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# The mediating impact of motive fulfilment on the relationship between supervisors and volunteers' intention to stay

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**Abstract:** In this study, the effects of relationships with immediate supervisors, or Leader-Membership Exchange (LMX), on volunteers' intentions to stay with their organisations through motive fulfilment are examined. Data were collected from 213 volunteers working in community non-profit organisations in Queensland, Australia, and hypotheses tested with simple and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings show that the fulfilment of values, understanding, enhancement, social, and career motives partially mediated the effect of LMX on volunteers' intentions to stay. The results indicate that motive fulfilment is important in promoting positive workplace outcomes by enhancing volunteer-supervisor relationships.

**Keywords:** volunteers; leader-member exchange; motive fulfilment; intention to stay and NPOs.

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## 1 Introduction

Volunteering rates in Australia are declining (Smerdon, 2015; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; Same et al., 2020), resulting in fewer volunteers and negatively impacting the supply of services in Non-profit Organisations (NPOs). This situation applies to many other countries as reports have shown a continued decrease of volunteering rates. For example, surveys have shown consistent decrease in the number of people participating in formal volunteering in the USA (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2016) and a steady decline in the number of volunteers in the UK (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2019). Besides decreasing volunteering rate, Bortree and Waters (2014) observed that volunteers do not stay long in an organisation, which means that remaining volunteers face an increased workload and the possibility of burnout. One of the consequences of burnout is an increased intention to leave, and in most cases, it results in high dropout or turnover rates (Huang et al., 2010; Millette and Gagné, 2008; Moreno-Jiménez et al., 2012).

High turnover is a challenge across all types of organisations, but for NPOs, changes in the social conditions of volunteers (Taylor et al., 2006) have further decreased participation, as young volunteers are contributing fewer hours (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This has led to a reduction in the ability of NPOs in Australia to provide the services demanded by their clients (Australian Council of Social Services [ACOSS], 2009; Volunteering Australia, 2016). Volunteer dropout rates and decreasing participation are therefore crucial concerns that need to be addressed to promote sustainable volunteer management practices in NPOs. Scholars have recognised the dropout rate as a challenge and have asserted that community NPOs need to do all they can to retain their existing volunteers (Bang et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Starnes, 2007) by addressing volunteers' intentions to leave and reducing the rate of dropping out. In light of this context, understanding of the factors that predict the decisions of volunteers to remain volunteers is necessary and more research is required to provide a more

comprehensive evidence-based knowledge from which managers can make better decisions to improve volunteer's service tenure.

Past studies have identified several factors as predictors of volunteers' intentions to stay. One such predictor is Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) (see Bang, 2011; Usadolo, 2016; Usadolo and Usadolo, 2019), which refers to subordinate's satisfaction with the relationships that develop between themselves and their supervisors. LMX is a typical Social Exchange Theoretical (SET) variable because it assumes that effective workplace relationships deliver tangible and intangible benefits to the individual, their supervisor and the organisation. The dynamics of SET, and in turn, LMX are explained later in the paper. The construct LMX has been used by researchers to examine how leaders at the supervisor level can influence their subordinates' workplace outcomes (Mathieu et al., 2016; Teoh et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2019) such as their intention to stay. According to previous research (see Brunetto et al., 2017; Nelson, 2012; Usadolo and Usadolo, 2019), it is expected that the nature of the relationship between supervisors and their subordinates, if characterised by mutual benefit, will result in several workplace outcomes, among them, intention to stay and commitment. There is a body of research about the impact of LMX on employee outcomes in public and private sector organisations (see Michael, 2014; Usadolo et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019). However, less research has been undertaken for the volunteer-supervisor relationship within the NPOs, especially in Australia.

Another view that has gained attention in studies is the robust effect of motive fulfilment on the intention to stay. Several studies have found that motivational factors impact volunteers' decisions to begin volunteering in organisations (Omoto and Snyder, 1995), and the fulfilment of motives has been identified as a key predictor of positive experiences that result in high levels of intention to remain (Same et al., 2020; Willems et al., 2012). Cho et al. (2020) and Penner (2002) argued that volunteers' perceptions about their experiences and the organisation's management practices affect their volunteering behaviour. Thus, the nature of relationships in organisations, as embodied by supervisor-subordinate relationships, which are a reflection of management practices, may determine whether volunteers' motives are fulfilled or not. Dwiggin-Beeler et al. (2011) and Penner (2002) noted that organisational variables (such as LMX), or dispositional variables (such as motive fulfilment) alone may not fully explain volunteers' workplace outcomes. However, Penner (2002) suggested that dispositional variables can be mediators in the relationship between organisational variables and workplace outcomes, or organisational variables can mediate the impact of dispositional variables on workplace outcomes.

It is therefore necessary to look at the interactive consequences of these variables. However, in this study, the focus will be on examining the impact of one dispositional variable (motive fulfilment) as a mediator of the relationship between the independent variable (LMX) and one workplace outcome (intention to stay). This is a gap in the literature, especially given that a recent study has shown that LMX has an indirect relationship with intention to stay (see Usadolo and Usadolo, 2019). Moreover, Boezeman and Ellemers (2007, 2008) and Craig-Lees et al. (2008) all stated that there is a need to understand how individual factors (such as volunteers' motivations) affect volunteers' levels of interest and volunteer retention rates. Previous research has shown that motive fulfilment is a predictor of positive experience, which in turn, should ensure that the right workplace ingredients are in place to retain volunteers.

Hence, we expect that in the context of this study, motive fulfilment has a role to play in mediating the relationship between LMX and intention to stay.

In light of this, without understanding the likely level to which different factors affect volunteers' intention to stay, scholars and human resource managers cannot draw rigorous conclusions about theoretical relationships with respect to the nature of relationships between LMX, motive fulfilment and volunteers' intentions to stay volunteering in the community NPOs. Given the foregoing argument, the influence of two factors on volunteers' intentions to stay is examined. One factor pertains to management: The quality of the relationships between supervisors and volunteers (captured using the Leader-Member Exchange [LMX] construct). The other is an individual factor: volunteers' motive fulfilment.

