

## The factors affecting Volunteer Motivation among Non-Profit Organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

Khaled Mohammed Ahmed Alqasa

Department of Management, College of Business Administration,

King Faisal University, Al-Ahsa 31982, Saudi Arabia.

Faculty of Administrative Sciences, University of Aden

Email: [kalqasa@kfu.edu.sa](mailto:kalqasa@kfu.edu.sa)

Asim Mushabeb Al Qahtani

Board member of MAWA for social service

Email: [Asim@mawa.sa](mailto:Asim@mawa.sa)

### Abstract

This study sought to discover the elements influencing the motivation level of volunteer employees in Saudi Arabian non-profit organizations (KSA). This research examined the relationship between volunteer motivation and awareness, psychological state, reward system, management practices, social support, and social support. The population of this study consists of non-profit organizations operating in KSA, and the respondents to this survey are volunteer employees of these organizations. This study utilized quantitative research methodology to conduct a questionnaire survey employing a cross-sectional research design. There were 222 valid responses received and used for SPSS data analysis. The findings indicate that volunteer employees in non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia require significant social support, improved psychological conditions, and positive management methods. Observations suggest that strong social support, enhanced psychological conditions, and good management practices can increase the motivating level of volunteer employees working for non-profit organizations. The senior management of non-profit organizations can use these findings to increase the motivation of their volunteer workforce.

**Keywords.** Volunteer employees, non-profit organizations, motivating factors, social support, psychological state, rewards system, management practices.

## 1. Introduction

The motivation of employees is one of the driving forces for organizations to attain improved performance (Afif et al., 2023; Hitka et al., 2022). It is fundamental factors that motivate folks to work. Public employee motivation is one of the oldest and most contested concerns in public administration. Our discipline has long believed that public personnel must be motivated by a desire to aid the public and that this is the case. Public sector motivation is an individual's propensity to respond to reasons primarily or entirely dependent on public organizations. Despite firms' efforts to increase employee motivation (Azar & Shafighi, 2013; Pancasila, Haryono, & Sulisty, 2020), the motivating level of employees in several enterprises remains low. It is challenging to encourage volunteer employees who work for multiple organizations. It is also one of the most significant issues facing non-profit organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

According to the 2018 study of non-profit sector organizations, 34,716 males and 27,389 females work for non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia, and 25.03% of all employees are volunteers. In response to the Corona pandemic, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has developed over seventeen volunteer labor programs, including the National Volunteer Work Platform, which aims to create chances for Saudi society members to achieve equity and overcome challenges. Compared to the population, the number of Saudi volunteers in non-profit organizations is believed to be low. This study analyzed the literature on the factors that influence volunteering in the KSA, although there is an apparent shortage of credible academic resources in this area. Numerous research on volunteer motivation have been conducted in the literature (Dwyer et al., 2013; Fiorillo, 2011; Zievinger & Swint, 2018), but KSA non-profit organizations have been disregarded. Notably, the literature did not explore the motivational elements affecting volunteer employees. The literature examined KSA non-profit organizations (Alshammari et al., 2014; Phillips & Phillips, 2010) but not the motivation of volunteer employees.

Consequently, addressing the issues influencing the motivating level of volunteer employees in KSA non-profit organizations is essential. Although there have been few direct studies on the effect of perceived social support on motivation (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006; Shalhoob & Hussainey, 2023), research on the relationship

between social support and motivation demonstrates that it plays a significant positive predictive role in the effect of perceived social support on learning motivation. Perceived social support refers to individuals' perceptions of being supported, cared for, and assisted by family, community, or organizations through their networks. In interacting with the environment, volunteers usually have multiple goals essential to their successful adaptation to the environment. Volunteer motivation results from the interaction between volunteers and their environment. According to self-determination theory, the formulation and development of worthy goals are intrinsically tied to the external environment's shared role. The ability of volunteers to set new goals and their level of motivation is altered if the dynamics of their goals and intentions effectively match their perception of external support from family, society, or an organization. However, one of the businesses' most challenging tasks is motivating their volunteer personnel.

