

DOES VOLUNTEERING AT EVENTS MOTIVATE REPEAT ENGAGEMENT IN VOLUNTARY SERVICE? THE CASE OF YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEERS AT EXPO MILAN 2015

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Event volunteering is a specific form of episodic volunteering. This study was conducted with a group of young people who volunteered at a cultural event. The aim was to understand the effects of this experience. One thousand nine hundred and forty-five participants completed a questionnaire before volunteering (T1). One thousand and ninety-three of these participants then completed another questionnaire at the end of the event (T2). Five hundred and forty-one of them were contacted six months later and were asked if they were still doing voluntary work (T3). The impact of having satisfactorily fulfilled the needs relating to their voluntary work, the effects of the experience, and their satisfaction with the work were observed in order to determine differences between repeat volunteers and quitters. The results show that the fulfilment of the needs relating to self-oriented motivations and the impact on self esteem are important variables in terms of volunteering at a specific event but not in terms of any ongoing experience.

Key words: Event volunteering; Longitudinal study; Motivation fulfilment; Self-esteem; Motivation to volunteer.

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Volunteers are of great importance in terms of the functioning of our modern societies and, as a consequence, their commitment to nonprofit organisations (NPOs) is a crucial social issue. NPOs have always been interested in understanding the best way to recruit and keep volunteers (Guiddi, Alfieri, Marta, & Saturni, 2015; Nencini, Romaioli, & Meneghini, 2016; Pozzi, Marta, Marzana, Gozzoli, & Ruggieri, 2014; Snyder & Omoto, 2000) and they are now facing new challenges.

The demand for opportunities to take part in short-term, flexible (or “episodic”) voluntary work has increased as a result of a changing scenario that includes busier lifestyles, longer working hours, and a declining average number of hours of voluntary service per person (Alfieri et al., 2017; Macduff, 2005, 2011; Rehberg, 2005; Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). People often feel that they lack the time and the skills to be involved in traditional volunteering (Ralston, Downward, & Lumsdon, 2004; Wilson & Musick, 1997). Episodic volunteering, however, seems to satisfy to a greater extent the needs of this new generation of volunteers with a more individualistic orientation (Dekker & Halman, 2003; Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy,

2010). Since the 1980s, the desire to engage in voluntary activities on an occasional and instrumental basis (for example at special events) has gradually become more widespread, especially with regard to young people (Handy et al., 2010; Marks & Jones, 2004).

Episodic volunteering differs profoundly from traditional volunteerism (Omoto & Snyder, 1990; Pozzi, Pistoni, & Alfieri, 2017) and for a number of reasons it seems to satisfy this increasing demand for more flexible, short-term service. This type of voluntary work seems to reflect social changes and meet the requests of young people today, and we, the authors of this paper, consider that social changes have, in fact, contributed to a modification, at least in part, of the structure and the form of this phenomenon. As a consequence, a new perspective on the study of episodic volunteering is needed and social researchers should investigate why this new type of volunteerism is so attractive.

EPISODIC AND EVENT VOLUNTEERING

The term episodic was first introduced by Macduff (1991) who described it as limited in duration or related to a particular temporary episode. Episodic volunteers are generally engaged for particular events with service covering less than three weeks per year. According to Meijs and Brudney (2007, p. 69), episodic volunteering can be defined as “giving one’s time sporadically without an ongoing commitment, only during special times of year, or at one-time events, often in the form of self-contained and time-specific projects.”

With regard to duration of service, there are three types of episodic volunteers (see Macduff, 2005, for a complete description): temporary — volunteers who serve for a short period of time, usually for a few hours or a day (they do not return and are not committed to the organisation, for example, volunteers who supply water to runners during a marathon); interim — people who volunteer on a regular basis for less than six months (for example, students doing voluntary work at their own university for a semester); and occasional — volunteers who serve at regular intervals for short periods of, for example, a month or two in duration or just an evening.

According to this classification, most people who volunteer at events are occasional. These event volunteers may repeatedly serve at events that occur with specific regularity (e.g., once a year) or sporadically at various events. Event volunteering (EV) is therefore a subcategory of episodic volunteering in which “it is the event (activity), not the host organizer (the organization), that is the center of attention” (Wollebæk, Skirstad, & Hanstad, 2014, p. 25). It represents a new way of engaging in the community that is becoming increasingly popular (Handy et al., 2010; Macduff, 2005; Marks & Jones, 2004; Meijs & Brudney, 2007) and, consequently, has attracted the attention of a number of scholars. However, almost all of the research into EV has been conducted with reference to sports events.

In the past, studies on volunteering principally focused on the motives, satisfaction, and retention of traditional volunteers, that is, people who take part in organised voluntary activities. The motivation and satisfaction relating to episodic volunteerism are a brand new field of research, and studies on retention in this area have rarely been designed according to a longitudinal method (Alfieri, Marzana, & Martinez-Damia, 2019; Bryen & Madden, 2006; Cnaan & Handy, 2005). In the specific case of EV, most studies have focused on volunteer motivation and in their review, Dunn, Chambers, and Hyde (2016) reported 24 studies on this subject. Few of these studies measured the volunteers’ intention to continue, or their satisfaction with the experience of volunteering.

Another important topic which has been underinvestigated regards the effects of experiences of voluntary service in terms of increased prosociality and active citizenship. In a study conducted by Marta, Pozzi, and Marzana (2010) involving a group of former traditional volunteers, the results indicated that the experience had made them more prosocial in attitude and that they would be more inclined to volunteer again in the near future. They also reported being more sensitive to the issue of active citizenship. In other words, these ex-volunteers recognised that volunteering had helped them to grow from the point of view of their stance as a citizen. They reported that they had a more positive view of civic development and now felt that they had a greater sense of citizenship and solidarity with their community (Born, Marzana, Alfieri, & Gavray, 2015).