The contribution of this paper is that it provides greater clarity for NPO managers about the following:

- 1 The importance of the influence of supervisors' relationships with volunteers on volunteers' intentions to stay, and
- 2 The influence of motive fulfilment on the relationship between LMX and intention to stay.

The findings may enable NPOs to make informed decisions about strategies to increase volunteers' willingness to continue to volunteer.

In the following section, the theoretical framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET) that will be used as a lens of analysis will be explained. LMX, as a construct of SET, is fundamentally about workplace relationships in an organisation and SET is the umbrella theory providing a lens for interpreting the findings based on its assumption that argues the mutually beneficial outcomes likely to result from effective workplace relationships.

## **2 Social exchange theory**

In this article, SET is used as a lens to explain the impact of relationships such as LMX on volunteers' intention to stay and the possible role motive fulfilment plays in LMX relationships. As stated, SET assumes that when effective workplace exchange relationships develop, there are potential benefits likely to result for both employees and their organisations. In particular, SET argues that social interactions between supervisors and employees that are open, result in positive and trust-building relationships, which in the end, become mutually beneficial (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). LMX is a SET variable because the same assumptions about the benefits of effective workplace relationships apply to LMX. Previous research has shown the benefits of effective supervisor-subordinate relationships, in each case identifying how effective LMX leads to the reciprocal exchange of resources, knowledge, time, and emotional support for all the stakeholders, with the added benefit of high employee outcomes (Brunetto et al., 2017; Story et al., 2013; Aggarwal et al., 2020; Vila-Vázquez et al., 2020). The theory is relevant to this study because in the absence of a monetary reward for their volunteer labour, it is important for managers to understand the value of effective LMX in the workplace.

In line with SET, and as stated by Snyder et al. (2000) and Morse et al. (2020), the extent to which an individual's volunteer motivational concerns are met by their organisation or their organisational agents, will determine volunteers' levels of

commitment to continuing as a volunteer. Furthermore, Clary and Snyder (1999) stated that the degree to which the functional motives of volunteers are fulfilled by the opportunities provided by their working relationships in the organisation influences their level of commitment to continuing their participation in the organisation. The above arguments are consistent with Homans' (1961) explanation of the importance of resources exchange in determining the responses of a recipient. An exchange of resources takes place in the volunteers' relationships with their supervisors. The nature of relationships in organisations, as conceptualised through the LMX variable, is explained in the section below.

### **3 Leader-member exchange (LMX)**

As stated, LMX theory is underpinned by SET assumptions and is therefore used to explain the potential benefits of the two-way relationships between supervisors and subordinates (Brunetto et al., 2017; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Han et al., 2018) including the likely outcomes in terms of high employee performance (Buch, 2015; Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Mardanov et al., 2008). Hence, LMX theory is important in the context of volunteering because it helps to explain the relationships between supervisors and volunteers. In the context of volunteering, the nature of the resources exchanged defines the quality of the LMX relationship, which will either be high-quality and characterised by mutual support and appreciation (Mueller and Lee, 2002) or low-quality and characterised by poor communication and low trust (Usadolo and Usadolo, 2019). In high quality LMX, the exchange of resources (both tangible and intangible) benefits both parties.

High-quality LMX relationships create feelings of mutual obligation (Brunetto et al., 2017; Schyns, 2006) that are capable of influencing workplace outcomes such as intention to stay. A high-quality LMX is very important in the context of NPOs because it increases supervisors' abilities to coordinate and motivate the efforts of volunteers in order to avoid non-cooperation and non-acceptance of leadership, which, according to Pearce (1993), are often observed among volunteers working in NPOs. Pearce (1993) argued that when leaders' relationships with volunteers involve an appreciation of their significant contributions to the NPOs, it inspires and encourages volunteers. When these types of relationships are present, the question of volunteer non-cooperation in the NPOs will not arise, and there is an increased likelihood of volunteers remaining in their organisations.

Researchers have pointed out that when supervisors provide high levels of information sharing, individual attention, trust and emotional support, employees will reciprocate with positive workplace outcomes such as lower employee turnover and higher job satisfaction (Brunetto et al., 2013; Eisenberger et al., 2010). These are vital elements in developing good relationships between supervisors and volunteers in community NPOs because they will not only help the NPOs to retain volunteers but will also provide a disincentive to quit. In contrast, low-quality LMX is generally recognised as a predictor of voluntary turnover (Harris et al., 2005). Thus, it is of paramount importance that high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationships are apparent because supervisors at the lower levels of management are tasked with executing and evaluating policies that affect their day-to-day working relationships with volunteers in community NPOs.

LMX, as a construct of SET, highlights the development of high-quality relationships between volunteers and their supervisors, as articulated by Homans' (1961) value proposition. This proposition states that the more valuable a resource is to the recipient, the more the recipient will feel obliged to reciprocate. Gouldner (1960) and Emerson (1972) argued that the degree to which an exchange is viewed positively depends on the subjective psychological value an individual assigns to what he/she receives. In other words, the responses of the recipients, who in the context of this study are volunteers, are influenced by the extent to which the resources they are given meet their needs.

In NPOs, the provision of resources in the form of non-monetary rewards are determined by the volunteers' supervisors, and the degree to which this results in sustainable LMX relationships depends on whether it is high-quality or low-quality LMX. High-quality LMX is in line with (Schaefer, 2009) notion of positive reciprocal beneficial relationships, and it is a requirement for the development of positive relationships between supervisors and their subordinates. In particular, the value of a resource exchanged in the working relationship between a supervisor and a volunteer in a community NPO is determined by the perceived benefit the volunteer obtains, which in turn, influences the development of a positive and sustainable relationship. This is a relationship that in all likelihood will increase a volunteer's intention to stay in the organisation. This is because volunteering does not involve monetary rewards. Hence, volunteers will only feel obliged to reciprocate with longer stays in the organisation when the resources provided by their supervisors satisfy their motives for volunteering (Davis et al., 2003; Finkelstein, 2008; Zollo et al., 2017). Resources exchanged in high-quality LMX in the context of volunteering are usually non-monetary rewards, and scholars have stated that such rewards should satisfy volunteers' motives for volunteering. Put differently, supervisors have to make sure that the resources exchanged with volunteers address their motives for volunteering. This is an essential requirement for increasing the intention to stay of volunteers in community NPOs.

