

Motivations for Volunteering in Oman during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploring Faith, Individual Will, and Socio-Demographic Influences in the Context of Local Traditions

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Abstracts

This paper explores the motivations behind volunteering in Oman during the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes a sample of 492 individuals from Dhofar, in the south of Oman, and focuses on those who have ever participated in any voluntary activity to combat COVID-19. Using a quantitative approach and a non-probability sampling technique, it seeks to describe and analyze the volunteers' motivations in connection to their social characteristics in the context of local traditions. The majority of volunteers possess a modern education, with a significant proportion being higher education students. Their motivations revolve around faith and individual will, underscoring the significance of personal autonomy in their volunteer decisions. In addition, the study finds a strong association between family size and volunteering, with larger families showing higher engagement rates. These findings highlight the importance of having a differential understanding of people's motivation to volunteer and how each reason relates to sociodemographic factors within established traditions. They confirm that social and cultural research is a prelude to the design of campaigns aimed at improving volunteer participation rates in Oman's modernizing society.

Keywords: volunteering, motivations, Oman, COVID-19 pandemic, faith, individual will, socio-demographic factors, ethnography, cultural context.

1. Introduction

Volunteering is a noble humane act. Giving time, effort, and money to help others without expecting a return means that there is a motive to do so. Volunteering plays a crucial role in fortifying the social structure. We value these motivations highly, making their study an urgent necessity. In times of crisis, like the emergence of the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in December 2019 and the global outbreak of coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19), which the World Health Organization eventually declared a pandemic (Yuki et al., 2020), the importance of volunteering escalated, as it played a crucial role in safeguarding society from impending dangers with far-reaching implications.

Social scientists have paid close attention to voluntarism. Some regarded it as a sacrifice (Baron 1997). Others saw it as a deliberate rational action (Chapman 2001) or a pre-planned activity requiring priority and planning that may lead to professionalism (Dymarczyk 2023). The question they all address, however, is “Why do people volunteer?” They, however, arrived at different answers. However, industrially developed countries, characterized by civil societies operating effectively after neutralizing or marginalizing many traditional values of local groups, have developed frameworks that guide most reasons for volunteering (Butcher and Einlof 2017). As a result, the majority of existing literature emphasizes the individual's free will as a crucial driving force for volunteering, although cultural interpretations of this factor may differ (ibid.). Given that this paper studies non-western. In contrast, this paper adopts a perspective linking the individuals' will to sets of motivations for volunteering. Then it inquires how different motives work together, how they relate to each other, and what motives are stronger than others. The aim is to understand the processes that explain people's motivations to volunteer, which is the meaning of the short question, “Why do people volunteer?” The answers to this question should aid those who wish to encourage others to make volunteering a sustainable act rather than a one-time gesture. Clary et al. (1998) devised a functional analytical strategy to examine the role of values, understanding, social relations, protection of feelings, career development, and enhancement of positive affect, personal growth, and self-esteem. In brief terms, therefore, this paper assumes that volunteers benefit from volunteering because it fulfills the above functions, and using quantitative analysis, it aims at measuring the relative significance of each function. Finally, it discusses the findings in relation to scholarly writings on voluntarism in international, regional, and national contexts. The paper seeks to identify the percentage of volunteers in a community inhabiting the far south of the Sultanate of Oman. It focuses on a sample of young people studying at a major university in the region within networks composed of their friends, colleagues, and relatives. More specifically, the paper aims to measure the relative significance of volunteering motivations and explore how these drives interact with each other, shaping local traditions. The paper is composed of a review of the theoretical frameworks used in the study of volunteering with illustrative examples, followed by an explanation of the methodology used in collecting research data and a numerical description of the results analyzed by SPSS. Finally, the paper offers discussion of the interrelationships between motivations and their influence on selected sociodemographic factors and local traditions.

In brief, this study highlights the importance of understanding the diverse motivations of volunteers in order to effectively recruit and retain them. The research finds that in Oman, religious faith and personal values are primary motivations for volunteering, with less emphasis on social relations and career goals. Demographic factors also play a role in shaping motivations. The study emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive strategies to engage and retain volunteers, as well as the importance of intrinsic values over material rewards. Overall, this research provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to effectively engage volunteers in Oman.

