e.g., Bussell and Forbes, 2002; Clary *et al.*, 1998; Omoto and Snyder, 1995; Wilson, 2000) have widely investigated the motivational aspects related to helping, giving, and volunteering behaviors. While at a first glance, the rationale beyond volunteers' behaviors may naturally be associated to an altruistic push and a spirit of service towards others, the situation is more complex than that (Cornelis *et al.*, 2013; Wilson, 2000).

To clearly assess such a full scale of motivations, Clary *et al.* (1992) created the functional model, which concerns "the reasons and the purposes, the plans and the goals, that underlie and generate psychological [...] personal and social functions being served by an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions" (Clary *et al.*, 1998, p.1517). The authors, in analyzing volunteers' motivational processes, validated a multidimensional instrument for assessing volunteers' motivations related to specific psychological functions, called *Volunteer Functions Inventory* (VFI) (Clary *et al.*, 1992; 1998). The VFI measures volunteers' motivations according to six factors (Clary and Snyder, 1999): (1) *values* motivations, which refer to altruistic and humanitarian concerns; (2) *social* motivations, that are related to foster relationships with other people; (3) *career* motivations, which refer to enhance knowledge and skills to improve professional careers; (4) *enhancement* motivations, that are addressed to self-development and, in general, feeling better about oneself; (5) *understanding* motivations, which are oriented to acquire and improve skills and capabilities; (6) *protective* motivations, that are related to protect the ego and alleviate guilt for having privileges. The first two factors have often represented *other-oriented* motivations, where the altruistic spirit of service is fully evident, while the last four factors may indicate *self-oriented* motivations, where personal (i.e., egoistic) benefits prevail over the others' good (Clary and Snyder, 1999; Omoto and Snyder, 1995).

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3 Such a functionalist model has been largely used to evaluate motivations, and from a
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5 NPO managers' perspective, to establish effective strategies (Lorente-Ayala *et al.*, 2020).
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7 Motivational factors to volunteer, either being considered individually or in a global concept,
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9 have been directly and positively related to volunteers' intention to stay with the organization
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11 (Bussell and Forbes, 2002; Clary and Snyder, 1999; Zollo *et al.*, 2017). Instead, unpacking
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13 such motivations into other- and self-oriented ones has been used to predict well-being
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15 (Stukas, *et al.*, 2016), in-role and extra-role (Cornelis *et al.*, 2013) of volunteers. Specifically,
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17 there have been evidence that the stronger psychological attachment felt by volunteers to their
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19 motivations, the stronger will be their intentions to maintain a long-lasting organizational
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21 relationship, regardless the nature of motivation (Clary *et al.*, 1992; 1998; Marta *et al.*, 2006).
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25 Hence, we hypothesize:

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28 *H1a.* Other-oriented motivations are positively related to volunteers' intention to stay
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30 with the organization.

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33 *H1b.* Self-oriented motivations are positively related to volunteers' intention to stay
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35 with the organization.
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38 39 40 *2.2. The role of positive reciprocity*

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42 Economic and organizational studies have shown that the norm of reciprocity operates as a
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44 general basic attitude to drive behaviors of individuals in most human societies (Faldetta,
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46 2011; Maxwell *et al.*, 2003). According to SET, reciprocity can be seen as one of the main
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48 mechanisms that affects voluntarism behaviors (Booth *et al.*, 2009; Eckstein, 2001; Lavelle,
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50 2010; Zollo *et al.*, 2017). According to Gouldner (1960), the norm of reciprocity leads an
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52 individual to give benefits to those who have benefited him/her in the past, and to retaliate in
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54 return when someone mistreats him/her. This is true in organizations too, where individuals
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56 tend to reciprocate being kind to people that have been previously kind to them, and they tend
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3 to negatively reciprocate other people for unfair or hostile actions (Hu *et al.*, 2011).
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5 Consistently, psychology scholars identified two concepts, positive and negative norms of
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7 reciprocity, which have been proved to be independent from the other (Perugini *et al.*, 2003).
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9 Thus, these attitudes and their consequential behaviors may be adopted by the same person
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11 but with different intensities (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2004).
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15 The norm of positive reciprocity explains the cognitive and behavioral patterns
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17 occurring when individuals receive something positive from social interaction, and in turn
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19 they feel obligated to give something back (Gouldner, 1960). Several studies show how
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21 positive reciprocation can occur in relations engaged for and driven by both other-oriented
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23 and self-oriented motivations (Hu *et al.*, 2011; Keysar *et al.*, 2008). Regarding other-oriented
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25 motivations, it is possible to hypothesize a positive relation between gift-like behaviors – as
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27 helping and prosociality – and the individual attitude to reciprocate (Simpson and Willer,
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29 2008; Zollo *et al.*, 2017). Individuals consider those who perform prosocial behaviors as
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31 benefactors, and so they will be inclined to reciprocate them indirectly (Keysar *et al.*, 2008).
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33 This kind of relation relies on the fact that reciprocating a positive behavior can build and
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35 develop prosocial behavior (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). So other-oriented individuals are
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37 inclined to reciprocate those who have shown helping and prosocial behaviors (Keysar *et al.*,
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39 2008), so encouraging and maintaining prosocial behaviors (Yang *et al.*, 2011). Moreover,
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41 benefactors – as volunteers are – gain personal satisfaction that further strengthens the norm
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43 of positive reciprocity (Keysar *et al.*, 2008). Regarding self-oriented motivations, since the
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45 work of Alexander (1987), reciprocity has been linked to reputation and status (Engelmann
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47 and Fischbacher, 2009; Panchanathan and Boyd, 2003). In this sense, individuals behave
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49 strategically, giving to individuals who have previously donated, and refusing to give to
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51 individuals who have not previously donated (Nowak and Sigmund, 1998). So, self-oriented
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53 individuals strategically select by giving only to recipients who will offer acceptable benefits.
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3 Yet, using again indications from SET, positive relationships among members of an
4 organization will make individuals more inclined to remain in organizations (Yang *et al.*,
5 2011). This situation is particularly true for those organizations where there is a need for
6 strong commitment (Clary *et al.*, 1998; Omoto and Snyder, 1995) and intense and reciprocal
7 social relations, as those using volunteers (Vantilborgh and Van Puyvelde, 2018; Webb *et al.*,
8 2000; Wilson, 2000). Moreover, if the norm of positive reciprocity is widespread within the
9 organization, volunteers and managers will be more inclined to feel social integration and a
10 sense of belonging (Molm *et al.*, 2007), so increasing their intention to stay within the
11 organization (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).

