

Analysis Of The Role Of Volunteers In Supporting The Red Crescent's Capabilities During Major Religious Seasons In Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

This research aims to analyze the role of volunteers in supporting the Saudi Red Crescent's capabilities during major religious seasons in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, periods that witness high population density and increased pressure on health and emergency services. The study adopted the descriptive analytical approach, and was based on questionnaires distributed to a sample of (200) participants from volunteers and Red Crescent employees. The research focused on volunteers' contributions to enhancing field response efficiency and reducing the burden on official teams, in addition to their role in health awareness and crowd management. The results showed that volunteers are a fundamental pillar of the Red Crescent's success, contributing to increased service capacity, raising beneficiary satisfaction, and fostering a positive image of volunteer work in the community. The results also revealed challenges facing volunteers, such as the need for specialized training, establishing coordination mechanisms between them and official cadres, and ensuring continued participation. The study concluded that it is necessary to invest in programs to prepare and develop volunteer skills, and to strengthen communication channels between them and regulatory bodies. This will ensure the sustainability of efforts and achieve the Red Crescent's goals of protecting lives and providing emergency care efficiently. The study recommended creating updated volunteer databases and organizing incentive campaigns to increase participation during religious seasons.

Keywords: Volunteers - Saudi Red Crescent - Religious Seasons - Emergency Services - Crowd Management - Emergency Care - Training - Field Response.

Introduction

Major religious seasons in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, such as the Hajj and Umrah seasons and the holy month of Ramadan, are among the largest human gatherings in the world, requiring exceptional preparations and efforts to ensure the safety and comfort of millions of visitors, pilgrims, and Umrah performers. The role of volunteers is essential to increasing and supporting the capabilities of the Saudi Red Crescent Authority, enabling it to provide its emergency and humanitarian services with high efficiency and professionalism. Volunteers are ambassadors of giving, working hand in hand with the Authority's emergency and medical teams to expand coverage and reach the most remote and crowded points in the holy sites and the Two Holy Mosques. Thousands of male and female volunteers are recruited annually from various backgrounds and specializations, including health cadres of doctors and nurses, as well as students studying in medical colleges and applied sciences. This ensures the provision of specialized and early first aid services. These volunteers contribute to the implementation of the Red Crescent's

,operational plan, which is characterized by complexity and comprehensiveness, including emergency humanitarian, and awareness-raising aspects⁸

The support provided by volunteers is represented in multiple vital paths, the most important of which is the first aid path, where they provide first aid to the injured and emergency cases such as heat exhaustion or minor injuries, and help in triaging cases and facilitating their transfer to health centers or field hospitals. They also play a major role in the organizational and advisory path, where they help organize the movement of crowds and direct visitors, especially the elderly and people with disabilities, providing them with wheelchairs and directing them to the nearest service centers or first aid points. This logistical support relieves the enormous pressure on the shoulders of the primary first aid teams, allowing them to focus on more serious cases⁹

Discussion

Volunteer work during the Hajj and Umrah seasons in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia goes beyond charitable activities to become a fundamental pillar and one of the strategic components for the success of the system of services provided to the guests of God and a developmental axis that aligns with the objectives of the Kingdom's Vision 2030. These seasons gain their great importance in terms of the huge human volume, as millions flock to specific geographical areas in short periods of time, which places exceptional pressure on the infrastructure and human resources of government and service agencies. Here, the vital and detailed role of volunteers in bridging gaps and enhancing the ability to respond becomes clear. The importance of volunteer work during the Hajj and Umrah seasons can be explained as follows^{10,1}

Volunteers are a support force that increases the capacity of agencies operating in many sectors, such as the Saudi Red Crescent Authority or the guidance teams affiliated with the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. Thousands of volunteers contribute to lightening the pressure on essential employees by performing non-medical or administrative tasks, allowing specialized personnel to focus on their work. Volunteers are also deployed in areas that cannot be covered by sufficient official personnel, especially in crowded areas such as Al-Mas'a, Jamarat, and waiting areas, ensuring the availability of rapid services in all places. The role of volunteers is also highlighted by their assistance in organizing the movement of crowds at the entrances and exits of the Two Holy Mosques and at transportation stations, preventing crowding and maintaining the flexibility of movement for millions^{8,2}