#### **4 Intention to stay**

An individual's conscious plan to keep serving in the organisation is referred to as intention to remain (Blau and Holladay, 2006), while intention to leave is a "subjective probability that an individual will leave the organisation within a certain period of time" (Zhao et al., 2007, p.651). A volunteer's intention to remain is likely to be linked to the amount of satisfaction he/she derives from receiving rewards that meet his/her needs or motives for volunteering.

Intention to stay is essential to the effectiveness of the organisation because it is usually associated with low rates of absenteeism and high retention rates (Griffeth et al., 2000). These outcomes are beneficial to the organisation because they reduce the cost of recruitment and training. Being able to retain volunteers also reduces the negative impacts of turnover, which can be devastating for community NPOs because they depend mostly on volunteers. In addition, strong intentions to stay minimises the loss of volunteers who have acquired valuable knowledge and experience and whose departure would therefore reduce the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency. Hence, understanding the factors that influence volunteers' intention to stay is important for community NPOs' success as it will enable managers to develop more effective volunteer retention strategies in NPOs.

Volunteers' experiences with respect to their relationships with their organisations and their organisations' agents are among the factors that affect how long they will stay with the organisation (Cho et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2006). Some studies have identified high-quality LMX-related attributes such as good relationships with other staff such as supervisors, working conditions (Hidalgo and Moreno, 2009) and opportunities for positive peer interactions (Haski-Leventhal and Bargal, 2008) as determinants of intention to stay or to leave.

Employees' perceptions of quality LMX will be positive if they receive from their supervisors timely and appropriate information, respect, trust, and empowerment (Gerstner and Day, 1997). This may, in the case of volunteers, result in the development of effective relationships with their supervisors, which will encourage continuous volunteering. Another possible LMX factor that could increase volunteer intention to stay is positive feelings developed in the working relationship in the organisation. Willingness to engage, consult, and exchange ideas is one of the defining characteristics of high-quality relationships. Reflecting this view, Garner and Garner (2011) stated that volunteers are more inclined to continue volunteering when they perceive that organisations or their agents, such as supervisors, are open to their ideas. Hence, according to Wheeler et al. (2007), turnover will decrease – implying intention to stay will increase – when employees experience high-quality LMX.

High-quality LMX was found to be negatively related to turnover intention in a meta-analytic study conducted by Gerstner and Day (1997), while Griffeth et al. (2000) found LMX was negatively related to actual turnover. These results indicate that as the quality of LMX increases, intention to stay increases, and that poor relationships between supervisors and subordinates in the workplace result in turnover intentions. Turnover intentions have been found to be high among employees who perceived their relationships with their supervisors to be unsatisfactory (Harris et al., 2005). Given the above discussion, it is expected that high-quality LMX will increase volunteers' intentions to stay in community NPOs in Australia. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*Hypothesis 1: High-quality LMX is positively related to volunteers' intention to stay.*

## **5 Motive fulfilment**

According to the literature, motive fulfilment is different from motive. Motive, in terms of the functional approach used by Clary et al. (1998), refers to the functions or reasons a volunteer has decided to give his/her time for unpaid activities in an organisation. When the reasons (motives) have been achieved, this is referred to as motive fulfilment. The functional approach, which focuses on motive fulfilment, seeks to understand how people identify their motives for volunteering, seek opportunities that fulfil those motives, and sustain their involvement over time (Snyder and Omoto, 2000). In this regard, individual motives are an important antecedent to the decision to volunteer.

Volunteer motivations have been looked at in terms of the functions they serve for individuals. In this regard, six personal and social functions of volunteerism have been identified. They are values (selfless concern for the welfare of others), understanding (a desire for personal growth and to learn new skills), self-enhancement (a desire to increase self-esteem and self-confidence), social (a desire to belong to a group and



increase social networks), career (a desire to improve career prospects), and protection (a desire to reduce feelings of guilt or preoccupation with a particular problem). The functional approach to motivation is one of the commonly used approaches in studies of volunteers because it can uncover the diversity of motives that bring about volunteerism and encourage continued involvement in volunteering (Mannino et al., 2011).

Previous studies have shown that volunteers feel obliged to reciprocate with a longer stay in an organisation when the resources they are provided fulfil their functional motives (Davis et al., 2003; Finkelstein, 2008; Morse et al., 2020). Motive fulfilment is said to occur only when at least some of the reasons for volunteering are met. Studies about volunteers have reported a significant positive relationship between the importance given by volunteers to various initial motives and the degree to which each motive is fulfilled. For example, Davis et al. (2003) and Finkelstein (2008) found that for volunteers, the strongest predictor of the fulfilment of motives (such as the value motive) was the initial importance they attached to that motive. Moreover, Pearce (1993) suggested that motivation to volunteer is a better predictor of the initial decision to volunteer, but the fulfilment of motives is likely to be a better predictor of a volunteer's future behaviour in an organisation because fulfilment results in more satisfied volunteers. These studies have shown that people seek out activities that are likely to fulfil their strongly held motives and that fulfilment is likely to increase positive workplace outcomes. In line with this view, a second hypothesis is formulated:

*Hypothesis 2: Each initial motive is positively related to its fulfilment.*

In the literature, there are two complementary arguments relating to motive fulfilment. One is that if volunteering activities are satisfactory due to the fulfilment of motives, it will result in positive outcomes such as a long-term commitment to the organisation (see Moreno-Jiménez and Villodres, 2010; Morse et al., 2020). The other is that if there is dissatisfaction with volunteering because of a lack of motive fulfilment, it will result in negative outcomes, including decisions to leave. People's initial motives are important, not only in initiating volunteer activities, but also in helping volunteers to determine the nature of their experiences, depending on whether the motives are fulfilled or not. According to Al-Mutawa (2015) and Snyder et al. (2000), the extent to which a volunteer's motives are fulfilled will determine whether they will continue as a volunteer. Similarly, Morse et al. (2020) stated that the satisfaction of important volunteer's motive will determine their persistence in the organisation.

