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## A Systematic Literature Review on Motivation of Volunteerism

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze national and yearly trends in past research and to explore motivations for volunteerism over seven recent years using a Systematic Literature Review approach. The PICo strategy was employed to ensure the selection of relevant studies, focusing on key concepts and considering contextual factors. The PRISMA Guideline Framework guided the review process, with articles systematically selected from the SCOPUS database. Findings revealed that the majority of studies on volunteerism motivation in SCOPUS were conducted in the United States. The analysis consistently identified two main motives: intrinsic (value motive, enhancement motive, psychological motive, protective motives, cognitive motive, and spiritual motive) and extrinsic (social motive, career motive, skill motive, culture motive, experience motive, material motive, status motive, network motive, pressure motive, and ideological motive). Each finding was contextualized within the specifics of past studies. While volunteers engage in various domains like politics, welfare, and sports, this study focuses on volunteers broadly, without specific categorization.

**Keywords:** extrinsic, intrinsic, motive, motivation, volunteerism

## INTRODUCTION

This research tries to identify the characteristics of motivation for volunteerism action by conducting a systematic evaluation of the most recent literature for 2018–2023. The detailed examination of 44 publications yielded two main characteristics of motivation which are intrinsic/internal motivation and extrinsic/external motivation. Internal motivation consists of six sub-characteristics of motivation while external motivation consists of ten sub-characteristics of motivation.

Volunteerism is a cornerstone of societal growth, benefiting both communities and individuals via acts of kindness and service (Carida et al., 2022). Its significance is rooted not just in the practical advantages it gives to people in need, but also in the tremendous influence it has on volunteers and the larger social fabric. Understanding the motives for volunteerism is critical because it allows organizations and policymakers to successfully harness volunteer power and generate significant, long-term possibilities for civic involvement and social change (Heley et al., 2022).

At its heart, volunteerism is critical for addressing a wide range of societal issues and needs. Volunteers play an important role in filling gaps in social services, increasing the effect of charity organizations, and





addressing urgent community concerns (Garcia et al., 2022). Many crucial services and activities would not be feasible without volunteers' devotion and commitment, emphasizing volunteerism's critical role in furthering the common good (Abidin et al., 2023).

Furthermore, volunteering promotes a feeling of community and social cohesiveness by bringing individuals together to work toward common goals and ideals. Volunteering allows people from many backgrounds to interact, collaborate, and form meaningful connections based on mutual respect and solidarity in an increasingly fragmented and individualistic world (Butcher & Einolf, 2017). Volunteerism builds the social fabric by bridging differences and encouraging understanding across lines of difference. It also fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity (Renn, 2022).

Understanding the motivations behind volunteerism is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it allows organizations to effectively recruit, retain, and support volunteers by aligning opportunities with individuals' interests, values, and aspirations. By understanding what drives people to volunteer, organizations can create meaningful and fulfilling experiences that maximize volunteers' impact and satisfaction. Moreover, knowing the motivations behind volunteerism enables organizations to tailor their outreach and engagement strategies to attract a diverse range of volunteers, ensuring that volunteer opportunities are accessible and inclusive to all members of the community (Alzareer et al., 2023).

Furthermore, knowing the motives behind volunteers allows policymakers and stakeholders to create laws and programs that encourage and support civic involvement and social responsibility. Recognizing the elements that impact people's volunteer decisions allows politicians to devise tailored interventions and incentives that encourage more people to participate. Policymakers may establish an enabling climate that supports a culture of volunteerism and community participation by implementing tax incentives, volunteer recognition programs, or supporting volunteer-led initiatives (Saz-Gil et al., 2020).