2. Theoretical Framework

In his article, Mann (2001) explains that voluntarism theories, which focus on human will and volition, are crucial for understanding acts of benevolence towards others. These theories

originate from philosophy, religion, politics, and psychology. Philosophical theorists argue that virtue and badness are subjective qualities derived from conscious beings' attitudes. They view the individual's will as subjective, with the actor being the source of ethical value. Different responses to the question of who determines the value of volunteering include individuals, specialists, society, and God (Mann 2001, 1772-3).

Empirical studies show that there is a connection between religious beliefs and voluntarism. Denning (2020) examines how religious organizations and volunteers address poverty in the UK, challenging fixed notions of religious motivation. Mittermaier (2014) explores Islamic charitable activities in Egypt, highlighting the impact on society. Clerkin and Swiss (2013) find that religious motivations are more common in volunteer labor in American faith-based organizations, leading to higher satisfaction levels. Voluntarism in politics emphasizes individual and collective will, shaping governance. It challenges determinist views that focus on structural constraints. Rogen (1962) argues that voluntarism can destabilize relations between unions and employers, favoring craft unions over unorganized workers and the unemployed. A recent study shows that voluntarism's impact on political outcomes is significant in modern societies. Psychological theories of voluntarism stress the importance of volition, or the will, in thought and conduct. Ferrero (2022) explores the significance of agency beyond the achievement of objectives, emphasizing its usefulness and congruence with fundamental values and self-concept.

The article "Understanding and Assessing the Motivations of Volunteers: A Functional Approach" by Clary et al. (1998) offers a comprehensive framework for the analysis of the underlying reasons behind individuals' decision to engage in volunteer work. They employ a functional approach to understand the motivations behind volunteering. Their perspective explores the various functions or objectives that volunteering serves for individuals, including personal fulfillment, social connection, and career development. The authors categorize motivations into different functions, which are also central to the present study. In brief, volunteering offers individuals the opportunity to express their values, learn new skills, interact with others, enhance their career prospects, address personal issues, and promote personal growth and development.

Similarly, this article highlights the significance of comprehending volunteerism as a multifaceted phenomenon that demonstrates intricate interactions between an individual's will and broader social, political, and psychological factors. To capture the complex range of factors that drive individuals to participate in volunteer activities, it suggests evaluating volunteer motivations using a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. The article also emphasizes the need to consider cultural and contextual factors when evaluating volunteer motivations, as these can influence why individuals choose to volunteer. The paper proposes a scheme of six motives for volunteering, including faith, free will, serving humanity, career objectives, social relations, and functional improvement. The main assumption is that these motivations better align with the ideas and feelings expressed by respondents in interviews conducted prior to designing the study questionnaire. Overall, the paper highlights the importance of motivations that benefit the volunteers. It is crucial for organizations and policymakers to effectively involve volunteers. Ultimately, this paper aims to uncover

motivations that are useful in the eyes of volunteers and that in turn may help organizations and policymakers address volunteers in effective ways that are relevant to their culture and personal feelings.

3. Methodology

We created a customized questionnaire based on firsthand experiential data collected during 18 months of immersion within the study community. We formulated the questions using local terminology that resonated with the participants' ideas, emotions, and behaviors. We structure the questionnaire into four clusters of motivations: (1) individual-bound motivations and (2) society-oriented motivations. The aim is to explore and analyze the factors that drive individuals to engage in volunteer activities within the specific cultural and societal context of the study community. The study population comprises three categories: (1) individuals who volunteered during the coronavirus pandemic, (2) individuals who have not volunteered yet but show support and potential for future volunteering, and (3) individuals who are opposed to volunteering.