To our knowledge, there have not to date been any studies on episodic volunteering which aim to identify the effects that experiencing this type of volunteering has on those who volunteer at events or whether these effects are similar to those that studies on traditional volunteering (TV) have found, that is, the planting of the so-called “prosocial seed” (Marta et al., 2010).

The studies reported below aimed to investigate whether and to what extent an experience of EV has met the expectations of a group of young event volunteers and whether it has affected any future decision to continue to engage in voluntary work.

YOUNG ADULTS AND VOLUNTEERISM

Only a few studies on traditional volunteers have specifically dealt with young adults and their motivations (e.g., Marta, Guglielmetti, & Pozzi, 2006). The results of these studies indicated that young volunteers are characterised by higher levels of self-efficacy, optimism, and self-esteem (Alfieri, Marzana & Cipresso, 2019; Allen & Rushton, 1983; Hart & Fegley, 1995; Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat, 2007). Moreover, they were of a higher academic standard, were more motivated to study, and had greater work aspirations in comparison to those of their peers who had never been involved in any type of voluntary service (Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998). They also revealed a high propensity towards prosocial attitudes and behaviors, which, in turn, was reinforced by their intensive involvement in volunteerism. In addition, the studies conducted showed that when they start working with NPOs, their motivational framework is composite in that it is both based on strong values and is community oriented. Furthermore, they draw on their experience as a volunteer in order to develop the type of competences and abilities that are useful for self-growth and this helps them to enter the job market (Capanna, Steca, & Imbimbo, 2002; Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000; Sundeen & Raskoff, 1994; Wuthnow, 1995). To sum up, research has shown that the motivations of young volunteers are different from those of people in other age groups (Okun & Schultz, 2003; Omoto et al., 2000).

There are also differences between young adults and adults in terms of motivation when episodic volunteering is involved, but the results of studies on the subject have not always been unanimous with regard to whether the expectation that underlie the motivations of young adults will be more self-oriented (Dunn et al., 2016; Handy et al., 2010; Hustinx, Haski-Leventhal, & Handy, 2008; VanSickle, Pierce, & Diacin, 2015; Wollebæk et al., 2014).

Another interesting aspect is that research has shown that young people who engage in voluntary activities during their time at university are more likely to volunteer as adults (Bowman, Brandenberger, Lapsley, Hill, & Quaranto, 2010; Meijs & Brudney, 2007). It is therefore important to know more about how to make early experiences of voluntary service satisfactory, especially for young people. However, as

mentioned earlier, episodic volunteering seems to be a type of volunteerism which is in any case particularly suitable for young adults (Handy et al., 2010).

FROM MOTIVATIONS TO SATISFACTION, RETENTION,
AND DROPOUT IN TRADITIONAL AND EPISODIC VOLUNTEERING

In the case of episodic volunteering, it is possible to analyse the degree of retention by means of referring to the number of times volunteers repeat the experience (Macduff, 2005). In the literature on the subject, these volunteers are sometimes called habitual episodic volunteers (Handy, Brodeur, & Cnaan, 2006) or regular episodic volunteers (Wollebæk et al., 2014).

In research TV, the issue of volunteer dropout and the factors that may prevent it has frequently been focused on. Vecina, Fuertes, and Abad (2010) emphasised that people will continue to volunteer as long as they feel that the motivations that are relevant for them are satisfied. When this is the case, they identify with their role as a volunteer and become committed to the organisation they work with (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Piliavin & Callero, 1991). According to Vecina et al. (2010), these cues allow researchers to predict whether volunteers will remain or abandon voluntary service. This study revealed that those volunteers who had served for at least eight years in an NPO had a higher level of organisational commitment and a strong perception that their identity was linked to their role as a volunteer. They were also highly satisfied with the organisation they served with and intended to remain at for at least 2 years. The results of this study also provided evidence that, over the years, the degree of commitment to an NPO (rather than the degree of satisfaction) seems to play an increasingly important role as a determinant of a volunteer's intention to stay. Indeed, in the long term, volunteer satisfaction seems to diminish in importance as a determinant of the intention to continue (Vecina, Chacón, Marzana, & Marta, 2013). However, many of the conclusions reached in studies on traditional volunteers are not applicable to episodic volunteers. One reason for this is that episodic volunteers often work with various NPOs and, as a consequence, it is impossible to assess whether feelings of commitment to an organisation affects any decision to repeat the experience. In fact, episodic volunteering, according to Meijs and Brudney's (2007) definition reported above, differs from TV in that there is a lack of ongoing commitment.

The issues surrounding sustained episodic volunteering thus appear to be particularly linked to the satisfaction of volunteer expectations. Research on TV has extensively shown that people are motivated to volunteer for various reasons (Kiviniemi, Snyder, & Omoto, 2002) and that these reasons differ in terms of the volunteers' perception of the tasks which are more relevant to their personal motives (Houle, Sagarin, & Kaplan, 2005). In a cross-sectional study on episodic volunteering that aimed to compare *novices* (volunteers who were serving for the first time) and volunteers who already had served two or three times, Hyde, Dunn, Bax, and Chambers (2016) found that in both groups the satisfaction of the participants and the satisfaction of their motivations were strongly associated with their intention to volunteer again in the future. A significant improvement in the understanding and measurement of this aspect was made when Stukas, Worth, Clary, and Snyder (2009) proposed a matching hypothesis based on a theoretical framework using a functional approach (Snyder, Clary, & Stukas, 2000). The basis for this relates to the idea that differing environmental opportunities may be differentially rewarding to volunteers with different motives.