Finally, volunteerism is critical for developing stronger, more resilient communities while also promoting social justice and communal well-being. Understanding the motives for volunteerism allows organizations, politicians, and stakeholders to successfully leverage the power of volunteers to address major social concerns and affect good change (Bailey et al., 2023). By acknowledging and supporting volunteers' vital efforts, we can create a more compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable society for future generations. To get a better understanding of the motives for volunteerism, this study will achieve two research objectives which are:

- 1. To identify the motivation for volunteerism based on national and year tendencies
- 2. To identify the characteristics of volunteerism's motivation in society around the world

## METHODOLOGY

## **Formulation of the Research Question**

The study question was formulated from two sources: first, concepts from previous studies by Dalton et al. (2016), Mount and Cabras (2016), and Nethercote (2017). All previous articles have dealt with the motivation to participate in volunteerism action and the variables that contribute to its enhancement. Second, Lockwood et al. (2015) used the mnemonic PICo, which stands for 'P' (Population or Problem), 'I' (Interest), and 'Co' (Context). This study developed the research topic using three primary aspects based on PICo ideas. The elements for Population in this study are worldwide society, the elements for Interest are related to i) motivation, ii) national and year tendency, and the elements for context are related to volunteerism. This notion has led to the establishment of two research questions which are:

- 1. What are the national and year tendencies of past studies?
- 2. What are the characteristics of volunteerism's motivation in society around the world?





## **Searching Strategies**

This section will go into detail on the article's extraction process for identifying elements related to motivation

in volunteerism action. The authors employed the PRISMA technique, which included collecting and filtering publications, selecting eligibility and exclusion criteria for this study, conducting a systematic review, including identification, screening, eligibility, data abstraction, and content analysis.

#### **Prisma**

The PRISMA Statement standards (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) were followed for the review. The PRISMA framework sets a clear research question that allows for a systematic review; filters articles using inclusion and exclusion criteria to organize them according to the authors' research question; and swiftly evaluates a vast database. Using PRISMA allows for a thorough examination of the components associated with volunteerism motivation.

#### Resources

This review's resources are from Scopus journal databases. Scopus is the primary database utilized in this systematic review paper. It was created in 2004 and has over 10,000 publishers globally. It encompasses a wide range of academic disciplines, including social science, medicine, physical science, and agriculture.

### **Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria**

First, this review focused solely on journal publications. The review articles, books, book series, book chapters, and conference proceedings were excluded. Second, the search focused solely on English articles to improve comprehension. When examining non-English literature, linguistic misunderstandings and translation difficulties may arise. Third, due to the large number of papers that show motivation in volunteerism action, this evaluation only includes the most recent seven years of publishing (2018-2024). This timeline option assures the most recent pattern of elements related to volunteerism's motivation. Finally, to observe the global pattern of elements associated with motivation for volunteerism action, this article review does not focus on a single location or nation.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion							
<b>Document Type</b>	Article Journal	Review articles, book series, books, Chapter in a book, conference proceeding							
Language	English	Non-English							
<b>Publication Timeline</b>	2018-2024	<2018							

## **Systematic Review Process**

The first stage is identification. At this stage, the keyword for the search process is determined. Table 2 includes relevant terms to find motivation factors in volunteerism action based on literature analysis, previous research, and thesaurus searches. At this level, 345 studies were found by using the search string as in Table 2.

The second phase is screening, which rejected 253 out of 345 studies based on the category of document type, language, and publication date. The next phase is eligibility, which involves reviewing the entire set of articles. Following a thorough review, 48 publications were deleted because they lacked information related to motivation in volunteerism action, lacked empirical evidence, and did not focus on volunteerism context.

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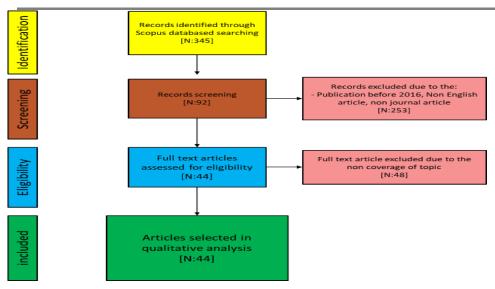


Figure 1: PRISMA Framework

## **Data Abstraction and Analysis**

44 papers were reviewed and thoroughly assessed. The analysis focused on studies that addressed the research topic for this review. The result was reached by reading the abstract and then reading the entire article in depth to gain the article's subject and sub-theme of motivation in volunteerism-related components.