In addition, motivation is a process that involves drive, direction and persistence geared towards easing the internal tension created by unsatisfied needs. This means the initial phase of volunteering consists of the decision to act as a result of the force generated by the tension from unsatisfied needs. However, the continuation (persistence) of such an action depends on whether the goal (satisfaction of a particular need) is achieved. If the action does not provide the intended satisfaction, the individual may discontinue the action. Hence, fulfilment of motives would be a better predictor of a volunteer's intention to stay. Based on the above argument, a third hypothesis is formulated:

*Hypothesis 3: Volunteers' motive fulfilment is positively related to intention to stay.*

Motive fulfilment is a mediator between LMX and intention to stay. Researchers have consistently shown that favourable perceptions of supervisor-subordinate relationships influence employees' positive workplace-related outcomes (Brunetto et al., 2017; Cascio,

2006). However, the findings are inconsistent. Harris et al. (2005) and Schyns et al. (2007) suggested the possibility of intervening variables such as motive fulfilment in the case of volunteers because intention to stay is said to increase if volunteers perceive that important functional motives have been appropriately met.

The view that there are intervening variables is based on the analysis of the three stages of the volunteering process within an organisation. They are the antecedent stage, the experience stage, and the consequence stage (Davis et al., 2003; Omoto and Snyder, 1995). The antecedent stage consists of the various motives for volunteering, while the experience stage consists of the degree of fulfilment of the six functional motives. The consequence stage consists of possible workplace outcomes such as involvement, time spent volunteering, and length of service (Davis et al., 2003; Finkelstein, 2008). Since volunteers' obligations to their organisations are not bound by monetary rewards, the volunteer's experience becomes very important because it determines the volunteers' continuity and involvement. According to Omoto and Snyder (1995), the future behaviour of volunteers (the experience stage) largely depends on the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation. This means that factors within the organisation have a direct effect on the length of time spent volunteering. One of these factors is the supervisor-subordinate relationship that evolves as a result of the match between volunteer benefits and the individual's important personal and social motives. This is consistent with Homan's (1961) value proposition of SET that the continuation of a positive behaviour depends on whether previous behaviour has yielded a reward or valuable benefit to the recipient.

High-quality LMX is characterised by the provision of resources that meet both the physical and psychological needs of supervisors' subordinates. Hence, for unpaid employees such as volunteers, it is expected that intention to stay will be high when relationships with supervisors lead to the fulfilment of important motives. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that volunteer motive fulfilment (i.e., fulfilment of the six functional motives) will mediate the association between LMX and intention to stay. The following hypothesis is therefore formulated:

*Hypothesis 4: Volunteers' motive fulfilment will mediate the relationship between high quality LMX and intention to stay.*

## **6 Method**

A self-administered survey (using a cross-sectional design) was used in this study for data collection. Questionnaires were distributed to 680 participants in five community NPOs in Queensland, Australia, and a total of 213 were returned. Before the distribution of questionnaires, the researcher held meetings with different volunteer coordinators in NPOs to explain the research project and seek permission for data collection. Meetings were organised by the volunteer coordinators for the researcher to meet with volunteers and explain to them the importance and objectives of the research project. Both volunteer coordinators and volunteers were assured that the information collected would be kept confidential and findings would be reported anonymously.

Most questionnaires were handed out and collected by the researcher after these meetings. Those who were not able to complete their questionnaires at the meetings were given the option to either bring them to the next meeting or send them by post using the

stamped self-addressed envelopes provided. Postage-paid envelopes were used to make it easy for the participants to send the surveys back to the researcher and still retain their anonymity. In addition, some questionnaires were left with the volunteer coordinators to give to those volunteers who were absent. After the data collection, descriptive statistics such as means, frequency distributions and standard deviations within the SPSS package were used to analyse the demographic data and other variables.

### *6.1 Measures*

All measures used in this study were adapted from previous studies. The unidimensional LMX-7 instrument developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) for examining supervisor-subordinate relationships was adapted for use in this research. This instrument consists of seven questions and was selected because of its high reliability and sound psychometric properties (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Participants were asked to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6). An example of the question is: 'I have a good working relationship with my supervisor.' Consistent with previous studies, the Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.91, suggesting a high level of internal consistency.

Clary et al. (1998) Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was used to measure both volunteer motives and degree of fulfilment. The VFI has a total of 42 questions. Some modifications were made to make the questionnaire easier and more understandable for the respondents. For example, one of the modified questions for the fulfilment of values was "People I am genuinely concerned about are being helped through my volunteer work at this organisation" instead of the original question, which was, "I am genuinely concerned about the people who were helped." As for enhancement, one of the modified questions was "From volunteering at this organisation, my self-esteem has been enhanced," instead of the original question which was "My self-esteem was enhanced." All questions were measured using a six-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6). The VFI has been widely used to examine volunteers' motives because of its excellent psychometric properties and consistent internal reliability (Davis et al., 2003; Finkelstein, 2008). The Cronbach's alphas for the motives scale ranged from 0.80 to 0.92, and for motive fulfilment they ranged from 0.85 to 0.89, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Intention to stay was examined with the Irving et al. (1997) turnover intention measure, which consists of three items, and all questions were measured with a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6). The questions were reworded to reflect the extent to which each respondent was thinking of staying with their present organisation. Participants were asked to indicate their levels of agreement with statements such as: "I intend to keep on volunteering in this organisation for the foreseeable future." The Cronbach's alpha was 0.91, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