Stukas et al. (2009) started by showing that not all volunteer motivations have the same importance in terms of their contribution to the level of satisfaction. When the most important motivations are satisfied, the level of satisfaction is high and the intention to continue is strong. In effect, in operational

terms, the most satisfied volunteers are those who report a greater number of high motive-high affordance matches. As a consequence of this discovery, Stukas et al. (2009) developed a parsimonious index, the so-called total match index (TMI) which represents the overall motive-benefit match. The aim was to enable researchers to predict whether there would be a favourable outcome, above and beyond motives and affordance ratings alone. With reference to the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) developed by Clary et al. (1998) for the assessment of volunteer motivations, Stukas et al. created 12 items (two for each function assessed by the VFI) that aimed to capture the extent to which the experience of actually doing voluntary work aligns with the individual's motives for volunteering. According to the authors: "Besides being easy to calculate, a multiplicative product also resonates with other well-known heuristic formulas in psychology, for example, the classic Expectancy-Value models (Feather, 1982) that predict goal-driven behavior by multiplying a person's subjective likelihood of success (expectancy) by the importance of the goal (value)" (Stukas et al., 2009, p. 9).

Güntert, Neufeind, and Wehner (2015) recently used this procedure in a longitudinal study involving volunteers at a sports event in order to test the degree to which the match indexes accounted for any variance between volunteer satisfaction and the intention to volunteer again. The results showed that the match index related to the "understanding" motive accounted for any additional variance in both the participants' satisfaction and their intention to volunteer again.

VOLUNTEERING AND SELF-ESTEEM

In their study, Yanay and Yanay (2008) stated that dropping out is not always a product of waning motivation — for many volunteers, quitting was extremely difficult and was rather the outcome of discrepancies between "ought to be" and "actual" experiences. Volunteers expect to feel good about themselves when volunteering but they are expected by the NPO to manage any feelings of discomfort and uncertainty independently. These discrepancies between expectations and reality may elicit feelings of anger and disappointment. As a result, committed volunteers drop out in order to preserve positive feelings about themselves. Feeling good is related to the idea of subjective well-being which implies positive self esteem (see also Ryff and Keyes' studies, 1995; Alfieri, Marzana, & Cipresso, 2019) and self acceptance, which is related to the extent to which a person likes most aspects of his/her own personality.

The issue of volunteer well-being (and, consequently, self acceptance) is strongly related to one of the most debated matters in volunteer motivation which regards whether these motivations are altruistic or egotistical. Some researchers have proposed that helpful actions reflect intrinsically altruistic personalities and humanitarian concerns (Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer, 1991; Eisenberg et al. 1989; Rush-ton, 1984) as well as a purely altruistic motivation to benefit others (Batson, 1987, 1990, 1998). On the contrary, others have stated that helping behaviors are motivated by more selfish concerns, for example, making oneself feel good, boosting self esteem or securing social recognition (Archer, Diaz-Loving, Gollwitzer, Davis, & Foushee, 1981; Cialdini, Baumann, & Kenrick, 1981; Schaller & Cialdini, 1988; Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989). Research has proven that in the case of young adults, volunteering produces positive outcomes in terms of an increase in self-esteem, self acceptance and self-efficacy (King, Walder, & Pavey, 1970; Omoto & Snyder, 1990).

To our knowledge, there are no studies that specifically analyse whether individual levels of self-esteem and any improvements that result from volunteering are related to the intention to engage in EV.

WHY DO PEOPLE TURN TO EVENT VOLUNTEERING?

As mentioned above, EV is a specific form of occasional episodic volunteering that shares some features with other types of volunteering (specifically, TV and temporary and interim episodic volunteering). Therefore, in terms of motivation, satisfaction, and outcomes relating to the experience, it is important to establish, what distinguishes EV from other types of volunteering and what it has in common with them.

According to Kumnig et al. (2015) who investigated volunteering at the Special Winter Olympics in Innsbruck in 2008, the multidimensional structure of sports volunteerism (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991) can be described in terms of five motives that they considered the most relevant (Monga, 2006): altruistic value, personal development, community concern, ego enhancement, and social adjustment. The results of this study seem to indicate that the motivations of event volunteers (and also traditional volunteers) are a combination of the motivational functions assessed in the VFI.

There have been studies that have shown that there may be many factors motivating event volunteers, just as in the case of traditional volunteers (Treuren, 2014; VanSickle et al., 2015). However, those who volunteer at a sports event are mainly motivated by a personal interest in the sport in question (VanSickle et al., 2015).

A study carried out by Treuren (2014) focused on motives which were specifically linked to the event itself and the results indicate that volunteers who serve at events can be classified into six distinct motivational types. These include: those who are mainly motivated by the opportunity of obtaining a form of tangible benefit (instrumentalist volunteers); those who are not very interested in the event or the organisation but are compelled by feeling of social obligation to provide assistance (obligated volunteers); those who really like all aspects of the event and volunteer for pleasure and a sense of responsibility to ensure the success of the event (very keen enthusiast volunteers); those who are still very keen to be involved but are less enthusiastic about the event (semi-keen enthusiastic volunteers); those for whom the key motivation is to be involved and provide support for the event (associative-supportive motivated volunteers); and, lastly, those who seem to have been obligated by friends or a sense of duty to participate (habitual but not very interested volunteers). Finally, Kumnig et al. (2015) showed that the experience of volunteering at the Special Winter Olympics in Innsbruck in 2008 and the motivational schemata associated with this event both contributed to the psychological well-being of the volunteers.