The content analysis was then employed in the qualitative analysis to discover a theme relating to elements associated with volunteerism's motivation. Table 3 is the list of 44 papers included in this systematic literature review on the motivation of volunteerism around the world.

Table 2: Search string

DA	TABASE	SEARCH STRING
SC	OPUS	TITLE-ABS-KEY (motive AND motivation AND volunteers) AND PUBYEAR > 2017 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE, "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))

Table 3: List of papers included in the study

No.	Article	Year	Country	Title							
1	[55]	2024	Australia	Exploring the relationship between loneliness and volunteering amongst Australian adults: a cross-sectional study							
2	[3]	2024	Saudi Arabia	Exploring the experiences, motivations, and skillsets of nurse volunteers during Hajj: implications for enhancing volunteer programs							
3	[2]	2024	Saudi Arabia	Understanding volunteerism among dental students and professionals to reach Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals							
4	[57]	2023	United States	Meta-analysis of Volunteer Motives Using the Volunteer Functions Inventory to Predict Volunteer Satisfaction, Commitment, and Behaviours							
5	[47]	2023	Kyrgyzstan	Understanding community health workers' activities in a community-based child health promotion project in Kyrgyzstan							



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6	[4]	2023	Australia	Exploring Motivations and Benefits of Volunteering: The Perspectives of High School Students in Selected Australian Islamic Schools
7	[8]	2023	German	Motives of Peer Support Volunteers with Experiences of Mental and Addictive Disorders: An Innovative Approach in the Context of Employment Promotion in Germany
8	[58]	2023	Lebanese	Motives for physical activity participation among Lebanese
9	[14]	2022	United States	Highly specialized recreationists contribute the most to the citizen science project eBird
10	[9]	2021	Poland	Sectional study
11	[52]	2021	Portugal	Engagement in civic organizations in old age: Motivations for participation and retention
12	[51]	2021	Japan	Association between Japanese community health workers' willingness to continue service and two categories of motives: Altruistic and self-oriented
13	[54]	2021	Russia	The motivation of differently-aged volunteers who help people and stray animals
14	[35]	2021	United States	Motives for Citizen Science Program Participation and the Role of the Organization: Lessons from Water Quality Monitors in Texas
15	[7]	2021	Pakistan	Volunteering: what drives and retains it? An analysis of motivational needs together with organizational policies and practices
16	[34]	2020	United States	The diverse motivations of citizen scientists: Does conservation emphasis grow as volunteer participation progresses?
17	[6]	2020	United States	Motivations of federal workers to volunteer in public sector special events
18	[36]	2020	Canada	Characteristics of volunteer motivation to mentor youth
19	[45]	2019	United Kingdom	'The lure of war': reconsidering the motivations of nurses to volunteer in the First World War
20	[30]	2019	Guinea	What motivates individuals to volunteer in the Ebola epidemic response? A Structural Approach in Guinea
21	[40]	2019	Japan	What Motivates Japan's International Volunteers? Categorizing Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVS)
22	[5]	2019	Spanish	Motivations for volunteerism, satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion: The moderating effect of volunteers' age
23	[19]	2019	Istanbul	On the Servant Leadership Behaviors Perceived in Voluntary Settings: The Influences on Volunteers' Motivation and Organizational Commitment
24	[28]	2019	Poland	Why do People Help Each Other? Motivations of Volunteers Who Assisted Persons with Disabilities During World Youth Day