### *6.2 Demographic analysis*

As indicated above, data were collected from five community NPOs in Queensland that provide services to the vulnerable and less privileged in their communities. These NPOs will henceforth be referred to as organisations A, B, C, D and E. Prominent among the community services these NPOs (A, B and C) render are settlement of refugees,

advocacy to refugees, community development and engagement with communities and between communities, reskilling and employment services, and sourcing and delivery clothes to the needy. The other two of the NPOs (D and C) are involved in community respite, advocacy and transport services for people with a disability. The percentage of the total data collected from the five community NPOs was 32.7%. The number of respondents from the organisations was as follows: A, 51 (24% of all returned questionnaires); B, 34 (16%); C, 46 (21.6%); D, 43 (20.2%) and E 39 (18.3%). Similar to past studies about volunteers (see Barraket et al., 2013; National Survey of Volunteering Issue, 2011), most of the volunteers in the sample were females (140 = 65.7%). The age distribution of the participants was also consistent with findings from the literature (Hoye, 2004; National Survey of Volunteering Issue, 2011). For example, an ACOSS (2009) survey of community NPOs in Queensland found that older people were participating more in voluntary services than were younger people. This was evident in the age analysis of this study, as 108 (49%) were aged 43 and above. With respect to hours spent volunteering, the largest cohort (82, or 38.5% of respondents) volunteered for three to four hours per week. Most of these respondents had volunteered for their organisations for more than five years. The age distribution and hours spent volunteering are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Age distribution and hours spent volunteering

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>No of hours</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
73–77	1	5	11 and above	1	.5
68–72	35	16.4	9–10	2	.9
63–67	24	11.3	7–8	5	2.3
58–62	12	5.6	5–6	41	19.2
53–57	16	7.5	3–4	82	38.5
48–52	6	2.8	1–2	80	37.6
43–47	14	6.6			
38–42	27	12.7			
33–37	20	9.4			
28–32	26	12.2			
23–27	18	8.9			
18–22	12	5.6			
Under 18	1	0.5			

### 6.3 Data analysis

A factor analysis of the 52 questions in the questionnaires set at factor loading of .45 as the cut-off point revealed 14 latent variables with eigenvalues greater than one. These factors explained 80% of the variance, with the first factor accounting for 10.07% of the variance. Table 2 shows the factor loading of each of the variables and their reliability values.

**Table 2** Factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	My supervisor is satisfied with my work.	.705	.906
	My supervisor understands my work problems and needs.	.715	
	My supervisor knows how good I am at my job.	.804	
	My supervisor is willing to use her/his power to help me solve work problems.	.835	
	I have a good working relationship with my supervisor.	.811	
	My supervisor is willing to help me at work when I really need it.	.811	
	I have enough confidence in my supervisor that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so.	.735	
Protective motive	No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.	.851	.899
	By volunteering I feel less lonely.	.795	
	Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.	.793	
	Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.	.783	
	Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.	.764	
Social motive	My friends are also volunteers.	.906	.940
	People I know share an interest in community service.	.900	
	Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.	.845	
	Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.	.796	
	People I'm close to want me to volunteer.	.779	
Understanding motive	I can learn more about the cause for which I am working.	.884	.921
	Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.	.883	
	Volunteering allows me to learn things through direct, hands on experience.	.857	
	By volunteering, I learn how to deal with a variety of people.	.838	
	I can explore my own strengths as a volunteer.	.828	
Career motive	Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.	.900	.916
	I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.	.878	
	Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.	.834	
	Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession.	.833	
	Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.	.754	

**Table 2** Factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha (continued)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
Enhancement motive	Volunteering makes me feel important.	.791	.896
	Volunteering increases my self-esteem.	.758	
	Volunteering makes me feel needed.	.748	
	Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.	.713	
	Volunteering is a way to make new friends.	.623	
Values motive	I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.	.779	.796
	I feel compassion toward people in need.	.699	
	I feel it is important to help others.	.689	
	I can do something for a cause that is important to me.	.665	
	I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.	.664	
Intention to stay	I intend to keep on doing the job in this organisation, for the foreseeable future.	.804	.907
	I see myself still volunteering for this organisation one year from now.	.797	
	I do not intend to pursue an alternative volunteering job in the next two years.	.793	
Protective motive fulfilment	Volunteering at this organisation allows me to escape some of my own troubles.	.894	.865
	Volunteering at this organisation allows me to feel less lonely.	.863	
Social motive fulfilment	People close to me know that I am volunteering at this organisation.	.862	.846
	My friends have found out that I do volunteer work for this organisation.	.834	
values motive fulfilment	People I am genuinely concerned about are being helped through my volunteer work at this organisation	.903	.892
	By volunteering at this organisation, I am doing something for a cause I believe in.	.893	
Career motive fulfilment	By volunteering at this organisation, I have been able to make new contacts that might help my business or career.	.907	.856
	By volunteering at this organisation, I have been able to add important experience to my resume.	.891	
Understanding motive fulfilment	I have been able to explore my own personal strengths through volunteering at this organisation.	.877	.848
	I have learned how to deal with a greater variety of people through volunteering at this organisation.	.856	
Enhancement motive fulfilment	From volunteering at this organisation, my self-esteem has been enhanced.	.801	.890
	From volunteering at this organisation, I feel better about myself.	.790	

The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (with a Chi-square value of 93, 68.620,  $p < .0001$ ), and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.789, which is above the minimum 0.6 requirement. The KMO and Bartlett's test results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** The KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.789
Approx. Chi-Square	9368.620
Bartlett's Test of df	1326
Sphericity Sig.	.000

To assess the credibility of the measures used, it was important to ensure that the items used represented the theoretical constructs they were intended to measure (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Construct validity includes content, convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011), and these were all tested. Content (face) validity was established using pre-validated questions and by pre-testing the survey instruments. Convergent validity was established by calculating the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each of the items. The average variance values of the scales ranged from 0.55 to 0.89 and were above the minimum recommended value of .50 (Gefen and Straub, 2005; Hair et al., 2010; Vinzi et al., 2010). These values provide support for the convergence of the items and indicate that all the latent variables were also distinct from each other (discriminant validity). In addition, every item was distinctly different from all of the others, as the squares of the correlation values for all pairs of variables were less than the sums of the two variables AVE, which is consistent with Hair et al. (2010) and Vinzi et al. (2010) recommendations. A correlation matrix was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationships between all variables. Table 4 shows the correlation coefficients for each variable and the means and standard deviations of all the variables examined in the study.