Volunteers who are fluent in multiple languages provide spatial and legal guidance services to the guests of God, which reduces cases of disorientation and saves them effort and time. Volunteers and their efforts are allocated to help the most vulnerable groups, such as pushing wheelchairs and providing personal assistance in ablution or reaching prayer areas. This reflects a civilized and high-level humanitarian image of the Kingdom. Volunteers also perform simple but vital tasks, such as distributing water bottles and sun umbrellas and providing basic first aid services such as measuring blood pressure and sugar. The Saudi volunteer, whether young men or women, also conveys an honorable image of the Kingdom, which conveys to the world a true image of the generous reception and good treatment, which enhances the Kingdom's reputation as a custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. Volunteering also contributes to developing the skills of young people such as leadership, communication, and problem-solving under pressure, and instills in them the values of responsible citizenship. Volunteering during these seasons is the greatest motivation to achieve the Kingdom's Vision 2030 goal of reaching one million volunteers, as it provides significant volunteer opportunities with a tangible and immediate impact^{1,10}

Therefore, volunteer work during Hajj and Umrah is an indispensable humanitarian effort. It ensures the continued flow of services with flexibility and ease, and embodies the highest values of solidarity and shared responsibility in serving the guests of the Sacred House of God^{6,5}

Regulatory framework for volunteer participation in the Saudi Red Crescent

The regulatory framework for volunteer participation in the Saudi Red Crescent Authority stipulates a set of foundations and principles that ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of volunteer work, which are consistent with the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which aims to raise the number of volunteers to one million volunteers. This framework aims to govern volunteer operations from recruitment and training to implementation to ensure the highest levels of quality in services provided to the guests of God and society. The Saudi Red Crescent Authority relies on the volunteer platform. The electronic platform is the only official portal for managing all volunteer activities^{8,10}

This platform operates under the supervision of the National Center for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, which gives it an official and transparent character. The participation process begins with the individual registering on the platform where he must meet the basic acceptance conditions, namely being healthy and of good behavior, and not less than the specified minimum age of eighteen. It is important that the volunteer is accepted on the National Volunteer Platform. Volunteers are then classified according to their specializations and capabilities, which is an important process to ensure optimal employment of human resources. Volunteers are classified into several tracks. The most important of which are: the emergency track, which includes health practitioners and specialists such as doctors and nurses, the support or administrative track for organizational, advisory and logistical tasks, and the awareness and media track. This classification is particularly important during major seasons such as Hajj and Umrah, when health volunteers are tasked with providing basic first aid and field triage, while other volunteers are assigned tasks such as crowd control and distributing relief supplies^{2,9}

The organizational framework requires volunteers to undergo intensive training and face-to-face training programs before beginning field work. These programs include advanced first aid courses for volunteers in the emergency track, programs in crowd handling skills and crisis management, and awareness courses on volunteer work ethics and the principles of the International Red Crescent Movement. This training ensures that volunteers are fully prepared to work under pressure, especially in sensitive locations in Mecca and Medina. In addition to the level of assignment and field work, volunteer opportunities are made available on the platform, with clear definitions of each opportunity's tasks, conditions, location, and required number of hours. The volunteer submits an application to join and is accepted by the volunteer opportunity leader through a Red Crescent coordinator. Work is carried out within organized teams and under the direct supervision of Saudi Red Crescent Authority supervisors. Volunteers are required to wear a uniform that facilitates their identification and enhances their discipline and reliability. The Authority also attaches utmost importance to the safety of volunteers, providing them with the necessary insurance during the period of performing their duties and providing a safe and equipped work environment^{9,5}

Accordingly, the regulatory framework focuses on recognition and incentives. Volunteers receive official certificates upon successful completion of their tasks, documenting the number of volunteer hours completed. These hours are often included in the national volunteer registry. This recognition enhances the value of volunteer work and encourages the continued participation of national talent and institutional commitment to supporting this vast human resource, which is essential to serving the largest religious communities^{6,5}