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25	[29]	2019	Australia	Volunteering benefits life satisfaction over 4 years: The
				moderating role of social network size
26	[38]	2019	Italy	Self-conception and volunteering: The mediational role of motivations
27	[39]	2019	Bulgaria	Self-enhancement and helping behaviours: Motivations of volunteers in registration and reception centers for refugees in Bulgaria
28	[20]	2019	Austria	Motivation for environmental volunteering - A comparison between Austria and Great Britain
29	[43]	2019	India	Factors influencing participation of healthy volunteers in clinical trials: Findings from a cross-sectional study in Delhi, North India
30	[32]	2019	Australia	What pre-event motives determine the decision to volunteer at a sporting event: How can Herzberg's two-factor theory help?
31	[16]	2019	German	Experiences and psychological strain in volunteer medical doctors providing medical visual examination for asylum seekers in a reception center in Germany–a qualitative interview study
32	[42]	2019	Saudi Arabia	A Regression Analysis of Motivations for Saudi University Male Student Volunteers
33	[36]	2018	Italy	The contribution of caregiving orientations to volunteering-related motives, costs, and benefits
34	[18]	2018	Belgium	Dynamics in motivations and reasons to quit in a Care Bank: a qualitative study in Belgium
35	[24]	2018	China	What motivates volunteers to help at business events? Reciprocal altruism and reflexivity
36	[52]	2018	Malaysia	Predicting youth participation in urban agriculture in Malaysia: insights from the theory of planned behaviours and the functional approach to volunteer motivation
37	[48]	2018	London	Volunteering for sports mega-events: a non-host region perspective
38	[12]	2018	United States	Generation Z's sustainable volunteering: Motivations, attitudes and job performance
39	[27]	2018	United Kingdom	Participant and Public Involvement in Refining a Peer-Volunteering Active Aging Intervention: Project ACE (Active, Connected, Engaged)
40	[25]	2018	Germany	S.O.S. on my phone: An analysis of motives and incentives for participation in smartphone-based volunteering
41	[50]	2018	Germany	German Version of the Inventory of Motivations for Hospice Palliative Care Volunteerism: Are There Gender Differences?
42	[17]	2018	China	Why volunteer teaching tourism? Empirical evidence from China
43	[29]	2018	Saudi Arabia	Individualism behind Collectivism: A Reflection from Saudi Volunteers
44	[31]	2018	Australia	Uncovering the motives and experiences of locally sourced volunteers at two events in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia



#### RESULT

## First research objective: to identify the motivation for volunteering based on national and year tendencies

Figure 2 shows the tendencies of the number of motivations on volunteering publications in several countries around the world. Based on the diagram, a total of twenty-two countries have published articles on motivation for volunteering. The United States was the most dominant country and contributed six articles (13.63%), followed by Germany and Saudi Arabia representing 9.09% of the total articles. The United Kingdom contributed three articles (6.81%), as well as Japan, Poland, Italy, and China, which accounted for 4.54% of articles, respectively. The other fourteen countries accounted for 2.27% of each country.