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14 Specifically, we think that because volunteerism implies social relationships,
15 volunteers may tend to positively reciprocate to others' actions, so being *positive*
16 *reciprocators* (Perugini *et al.*, 2003, p.255). According to the VFI model (Clary *et al.*, 1992;
17 1998; Zollo *et al.*, 2017) and in line with the motivational complexity of the norm of
18 reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), we hypothesize:

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21 *H2a.* Volunteers' positive attitude to reciprocate significantly mediates the
22 relationship between other-oriented motivations and intention to stay with the
23 organization.

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26 *H2b.* Volunteers' positive attitude to reciprocate significantly mediates the
27 relationship between self-oriented motivations and intention to stay with the
28 organization.

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31 While the above-mentioned hypotheses are the central focus of this study, the
32 existence of a mediation also requires a set of other instrumental conditions (Baron and
33 Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2009). Specifically, independent variable(s) (other- and self-oriented
34 motivations), the mediator (positive attitude to reciprocate), and the dependent variable
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(intention to stay), should be related to each other. Hence, for clarity proposes, we also explicit these corollary hypotheses (c1, c2, c3), that however has only an instrumental nature:

H2(c1). Other-oriented motivations are positively related to volunteers' positive attitude to reciprocate.

H2(c2). Self-oriented motivations are positively related to volunteers' positive attitude to reciprocate.

H2(c3). Volunteers' positive attitude to reciprocate is positively related to volunteers' intention to stay with the organization.

2.3. *The role of negative reciprocity*

As we premised, the norm of reciprocity is a dual concept explaining both the attitude toward prosocial but also the attitude toward vindictive behaviors (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2004).

According to SET, considering both sides of reciprocity (i.e., positive and negative) captures the full range of reciprocal attitudes that may occur in social and organizational relationships (Perugini *et al.*, 2003). This also enlarges the spectrum of inquiries about reciprocity to the dark side of relationships, to which even less attention has been paid. For this reason, the development of the following hypotheses is much more explorative.

In the case of the norm of negative reciprocity, the assumption would prescribe that individuals will tend to retaliate in reason of mistreatments (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). It is possible to find deep roots of the norm of negative reciprocity in the biblical injunction of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". From a sociological point of view, this norm is a means through which an individual may react against someone's unfavorable treatments, so to keep balance in social systems (Uhl-Bien and Maslyn, 2003). Thus, individuals who feel that people have been badly treated, may tend to negatively reciprocate against those who treat