I selected a total of 152 respondents from my Dhofar University students. They added 340 people to their social network. Therefore, they chose the Snowball method, which aligns with the emphasis on person-to-person voluntarism. This is a convenient sample, with students serving as key participants and constituting a majority within the study community. It may not be representative of the university. Yet it fulfills the study's aim, which is to identify ideas, beliefs, and concepts shared in society at large and responsible for shaping voluntarism motivations. Snyder et al. (2000) created the Functional and Value-based Interests (FVI) questionnaire that we used. We changed 24 of the questions to match the six functions described above. The questionnaires asked the respondents if they have ever joined a voluntary activity to combat COVID-19 of any kind. The questionnaire did not ask respondents to specify the kind of voluntary activity they performed. The main concern of the questionnaire was to identify and measure motivations to volunteers by choosing whether they agree or disagree on each item on the Likert scale consisting of a series of statements with which respondents indicate their level of agreement or disagreement (completely wrong, often wrong, I don't know, often true, completely true).

The FVI questionnaire aims to assess individuals' interests based on their functional and value-based perspectives. Its goal is to identify what motivates people and what they find satisfying in their careers and personal endeavors. The results have an impact on a variety of life choices and personal growth. Overall, the FVI questionnaire demonstrated its usefulness in identifying and measuring the respondents' motivations, facilitating a discussion on how their personal characteristics, shaped by their community value systems, influence them. We electronically shared the questionnaire with 152 students. They, along with their friends, colleagues, relatives, and acquaintances, completed the questionnaire. We used SPSS to analyze the data for further examination and insights.

This paper employs the snowball or network sampling technique, a well-known method in research. It entails selecting certain individuals as "index" participants, who, in turn, refer to other people they are familiar with or socially connected to and who possess specific

characteristics specified by the researcher. The researcher chooses the convenient snowball method to include populations from outside the university walls, often considered too private for detailed research such as interviews. This method leverages existing relationships within communities; it secures the element of familiarity and trust with the researched people. Secondly, budget cuts prevented funding this research, making it cost-effective in terms of both time and money. Upon confirmation of the initial participants, they could expedite the recruitment process by promptly recommending others who met the criteria. These strengths, however, do not preclude the weak aspects of this method, including sampling bias, limited representativeness, dependence on initial contacts, and ethical and confidentiality concerns. In summary, the snowball method is a useful tool for accessing specific populations and can be both cost-effective and efficient. However, it is an adaptable method and perfectly useful for this exploratory study (Faugier 2010).

4. Results

Table 1 summarizes the general characteristics of the volunteers in this study. All volunteers are Omanis and Muslims. The volunteers exhibit a balanced gender distribution, with 45 (59.2%) females and 31 (40.8%) males, mirroring the overall gender ratio of the university. The largest age group among the volunteers is between 15 and 25 years, comprising 39 individuals (51.3%) of the total sample, followed by the age group between 25 and 40 years, with 32 individuals (42.1%). The smallest group consists of individuals aged 40 years or older, with only 5 (6.6%) participants.

4.1 Variation following demographic variables

Remarkably, all the volunteers in this study have received modern education. Among them, the majority (70 persons, or 92%) are students, with 57 (75%) holding an undergraduate degree, 4 (5.3%) pursuing a postgraduate degree, and the remaining 6 (7.9%) enrolled in modern schools. This suggests a potential correlation between modern education and participation in voluntary activities, as a considerable proportion of the volunteers are students or individuals with higher education degrees.

Table. 1: General description of the study sample

Variables		Frequencies	%
Gender	Male	31	40.8
	Female	45	59.2
Age	15-25 years	39	51.3
	25-40 years	32	42.1
	> 40 years	5	6.6
Education Level	School education	6	7.9
	Intermediate College	9	11.8
	University education	57	75

	Higher studies	4	5.3
JOB	Unemployed	31	40.8
	Housewife	10	13.2
	Employed	22	28.9
	Self employed	13	17.1
Family Size	2-4	9	11.8
	5-7	46	60.5
	11-13	11	14.5
	>13	10	13.2
Family Pattern	Father, mother, and sons	46	60.5
	Father, mother, sons, grandfather / grandmother	13	17.1
	Father, mother, sons, grandfather, grandmother, uncles & aunts	17	22.4
Marital Status	Single	44	57.9
	Married	32	42.1
Mode of Living	Urban	59	77.6
	Pastoralist	17	22.4
Nationality	Omani	76	100
	Other	0	0
Religion	Islam	76	100
	Other	0	0
Income	Low	5	6.6
	Medium	60	78.9
	High	11	14.5