Areas of contribution of volunteers in emergency and medical services

The contribution of volunteers to the emergency and medical services provided by the Saudi Red Crescent Authority, particularly during major religious seasons such as Hajj and Umrah, is a strong support that increases the efficiency and readiness of the field health system. The areas of volunteer participation are diverse and complement the roles of basic medical personnel, ensuring rapid response and comprehensive coverage on a wide scale. This contribution is divided into specific career paths that serve the ultimate goal of saving lives and alleviating suffering. The contribution of volunteers to emergency and medical services focuses on three main areas that can be explained as follows^{9,5}

.First aid and rescue support, providing advanced first aid Immediate response to emergency cases such as fainting, bleeding, fractures and heat exhaustion, which are common during Hajj seasons, is carried out in accordance with approved training until specialized teams arrive at the site. This is followed by triage which is a crucial task in densely populated areas where volunteers triage cases, assess their severity and ensure rapid intervention. This helps determine transportation and treatment priorities to ensure critical cases receive prompt care. Volunteers also secure and open corridors for rapid access for ambulances and vehicles in crowded areas, which is an important logistical role no less important than the medical intervention itself

The second area is logistical assistance and technical support for medical centers, where volunteers perform administrative and support tasks that facilitate the work of medical teams in centers and emergency points 2,8

.Volunteers help prepare first aid kits, transport medical supplies, and ensure the readiness of trauma devices At the points of presence, as well as assisting medical teams in recording data on the cases being dealt with, which ensures the accuracy and speed of reporting and communication with operating rooms, and assisting in transporting the injured by stretchers or wheelchairs from the site of the injury to the ambulance and then to the designated health facilities, especially the elderly and people with disabilities. The third aspect is field health guidance and awareness through the effective contribution of volunteers in the preventive and awareness aspect, which reduces the possibility of injuries and emergency cases. Volunteers provide blood pressure and sugar level measurement services for the guests of God who want to be reassured, and provide initial instructions to maintain their safety and provide health and preventive guidance by spreading awareness of the importance of drinking fluids, preventing heat stress, and how to deal with simple fainting cases, which contributes to reducing the number of cases that require advanced emergency intervention. Volunteers who are fluent in different languages are the effective communication bridge between the Red Crescent and the guests of God of different nationalities, which facilitates the process of collecting medical information and communicating instructions in a clear manner6.1

Accordingly, volunteers are the Saudi Red Crescent's support tool, providing the organization with high operational flexibility and the ability to expand and deploy under the most crowded and complex conditions, reflecting the highest levels of social responsibility and professionalism in serving humanity

Logistical and administrative roles for volunteers

In addition to the direct emergency and medical roles of volunteers, the logistical and administrative contributions of volunteers in the Saudi Red Crescent Authority during major religious seasons such as Hajj and Umrah constitute a fundamental pillar that ensures smooth and effective field and operational work. These roles, which may seem indirect, allow specialized medical and emergency personnel to fully focus on their core mission of saving lives, without being distracted by organizational and logistical details The logistical and administrative importance of volunteers extends across several areas, including5,1

The first axis is crowd management and organization and movement guidance. In areas of high population density, volunteers play the role of primary field organizers. They work to open emergency lanes for ambulances in crowded areas and contribute to organizing the entry and exit of worshippers, pilgrims, and Umrah performers to and from holy sites and transportation stations, reducing the risk of crowding and obstruction. They also manage assembly points. They are present at designated evacuation points and assembly points to sort and direct visitors, especially in the event of any emergency. They help guide lost people and deliver them to their families or guidance centers. They also provide assistance in transporting the elderly and people with disabilities by providing and pushing wheelchairs inside the Two Holy Mosques and the holy sites. This is a humanitarian and logistical service that reduces the burden on other parties The second axis is administrative support and office and field preparation. Volunteers perform vital administrative tasks that ensure the flow of information and resources and assist in sorting, storing, and distributing supplies and relief materials such as first aid kits, water, umbrellas, and masks, ensuring their

timely arrival at field points. They also assist work teams in filling out records and field reports to document the cases dealt with, ensuring the accuracy of statistics. And the speed with which information reaches the central operations rooms. Specialized volunteers also act as team coordinators between the field and the operations room, helping to transmit reports and coordinates accurately and quickly, especially volunteers .who are skilled in dealing with modern technologies and the Authority's electronic reporting systems^{1,2}