AIMS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The main aim of this study was to shed light on the phenomenon of EV and since most of the studies that have been conducted on this subject only refer to sport events, we decided to focus on a cultural event. It is also true that in the literature on volunteerism in general, and on EV in particular, only a few studies adhered to a longitudinal design and, consequently, there are very few studies on retention.

With the purpose of addressing this gap, we assessed a group of volunteers at a specific event in order to measure their motives, their satisfaction, and their intention to continue both at the time of the event and with reference to their current involvement in voluntary service six months after the event in question. In other words, our main aim was to determine whether EV can satisfy volunteers' motivations and whether their satisfaction with the experience plays a role in any subsequent decision to continue volunteering. The specific research questions were:

1. Are there any differences between event volunteers who continue and those who quit volunteering after the event in terms of feelings of satisfaction elicited by the experience and the satisfaction of the motivations that led them to volunteer?
2. Is there any relationship between the individual level self-esteem and the motivations to volunteer of event volunteers who continue and those who quit volunteering after the event?

Study 1 focuses on the first research question, Study 2 refers to the second. The results of both studies have important implications for voluntary organisations since they provide information which is useful for the recruitment and retention of episodic volunteers.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The Universal Exposition is a community event of global interest that takes place every five years in a different country. The aim is to increase people's awareness of important issues in order to influence the choices they make and the actions they perform with a view to ensuring an overall improvement in the welfare of humanity. The present study was conducted during the 2015 Universal Exposition in Milan (EXPO from now on). The main topics of EXPO 2015 were nutrition and sustainability, and environmental and human resources.

This international event was extremely large and it involved a total of 5,797 volunteers. EXPO volunteering is a very interesting and meaningful type of volunteering to study. As part of a joint project with the Voluntary Service Centre in Milan (CIESSEVI¹) who recruited, trained, and supervised the volunteers, we set up and carried out a longitudinal study, collecting data in three phases: before the beginning of the event (pre EXPO experience - T1), at the end of the event (post EXPO experience - T2), and six months after the end of the event (follow up - T3). We gathered data six months after the end of the event in order to find out whether any of them had decided to engage in new voluntary activities or had simply quit volunteering.

STUDY 1

With a view to establishing whether there were any differences between event volunteers who had abandoned volunteering after EXPO and those who had continued to do voluntary work as a consequence of their satisfaction resulting from the satisfaction of their motivations, we tested the hypothesised model shown in Figure 1. This model was tested separately on *repeat volunteers* (participants who at T3 were still doing voluntary activities) and *quitters* (those participants who at T3 were not doing any voluntary activities).

Method and Procedure

Since the study was longitudinal, the participants completed online questionnaires at T1 and T2. About six months after the end of EXPO, each volunteer was then invited to fill in a third online questionnaire (T3). The present study refers to those event volunteers who completed the questionnaire at all three points in time. According to the data collected at T3, we divided the sample into two groups: those who after EXPO had engaged in further voluntary activities (repeat volunteers) and those who had not (quitters). A path analysis (AMOS 21.0; Arbuckle, 2012) was run on both the repeat volunteers and the quitters in order to test the hypothesised model.

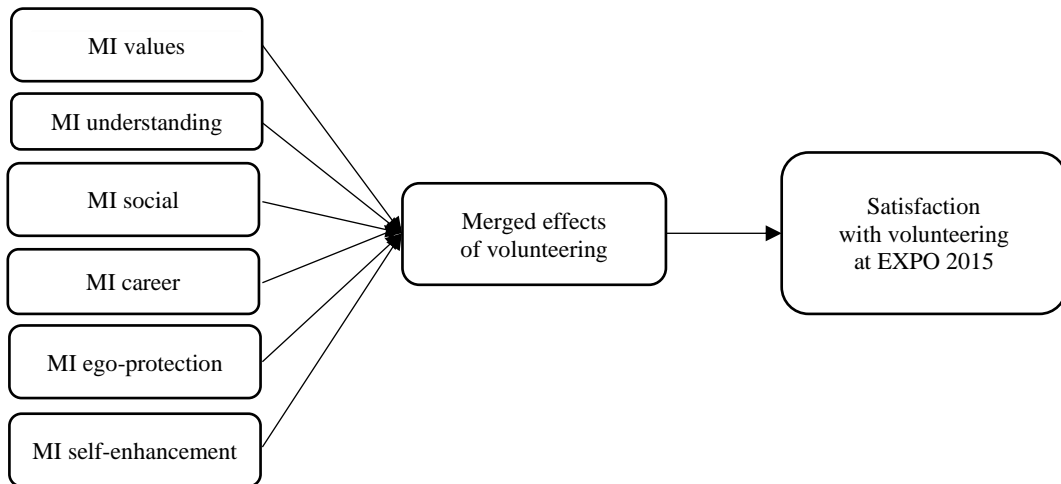


FIGURE 1
The hypothesised model.
MI = match indexes.

Participants

The aim of this study was to assess young adult event volunteers. As a consequence, only those aged 18-30 were selected from the total group of volunteers. The total number of participants in this age group was 1,945 at T1, 1,093 at T2, and 514 at T3. As reported above, the analyses were conducted on the 514 young adults who had filled out all of the questionnaires. This group was comprised of 71% of females and 29% of males. The mean age for the women was 22.4 ($SD = 2.9$) and for the men 22.1 ($SD = 3.1$).