Regarding employment status, more than half of the volunteers (45 persons, or 59%) have some form of occupation. Among them, 22 persons (28.9%) have regular employment, 13 (17.1%) are self-employed, and 10 (13.2%) identify as "housewives." The remaining volunteers consider themselves unemployed, but many of them are likely still studying, which can be considered a form of occupation. Given that a significant portion of the volunteers are involved in various forms of work or study, these findings suggest a potential association between employment and the propensity to volunteer.

The data indicates a correlation between family size and volunteering, with a higher rate of volunteering observed among members of larger families. Specifically, 46 people (60.5%) who volunteered live in families consisting of 5 to 7 members, 11 people (14.5%) in larger families, 10 people (13.2%) in families with 14 members or more, and 9 people (11.8%) in families of 2

to 4 members. Notably, all the volunteers reside either in nuclear or extended families. Many of them live in close-knit households, with multiple generations and siblings residing in adjacent houses. This finding supports the observed trend that links volunteering motivation to serving one's nation, family, and/or religion. Various studies (Qu et al., 2024) support the interconnection of these categories in the local culture. Oman, like many Muslim communities, exhibits diverse practices influenced by various traditions, including Islam, tribal governance, and modern institutions. However, the state's centralization is not complete, and it does not exclude or essentialize other aspects (Asad 2003:179). Consequently, family ties continue to hold significant importance, working in synergy with religious beliefs (Al Barwani and Albeely 2007).

Among the volunteers, a majority are single (44 persons, or 57.9%), live in urban areas (59 persons, or 77.9%), and belong to high- or middle-income groups (71 persons, or 93%). In contrast, those who are married (32 persons, or 42.1%), live in rural or semi-sedentary areas (17 persons, or 22.4%), and belong to lower-income groups (5 persons, or 6.6%) are fewer in number. These findings indicate that higher income, singlehood, and urban life may influence the motivation towards volunteering. However, the next study will analyze these observations in comparison with the rest of the larger sample, which includes individuals who have never volunteered and those who oppose voluntarism.

4.2 Descriptive statistics of persons who volunteered

Table. 2 Descriptive analyses, the strength of different motivations

#	Motivation	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	Order	Sig
1	Volunteering to fight Corona relieves me of fear and anxiety about the danger of the epidemic	3	6	17	33	76	3.72	1.028	8	High
2	Volunteering to fight Corona is because I feel compassion for others	25	9	6	19	17	2.92	1.156	11	Med
3	Volunteering to fight Corona is to achieve an appreciation	21	10	13	18	14	2.92	1.145	10	Med
4	Volunteering to fight Corona enables me to build relationships in the places I want to work	17	19	7	20	13	2.91	1.131	12	Med
5	Volunteering to fight Corona teaches me how to deal with diverse groups of people	1	3	5	27	40	4.34	.873	6	V. high
6	Volunteering to fight Corona could improve my job situation	14	13	19	18	12	3.01	1.022	9	Med
7	Volunteering to fight Corona is a duty toward the homeland	5	-	-	10	61	4.61	1.021	4	V. high
8	Volunteering to fight Corona is one of my generosities	7	4	5	25	35	4.01	1.026	7	High
9	Volunteering to fight Corona in the service of my family and clan	3	3	1	20	49	4.43	.998	5	V. High

10	Faith	Volunteering to fight Corona is an endeavor to please God in this world and the hereafter	2	-	-	8	66	4.79	.699	1	V. high
11	Humanism	Volunteering to fight Corona is a service to all of humanity, and for me there is no difference between one person and another	-	3	-	11	62	4.74	.661	3	V. High
12	Individualism	Volunteering to fight Corona is an expression of my individual free will	1	-	1	12	62	4.76	.608	2	V. High