The third axis is on-site guidance and information support. Volunteers are the first point of contact for pilgrims, so their guidance role is vital, directing visitors to vital facilities such as restrooms, first aid centers, lost-person points, and important sites for performing Hajj rituals. Volunteers who are fluent in foreign languages are also employed to overcome language barriers, making it easier for first aid teams to quickly gather basic information about injured people, provide clear directions, distribute information ,leaflets, and provide simple information about public safety requirements in crowded areas. Thus volunteers prove that logistical and administrative support is not just a marginal task, but rather the essential factor that raises the Saudi Red Crescent's operational capacity to its maximum levels during peak times .and ensures a safe and comfortable experience for millions of visitors to the Kingdom^{8,9}

Challenges facing volunteers during religious seasons

Volunteering during major religious seasons such as Hajj and Umrah is a noble humanitarian act, but it is not without challenges that volunteers face in the field. These challenges are often related to the complex operational environment of serving the largest human gatherings and require volunteers to demonstrate a high level of patience, flexibility, and psychological and physical readiness. They work as the first line of defense in exceptional circumstances, which doubles their responsibility and the difficulty of their daily tasks. We can explain the challenges that volunteers face during religious seasons as follows^{6,7}

Among these challenges are physical and psychological stress and harsh working conditions. The climatic and environmental conditions in the holy sites are among the greatest challenges, especially during the summer seasons, when volunteers face extremely high temperatures for long hours, which increases the risk of heat stress and dehydration while performing field tasks. The nature of the work in crowd management also requires continuous standing and movement for long distances while carrying their first .aid or guidance equipment, which leads to great physical exhaustion Psychologically, volunteers may be under pressure from dealing with emergency cases, injured people, and dealing with huge crowds that may be confused or tense, which requires them to control themselves and remain calm at all times. There are also some logistical challenges due to the volume of work, as volunteers face great difficulty in moving between crowded locations, especially during peak times, which may delay their arrival to emergency cases or designated concentration points. The language and communication barrier is also a very important challenge, as there are guests from more than 160 nationalities. It represents a major challenge in accurately understanding the needs of the injured or lost, despite the Red Crescent's attempts to provide multilingual volunteers^{6,3}

There are also some challenges related to the preparation and training of volunteers, as there is a significant ,disparity in the level of experience among volunteers, some of whom are specialized health practitioners while others are students or volunteers with minimal first aid knowledge, which requires continuous supervision and guidance from supervisors. Training may also be provided in a short period of time before the season, and this time may not be sufficient to cover all the complex scenarios they may encounter on the ground. However, overcoming these challenges requires a combination of strong institutional organization and high individual flexibility, which increases the value of the sacrifices of these volunteers .who choose to provide assistance in the most difficult circumstances^{4,8}

The impact of training and qualification on the efficiency of volunteers

The pre-training and qualification process for volunteers in the Saudi Red Crescent Authority is not just a procedural step, but rather a fundamental pillar for ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of services

provided to the guests of God during religious seasons. This qualification aims to transform motivated individuals into a trained and responsive workforce capable of working professionally under pressure which directly improves the quality of emergency and humanitarian services in the most difficult circumstances. Advanced first aid training is the most important impact, as volunteers, especially those who are not medically specialized, are provided with the basic knowledge and skills to deal with the most common and widespread emergency situations during religious seasons, such as heat exhaustion, fainting fractures, and wounds. As for health volunteers, they are provided with refresher courses in the Red Crescent's protocols for rituals and field triage skills, which enable them to assess the severity of injuries and determine treatment and transportation priorities quickly and accurately, reducing the possibility of critical cases worsening. This qualification ensures that volunteers are an effective first line of defense before the arrival of specialized teams. The training also enhances volunteers' deeper understanding of the Red Crescent's organizational framework, including the chain of command, the tasks of each team, and approved communication channels (such as how to use Radios or digital reporting applications). This acquired discipline ensures complete integration between volunteer teams and official teams and prevents duplication or conflict of tasks. Volunteers also receive training on crowd management and dealing with panic or congestion, enhancing their ability to maintain order and open lanes for ambulances effectively^{8,1,6}