Multicollinearity and common method bias were not a problem because none of the correlations was above .90 (Pavlou et al., 2006). The analysis of the results indicates that all the variables correlate positively and significantly at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. In addition, the Harman's one factor test indicates there is a low chance of common method bias as one factor explains 20.00% of the variance, which is much lower than the point of concern (60–70%) as indicated by Fuller et al. (2016).

A simple linear regression was used to explore Hypotheses 1 and 2. Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested with multiple linear regressions and the mediation analysis was based on Baron and Kennys (1986) conditions of mediation. Gender was controlled for in the regression analysis to address the alternative explanation that volunteers' intention to stay was determined by gender.

**Table 4** Correlation matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1 Gender																			
2 Age	-.09																		
3 Hours	.05	-.02																	
4 Years of volunteering	.08	-.02	.09																
5 Value motive	.01	.05	.13	.04															
6 Understanding motive	.04	-.04	.17*	.11	.32**														
7 Social motive	-.11	.33**	.07	-.17*	.23**	.03													
8 Enhancement motive	-.22**	.12	.12	-.30**	.09	-.05	.45**												
9 Protective motive	-.18**	-.04	.19**	-.04	.21**	.10	.25**	.57**											
10 Career motive	.10	-.53**	-.01	-.11	-.13	-.01	-.38**	.03	-.07										
11 Value fulfilment	-.04	-.03	-.08	-.01	.25**	.07	.01	.13	.18**	.07									
12 Understanding fulfilment	-.02	.02	-.07	.08	.20**	.18**	.12	.16*	.19**	-.11	.23**								
13 Social fulfilment	-.13	.12	.11	-.10	.13	.13	.19**	.19**	.20**	-.21**	.14*	.19**							
14 Enhancement fulfilment	-.21**	.06	.05	-.03	.04	-.06	-.00	.35**	.32**	.03	.17*	.28**	.23**						
15 Protective fulfilment	-.06	-.04	-.04	-.02	.19**	.09	.01	.18**	.31**	.02	.12	.22**	.04	.32**					
16 Career fulfilment	.05	-.05	-.05	-.22**	.09	.02	-.03	.10	.04	.23**	.06	.01	.12	.17*	-.02				
17 LMX	-.07	.12	-.06	-.03	.14*	.12	.17*	.26**	.19**	-.05	.23**	.33**	.36**	.42**	.20**	.19**			
18 ITS	-.11*	.01	-.02	-.03	.16*	.16*	.16*	.22**	.20**	-.08	.29**	.35**	.38**	.42**	.18**	.24**	.55**		

Notes: N=213, \*\*, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



## 7 Results

Hypothesis 1 states that “High-quality LMX is positively related to intention to stay.” The results from the simple linear regression analysis support this hypothesis. The relationship between LMX and intention to stay was positive and significant ( $R^2 = .307$ ,  $F = 46.408$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). This means that LMX accounted for 30.7% of the variance in intention to stay. This finding indicates that good exchanges between supervisors and volunteers influenced volunteers’ intentions about whether to stay in their organisations.

**Table 5** Regression analysis detailing the relationship between LMX and volunteers’ intention stay

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Intention to stay <math>\beta</math> scores</i>
Gender	.010
LMX	.554**
$R^2$	.307**
$F$	46.408**

Notes:  $N = 213$ , \*\* Correlation is significant  $< .001$  level. \* Correlation is significant  $< .005$  level.

Hypothesis 2 states that “Each of the motives is positively related to its fulfilment.” The results from the simple linear regression analysis support this hypothesis. The relationship between each of the motives and its fulfilment was positive and significant. For example, value motive fulfilment was predicted by value motive ( $R^2 = .076$ ,  $F = 8.590$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), enhancement motive was predicted by enhancement motive ( $R^2 = .128$ ,  $F = 15.361$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), and the fulfilment of each of the other motives was predicted by the initial motive (see the Table 6).

**Table 6** Regression analysis detailing the relationship between each motive and its’ fulfilment

<i>Variables</i>	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F$
Gender	-.116		
Value	.264**	.076*	8.590
Gender	.088		
Enhancement	.342**	.128**	15.363
Gender	-.102		
Understanding	.198*	.043*	4.698
Gender	.096		
Social	.186*	.046*	5.088
Gender	-.045		
Career	.225*	.053*	5.835
Gender	-.045		
Protective	.333**	.108**	12.756

Notes:  $N = 213$ , \*\* Correlation is significant  $< .001$  level. \* Correlation is significant  $< .005$  level.

The results from the multiple regression provide support for the acceptance of Hypothesis 3 which states that “Volunteers’ motive fulfilment is positively related to intention to stay.” The relationship between motive fulfilment and intention to stay was positive and significant ( $R^2 = .353$ ,  $F = 15.971$ ,  $p < .001$ ), except for protective motive fulfilment that was not significant. Motive fulfilment accounted for 35.3% of the variance in intention to stay.

The results from the multiple regression partially supported Hypothesis 4 ( $R^2 = .462$ ,  $F = 54.973$ ,  $p < .001$ ) which states that: “Volunteers’ motive fulfilment will mediate the relationship between high-quality LMX and intention to stay.” The  $\beta$  coefficient of LMX on intention to stay became smaller ( $\beta = .328$ ,  $p < .001$ ) when the mediating variables were included in the multiple regression model. The analysis clearly shows that the fulfilment of five volunteer motives (values, understanding, enhancement, social and career) plays a significant role in the association between community volunteers’ LMX and intention to stay. A relationship was not found for the protective motive. The steps taken to ensure that the model met all the conditions of mediation analysis are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7** Mediated multiple regression detailing the relationships between LMX and intention to stay through the mediators