Table 2 highlights that the primary motivation for volunteering to combat the Coronavirus is to please God (Motivation No. 10) in this world and the hereafter, with a high arithmetic mean of 4.79. Volunteering as an expression of individual free will (Motivation No. 12) is the second highest motivation, with an arithmetic mean of 4.76. Interestingly, the lowest-ranking motivation is the idea that volunteering in this context fosters workplace relationships (Motivation No. 4), with an arithmetic mean of 2.91. In summary, we can rank the following motivations in order of strength: 1. Faith 1. Faith 2. Free will 3. Serving humanity; 4. Career purposes; 5. Social relations; and 6. Individual feelings.

4.3 T-test and One-Way ANOVA test

Table. 3 t-test Results

Variable	Motivations	T	Df	Mean male	female	Sig.
Gender	Protection	.929	74	3.3118	3.1037	.356
	Career	.533	74	3.3548	3.4667	.596
	Values	.378	74	4.3118	4.3778	.707
	Faith	1.181	74	4.90	4.71	.241
	Humanism	.296	74	4.71	4.76	.768
	Individualism	.898	74	4.84	4.71	.372
				Single	Married	
Marital status	Protection	4.294	74	2.8258	3.6875	.000
	Career	1.355	74	3.3030	3.5833	.179
	Values	1.611	74	4.2348	4.5104	.111
	Faith	1.942	74	4.66	4.97	.056
	Humanism	1.207	74	4.66	4.84	.231
	Individualism	.160	74	4.77	4.75	.873
				Urban	Pastoralist	
Model Of Living	Protection	2.091	74	3.0678	3.6078	.040
	Career	.462	74	3.3955	3.5098	.646
	Values	.751	74	4.3164	4.4706	.455
	Faith	.165	74	4.80	4.76	.870

Humanism	1.053	74	4.78	4.59	.296
Individualism	1.353	74	4.81	4.59	.180

Table 3 indicates statistically significant differences between protection motivations and both marital status and mode of living (p -value < 0.05). This suggests that these two variables may have an impact on protection-related motivations. Further exploration of these variables through ethnographic qualitative research methods could provide valuable insights for designing and planning voluntary campaigns. Understanding the interplay between these factors and motivations can enhance the effectiveness of volunteer initiatives in combating the Coronavirus and other public interest issues.

In the One-Way ANOVA Test, statistically significant differences are observed only between protection motivations and the variable of age, with a p -value less than 0.05. This finding emphasizes the significance of age among the volunteers, as it relates to knowledge, wisdom, respect, and a strong sense of duty toward others in the studied community. Projects and studies on voluntarism should pay special attention to this dimension, as it can significantly influence motivations for volunteering. Other studies, like Denning (2020), also support the idea of using ethnographic methodologies to gain a deeper understanding of volunteers' motivations, particularly in relation to age.

4.4 Correlation test results

Table. 4 Correlation Test Results

Motivation		Protection	Career	values	Faith	Humanism	Individualism
Gender	Corr. Coof.	-.107	.062	.044	-.136	.034	-.104
	Sig.	.356	.596	.707	.241	.768	.372
Age	Corr. Coof.	.391**	.176	.171	-.036	.067	.175
	Sig.	.000	.129	.139	.760	.566	.130
Education level	Corr. Coof.	.018	.145	-.145	-.045	-.136	.032
	Sig.	.876	.210	.213	.680	.242	.783
Job	Corr. Coof.	.265**	-.002	.103	.239**	-.009	.189
	Sig.	.021	.986	.374	.037	.938	.102
Family size	Corr. Coof.	.098	-.068	-.153	-.030	-.075	-.206
	Sig.	.398	.557	.186	.800	.519	.074
Family pattern	Corr. Coof.	.219	-.014	-.025	.089	-.112	.083
	Sig.	.057	.904	.931	.443	.334	.479
Marital status	Corr. Coof.	.447**	.156	.184	.220	.139	-.019
	Sig.	.000	.179	.111	.056	.231	.873
Model of living	Corr. Coof.	.236**	.054	.087	-.019	-.122	-.155
	Sig.	.040	.646	.455	.870	.296	.180
Income	Corr. Coof.	.230**	.103	.153	.179	.203	.165
	Sig.	.045	.377	.186	.122	.078	.155

The Pearson Correlation Test shows that all the variables of age, job, faith, marital status, mode of living, and income have a significant correlation with the variable of “protection,” as indicated

by p-values less than 0.05. This suggests that these variables affect the level of protection experienced by individuals, as discussed below.