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3 them badly (Gouldner, 1960). In this way, individuals reaffirm a value system while also
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5 discouraging future negative behaviors (Barclay *et al.*, 2014; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007).
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8 However, a distinction can be done between relations driven by altruistic motivations
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10 and those driven by egoism and selfishness. According to Liden *et al.* (1997), the search for
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12 mutual benefits, and so a tendency to positively reciprocate, would result in a relation more
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14 focused on the other member(s) of the relationship. Accordingly, we can argue that an other-
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16 oriented individual will be less likely to engage in retaliatory behavior, preferring avoidance,
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18 reconciliation, or forgiveness (Aquino *et al.*, 2012). In this way, it is only reasonable to
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20 suppose that a negative attitude to reciprocate does not affect other-oriented motivations,
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22 concluding with a null hypothesis:
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26 *H3a.* Volunteers' negative attitude to reciprocate does not mediate the relationship
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28 between other-oriented motivations and intention to stay with the organization.
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33 Contrary, a social relationship characterized by an exchange of injuries, and so by a tendency
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35 to negatively reciprocate, would consist of higher self-interest. Thus, these individuals will
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37 have higher tendencies to retaliation against received mistreatment, also weakening his/her
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39 intention to stay longer in such a negative evaluated environment (Cropanzano and Mitchell,
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41 2005; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2004; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn, 2003). Thus, we hypothesize:
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44 *H3b.* Volunteers' negative attitude to reciprocate significantly mediates the
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46 relationship between self-oriented motivations and intentions to stay with the
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48 organization.
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53 As in the previous case, the same corollary hypotheses should exist too, so to postulate a
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55 mediation for negative reciprocity:
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3 *H3(c1)* Other-oriented motivations are negatively related to volunteers' negative
4 attitude to reciprocate.
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7 *H3(c2)* Self-oriented motivations are positively related to volunteers' negative attitude
8 to reciprocate.
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11 *H3(c3)*. Volunteers' negative attitude to reciprocate is negatively related to volunteers'
12 intention to stay with the organization.
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19 Building on the above, our hypothesized conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.
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22 Insert Figure 1 here
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25 26 27 **3. Method**

28 29 *3.1. Sample and procedure*

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31 The data used were collected as part of a larger research project on NPOs providing socio-
32 healthcare services and involved in on-call emergency/urgency system. Such a homogenous
33 sample criterion allowed us to better focus on and assess the specific characteristics as well as
34 the contextual constraints of the selected industry, thus assuring similarity of the
35 organizational factors and volunteers' motivations (Rousseau and Fried, 2001). The sampling
36 frame consisted of thirty charitable organizations located in the Region of Tuscany (Italy)
37 including both lay voluntary associations and religious-inspired ones (Manetti *et al.*, 2019).
38 Tuscan NPOs have ancient traditions, due to their Medieval foundations and to a prominent
39 embeddedness in the social context (Zollo *et al.*, 2017; 2019). A thirty-seven-items
40 questionnaire was developed and translated from English to Italian following the back-
41 translation procedure (Brislin, 1970). Our questionnaire was pre-tested in two ways: 1) by a
42 group of fifteen university students involved in volunteering activities and their responses
43 were not included in the final sample; 2) by five academic expert scholars of the field. In both
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3 passages, no change was considered necessary to the survey. To reduce social desirability bias
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5 and common method variance (Spector, 1994), the cover of the questionnaire stressed
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7 anonymity and strategies to assure privacy of volunteers' data. Moreover, as Podsakoff *et al.*
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9 (2012) suggest, we divided the items of the independent variables from the dependent ones.
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12 NPOs' presidents and directors directly collaborated to the spread of the survey link
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14 which was emailed to 1000 volunteers actively operating in thirty NPOs. Data collection
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16 yielded 580 responses (response rate = 58%), which resulted in a usable sample of 379
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18 questionnaires after deleting incomplete surveys. The non-response bias was estimated using
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20 wave analysis (Rogelberg and Stanton, 2007) by comparing early and late respondents. The
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22 results of *T*-tests across the demographic characteristics of the groups showed no significant
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24 differences, assuring a limited non-response bias (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). In Table 1
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26 the sample characteristics are reported.
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36 3.2. Measures

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38 The constructs were measured using scales validated in previous studies.
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41 *Motivations to volunteering* were measured through the VFI originally validated by
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43 Clary *et al.* (1998; see also Okun *et al.*, 1998), using the 30 original items divided into six
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45 functional motivations: social (e.g. "People I'm close to want me to volunteer"); values (e.g.
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47 "I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving"); understanding (e.g.
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49 "Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things"); protective (e.g. "Doing
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51 volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others");
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53 career (e.g. "Volunteering experience will look good on my resumé); and enhancement (e.g.
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55 "Volunteering increases my self-esteem").
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3 An exploratory factor analysis was initially run to confirm the validity of the two-factor
4 structure hypothesized for the VFI construct (i.e., *other-oriented* and *self-oriented*
5 motivations). The EFA analysis was conducted only for the VFI construct to empirically
6 demonstrate our hypothesis about its two-factor structure. Instead, the validity and uniqueness
7 of the positive and negative attitudes to reciprocate were already empirically validated by the
8 pertinent literature (Perugini *et al.*, 2003) and thus not further revalidated. We used a principal
9 axis factorization with a varimax rotation (Hair *et al.*, 2006) on the thirty items of the VFI
10 construct (Table 3).
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27 The results of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test (0.908) and Bartlett's sphericity test ($p > 0.001$) were
28 satisfactory and thus suggest our data were appropriate for conducting the factor analysis. As
29 a result of the principal factor axis analysis, two factors were extracted with eigenvalues
30 greater than one which explained more than 50 percent (58.434%) of the total variance (Hair
31 *et al.*, 2006). As expected, the items were nicely distributed as our theoretical previsions: the
32 *other-oriented motivations* factor allocates social and values items, while understanding,
33 career, ego-protection, and ego-enhancement loaded onto the factor *self-oriented motivations*.
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35 As shown in the rotated factor matrix (Table 3), all item loadings are higher than 0.30 and all
36 the communalities higher than 0.40 as required (Hair *et al.*, 2006), so no item was deleted
37 from the analysis. Further, both absolute and relative indexes of the two constructs are
38 satisfactory, confirming the validity of the two-factor structure for the VFI.
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55 4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