<i>Model 1 (LMX on all motives fulfilment)</i>						
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Values fulfilment</i>	<i>Enhancement fulfilment</i>	<i>Understanding fulfilment</i>	<i>Social fulfilment</i>	<i>Career fulfilment</i>	<i>Protective fulfilment</i>
Gender	-.070	.074	-.050	.129	-.036	.028
LMX ( $\beta$ )	.227*	.419**	.327**	.370**	.186*	.203*
$R^2$	.058*	.178**	.111**	.148**	.037*	.042*
$F$	6.157	22.730	13.171	18.299	4.017	4.659
<i>Model 2</i>			<i>Model 3</i>			
<i>All motives fulfilment on intention to stay;</i>			<i>LMX and motives fulfilment on Intention to stay</i>			
<i><math>\beta</math> scores</i>			<i><math>\beta</math> scores</i>			
Gender	-.027		-.005			
LMX			.328**			
Values fulfilment	.154*		.124*			
Understanding fulfilment	.182*		.128*			
Enhancement fulfilment	.254**		.172*			
Social fulfilment	.250**		.168*			
Career fulfilment	.152*		.117*			
Protective fulfilment	.030					
$R^2$	.353**					
$F$	15.971**					
$\Delta R^2$			.120*			
$\Delta F$			8.565*			

Notes:  $N = 213$ , \*\* Correlation is significant  $< .001$  level. \* Correlation is significant  $< .05$  level.

The mediation effects were further confirmed with a Sobel test. The Sobel analysis showed that LMX had a significant indirect effect on intention stay via the fulfilment of the value motive (Sobel = 2.97,  $p < .001$ ), the understanding motive (Sobel = 2.55,  $p < .05$ ), the enhancement motive (Sobel = 2.17,  $p < .05$ ), the social motive (Sobel = 2.09,  $p < .05$ ), and the career motive (Sobel = 1.80,  $p < .05$ ).

## 8 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of one management factor, LMX, on volunteers' intentions to stay with their organisations and the mediating role of motive fulfilment in the relationship between LMX and volunteers' intention to stay. The results from the regression analysis revealed that LMX had a positive impact on volunteers' intentions to stay, and the impact was significantly influenced by the fulfilment of five of the six motives, which are values, understanding, enhancement, social and career motives. However, fulfilment of the protective motive did not significantly mediate the relationship between LMX and intentions to stay. With respect to the direct association between LMX and intention to stay, the findings support previous research by Bang (2011) that LMX predicts volunteers' intentions to stay, and Brunetto et al. (2013) findings that positive relationships with supervisors have a significant effect on the retention of public and private sector nurses in Australia. Hence, Hypothesis 1 was supported; the findings show LMX had a direct and positive effect on volunteers' intentions to stay ( $\beta = .554$ ). Therefore, the findings contribute new knowledge in explaining the direct positive effect of LMX on the intention to stay of volunteers in community NPOs in Australia.

The findings of this study also support previous findings of Davis et al. (2003) and Finkelstein (2008) that initial motives are better predictors of motive fulfilment and that motive fulfilment is a better predictor of volunteers' workplace outcomes. However, not much is known about the role of motive fulfilment on the effect of LMX on intention to stay. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute new knowledge to the literature by providing a deeper understanding of how supervisor-subordinate's workplace social exchange relationships affect volunteers' intentions to stay in community NPOs in Australia. In particular, this study found that the effect of LMX on intention to stay was partially influenced by the fulfilment of the values motive ( $\beta = .124$ ), the understanding motive ( $\beta = .128$ ), the enhancement motive ( $\beta = .172$ ), the social motive ( $\beta = .168$ ) and the career motive ( $\beta = .117$ ). The partial mediation of the fulfilment of the five motives of the relationship between LMX and intention stay suggests that when opportunities such as new learning experiences, the use of skills and abilities, and the development of self-esteem and confidence (which characterise fulfilment of the understanding and enhancement motives) are made possible by volunteers' supervisors, volunteers' intentions stay will increase. High-quality relationships between volunteers and their supervisors enable supervisors to be familiar with volunteers' abilities and needs. In the context of volunteers in the community NPOs, reciprocity depends on the fulfilment of these important motives by their supervisors. These supports from volunteer's supervisors are important rewards because they fulfil the volunteers' functional motives which in turn cause them to feel obligated to reciprocate with positive workplace outcomes such as intention to stay. Consequently, supervisors should be given the ability to provide the necessary training, career opportunities and relational and organisational elements that will fulfil the volunteer motives examined in this study.

Considering motives in terms of the reciprocal exchange of benefits and rewards in workplace relationships, the findings of this study indicate that the fulfilment of these motives provide valuable rewards that indirectly predict the effect of LMX on volunteers' decisions about whether to remain volunteers in an organisation. That providing valuable and important rewards increases volunteers' intentions to reciprocate is in line with the findings of other studies, for example, Homans (1961), that show that the effect of LMX on the intention to leave may be mediated by variables such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Elanain, 2014), supportive supervisor communication (Usadolo and Usadolo, 2019) and social and economic exchanges (Loi et al., 2009). With its focus on motive fulfilment, this study provides additional understanding about the indirect effect of LMX on a volunteer's intention to stay.

This study has helped to fill some gaps identified in the literature. Clarke (2010) and Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) called for more research on the role of leadership processes in NPOs and on volunteer work outcomes. Some scholars have argued that little is known about the causal mechanisms that might help to explain the relationship between management factors and positive work outcomes for volunteers (Jenkinson et al., 2013). For example, the examination of mediating factors was suggested by Lee et al. (2013) as a means of obtaining a clearer understanding of their influence on volunteers' workplace outcomes. The findings of this study have addressed this gap in the literature. The investigation of the causal relationships between these variables explains how LMX can be improved in the context of volunteers in community NPOs.

This study found that fulfilment of the protective motive was not a significant mediator between LMX and intention to stay. The expectation was that fulfilment of the protective motive would mediate the influence of LMX on volunteers' intentions to stay, given that most of the community NPOs involved in this study provided services to people who are less fortunate, those on low incomes, refugees and other disadvantaged groups. Our expectation was influenced by the observations of Clary et al. (1998) and Phillips and Phillips (2011) that in the case of volunteerism, the protective motive serves to reduce guilt over feelings of being more fortunate than others. Therefore, there is a need for future studies to test the influence of the fulfilment of protective motive on the relationship between LMX and intention to stay.