5. Discussion

Reply to Comment No. 4 in References No. 2: The discussion of the results was neither robust nor supported by the relevant literature.

Oman has experienced significant growth, driven by oil revenues, investments in infrastructure, and a market-oriented economy.

An emerging nation-state in Oman has managed a market-based economy and built extensive modern infrastructure. Thanks to oil revenues, the society has witnessed a significant rise in GDP per capita, (Macrotrends 2024) rapid population growth due to the migration of foreign labor, improved living conditions, and increased life expectancy from 46.6 years in 1970 to nearly 80 years in 2024 (World-o-meter 2024) Successive governments have built a comprehensive network of primary health care facilities, managed by healthcare practitioners trained in modern biomedical sciences and staffed according to competitive national priority standards. Additionally, the country has implemented measures to guarantee affordable social services for children and the elderly. Like all developing countries, however, challenges remain in transitioning to preventive care and raising awareness of non-communicable diseases. Oman aims to address these challenges through education, workforce development, long-term health investments (Ben Halim et al. 2022), and civil society revitalization, including volunteering.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government launched various initiatives, including efforts to ensure equitable healthcare access. It called for volunteers, but the response was poor.

The Omani government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the above progress when connected to voluntarism. It consisted of multisectoral while ensuring equitable healthcare access for all. It strengthened medical and public health responses (Ghafri et al., 2021), including proactive measures in activating the national incident chain of command, conducting risk assessments, and developing guidelines (Al-Khalili et al., 2021). The government activated volunteer work through initiatives such as the National Youth Committee and an electronic platform (Keshk 2020).

Nevertheless, despite these efforts, there was a shortage of volunteers, influenced by religious, cultural, and sociocultural factors that affect volunteerism.

Power dynamics shape modern discourses, influencing everything from the social structure to the mental health of each individual citizen. To fully understand these discourses, we need to use combined approaches that include qualitative methods (Potter 2012, Miller 1990, 124). Three discourses manage social life in Oman: religious, cultural, and political (Ismail, 2018). They are interwoven. Religious discourse calls for tolerance. Cultural discourse is still evolving in the context of encroaching modernizing projects. Political discourse seeks to entrench pluralism in Omani society (Ismaili 2018). The Ibadi faith (Ibadism) contributes to Oman's reputation for being free from sectarian religious conflicts, despite its ethnically diverse population. This is a

reformist Islamic movement that influenced Oman's structures, among other societies. It originated in the seventh century and has since been known for a relentless pursuit of social justice based on religious faith. In this form of governance, the Imam serves as both a spiritual and political leader. Simultaneously, it allows for local communities' autonomy based on consensus and consultation. This description more or less summarizes social life in contemporary Oman, where Ibadism is the faith of the ruling class. It grants the sultan the role of wielding religious and political power based on Islamic principles. Furthermore, Ibadism opens up a large scope for the state's influence on different social groups as it allows for the coexistence of different religions (Goshey, E. 2019). Fruitful cooperation is therefore possible between members of Omani society, where the cultural discourse allows the religious discourse to deeply affect the social fabric in accordance with the political discourse dominating the collective conscience of the population.

(Bierschenk 1988).