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57 The preliminary EFA was further tested by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Bagozzi
58 and Yi, 1988; Fornell *et al.*, 1990), to evaluate the psychometric properties of our
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3 constructs – other-oriented motivations, self-oriented motivations, positive attitude to
4 reciprocate, negative attitude to reciprocate, and intention to stay – through AMOS v. 26
5 (Arbuckle, 2013). To calculate parameters and test the three main hypotheses and their
6 corollaries, the maximum likelihood function was used (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Several fit
7 measures were used to verify the acceptable parsimony of the five-factor proposed model
8 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Bentler, 1990). First, absolute fit indexes were measured: 1) the
9 Chi-square of the model is significant ($\chi^2=285.260$; $p<0.01$); 2) the relative Chi-square
10 shows satisfactory fit being $\chi^2/df= 2.250$ (lower than 3 as required) (Bentler, 1990); 3) the
11 “Goodness of Fit Index” (GFI) of the model (0.946) suggests an acceptable level of fit
12 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988); 4) the “Root Mean Square Error of Approximation” (RMSEA)
13 (0.045) scores an acceptable fit level being less than 0.06 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Further,
14 the relative fit indexes, i.e. the “Comparative Fit Index” (CFI) (0.965), the “Incremental Fit
15 Index” (IFI) (0.960), the “Normed Fit Index” (NFI) (0.950), and the “Tucker-Lewis Index”
16 (TLI) (0.945) are all satisfactory above 0.90 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

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The measurement model indicated that factor loadings are significant ($p<0.01$). The
internal consistency was estimated with the composite reliability (CR) for each latent
construct (Hair *et al.*, 2006). All the variables – other-oriented motivations (0.822), self-
oriented motivations (0.815), positive attitude to reciprocate (0.734), negative attitude to
reciprocate (0.736), intention to stay (0.627) – show satisfactory composite levels of
reliability for the model, over 0.6 as required (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Convergent validity
was evaluated with the “Average of Variance Extracted” indicator (AVE) (Hair *et al.*,
2006); other-oriented motivations (0.585), self-oriented motivations (0.546), and intention
to stay (0.559) show tolerable values (>0.5 ; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), while positive attitude
to reciprocate (0.468) and negative attitude to reciprocate (0.495) are marginally below the
limit. However, several studies consider values approaching 0.5 as acceptable (see Fornell

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3 *et al.*, 1990; Hair *et al.*, 2006). Also, the square values of AVE – other-oriented
4 motivations (0.785), self-oriented motivations (0.746), positive attitude to reciprocate
5 (0.684), negative attitude to reciprocate (0.760), and intention to stay (0.735) – were all
6 higher than the construct correlations, thus indicating discriminant validity of the model
7 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hence, the overall indexes level, its reliability and validity suggest an
8 acceptable model fit.
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16 17 18 19 **4.4. Common method variance testing**

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21 We further control for the common method bias (CMB) following Podsakoff *et*
22 *al.*'s (2003; 2012) guidelines. First, we pre-tested all the scales deleting possible unclear
23 and vague items. Next, we conducted the Harman's one-factor test that showed an
24 acceptable value of 30.85% (less than 50% as required), so a limited variance explained by
25 the single factor. Finally, through a CFA we compared our hypothesized model with the
26 "one-factor model", which is a model loading all the observed variables onto a single
27 common method factor (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; 2012). The comparison yielded a
28 significant change ($p=0.05$) in the chi-square (value greater than 3.84, as required). As a
29 result, the CFA showed a better fit to the data of our hypothesized model in respect to the
30 one-factor model (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hence, CMB is unlikely to be a major threat to our
31 study.
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49 **4.4. Hypotheses testing and results**