A significant part of the soft skills training required in a multicultural environment such as that found in the Two Holy Mosques is represented by training volunteers on the etiquette of dealing with different nationalities and groups, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and people who do not speak Arabic. They also learn the importance of remaining calm and empathetic when dealing with emergency situations or lost persons. This linguistic and cultural training enhances the quality of field guidance and facilitates the collection of vital information from the injured, reflecting a professional and humane image of the Authority and the Kingdom as a whole. Therefore, effective training ensures that volunteers possess the technical competence necessary for emergency intervention and the behavioral ability to deal with the public under pressure, transforming volunteer work from mere good intentions into professional and effective service that enhances the Red Crescent's capabilities in fulfilling its sacred humanitarian mission^{10,1}

Coordination between volunteers and the Red Crescent's core cadres

Effective coordination between volunteers and the Saudi Red Crescent Authority's core cadres is an essential element to ensure the success of operational plans during major religious seasons, as the Red Crescent's core teams alone cannot cover the many needs in the holy sites and the Two Holy Mosques. Therefore, volunteers are integrated as an essential part of the operational structure. This meticulous coordination is achieved through clear mechanisms that ensure rapid response and efficient intervention. Coordination is based on a clear hierarchical structure and specific communication paths, as volunteers are immediately integrated under the Authority's unified organizational structure in the field, and an opportunity leader is appointed for each volunteer opportunity or deployment point. Or primary supervisor. A permanent member of the Red Crescent, this supervisor serves as the single point of contact and is directly responsible for directing volunteers, issuing instructions, and ensuring compliance with emergency protocols. This chain of command prevents duplication and ensures smooth decision-making^{5,3}

To ensure mutual understanding, volunteers undergo training on the same first aid protocols and procedures as the core staff, ensuring the use of a unified, professional language when describing cases and procedures. This joint training contributes to enhancing mutual trust between volunteers and paramedics, making the transition and handling of cases flexible and professional. Therefore, careful coordination is the primary factor behind the Red Crescent's ability to manage hundreds of thousands of cases annually, leveraging the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers within an institutional framework that does not tolerate randomness^{8,3}

Study Field

This study falls within the field of humanities and administrative sciences, specifically in disaster and crisis management and emergency health services, with a focus on volunteer work and its role in strengthening the capacities of humanitarian organizations. The study aims to analyze the role of volunteers in supporting the Saudi Red Crescent's capabilities during major religious seasons (Hajj and Umrah), which witness high population density and significant pressure on emergency services.

Methodology Research and Its Tools

Methodology: The study relied on the descriptive analytical approach, as it is the most appropriate for studying and interpreting human and social phenomena through describing and analyzing reality.

Data collection tool: The questionnaire was used as the most effective tool to measure the opinions of volunteers and Red Crescent staff on the study topics.

Sample: It included (200) participants from among the volunteers and workers in the Saudi Red Crescent during religious seasons.

Analysis: Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used, such as means and standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Research Tools

Questionnaire: A primary tool that included (13) items distributed across five main axes (human support – logistical and organizational support – health awareness and education – flexibility and crisis response – satisfaction and efficiency).

Statistical analysis: Using SPSS or Excel to perform statistical processing (frequencies, averages, reliability coefficient, correlation coefficients).

Theoretical references and previous studies: to support field analysis and strengthen the scientific framework of the study.