Consequently, this study aims to investigate the characteristics that inspire volunteer engagement in KSA non-profit organizations. Through a review of the literature, this study considered the internal psychological factors of individuals, societal factors related to their surroundings, the behavior of society, factors related to the level of culture of individuals, and their awareness of the significance of volunteerism and its effects on individuals, groups, and community. This study investigated five criteria in the literature: awareness, psychological state, reward system, management techniques, and social support. Although prior research has addressed several motivating elements ([ping Xu et al., 2021](#)), these factors are not discussed in the context of volunteer workers. Thus, this study significantly contributes to the existing knowledge and has practical ramifications.

## 2. Literature Review

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, non-profit organizations confront numerous obstacles, the most significant of which is the difficulty of recruiting professional workers and inspiring volunteers. According to data from the King Khalid Foundation's Non-Profit Saudi Trends Report 2021, 33% of Saudi Arabians who do not engage in volunteer work lack access to relevant volunteer opportunities. The survey revealed that 70 percent of volunteers work alone, indicating a lack of support for volunteering through non-profit

groups. 41% of Saudi volunteers volunteer because they enjoy helping others, while 29% of Saudi Arabians volunteer to fulfill their national duty. Furthermore, 8% of Saudi volunteers believe that volunteering is an excellent opportunity for communication, 7% have free time that they use for volunteering, 4% volunteer in non-profit organizations to develop skills, and 1% support their religion.

The most significant reason for young people to engage in volunteer work is their conviction in the relevance of volunteer work in community service and its positive influence in offering new experiences and the chance to develop personal and impersonal relationships. The vast majority of young people have no interest in volunteer work, despite having sufficient free time to engage in voluntary activity. This demonstrates the existence of a noticeable inconsistency in the criteria that motivate Saudis to volunteer. In the absence of a mandated national program, today's adolescents and youths are growing increasingly disconnected from national duty, the political process, and each other. Therefore, the research problem is to identify the factors that can encourage volunteering in non-profit organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia so that the researcher can provide scientific material supported by arguments, literature, and statistics to assist those involved in planning and managing volunteer work in implementing strategies. The current study identified five significant characteristics that can affect volunteer motivation. These elements include consciousness, a psychological state, a reward system, management techniques, and social support. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the connection between these variables and volunteer motivation.

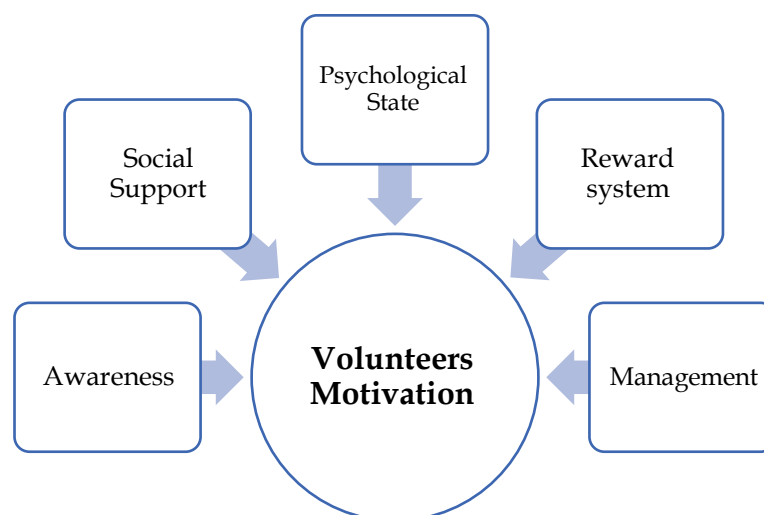


Figure 1. Research Framework

## 2.1 Volunteer Motivation

Motivation is a habit that regulates several internal and external elements (Poblete, Sena, & Fernandez de Arroyabe, 2019). A person may be innately driven to volunteer, spurred by literature and scientific resources, and psychologically motivated to volunteer because of a desire to assist. Volunteer motivation is an employee's motivation to work as a volunteer for an organization. Volunteers are frequently defined as those who engage in altruistic behavior under three conditions. They act without compensation and for the benefit of others more than themselves. To address the different factors that necessitate the participation of persons in volunteering, there is a rise in research and studies examining ways to encourage individuals to volunteer. Numerous research has focused on defining the idea of motivation, the numerous reasons that encourage people to volunteer, and whether the source of motivation is internal or external, or whether motivation is a non-physical psychological process caused by internal and external elements.