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51 To test the mediational hypotheses, we followed the procedure proposed by Hayes (2013)
52 with the SPSS PROCESS macro (v. 3.0; Preacher and Hayes, 2004). We used the
53 bootstrapping method (based on 5,000 bootstrap samples) to conduct the mediation analysis
54 (model 4 of PROCESS) and computed 95% bias-corrected LLCIs (lower levels confidence
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3 intervals) and UCLIs (upper levels confidence intervals) around the estimates of indirect
4 effects (see Hayes, 2013) reported in Table 4. Bootstrapping has several advantages over
5 traditional mediation methods (Hayes, 2009): (1) it requires no specific sample data
6 distribution and (2) no assumption of normality of the effects; (3) it estimates both indirect
7 and interaction effects; (4) it provides accurate bias-corrected confidence intervals and (5) a
8 high predictive validity of the model.
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23 First, the independent variable has to be significantly related to the outcome variable. Both
24 other-oriented motivations (+0.32; $p<0.01$) and self-oriented motivations (+0.19; $p<0.01$)
25 positively impacted on volunteers' intention to stay with the organization. Hence, *H1a* and
26 *H1b* were supported. Next, to test the mediation, the set of corollary hypotheses needs to be
27 satisfied. The independent variables should have a significant impact on the hypothesized
28 mediating variables. Both other-oriented motivations (+0.45; $p<0.01$) and self-oriented
29 motivations (+0.32; $p<0.01$) impact on positive attitude to reciprocate, confirming *H2(c1)* and
30 *H2(c2)*. The two types of motives also significantly relate to negative attitude to reciprocate
31 but in opposite ways (-0.23; $p<0.01$ and +0.44; $p<0.01$, respectively), confirming *H3(c1)* and
32 *H3(c2)*. This implies that well-intentioned or altruistic motivated volunteers will refrain more
33 from acting in a vengeful way, while more egoistic-driven ones will be less tolerant to
34 perceived mistreatments (Hu *et al.*, 2011). Next, the mediating variables should be
35 significantly related to the outcome variable. Positive attitude to reciprocate has a positive
36 impact (+0.28; $p<0.01$) on intention to stay (*H2c3* confirmed), while negative attitude to
37 reciprocate is negatively related to it (-0.19; $p<0.01$) (*H3c3* confirmed). In sum, individuals
38 with a positive attitude in general will stay longer than negative reciprocators that may hold
39 grudge against their social environments and thus leaving sooner (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).
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3 Finally, the original influence between the independent and the outcome variable has to be
4 lessened (partial mediation) or fully absorbed (total mediation) by the mediating variable. Our
5 empirical test confirms all the hypothesized mediational effects, as indicated by the p -value of
6 the indirect effects (which have to be different than zero) and the LLCIs and ULCIs (whose
7 intervals do not contain the zero) (Preacher and Hayes, 2004). Positive attitude to reciprocate
8 lessened the influence between other-oriented motivations and intention to stay (+0.24;
9 $p < 0.01$), resulting in a partial mediating effect ($H2a$ partially supported). Similarly, positive
10 attitude to reciprocate also lessened the influence between self-oriented motivations and
11 intention to stay with the organization (+0.12; $p < 0.01$) ($H2b$ also partially supported). This
12 indicates that a positive attitude to reciprocate reinforces the volunteers' intentions to stay.
13 Thus, regardless of the main motivations for engaging in voluntarism, either other-oriented or
14 self-oriented volunteers will likely stay longer with the organization, when their attitude
15 toward reciprocation is positive and prosocially shaped (Molm *et al.*, 2007).
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33 Considering negative attitude to reciprocate, it showed no impact between other-
34 oriented motivations and intention to stay (the original beta coefficient remained the same,
35 supporting the null hypothesis $H3a$). Thus, as theoretical inferred, volunteers with other-
36 oriented motivations are not *poisoned* by vengeful behaviors; an explanation could be that
37 volunteers showing such motivations are less prone to such negative attitudes, thus this does
38 not interfere with their willingness to continuing volunteering (Liden *et al.*, 1997). Instead,
39 the relation between self-oriented motivations and intention to stay with the intervention of
40 negative attitude to reciprocate becomes not significant (the LLCIs and UCLIs interval
41 contained zero as showed in Table 4), thus resulting in a total mediation effect ($H3b$
42 supported). This important result shows that negative attitudes in combination with egoistic
43 motivations lead to a vicious behavior spiral. Indeed, negative attitude to reciprocate
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3 consumes the limited motivational push offered by egoistic motives, thus reducing the
4 permanency of the individuals in the organization (Barclay *et al.*, 2014).
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10 **5. Discussion and conclusion**