Sixty-five of the participants (12.6%) already had experience of volunteering before working at EXPO and 449 participants (87.4%) had never been volunteers before. In terms of demographics, there were no significant differences between the two groups.

At T3, six months after EXPO, 160 participants (31.1%) had started a new voluntary activity (repeat volunteers) and 354 participants (68.9%) had not (quitters).

Measures

The measures recorded are presented according to the time of data collection.

Time 1

Demographic information. Participants provided background demographic information. In this study, the focus was on age and gender.

Previous experience of volunteering. A single item assessed whether the participants had previously volunteered for any events or had done any traditional volunteering.

Motivation to volunteer. Participants completed the Italian version (Barbaranelli, Caprara, Capanna, & Imbimbo, 2003) of the Voluntary Function Inventory (VFI) devised by Clary et al. (1998). This is a 30-item scale. The volunteers reported the level of their agreement with each item using a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). These items can be divided into 5-item subgroups, each one pertaining to one of the motivational functions that Clary et al. (1998) identified as being the most important for volunteering. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for the 5-item subgroups of the VFI at Time 1 were: values

(e.g., “I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself”) $\alpha = .76$; understanding (e.g., “I can learn more about the cause for which I am working”) $\alpha = .77$; career (e.g., “Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work”) $\alpha = .87$; social (e.g., “People I am close to want me to volunteer”) $\alpha = .81$; ego-protection (e.g., “No matter how bad I have been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it”) $\alpha = .83$; and self-enhancement (e.g., “Volunteering makes me feel important”) = .81.

Time 2

Environmental affordances. The participants reported their experiences of environmental affordances while actually working as volunteers. A 12-item measure designed for this purpose by Stukas et al. (2009) was used. Each item was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all accurate* to 5 = *extremely accurate*). There were two items corresponding to each of the motivational functions proposed by Clary et al. (1998) in the VFI. The Environmental Affordances Scale (EAS) scores, combined with the VFI scores resulted in six match indexes (MI; one for each function). These indexes were computed by means of multiplying the mean resulting from the five items of each subscale of the VFI and the mean of the two corresponding items of the EAS (e.g., VFI values mean score \times EAS values mean score). Each MI represents the extent to which the experience of volunteering has satisfy the initial motivations of the participant and this in turn accounts for the weight that each function has in motivating that participant in continue to do voluntary work.

Time 3

Merged effects from EXPO experience. The changes that the participants perceived in their life as a result of their EXPO experience were assessed. A 18-item scale adapted from a study carried out by Marta & Pozzi (2008) was used. The Merged Effect Scale (MES) represents an “index in progress” of what a person feels in terms of self improvement as a result of his/her voluntary service. Cronbach’s α was .93. The respondents were requested to indicate the level of their agreement with the items by means of a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). Some examples of the items in the MES are: “I’m more friendly,” “I have understood how lucky I am,” and “I have improved my relationship with my parents.”

The perceived satisfaction of the participants with their experience of volunteering at EXPO. A single item assessed the extent to which, six months after the end of the event, the participants were satisfied with their experience at EXPO.

Current engagement in volunteering. Participants were asked whether, at that time (i.e., six months after the end of EXPO), they were still doing voluntary work or not.

Results

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations of all the variables, for both repeat volunteers and for quitters. It is interesting to note that, in contrast with analyses of motivations relating to traditional volunteers (as clearly reported by Chacón, Gutiérrez, Sauto, Vecina, & Pérez, 2017), the results show that for these event volunteers, the VFI understanding motivational function was more important than VFI values.

TABLE 1
 Descriptive analyses and correlations of the instruments for both repeat volunteers and quitters

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. MI values	15.14 13.97	4.57 4.89	-	.47	.51	.30	.41	.50	.45	.22
2. MI understanding	17.15 17.55	4.33 4.28	.59	-	.38	.55	.51	.67	.38	.27
3. MI social	7.47 6.63	4.35 3.65	.50	.37	-	.46	.60	.55	.51	.13*
4. MI career	11.23 12.02	5.55 5.40	.35	.44	.37	-	.49	.59	.40	.10*
5. MI ego-protection	7.10 7.13	4.60 4.47	.44	.48	.51	.36	-	.63	.44	.17
6. MI self-enhancement	13.35 13.76	5.35 5.28	.57	.64	.55	.42	.64	-	.44	.22
7. Merged effects of volunteering	3.02 3.05	0.80 0.72	.49	.42	.46	.34	.32	.48	-	.36
8. Satisfaction with volunteering at EXPO 2015	4.71 4.74	0.54 0.55	.31	.26	.26	.16	.22	.31	.38	-

Note. Repeat volunteers are shown in bold above the diagonal. Quitters are below the diagonal. MI = match indexes. All correlations are $p < .05$. * $p = n. s.$

The hypothesized model was tested separately on both repeat volunteers and on quitters. Figure 2 shows the final model relating to those participants who had continued to volunteer and Figure 3 relates to quitters.

With reference to repeat volunteers, the final model showed: $\chi^2(6) = 8.01, p = .238$; RMSEA = .05, 95% CI [.00, .12]; CFI = .10. This model accounts for 13% of the total variance in satisfaction with the experience as a volunteer at EXPO and 35% for the outcomes of this experience (merged effects).

MI values (.20) and MI social (.24) were shown to be predictors for the merged effects relating to the EXPO experience. In addition, the results indicated that the latter index was strongly related to perceived satisfaction (.36).