## 2.2 Awareness

Awareness is one of the essential motivational elements (Chen, Chen, & Wu, 2018) for volunteering. It is regarded as one of the internal factors that cause an individual to volunteer for civil and non-profit organizations. In psychology, the process of consciousness consists of two interrelated processes: sensation and interpretation, with the process of success beginning with inputs and events in the individual's immediate surroundings. Because of his knowledge of new stimuli and factors, the individual becomes more integrated. Consequently, awareness responds to several external influences that provide evidence of the harmony between living organisms and their environment. Behavioral awareness is the knowledge that we gain from a direct external influence based on the intensity of our feelings and emotions. Their awareness determines the nature of an individual's responses to external stimuli. The consciousness of volunteering is shaped by external factors such as living conditions, as might be summarized. In emergencies, awareness of volunteering grows, and school curricula and the media can inspire individuals to

volunteer by raising their understanding of volunteering's significance and role in society. The internal psychological and social aspects of volunteering in emergency situations are self-awareness and the external environment. Additionally, propaganda and advocacy play a role in internal and external awareness.

### 2.3 Social Support

Man is, by nature, a social entity who lives in a society that directly or indirectly influences his behavior, biases, and interests. The dimensions of social support include the individual's perception of being impacted by encouragement, acceptance, appreciation, and belonging to a social network with mutual commitments, emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support, informational support, and social integration. Emotional support may strengthen an individual's perception of network membership (De Meyer et al., 2016). Due to its stress-relieving properties, emotional support has been recognized as the most important type of social support. Volunteering benefits are realized and supported at all levels, including identifying and periodic study of barriers to volunteer engagement in social events, establishing a volunteer participation mechanism and management of its activities, and availability of material and information resources to coordinate and support volunteer efforts. One of the aspects that has a direct effect on volunteering motivation is social support. Therefore, society's culture must be geared toward the significance of volunteering to encourage volunteering.

### 2.4 Psychological State

Individual psychological condition explains several reactions and behaviors (Afsar et al., 2020; Holroyd & Yeung, 2012). This study aimed to determine the internal motivations for volunteering, including the individual's mental state. An individual psychological state is a fundamental determinant of numerous reactions and behaviors. Psychological health is a significant public health issue that influences society's development. It is common knowledge that an individual's psychological condition fluctuates based on several factors. The individual's financial situation may alter their psychological state, need for recognition, and other elements that influence

their disposition. In this study section, the researcher attempted to determine how to persuade individuals to volunteer by enhancing their mental condition. Understanding the significance of psychological state in the motivation of charitable volunteerism might assist in motivating and engaging volunteers. Understanding the characteristics that inspire volunteer retention and recruitment is crucial for the success and longevity of many community-based programs, given that many non-profit service organizations rely on volunteers to provide essential services to their communities. The psychological state of persons is a critical motivational factor (Burleson, 2003; Hamre & Pianta, 2005) behind volunteering. Organizations can motivate volunteers by evoking the compassion of individuals and inspiring them to aid others through philanthropic activity in non-profit organizations.

## 2.5 Reward System

A successful incentive system is one of the essential motivators for individuals in for-profit and non-profit organizations (Panda et al., 2021). Certain limitations apply to voluntary participation, which is particularly significant for human resource management in non-profit organizations. It means that everyone who works for the organization is entitled to remuneration sufficient to cover their basic needs. Non-profit organizations suffer budget constraints, making it more challenging to fulfill their obligations. Therefore, the compensation system is one of the most significant variables to consider while examining the motivations for volunteering in non-profit organizations. The reward system varies from institution to institution, depending on the nature and role of each institution within the community. Still, in the end, they all consist of two main components: material and moral incentives. Each organization employs these incentives in various ways to achieve the most significant benefit for the employee and the organization. Rewards influence individuals' motivation more (Nijboer, Birbaumer, & Kübler, 2010; Wang et al., 2021). Thus, the study discovered that moral rewards are the most effective inducement for volunteer work for non-profit organizations. The researcher argues that the rewards system should be examined as one of the motivating reasons for volunteering in non-profit organizations.