11 **5.1. Theoretical implications**

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14 The study has shown that volunteers' motivations are positively related to their intention to
15 stay (*H1a* and *H1b* supported). This result is consistent with the volunteering literature (Clary
16 *et al.*, 1998; Omoto and Snyder, 1995), and contributes to previous studies in splitting self-
17 oriented and other-oriented motivations, showing that both kinds of motivations are related to
18 intention to stay with the organization (Cornelis *et al.*, 2013; Marta *et al.*, 2006; Stukas, *et al.*,
19 2016). In addition, we showed how positive and negative reciprocity have different impact on
20 these relationships.
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30 Overall, we also offer a novel approach to the application of the functionalist model.
31 Significantly, we open up a debate on the possible different effects that other- and self-
32 oriented motivations may have. Indeed, in the pertinent literature the VFI questionnaire has
33 been either used in a six-factor structure (Clary *et al.*, 1992) or in a global synthetic index
34 (Okun *et al.*, 1998). Instead, we adopted a split approach, and similar to Stukas *et al.* (2016)
35 and Cornelis (2013) we showed that these classes of motivations work in different ways. In
36 addition, previous research on volunteering has mainly investigated motivations that induce
37 behaviors (Bussell and Forbes, 2002) and intentions to stay with organizations (Clary *et al.*,
38 1998; Webb *et al.*, 2002); we have enlarged the debate by showing that reciprocity is
39 important for fostering commitment, involvement, and intention to stay.
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53 Indeed, we have analyzed also the relation between volunteers' reciprocal attitude and
54 their intention to stay, highlighting the differences between positive and negative attitudes to
55 reciprocate. The norm of reciprocity has been analyzed in its full spectrum when considered
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3 in volunteering literature (e.g. Booth *et al.*, 2009; Lavelle, 2010) and in this way, we moved
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5 forward in respect to the extant literature that mainly focused on positive reciprocal attitude
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7 and behavior in NPOs (see Zollo *et al.*, 2017; 2019). We have instead shown that having
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9 other-oriented volunteers who tend to positively reciprocate fosters commitment and intention
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11 to stay; on the contrary, having self-oriented volunteers who tend to negatively reciprocate
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13 may discourage their commitment and intention to stay. This fact calls for a deeper level of
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15 understanding of the reciprocity element within NPOs' context (Zollo *et al.*, 2017).
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19 The norm of reciprocity is considered a key mechanism in organizations (Gouldner,
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21 1960; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn, 2003); its mediating effect suggests that NPOs' managers should
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23 favor within-organization positive reciprocal attitudes (*H2a*, *H2b* and its corollary *c1*, *c2*, *c3*
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25 confirmed). This is in line with the literature on reciprocity (Barclay *et al.*, 2014); however,
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27 this study demonstrates that another powerful tool is discouraging within-organization
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29 negative reciprocal attitudes, indeed a less studied element, that may also increase the
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31 turnover by reducing volunteers' engagement (*H3b* and its corollary *c1*, *c2*, *c3* confirmed)
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33 (Aquino *et al.*, 2006). Accordingly, our findings show that reinforcing organizational
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35 perceptions of reciprocity may improve the effectiveness of charitable organizations'
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37 management (Hu *et al.*, 2011; Jain, 2016). Thanks to our empirical analysis, we demonstrated
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39 how NPOs scholars could use the two statistically valid and independent constructs of *other-*
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41 *oriented* and *self-oriented* motivations to test alternative frameworks, additional relationships,
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43 and explore different related antecedents and outcomes. Hence, these constructs might be
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45 used to better investigate different underlying mechanisms of NPOs management strategies,
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47 thus focusing on correlations and influences between volunteers' social and values
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49 motivations (i.e., the *altruistic* sub-dimensions) as well as their understanding, career, ego-
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51 protection and self-enhancement (i.e., the *egoistic* sub-dimensions) and other organizational
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53 behavior variables.
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5.2. Practical implications

In a practical sense, we suggest NPOs' managers to pay attention to volunteers' motivations, which might be not only altruistic or other-oriented (such as social and values motivations) but also egoistic or self-oriented (such as understanding, career, ego-protection and self-enhancement motivations) (Marta *et al.*, 2006). A deep understanding of what motives volunteers to donate their time, efforts, and know-how to NPOs represents a strategic lever not only to attract new volunteers but also to maintain and retain the existing volunteers (Zollo *et al.*, 2017; 2019). Hence, observing how their motivations evolve and potentially change during their volunteering activities is essential. Particularly, managers should focus on the reasons why other-oriented and self-oriented motivations evolve during time, thus significantly impacting on volunteers' attitudes and behaviors within the organization.

Moreover, we argue that NPOs' managers should transmit signals about the way exchanges are conceived within the organization, since it can influence volunteers' attitudes about reciprocity (Lindenberg and Foss, 2011). Managers should behave as examples to foster and favor volunteering behaviors or, on the contrary, to discourage those behaviors which are not appropriate for volunteering. Through monitoring such relational signals and encouraging positive reciprocal attitudes, managers can foster positive social relationships within the organization; this in turn may generate social cohesion among volunteers (Molm *et al.*, 2007), so increasing retention and intention to stay (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).

By discouraging negative reciprocal attitudes, managers may contribute to avoid low-quality relationships within the organization (Liden *et al.*, 1997); this in turn may increase organizational commitment and social integration (Uhl-Bien and Maslyn, 2003), so inducing volunteers to remain in the organization. Managers should control how this kind of organizations react to volunteers' behavioral signals (Lindenberg and Foss, 2011); on the one

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3 hand, the management should promote and acknowledge volunteers' efforts, favoring cultures
4 where the norm of positive reciprocity is encouraged; on the other hand, they should prevent
5 and censure revengeful behaviors, so discouraging negative reciprocal attitudes.
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10 11 12 **5.3. Limitations and future research** 13

14 This work has also some limitations; for example, the self-reported nature of the questionnaire
15 can lead to a social desirability effect (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; Spector 1994). However,
16 NPOs' management strongly supported participation and they directly stressed the importance
17 of a straight response for the NPO's own sake. The second limitation is the sample collected
18 from Italy. Nevertheless, Italy has a centenary tradition in voluntarism activities resulting in a
19 capillary NPOs proliferation in the territory. For these reasons this sample may represent a
20 real excellence for the whole sector. While this study assessed a reciprocity effect and its
21 implications, future studies may explain better how managers can deal with it efficiently. For
22 example, *how can managers effectively detect negative and positive attitudes to reciprocate?*
23 *How can they create practices to limit toxic behaviors while promoting prosocial ones?* These
24 questions could be addressed through case studies showing best practices and contexts of
25 applicability. Finally, future research could consider whether reciprocity is an attitude related
26 to personal values – such as religiosity and spirituality (Lim and MacGregor, 2012) – or if its
27 intensity can be both reinforced (positive aspect) or lessened (negative aspect) by it.
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Table 1. Sample Characteristic