Omoto and Snyders (2002) assertion that individuals volunteer in order to fulfil one or more motives helps to provide an explanation for why the fulfilment of the protective motive was not a significant mediator of the relationship between LMX and intention to stay. Based on Omoto and Snyders (2002) argument, it is logical to conclude that the volunteers who took part in this study had more than one motive they wanted fulfilled, and whether or not these motives were fulfilled was dictated by circumstances in the organisation. Finally, another possible reason why the fulfilment of the protective motive was not found to be significant may be the limitations of the measurements used in this study. The measures for LMX were designed for paid employees; it is possible that some factors relevant to volunteers may not have been fully captured in the measurement.

## **9 Theoretical and practical contributions of the study**

This study contributes to theory and the literature because the findings support Farmer and Fedors (1999) suggestion that a perceived lack of reciprocity between volunteers and supervisors may result in volunteers feeling that they are being unfairly treated. By

analysing the role of the fulfilment of some types of motives as intervening variables, this study offers a unique perspective on the link between volunteer motive fulfilment and the value assumptions of SET as explained by Homans (1961) and others (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). The analysis of the influence of mediating factors supports the value propositions of Homans (1961) regarding the importance of resource exchanges in determining both the extent of the reciprocal attitude and the behaviour of the recipient. Based on this, it can be concluded that the motives that mediate the relationship between LMX and intention to stay are valuable resources that will cause volunteers to want to reciprocate in a manner that they believe is proportionate in their relationships with their organisations.

In addition, the study contributes to the literature by shedding light on the importance of the effect of high-quality relationships on volunteers' intentions to stay. Intention to stay has been associated with low rates of absenteeism and turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). High turnover and absenteeism are costly to NPOs because they increase the need for recruitment and training. The findings of this study will enable organisations to reduce turnover rates and their associated negative impacts by improving workplace relationships. High-quality relationships between supervisors and subordinates should be facilitated in community NPOs to ensure that volunteers stay longer in their organisations. Given that several studies have linked supervisor-subordinate relationships with intention to stay, this study makes a contribution by providing further evidence of the direct influence of lower-level management (supervisor) support on volunteers' intention to stay.

In organisations with paid workforces, salaries and benefits are two of the primary rewards for employees. These rewards are not available to volunteers in NPOs because they do not engage in volunteering activities for monetary rewards; volunteers seek rewards of another kind. As such, it has not been made clear in the literature what the focus should be when examining reciprocal exchanges between supervisors and volunteers. The NPO and volunteer literature provides very little research-based information for understanding how supervisor-subordinate relationships are constructed. Moreover, there is a lack of knowledge concerning the characteristics that supervisors require to encourage their subordinates to have positive work attitudes and behaviours. In this context, this study has explained how one core organisational relationship can be managed with respect to volunteers in order to achieve high retention rates. In line with Homans (1961), this study finds that the fulfilment of the set of motives that mediated the impact of LMX on intention to stay is a valuable contributor to decreasing volunteers' intentions to leave their NPOs. This is an important contribution to the literature because the findings have shown that volunteers will continue to reciprocate if their supervisors keep on providing resources that help them satisfy the motives that are important to them.

This study includes several practical implications for managements interested in increasing their volunteers' intentions to stay. As indicated previously, a supportive workplace environment and supportive organisational policies foster positive workplace experiences for volunteers, and supervisors play key roles in ensuring a positive workplace environment. The mediation framework examined in this study provides useful information that the management and supervisors of community NPOs can use to develop and promote future programmes that focus on helping volunteers to meet their needs. In the context of this study, this means fulfilling the motives that mediate the influence of LMX on intention to stay. The fulfilment of these salient motives by supervisors can increase volunteers' positive work experiences and increase intention to

stay. This can help the organisations, not only to save resources through reduced expenditure on training new volunteers, but also to reduce the costs of recruitment, as volunteers who are satisfied with their volunteering experiences are more likely to help in recruiting others to join the organisation.

## **10 Limitations of the study and future research**

One limitation of this study is that the analysis of the data with multiple regression tools introduces some limitations. Although multiple regression analysis is suitable for determining causality, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) is often recommended as being more appropriate for testing a complex model with a number of simultaneous causal relationships (Byrne, 2010; Kline, 2011). A Sobel test was used to test the mediation effect on the data gathered for this study. However, because the Sobel test has been criticised for its low statistical power (see Figuerdo et al., 2013; Hertzog, 2018), it is recommended that in future studies, using SEM be considered so that the bootstrap method can be used to test for mediation effects. The bootstrap method may give more information about mediation effects. In addition, data collected at one particular time may not be suitable for the effective examination of causal relationships. However, the use of both techniques (cross-sectional design and regression analysis) did not pose a problem in this study because the issue of common method bias was avoided, and all the conditions for undertaking a multiple regression were met. Hence, the study offers interesting and important findings that can be generalised to other categories of NPOs such as sport and recreation NPOs and religious NPOs. However, future studies should consider adopting a longitudinal approach that would allow data to be collected more than once from the same sample in order to provide an in-depth explanation of the causal relationships involved. Because the focus of this study was on workplace relationships, it is suggested that Social Identity Theory (SIT) be used as a theoretical lens to examine supervisor-volunteer relationships in future studies. SIT may assist with the identifying how an employee defines or identifies him/herself in terms of a group's norms and how such identification influences his/her attitudes to and in the organisation.

## **11 Conclusion**

The findings of this study have demonstrated that volunteers' involvement and length of service are to a large extent determined by the support provided by their supervisors. In addition, the results support the view that motive fulfilment is a significant variable in the exchange process. Based on the analysis in the study, it is clear that volunteers' positive experiences depend on the quality of the relationships they have with lower-level management (supervisors) in the community NPOs examined. This study has shown that volunteer motive fulfilment plays a mediating role on the effect of LMX on volunteers' intentions to stay in their organisations. The mentioned recommendations for future studies are important as they allow similar research focus to be considered with different approaches.

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