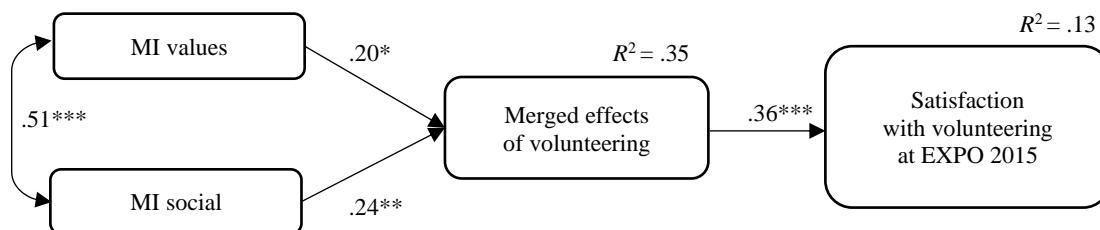


FIGURE 2
 Model for repeat volunteers — only significant paths are shown.
 MI = match indexes.
 *** $p < .000$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

With reference to quitters (Figure 3), the final model showed $\chi^2(6) = 12.59, p = .05$; RMSEA = .06, 95% CI [.00, .10]; CFI = .99. This model accounts for 14% of the total variance in satisfaction with the experience as a volunteer at EXPO and 34% for the resulting outcomes (merged effects).

Similarly to the model resulting from the data for repeat volunteers, MI values (.23) and MI social (.22) are predictors of merged effects. However, in the case of quitters, an additional index also accounts for the variability in the perceived satisfaction of the participants. This is MI self-enhancement (.18) which was strongly related to perceived satisfaction (.38).

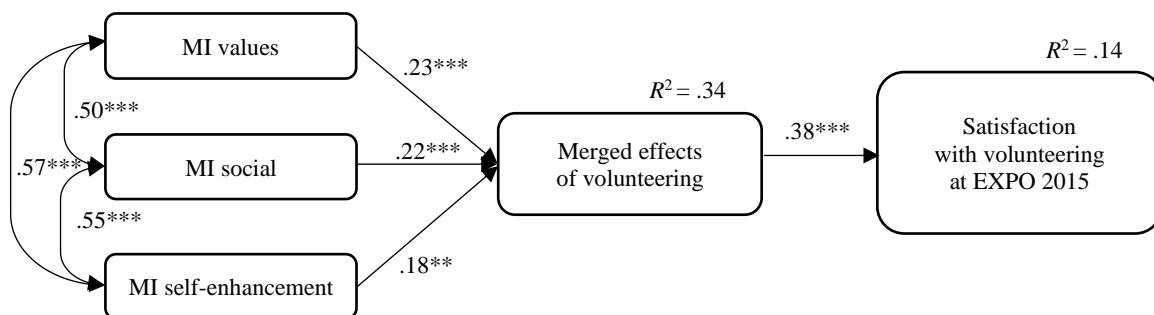


FIGURE 3
 Model for quitters — only significant paths are shown.
 MI = match indexes.
 *** $p < .000$. ** $p < .01$.

Conclusion

The results provided us with two different models: one for those participants who had taken up new voluntary activities subsequent to EXPO, and one for quitters. In particular, the results revealed that the satisfaction of the two types of motivation as assessed by the VFI, that is, values (MI values) and social (MI social), has a remarkable impact on the merged effects relating to the EXPO experience for both groups (repeat volunteers and quitters). To sum up, a combination of individualistic and pure prosocial motivations seem to account for participant satisfaction.

That being the case, repeat volunteers and quitters do however seem to differ in terms of the contribution that the fulfilment of expectations which Clary et al. (1998) labelled as self-enhancement (MI self-enhancement) seems to have on the individual's perceived overall satisfaction with their experience at EXPO. Motivation relating to self-enhancement involves a process that focuses on self-growth and development leading to an improvement in personal skills. It is thus generally classified as an instrumental motivation (Clary et al., 1998; Cornelis, Van Hiel, & De Cremer, 2013).

Accordingly, those participants who had abandoned voluntary service after EXPO had a greater perception that their experience at EXPO has satisfied their personal expectations pertaining to self-enhancement, that is, the strengthening of self-esteem and self acceptance. In addition, the realisation of the self-enhancement motivation was found to impact on how they felt after they quit (MES) and the resulting merged effects, in turn, impacted on the participant's current satisfaction with having volunteered at EXPO. This was not the case for those participants who had continued to do voluntary work after EXPO. Analogous results were found by Vecina & Chacón (2017). In their work satisfaction of career and en-

hancement motivations had a negative relationship with sustained volunteering: volunteers that were more satisfied with these two motivations had higher probabilities of dropping out than less satisfied volunteers.

The results of this study led us to go on to reflect on the effect of EV on the decision regarding whether or not to continue voluntary work. We might ask to what extent are more individualistic motives (i.e., those linked to the sphere of the Ego) involved in an individual's decision to seek, carry out, and then leave voluntary service. How are these motivations connected to an indicator of well-being that is the level of self-esteem of the participants?

If it is true that voluntary work increases one's self-esteem, can resorting to EV in a functional way be seen as a means for young people to "re-establish" a balance and to make them feel better? This research question is addressed in Study 2.

STUDY 2

The results of Study 1 indicated that quitters perceived their desire for self-enhancement was fulfilled as a result of their EXPO experience and that this was important to their sense of satisfaction. In the literature on the subject, a motivation relating to self-enhancement is considered a self-oriented motivation, as is ego-protection (Cornelis et al., 2013; Omoto et al., 2000).