<i>Variable</i>	Frequency	Valid Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	248	65.4
Female	131	34.6
Total	379	
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	80	21.1
25-29	40	10.6
30-35	32	8.4
36-40	29	7.7
41-50	51	13.5
51-60	46	12.2
Over 60	101	26.6
Total	379	
<i>Status</i>		
Single	89	23.5
In a relationship	89	23.5
Married	153	40.4
Widowed	15	4.0
Separated, divorced	18	4.7
Other	15	3.9
Total	379	
<i>Education level</i>		
Primary school	14	3.7
Secondary school	83	21.9
High school	198	52.2
Bachelor's degree	30	7.9
Master's degree	33	8.7
PhD	15	4.0
Total	379	
<i>Employment</i>		
Student	56	14.8
Employee	64	16.9
Worker	38	10.0

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3	Merchant	7	1.8
4	Freelance	33	8.7
5	Teacher	5	1.3
6	Artist	9	2.4
7	Housewife	4	1.1
8	Retired	99	26.1
9	Unemployed	38	10.0
10	Other	26	6.9
11	Total	379	

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19 *Years of Volunteering*

20	Less than 1	34	9.0
21	1-4	103	27.2
22	5-10	95	25.1
23	10-15	50	13.2
24	More than 15	97	25.6
25	Total	379	

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Table 2. Means (M), standard deviations (SD), reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha), and correlations of the variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Social	3.32	1.12	<i>(0.76)</i>								
2. Values	3.51	1.32	.552*	<i>(0.72)</i>							
3. Understanding	3.70	1.02	.505*	.560*	<i>(0.75)</i>						
4. Career	2.46	1.36	.485*	.414*	.521*	<i>(0.89)</i>					
5. Protective	2.84	1.28	.560*	.555*	.497*	.600*	<i>(0.85)</i>				
6. Enhancement	3.55	1.16	.552*	.613*	.600*	.542*	.657*	<i>(0.84)</i>			
7. Pos Reciprocity	3.00	1.65	.276*	.444*	.313*	.225*	.293*	.283*	<i>(0.70)</i>		
8. Neg Reciprocity	2.90	1.20	.085	-.015	.287*	.369*	.148*	.071	.085	<i>(0.81)</i>	
9. Intention to stay	4.56	0.84	.228*	.220*	.246*	.001	.200*	.226*	.228*	-.196*	<i>(0.88)</i>

Cronbach's alpha values are reported on the diagonal

* $p < .01$

Protective = ego-protection motive; Enhancement = ego-enhancement motive.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis

Items	Factor 1 "Self-oriented Motives"	Factor 2 "Other-oriented Motives"	<i>Communalities</i>
Career1	.682		0.465
Career2	.620		0.424
Career3	.712		0.506
Career4	.705		0.497
Career5	.683		0.466
Understanding1	.607		0.438
Understanding2	.562		0.426
Understanding3	.493		0.418
Understanding4	.483		0.411
Understanding5	.617		0.420
Ego-enhancement1	.675		0.453
Ego-enhancement2	.762		0.416
Ego-enhancement3	.711		0.408
Ego-enhancement4	.585		0.514
Ego-enhancement5	.672		0.568
Ego-protection1	.673		0.456
Ego-protection2	.637		0.580
Ego-protection3	.607		0.506
Ego-protection4	.717		0.426
Ego-protection5	.753		0.452
Social1		.519	0.415
Social2		.573	0.406
Social3		.708	0.502
Social4		.688	0.474
Social5		.709	0.502
Values1		.627	0.421
Values2		.608	0.417
Values3		.598	0.410
Values4		.586	0.408
Values5		.565	0.406
Extraction method: principal axis factorization			
Rotation method: Varimax; Normalization with Kaiser			
Item loadings below 0.35 not shown			
Number of extracted components: 2			
Total Variance explained: 58.434%			

Fitting Indexes:	Factor 1	Factor 2	Thresholds:
<i>Absolute Indexes</i>			
Relative Chi-square	2.755	2.805	< 3.0
GFI	0.930	0.902	> 0.90
RMSEA	0.0495	0.058	< 0.08
<i>Relative Indexes</i>			
CFI	0.935	0.922	> 0.90
IFI	0.940	0.910	> 0.90
NFI	0.925	0.905	> 0.90
TLI	0.920	0.905	> 0.90