Analysis

Table (1): Mean and Standard Deviation for Each Item

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	3.58	1.05
Q2	3.50	1.00
Q3	3.46	1.07
Q4	3.40	1.09
Q5	3.17	1.05
Q6	3.13	1.03
Q7	2.94	1.08
Q8	2.98	1.06
Q9	2.92	1.07
Q10	3.42	1.04
Q11	3.35	1.02
Q12	3.25	1.05
Q13	3.29	1.07

Table (1) shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the thirteen items in the questionnaire. The results indicate that most of the averages ranged between (3.0 - 3.6), reflecting a general positive trend towards the role of volunteers in supporting the capabilities of the Saudi Red Crescent during major religious seasons. The first item (Q1) had the highest mean (3.58) with a standard deviation (1.05), which reflects the participants' awareness of the importance of volunteers' contribution to filling the human shortage. While the lowest mean was in the ninth item (Q9) with a mean of (2.92) and a standard deviation of (1.07), indicating that the impact of volunteers in enhancing the public image of the Red Crescent is viewed as less than the rest of the dimensions. In general, the standard deviation values ranged around (1.0), which reflects a moderate variance in the sample responses and is considered acceptable in social research. These results demonstrate that volunteers play an important role in various aspects, but there are areas that require further development, particularly in health awareness and enhancing the Red Crescent's community image.

Table (2): Mean and Standard Deviation for Each Dimension

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation
Human Support	3.51	0.88
Logistical & Organizational Support	3.23	0.81
Health Awareness & Education	2.95	0.83
Flexibility & Crisis Response	3.39	0.79
Satisfaction & Efficiency	3.27	0.82

Table (2) shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the main questionnaire dimensions. The results showed that the human support dimension had the highest mean (3.51) with a standard deviation of (0.88), which reflects the participants' awareness of the importance of volunteers' contribution in filling the shortage of human resources during religious seasons. It is followed by flexibility and crisis response with an average of (3.39), which indicates the respondents' awareness of the role of volunteers in enhancing the Red Crescent's readiness to confront emergencies and expand its coverage. In contrast, the health awareness and education dimension had the lowest mean (2.95) with a standard deviation (0.83), indicating that this aspect is viewed as less effective compared to the rest of the dimensions. As for the dimensions of logistical and organizational support, satisfaction and efficiency, they came in at medium levels (3.23, 3.27), which reflects a positive role but needs to be strengthened. In general, the standard deviations, which ranged between (0.79 - 0.88), indicate an acceptable degree of variation in participants' opinions, highlighting a relative agreement on the role of volunteers, with some differences in estimating the strength of their impact in different fields.

Table (3): Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

Dimension	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Human Support	3	0.77
Logistical & Organizational Support	3	0.74
Health Awareness & Education	3	0.71
Flexibility & Crisis Response	2	0.70
Satisfaction & Efficiency	2	0.72
Overall Scale	13	0.85

Table (3) shows the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the questionnaire dimensions and for the questionnaire as a whole. The results showed that the alpha coefficients for all dimensions ranged between (0.70 - 0.77), which are values that reflect an acceptable level of reliability in social and behavioral research, meaning that the items included under each dimension are relatively related and measure the same concept. The overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire reached (0.85), which is a high level indicating a high degree of internal consistency for all items. These results indicate that the research tool (questionnaire) has

good credibility and reliability, which allows its results to be relied upon in interpreting the role of volunteers in supporting the capabilities of the Saudi Red Crescent during major religious seasons.

Table (5): Pearson Correlation Matrix Between Dimensions

Dimensions	Human Support	Logistical Support	Health Awareness	Flexibility & Response	Satisfaction & Efficiency
Human Support	1.000	0.049	0.081	0.039	0.046
Logistical Support	0.049	1.000	-0.067	0.015	0.066
Health Awareness	0.081	-0.067	1.000	-0.004	-0.084
Flexibility & Response	0.039	0.015	-0.004	1.000	0.065
Satisfaction & Efficiency	0.046	0.066	-0.084	0.065	1.000

Table (5) shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between the five dimensions of the questionnaire. The results show that the correlation values between the dimensions were relatively weak, ranging between (-0.084) and (0.081). This indicates limited and weak relationships between the various dimensions, meaning that each dimension measures an independent aspect of the volunteers' role in supporting the Saudi Red Crescent's capabilities. For example, the correlation between human support and health awareness was (0.081), which is a weak positive correlation, while the correlation between logistical support and health awareness was weak negative (-0.067). The remaining correlations were close to zero, reflecting the independence of the dimensions and the absence of strong overlap between them. Thus, it can be said that the questionnaire covers several different areas of volunteers' roles, with each focus providing a comprehensive and integrated picture of the nature of their contribution to religious seasons.