In light of this, an important question arises with regard to repeat volunteers versus quitters: was the participants' self esteem connected to their motivation?

Method and Procedure

We conducted a series of regression analyses on both subsamples (repeat volunteers and quitters, as already distinguished in Study 1). The aim of these analyses was to understand whether and to what extent their motivations to volunteer were related to an individual indicator of well-being, that is, their level of self-esteem.

All of the variables used in these analyses were collected at T1. Specifically, our purpose here was to figure out whether there were already differences between the repeat volunteers and quitters before EXPO.

Measures

The measures recorded are presented according to the time of data collection.

Time 1:

Demographic information. See Study 1 for a complete description.

Motivation to volunteer. See Study 1 for a complete description.

Self-esteem. This was been assessed by means of a 10-item scale, the Self-Esteem Scale devised by Rosenberg (1965). Examples of the items are: "I feel I'm a worthy person" and "I feel I have a lot of qualities." Respondents reported their agreement with each item on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's α was .85.

Time 3:

Current engagement in volunteering. See Study 1 for a complete description.

Results

Table 2 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables, both for repeat volunteers and quitters. With reference to the repeat volunteers, none of the VFI motivational functions significantly correlate with self-esteem. On the contrary, a significant negative correlation between VFI ego-protection motivation and self-esteem was found for the quitters.

TABLE 2
 Descriptive analyses and correlations of the instruments for both repeat volunteers and quitters

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. VFI values	3.81 3.61	0.67 0.74	-	.41	.33	.11	.41	.39	-.01*
2. VFI understanding	4.14 4.12	0.65 0.59	.55	-	.29	.53	.38	.54	.07*
3. VFI social	2.34 2.08	0.88 0.74	.32	.18	-	.28	.60	.48	-.09*
4. VFI career	3.18 3.45	1.01 0.92	.16	.41	.20	-	.37	.50	.08*
5. VFI ego-protection	2.37 2.31	0.96 0.89	.45	.38	.46	.25	-	.66	-.05*
6. VFI self-enhancement	3.47 3.43	0.88 0.82	.49	.51	.41	.28	.66	-	.10*
7. Self-esteem	3.69 3.71	0.70 0.63	.05*	.01*	.10*	-.04*	-.21	-.01*	-

Note. VFI = Volunteer Function Inventory. Repeat volunteers are in bold. All correlations are $p < .05$. * $p = n.s.$

Table 3 shows that at T1 in the group of repeat volunteers there is not a significant relationship between the motivation to volunteer and self-esteem ($R^2 = .01$).

TABLE 3
 Repeat volunteers: Results of the multiple linear regression in which the dependent variable is self esteem and the independent variables are the motivations to volunteer

	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	.41		8.27	.00
1. VFI values	.10	-.01	-0.14	.89
2. VFI understanding	.11	.02	0.17	.86
3. VFI social	.08	-.12	-1.21	.23
4. VFI career	.07	.04	0.43	.67
5. VFI ego-protection	.09	-.15	-1.24	.21
6. VFI self-enhancement	.10	.23	1.87	.06

Note. $R^2 = .01$. VFI = Volunteer Function Inventory. *SE* = standard error.

Table 4 shows that in the group of quitters the motivations to volunteer account in part for the variability in self-esteem ($R^2 = .11$). Moreover, there are significant relations between VFI social motivation (.22), VFI ego-protection motivation (-.46), VFI self-enhancement motivation (.15), and self-esteem.

TABLE 4
 Quitters: Results of the multiple linear regression in which the dependent variable is self esteem and the independent variables are the motivations to volunteer

	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	.23		14.19	.00
1. VFI values	.55	.11	1.64	.10
2. VFI understanding	.73	.03	0.44	.66
3. VFI social	.05	.22	3.82	.00
4. VFI career	.04	-.04	-0.80	.42
5. VFI ego-protection	.05	-.46	-6.55	.00
6. VFI self-enhancement	.06	.15	1.99	.05

Note. $R^2 = .11$. VFI = Volunteer Function Inventory. *SE* = standard error. Significant values are in bold.

Conclusion

The results of Study 2 provide evidence that some instrumental motivations of quitters to volunteer at EXPO are related to their levels of self-esteem to a greater extent than is the case for the group of repeat volunteers. With regard to the results of a previous study on 4,000 Australian volunteers, Stukas, Hoye, Nicholson, Brown, and Aisbett (2016) maintained that people: “who might be struggling to feel good about themselves or who are dealing with loneliness due to a lack of rewarding social connections may seek out volunteer activities to distract themselves from their negative feelings” (p. 124).

Similarly, our results suggest that the participants who quit after EXPO had probably perceived the opportunity to volunteer at EXPO as an experience that might (positively) affect their levels of self-esteem. Since they chose a type of volunteerism that requires no ties to an organisation, once they felt that their instrumental motivations had been realised they quit voluntary work and there were no additional factors (e.g., commitment to the NPO or volunteer role identity) which motivated them to continue volunteering. We consider this to be an interesting result which should be taken into account in future studies on event volunteers.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The significance of the results of this study relate not only to a confirmation of the importance of the fulfilment of expectations related to satisfy values and social motivations in terms of the degree to which a volunteer will maintain and sustain their commitment to this type of volunteerism, but also to the fact that a certain number of event volunteers drop-out once they have satisfied their needs regarding their motivations linked to values, social aspects, and self-enhancement.