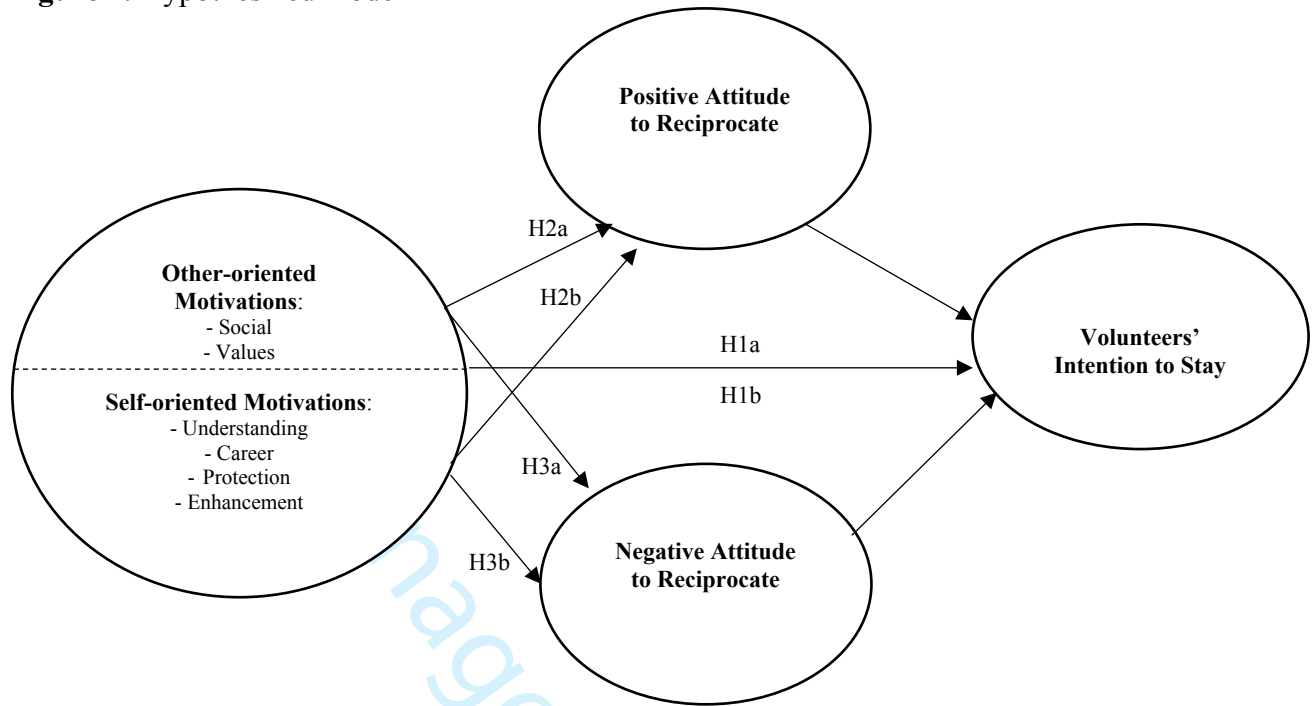
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Table 4. Results of the mediation analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Confidence Intervals (LLCIs; ULCIs)	R ²	Hypotheses
Main hypotheses					
Other-oriented motivations	Intention to Stay	+0.32*	0.2610; 0.3959	48%	H1a supported
Self-oriented motivations	Intention to Stay	+0.19*	0.0997; 0.2607		H1b supported
Other-oriented motivations and Intention to stay relation with the intervention of Positive attitude to reciprocate (Mediation effect)		+0.24* (partial mediation)	0.0571; 0.3028	49%	H2a partially supported
Self-oriented motivations and Intention to stay relation with the intervention of Positive attitude to reciprocate (Mediation effect)		+0.12* (partial mediation)	0.0330; 0.2143	49%	H2b partially supported
Other-oriented motivations and Intention to stay relation with the intervention of Negative attitude to reciprocate (Mediation effect)		+0.32* (Beta remains equal = no mediation)	0.2610; 0.3959	48%	H3a (Null Hy) supported
Self-oriented motivations and Intention to stay relation with the intervention of Negative attitude to reciprocate (Mediation effect)		Non significant (Beta becomes non significant = full mediation)	-0.1620; 0.1194	50%	H3b fully supported
Corollary hypotheses					
Other-oriented motivations	Positive Attitude to Reciprocate	+0.45*	0.3820; 0.5143	35%	H2(c1) supported
Self-oriented motivations	Positive Attitude to Reciprocate	+0.32*	0.2924; 0.4250		H2(c2) supported
Positive Attitude to Reciprocate	Intention to Stay	+0.28*	0.1290; 0.3780	28%	H2(c3) supported
Other-oriented motivations	Negative Attitude to Reciprocate	-0.23*	-0.3274; -0.2032	42%	H3(c1) supported
Self-oriented motivations	Negative Attitude to Reciprocate	+0.44*	0.2035; 0.5530		H3(c2) supported
Negative Attitude to Reciprocate	Intention to Stay	-0.19*	-0.2932; -0.1726	28%	H3(c3) supported

** $p < .01$

Figure 1. Hypothesized model



Management Decision

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