This paper is inspired by international studies concerned with developing framework for developing countries in an increasingly globalized world (Butcher and Einolf 2017, Grönlund et al. 2011), highlighting issues of autonomy (Qu et al. 2024) and impact of community (Omoto and Snyder 2002). The long-term aim is enhancing support, retaining volunteers, which could enhance political participation, and overcome social and institutional barriers (OECD 2021) much needed in rapidly changing communities of the MENA region (Haddad 2015). As for studies in Oman the present paper highlights the significance of faith-driven volunteering and their long-lasting effects on the country's social fabric, dating back to before the Renaissance period (Abed Rabbo and Saleh 2020). Second, it demonstrates the importance of collective belonging as a significant psychological incentive for volunteering (Al-Hinai 2024, Al-Shamil, and Al-Maamari 2015, Alriyami et al. (2018). This study therefore would agree with authors recommending focusing studies of voluntarism more on intrinsic psychosocial motivations (Al Shamli and Al Mamari 2015) than material reward. On the other hand, volunteers have the following socio-demographic characteristics: The majority have some form of employment, with a large number of them being self-employed or regular workers. There is a potential link between modern education and volunteerism, as more than half the volunteers have bachelor's degrees. In addition, volunteers are often unmarried, live in urban areas, and belong to high- or middle-income groups.

Although there is a strong willingness to volunteer, the actual volunteer rates in Oman and the broader Arab Middle East remain low, highlighting the impact of local cultural factors. The current study's results meet with Butcher and Einolf's (2017) critical observations on volunteering in the MENA region. They found that the proportion of volunteers in the Arab Middle East, including Oman, is low at 11.2% when using foreign criteria, such as those used in Canada's National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Engagement, which reached 31% of Canadians aged fifteen and above. The 1990s saw fifteen and more years of volunteer work in the Arab Middle East, including Oman (Hall et al., 1998, quoted in Cossam 2005: 435). The percentage of volunteers in this study is significantly lower compared to national and international averages. Similarly, in 1993 alone, approximately 47.7% of U.S. citizens (89.2 million individuals) engaged in volunteer work (Hodgkinson et al., 1996, quoted in Houle,

Sagarin, and Kaplan, 2005:337). In contrast, Butcher and Einolf (2017) note that when using culturally appropriate criteria, the percentage of assistance to others, including outsiders, in the Arab Middle East jumps to 50.8%. The results of the current study carry even better news. Of the 492 individuals surveyed, only 76 (15.4%) participated in volunteering, while the vast majority (399 individuals, or 81.1%) expressed a strong desire to volunteer if given the opportunity. Those who said they opposed the idea of volunteering were only a tiny minority (17 individuals, or 3.5%). This paper emphasizes the importance of analyzing statistical links between sociodemographic variables and volunteer motivations to gain insights into specific groups. Conducting numerical research and dealing with the everyday lives of individuals and groups is critical for social scientists to understand their challenges and concerns and provide effective and empowering support.

Research on the Gebali community shows that shared identity and spirituality are key motivators for volunteering. The above observations too underscore the significance of the present article, which focuses on examining volunteer motivation and how it relates to the dominant traditions of the study group. The results may help address the majority who want to volunteer but haven't found an opportunity. Reply of Auditor No. 3 regarding Gebali While a nation-state regulates a pervasive free market-based economy aiming to build a cooperative society despite clear differences in race, religion, and social class, it is important to examine participants' actions in the context of their traditions. To fully understand this phenomenon, we must examine quantitative data within the context of traditions (Jenkins 1994). The present study provides compelling evidence of the importance of local culture in determining motivation towards volunteering. The primary 152 participants are students at Dhofar University, the largest educational institution in the region. Most of them belong to tribes inhabiting the mountains surrounding the city and are known, along with their different language, as the "Gebalis" (of the mountain). The description "Gebali" differentiates these communities from residents of the arid land of the empty quarter, coastal areas, and other surrounding towns. Arabic is the designated language for all official purposes. Contemporary Gebalis live off a mixed economy combining pastoralism, salaried jobs for the government and the market, and private business. They all speak Arabic fluently and have recently received recognition as citizens of Oman. Institutions under the central authority in Muscat provide them with standardized education. Consequently, their distinctions from other residents are gradually diminishing, particularly due to the increasing prevalence of intermarriages.