We agree with those authors who claim that in order to understand the nature of a volunteer’s decision to persevere or dropout, close attention should be paid to processes of self-regulation (in terms of the

fulfilment of needs) in the context of the specific relationship between the volunteer and the organisation they work with. The results of the present research confirm the importance of sustaining additional factors (beyond the fulfilment of the needs of the volunteer) in order to favor an ongoing commitment to volunteering (particularly in the case of EV). Paying attention to these aspects may help scholars and NPO managers to understand the variables that are important to consider when planning recruitment or retention strategies for volunteers.

In the literature on the subject, there are many studies on TV and the importance of certain variables in terms of sustaining the engagement of volunteers (e.g., Kiviniemi et al., 2002; Marta & Pozzi, 2008; Nencini et al., 2016; Procentese, De Carlo & Gatti, 2019; Romaioli, Nencini, & Meneghini, 2016; Vecina et al., 2010). On the contrary, few studies have aimed to investigate this issue with reference to event volunteers. There is even less longitudinal research on how to predict the future behavior of event volunteers. In addition, the studies reported in literature have mainly involved volunteers who serve at sport events. To our knowledge, there have been no specific investigations focusing on community events such as EXPO Milan 2015.

It is interesting to note that, in contrast with all of the analyses relating to the motivations of traditional volunteers (as clearly reported by Chacón et al., 2017), VFI understanding (rather than VFI values) was the most important motivation to volunteer at EXPO. Recently, Chacón et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis on 48 studies that assessed volunteer motivations by means of the VFI (Clary et al., 1998). The results indicated that when traditional volunteer motivations are assessed, the hierarchy of the VFI motivational functions is always the same and that VFI values is the most important motivation to volunteer. This means that, according to the classification of the authors (Clary et al., 1998), traditional volunteers seem to be mainly driven by other-focused motives. It appears that this does not apply to episodic volunteers (or indeed to EXPO volunteers). Previous research on episodic volunteers has already suggested that these volunteers may be driven by less other-focused motives than traditional volunteers. For example, Dietz (1999), who compared long-term and episodic volunteers at the “Make a Difference” program (Phoenix, Arizona), had already observed that the latter gave greater importance to the VFI understanding motivational function. Moreover, in comparison to long-term volunteers, the episodic volunteers reported lower scores for VFI values. To sum up, Dietz suggested that episodic volunteers may be driven by self-interest, but they are not less motivated by “compassion” (see also Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003; MacDuff, 2005; Wollebæk et al., 2014). It is worth mentioning that (in accordance with Bowlby’s point of view, 1982), Gillath et al. (2005) related the VFI understanding function to human beings’ exploratory behavioral system. Thus, understanding represents a motivation to achieve “a more mature understanding of the world and oneself” (Meneghini, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2018, p. 524). As a consequence, rather than being classified as strictly self-focused, this function is more one-sided, other-focused, or altruistic.

However, in the case of event volunteers (as compared to traditional or episodic volunteers), other potential motivational factors (in addition to Clary et al.’s motivational functions) may be considered. For example, Monga (2006) pointed out that “special events are characterized by festive spirit, uniqueness, tradition, hospitality, celebratory atmosphere, element of leisure, social, and cultural experiences, are of limited duration, and offer a special experience” (p. 51). Given these peculiarities, the author expected the motives of event volunteers to differ from the more altruistic motivations characteristic of traditional contexts. In accordance with this assumption, Handy et al. (2006) found that event volunteers at summer festivals were less likely to be motivated by other-oriented than self-oriented motives.

Smith et al. (2010) found that regular student volunteers perceive altruistic motivations and benefits as more important than is the case with event volunteers and non-volunteer students. These researchers

proposed two possible explanations for these findings: first, that altruistic people tend to volunteer more than others and second, that people who repeatedly volunteer may prefer to attribute to themselves positive traits such as altruism. However, all of these studies were cross-sectional.

The present study, on the other hand, was designed to be longitudinal. The focus is on the motivations which prompt people to engage in volunteering, and the influence of individual levels of self-esteem (as a well-being indicator) was taken into consideration. Our research also assessed the extent to which the fulfilment of expectations is connected to a feeling satisfaction with the experience. This made it possible to investigate the differences between repeat volunteers and quitters.

Our studies have two main strengths. The results of Study 1 are in contrast with the general trend in research on volunteering. With reference to event volunteers in particular, it seems that those who feel that their needs have been satisfied are more likely to quit volunteering. This could be interpreted as a characteristic of event volunteers and/or a peculiarity of this age group. Indeed, as we emphasised above, the group of volunteers that we selected were all young adults.

Moreover, the aim of the research was to analyse a type of volunteering that has not been investigated before, that is, volunteering at a cultural (as opposed to sports) event. The fact that the studies were also longitudinal meant that it was possible to follow the event volunteers after the end of EXPO Milan 2015 in order to discover whether they had continued doing voluntary work or had abandoned volunteering.

To sum up, we may assume that when young adults do voluntary work at an event, they will often feel that this experience has satisfied some of their needs (i.e., self-enhancement) and will therefore have no further desire to pursue any additional commitments. The limits to the research have been discussed in the conclusions to the two studies. We feel in any case that it is worth noting that a significant finding is that the results of this research have revealed that EV plays an instrumental role for those volunteers who link their individual sense of well-being to self-oriented motivations.

NOTE

1. According to its mission statement, the CIESSEVI promotes volunteering and works to improve the managerial, organisational, and operational skills that are needed by NPOs in order to operate efficiently. Moreover, the CIESSEVI is committed to providing training programs for volunteers and offering a consultation service to NPOs.

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