## 2.6 Management Practices

Management is the process of achieving objectives through the most efficient use of available resources, according to a particular strategy and context. Literature depicts management schematics in non-profit organizations and highlights the similarity between management planning in non-profit organizations and corporate organizations. However, in non-profit organizations, management must embrace specific volunteer-encouraging procedures. Literature estimating the effect of management practices on volunteer motivation revealed that a better understanding of volunteer processes and the impact of volunteer manager actions during the volunteer recruitment phase could assist prospective volunteers in forming realistic expectations, thereby enhancing volunteer recruitment outcomes. Previous research identified the primary link between managerial practices and employee motivation (Cho & Perry, 2012; Cumming, Olphin, & Law, 2007).

Finally, from the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed;

- H1.** *There is a significant relationship between awareness and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations.*
- H2.** *There is a significant relationship between social support and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations.*
- H3.** *There is a significant relationship between psychological state and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations.*
- H4.** *There is a significant relationship between the reward system and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations.*
- H5.** *There is a significant relationship between management practices and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations.*

## 3. Methodology

There are numerous sorts of research methodologies, which vary according to the nature and purpose of the study. Considering this study's purpose, a quantitative research methodology is adopted. Using quantitative research from prior studies, this study measures characteristics such as social support, psychological state, reward



system, awareness, management methods, and volunteer motivation. Therefore, the current study employed the variables' measures from prior research. This study used the quantitative research method to conduct a questionnaire survey employing a cross-sectional research design.

Since there were insufficient resources and time to target the complete population, the appropriate sampling approach was adopted in this study. This study selected a sample population for the online distribution of questionnaires to collect the necessary data and accomplish the research objectives. In this study, the population is deemed quite large due to the number of Saudi Arabian volunteers working for non-profit organizations. Nonetheless, the population shares several traits linked with this research's development. Using the random sampling method, the study results can then be applied to the remaining, unselected population. Due to the size of the target population, random sampling is the optimal sampling approach for this investigation ([Karami, Dolatabadi, & Rajaepour, 2013](#)). This study focused on the employees of non-profit organizations in the KSA, regardless of gender, age, position, nationality, or degree of education.

Consequently, the sample was a random selection from the total population. Therefore, every member of the population has an equal chance and likelihood of being chosen to participate in the study ([Fiorillo, 2011](#)). Thus, the random selection process was utilized because it can collect the sample size necessary to obtain the final results from the respondents. This method is also helpful in ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the research's final results and conclusions. Consequently, 222 volunteers were selected at random for this investigation.

This study relies on primary data acquired using an internet questionnaire employing a basic random sampling technique. An online survey was conducted because it was difficult to survey the entire population. Questionnaires were distributed to employees via email and other social media platforms. This survey delivered 500 questionnaires to a volunteer staff of non-profit organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 230 questionnaires were returned, but eight were deemed inaccurate and eliminated from the survey. Consequently, a total of 222 questionnaires were analyzed to obtain the results.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Results

This section contains information describing the respondents' characteristics, including personal and professional details pertinent to the sample selection (employees and volunteers working in the non-profit organization). To deliver the most accurate findings possible, this research focuses on acquiring the information necessary to support this study. Therefore, the total number of participants in this study is (222). The demographic profile of respondents reveals that the majority of respondents are male. The majority of participants fall between the ages of 40 and 60. The percentage of married respondents is likewise more significant than that of singles. In addition, the share of undergraduate responses is larger. The demographic characteristics of respondents are provided in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	139	62.6
	Female	83	37.4
Age	Less than 22 years old	8	3.6
	From 22 to 39 years old	88	39.6
	From 40 to 60 years old	108	48.6
	More than 60	18	8.1
Marital Status	Married	167	75.2
	Single	48	21.6
	Divorced	7	3.2
Education	Pre-graduate or lower	23	10.4
	Undergraduate	143	64.4
	Postgraduate	56	25.2
Occupational Status	Director	38	17.1
	CEO	14	6.3
	Board Member	39	17.6
	Employee	73	32.9
	Other	58	26.1
Salary	4999-1000SR	42	18.9
	9999-5000SR	30	13.5
	15000-10000SR	17	7.7
	More than 15000 SR	31	14.0
	Volunteer	102	45.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>222</b>	<b>100</b>

This section depicts the mean and standard deviation of the research model. It is designed to identify and present the elements that motivate volunteers in non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia. In this study, the dependent variable (DV) is employees' motivation, and five independent factors (IVs) that are supposed to influence the DV were evaluated. Awareness, cultural influences, psychological reward systems, and management behavior are listed as the IVs. The dissemination of an online questionnaire and statistical analysis of the results studies their impact. The impact of each factor varies from 4,701 to 3,503, with the highest IV range indicating the most significant effect on the DV.