Risse's (2019) ethnographic study focuses on the communities of respondents from ethnically diverse tribes residing in the mountains surrounding Salalah. Despite their ethnic diversity, these groups are collectively known as "Gebalis," or people of the mountains, perhaps to distinguish them from the inhabitants of the arid lands of the Empty Quarter and other coastal areas and surrounding towns. Arabic is the lingua franca for the whole region. Over the past five decades, Gabalis have become citizens of Oman. They went to the Omani Ministry of Education's schools. Although the differences between them and other residents gradually decrease due to the prevalence of mixed marriages, market transactions, and employment, their traditions deeply influence the public's perception of Salalah city and the Dhofar region. Risse's detailed study shows how community members value autonomy in various aspects of life, such as communication, transportation, fishing, and choosing partners. She underscores the cultural

significance of upholding individual autonomy in the context of a community-centered society that values the efforts of others. In an earlier study, Risse (2015) provides a brief description based on fieldwork on mountain culture with a unique insight into the values of generosity and gift giving, but gifts are seen as unnecessary and not important in themselves. Gebalis believe in independence from property and do not attach any restrictions to the gifts they give. The recipient owns the gift and is not required to pay. The Gibalis culture values sharing. They believe in giving without expecting anything in return. They do not keep track of gifts given or received, and they do not feel owed or obligated. In fact, the Gebalis see giving as a means of sharing and creating positive social and religious credit. They don't care about wealth; they are not afraid of losing. Instead, they believe in giving what they have and sharing it with others. Interestingly, they have ways to escape cultural norms of generosity, such as asking for money or things without giving anything in return. To avoid embarrassing the donor, they accept uninvited gifts and, if possible, counter them.

However, cultural attitudes towards volunteering, including the reasons for participating, can decline due to the effects of oil wealth, government policies, and market dynamics.

In the present world, no culture remains isolated or unchanged. The Gebali communities are exception. They have undergone significant changes due to the region's oil wealth. The Omani government has taken steps to integrate them into modern development, resulting in a decline in regional independent trade, increased settlement, and a shift towards gardening and fixed employment. However, there is still a development gap between settled coastal areas and the nomadic interior, posing a risk of long-term decline and marginalization without targeted measures (Janzen 1983). In conclusion, traditions that maintain values of giving without expecting a return must face real challenges in the present world. The outcome of the encounter with the free market and state policies will undoubtedly have profound implications for the culture. There is no reason why motivations for voluntarism will be immune from the encroaching, undeniably powerful forces.

6. Conclusion

Research on volunteer motivations shows diverse perspectives: some view volunteering as a sacrifice, others as a rational, pre-planned activity, and some focus on personal fulfillment and professional development. Understanding these motivations is vital for effective recruitment and retention of volunteers. This study adopts a functional approach to analyze motivations for volunteering, considering factors like personal values, social relations, career development, and self-esteem.

The theoretical framework incorporates philosophical, religious, political, and psychological perspectives on voluntarism. Empirical studies suggest a connection between religious beliefs and volunteer work, with religious motivations often leading to higher satisfaction. Psychological theories emphasize the role of will in volunteering, while political theories explore the impact of voluntarism on governance.

The study uses a custom questionnaire and snowball sampling to explore volunteer motivations in a specific cultural context. The sample includes Omani students and their social networks. The findings indicate that faith and personal free will are primary motivations for volunteering, with social relations and career purposes being less significant. The results also show that demographic factors like age, employment status, and family size influence volunteer motivation.

In conclusion, Oman has experienced economic growth fueled by oil revenues and infrastructure investments, leading to improvements in living conditions and increased life expectancy. The government has implemented measures to ensure affordable social services, and it has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with initiatives for equitable healthcare access. However, the study reveals that sociocultural factors influence volunteering in Dhofar. It emphasizes the importance of faith-driven volunteering and collective belonging as motivators for volunteerism. The Gebali culture has long been known for autonomy and giving without expecting anything in return. By focusing on their uniqueness and future aspirations, communities embracing these traditions could sustain them. Cultures, however, change and may fade or disappear, especially if left unattended. The Gebali traditions are an exception.

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