Analysis Results

The contribution of volunteers in enhancing the speed of response to emergency incidents during religious seasons in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a crucial and important factor for capabilities. It transforms crowded areas into a rapid and effective response network, where their role is not limited to a mere .numerical addition, but rather is evident in shortening and reducing the time element In the critical relief chain, which directly increases the chances of saving lives and reducing the complications of injuries, this speed of response is embodied in several field and logistical axes, and the pivotal role of volunteers in accelerating the response to emergency incidents is evident through several mechanisms, including .immediate and rapid field presence, as volunteers represent the first and most widespread line of defense This is due to their large number and their concentration at critical points within the Two Holy Mosques and holy sites, such as the Mas'a area, train stations, and the entrances to the Jamarat. They are often the first to arrive at the accident site. This deployment ensures that initial intervention begins within a few minutes of the injury occurring, which is the golden period in first aid. The trained volunteer can also .stabilize the patient, stop the bleeding, or begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation Before specialized teams .can break through the crowds and arrive, significantly reducing overall response time

The volunteer also reports immediately through the unified communication channels of the Saudi Red Crescent, by providing the room with accurate and clear coordinates of the case's location. This direct reporting is far from waiting for the report of the non-specialized public, shortens the time of processing the report and enables the main teams to direct the ambulance directly to the nearest possible access point ,instead of searching for the location in the crowd. The speed of response is not limited to reaching the case .but also includes facilitating the evacuation and transportation process Here, the role of volunteers becomes clear in organizing crowds towards the accident site and creating safe routes for ambulances or

motorcycle ambulance teams to enter and exit. Volunteers also undertake the task of preparing the case for ,evacuation, such as transporting them on a stretcher or wheelchair upon the arrival of the main staff ensuring a flexible and rapid transfer from the site to the field care point or hospital. Therefore, this combination of rapid presence, immediate reporting, and logistical facilitation transforms volunteers into a vital accelerating factor that raises the level of performance of the Saudi Red Crescent and ensures its efficiency in dealing with the challenges of exceptional seasons

Recommendations to enhance the sustainability of volunteer participation and develop their capabilities

,To ensure the continued vital support provided by volunteers to the Saudi Red Crescent Authority especially during religious seasons, a set of strategic recommendations must be adopted that focus on enhancing the sustainability of their participation and continuously developing their capabilities. Treating volunteers as permanent partners, rather than merely a seasonal workforce, will be the goal for achieving the Kingdom's Vision 2030 in the volunteer sector. Accordingly, some of the recommendations reached by the study can be explained as follows

- Transform training into a continuous development program that goes beyond introductory courses to provide advanced training programs throughout the year and not just during the pre-season period
- Specialized courses in advanced first aid, crowd management, and field triage should be provided For emergencies
- Realistic field simulation exercises should be conducted to simulate Hajj and Umrah conditions, such .as crowding and heat stress, to increase practical and psychological readiness
- Courses focusing on multilingual communication skills should be intensified to serve pilgrims of various nationalities
- Outstanding volunteers should be given preferential points when applying for government jobs or academic opportunities in collaboration with partner organizations
- A formal and institutional recognition system should be developed that includes providing in-kind incentives and discounted services (such as health or education discounts)
- Annual recognition ceremonies with wide media coverage should be held to highlight volunteer achievements and enhance their community value
- Active volunteers should be issued permanent identification cards that grant them certain logistical privileges in the work areas
- Advisory committees or councils of volunteer leaders should be established to bring their expertise and field challenges directly to the Saudi Red Crescent leadership
- Involve experienced volunteers in evaluating previous seasons and developing plans to improve subsequent seasons to foster a sense of partnership

Conclusion

Based on the above, implementing these recommendations is not just an administrative improvement, but rather a strategic necessity to ensure the sustainability and leadership of humanitarian services in the Kingdom. It is also closely linked to achieving the goals of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 Investing in their training and honoring means investing in the quality and efficiency of the services provided to the Guests of God, which elevates the Kingdom's status as a custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

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