According to statistical research, the resources component has been identified as the most significant influence on Psychological, outweighing all other variables, with an overall mean of 4.701%. The second most influential component is awareness, with an average score of 4.388%. The third factor is the Reward system factor, which averages 3.886%. The fourth aspect is management, which has achieved an average of 3.505%. The final element is social support, with the lowest overall average, with a range of 3.503%. The descriptive data are displayed in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Type of variable	Mean	Standard deviation
DV: Motivating Volunteer	3.983	.67351
IV: 1 Awareness	4.388	.5270
IV: 2 Social support	3.503	.8793
IV: 3 Psychological	4.701	.5643
IV: 4 Reward system	3.886	.6453
IV: 5 Management	3.505	.78192

Pearson's correlation ( $r$ ) has been incorporated to evaluate the linear relationship between the DV and IVs. Pearson's correlation demonstrates the direction and strength of the link between the specified variables. The range of this relationship's value is -1.0 to 1.0, and its interpretation is as follows: + 1.0 indicates a perfectly positive value, whereas -1.0 indicates a perfectly negative value, and 0.0 indicates no relationship between the stated variables. The link is expected to be more vital when the correlation is close to +1.0 and weaker when it is close to -1.0.

Table 3 displays Pearson's correlation coefficient. This section presents and illustrates the findings of Pearson's Correlation testing. The relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable has been evaluated for each independent variable. The data shows a significant association between all components, ranging from 0.564 to 0.475; regression analysis has been employed.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation

	DV: Motivating Volunteer	IV: 1 Awareness	IV: 2 Social support	IV: 3 Psychological	IV: 4 Reward system	IV: 5 Management
DV:						
Motivating Volunteer	1					
IV: 1 Awareness	.443**	1				
IV: 2 Social support	.547**	.390**	1			
IV: 3 Psychological	.482**	.559**	.356**	1		
IV: 4 Reward system	.478**	.438**	.500**	.471**	1	
IV: 5 Management	.495**	.436**	.464**	.419**	.539**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that all correlation coefficients for all questionnaire items were statistically significant at the level of significance  $\alpha = (0.01)$ , which means that the tool has structural validity and is valid for the purposes of the study. Regression analysis is given in Table 4. Table 5 below indicates the variance between the dependent and independent variables. According to Table 5, the variance is 0.440, while Sig. F change is .000, and F change is 33.952.

Testing the proposed hypothesis is an essential part of completing this research. This study proposed one hypothesis for each independent variable. Therefore, the regression relationship analysis has been applied to evaluate each IV concerning the DV, as presented in Table 4. According to the results obtained by using the regression analysis, the coefficient of awareness factor is  $\beta = 0.091$  with a .162 significant value and correlated with volunteers' motivation. There is no significant relationship between this factor and volunteers' motivation; *H1* is rejected, and awareness is not related to volunteers' motivation. According to the results obtained from the regression analysis, the coefficient of the social support factor is  $\beta = 0.312$  with a .000 significant value. This indicates a significant relationship between this factor and volunteers' motivation; therefore, *H2* is supported, and social support positively relates to volunteers' motivation. According to the results obtained by using the regression analysis, the coefficient psychological state factor is  $\beta = 0.203$  with a .002 significant value. This indicates that psychological state is significantly related to volunteers' motivation; therefore, *H3* is supported, and psychological state is positively associated with volunteers' motivation.

Furthermore, according to the results obtained from the regression analysis, the coefficient of the reward system factor is  $\beta = 0.091$  with a .177 significant value and correlated with volunteers' motivation. This indicates no significant relationship between this factor and volunteers' motivation; therefore, *H4* is rejected, and the reward system is unrelated to volunteers' motivation. Nevertheless, according to the results obtained from the regression analysis, the coefficient of management factor is  $\beta = 0.177$  with a .007 significant value. This indicates a relationship between this factor and volunteers' motivation; therefore, *H5* is supported, and management is related to volunteers' motivation.

Table 4. Regression Analysis

Variable	Standardized Coefficients, $\beta$	Sig.
Constant		.073
Awareness	.091	.162
Social support	.312	.000
Psychological	.203	.002
Reward system	.091	.177
Management	.177	.007

\*Dependent variable: Motivating Volunteer

\*Predictors: (Constant), Management, Psychological, Social support, Awareness, Reward system

Table 5. Variance Explained

	Variance Explained
R	.663
R Square	.440
F Change	33.952
Sig. F Change	.000

## 5. Discussion

The study aimed to determine the effect of motivation on the trend toward volunteering in charitable organizations following the Kingdom's 2030 goal. It encourages individuals to volunteer with philanthropic organizations, enhancing their ability to achieve their objectives and obtain the intended results. To determine the impact of a set of independent variables (social support, psychological state, reward system, awareness, and management practices) on the dependent variable, the study selected a set of independent variables (social support, psychological state, reward system, awareness, and management practices) (volunteer motivation). According to the study, there is a significant relationship between social support and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations, between psychological state and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations, and between management of the

non-profit organization and volunteers' motivation. In addition, the study's findings revealed no significant association between awareness and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations, nor between the reward system and volunteers' motivation in non-profit organizations.

According to the observed results, volunteer awareness is adversely and insignificantly associated with volunteer motivation. This study's findings are comparable to those of a study conducted by Pak, Kooij, De Lange, and Van Veldhoven, as determined by a review of the prior literature (2019). In addition, the data indicate that social support is favorably and significantly associated with volunteer motivation. This study's conclusions are comparable to those of earlier studies by examining prior research. As literature also demonstrates a correlation between social support and motivation (Rahim, 2019; Taherdoost, 2016; Vinodkumar & Bhasi, 2010).

The findings revealed that psychological condition is positively and strongly associated with volunteer motivation. The enhancement of psychological conditions can raise the motivation of volunteers. This study's conclusions are compatible with those of other studies by examining past research. For instance, Morisson (2014) and Legault et al. (2006) identified a strong association between psychological state and motivation in their respective investigations. The statistical research revealed that the reward system has a negative and insignificant relationship with volunteer motivation. Bagci (2018) also discovered comparable results in his study. Consequently, it has been determined that rewards have little effect on volunteer motivation. These results contradict much earlier research (Nijboer et al., 2010; Reinhold, Gegenfurtner, & Lewalter, 2018).

In addition, the relationship between management methods and volunteer motivation was investigated. The significance of the association between management practices and volunteer motivation was determined by statistical analysis. It indicates that management approaches positively impact volunteer motivation. It can also be stated that improved management techniques can raise volunteer motivation. Toode et al. (2014) similarly found a favorable correlation between management practices and volunteer motivation, as did the current study.

## 6. Conclusion

This study sought to determine the elements that influence the motivation of volunteers working for non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia. This objective was accomplished by examining the relationship between volunteer awareness, psychological state, rewards system, management methods, social support, and motivation. Volunteers working for non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia require robust social support. The promotion of social support for these employees has the potential to improve their performance. Additionally, these employees require enhanced psychological health. Improving volunteer employees' mental health in non-profit organizations can provide positive results. Further, more effective management methods implemented by non-profit organizations can boost the motivation of volunteer staff. Therefore, volunteer employees in non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia require significant social support, improved psychological conditions, and positive management techniques.

## 7. Implications of the Study

Numerous prior studies have researched the non-profit organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; nevertheless, the purpose of the current study is one of the unique objectives and has filled a large vacuum in the literature. This study mainly focused on the volunteer staff working for these organizations. Previous studies rarely address the motivation of volunteers. Therefore, this study made a substantial contribution to the literature on non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia. The study's findings are highly relevant to non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia. Volunteer employees can be encouraged by the management of these organizations, which can help to improve performance. The top management of non-profit organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should provide higher social support to these employees for optimal results. Also, management should advertise their psychological support and management techniques to boost volunteerism. Consequently, the findings of this study can be used to strengthen the factors that contribute to the motivation of individual volunteers in non-profit organizations by increasing social and family support for these volunteers and by working



to provide the appropriate working environment in non-profit organizations. Valuable for achieving the objectives of non-profit organizations in the current study.

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