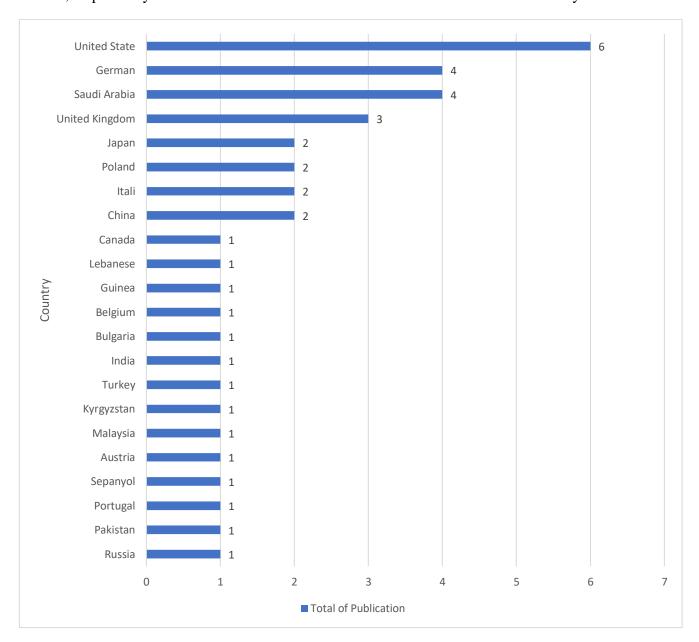


Figure 2: The national tendency of publication

Figure 3 shows the tendencies of the publication year of motivation on volunteering. Evidently, in the past seven years from 2018 to 2024, many motivational on volunteering articles were published. Only 44 articles were published in the SCOPUS database throughout this period and the number of publications during this period is inconsistent. This is because in the early two years (2018-2019) the publications of the studies consistently increased but declined drastically from 2020 until 2024.



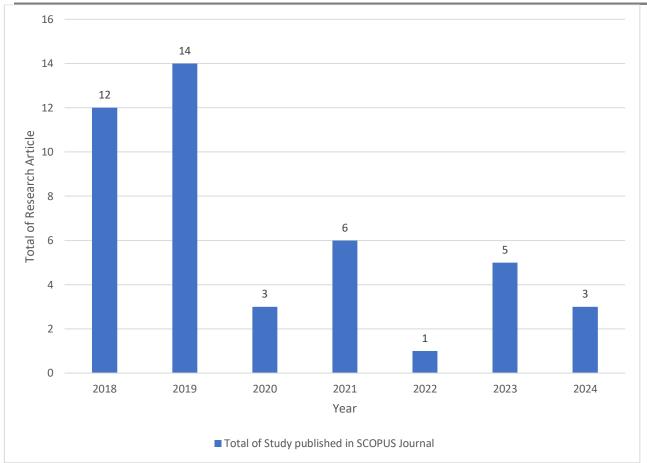


Figure 3: The year tendency of publication

# Second Research Objective: To Identify The Characteristics Of Volunteerism Motivation In Society Around The World

In seven years' latest research, the review identified two motives and sixteen sub-motives associated with motivation for volunteering. The two motives are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. There are six sub-motives in the intrinsic motivation and ten sub-motives in the extrinsic motivation. The collection of the study was published between 2018 and 2024. Three latest studies were carried out in 2024, five studies in 2023, and one in 2022. Next, six studies were published in 2021, three studies in 2020, fourteen studies in 2019, and the other twelve studies were published in 2018.

Table 4 is the thematic analysis of volunteerism motivation results based on 44 studies that have been carried out from 2018 until 2024. In the intrinsic motivation, the top to lower sub-motives identified by the past study is values motive (31.91%), enhancement motive (21.28%), psychological motive (18.09%), protective motive (13.83%), cognitive motive (11.70%), and spiritual motive (3.19%). In the extrinsic motivation, the top to lower sub-motives identified by past studies is social motive (27.59%), career motive (18.39%), skill motive (17.24%), culture motive (12.65%), experience motive (8.04%), material motive (5.71%), status motive (4.59%), network motive (2.29%), pressure motive (2.29%), and ideological motive (1.14%).

## DISCUSSION

This paper is a systematic review of seven years' latest study on the motivation of volunteerism in society around the world. Additionally, this paper also presents the national and year tendency of research related to the motivation of volunteerism involved in this study. Finding national and annual publishing patterns is important because it gives information on the geographical distribution of research contributions and the evolution of academic activity over time. Understanding these patterns can help researchers discover locations with high research activity, prospective cooperation possibilities, and developing trends within certain geographies or periods. Furthermore, it enables a more complete awareness of the worldwide academic



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research scene, supporting informed decision-making and strategic planning in academia and beyond (Zhang et al., 2020).

Table 4: The thematic analysis of volunteerism motivation result

No.	A .45.1.		Country	Intrinsic / Internal Motivation					Extrinsic / External Motivation										
	Article	Year		Psychological	Value	Protective	Protective Enhancement Spiritual Cognitive			Social	Material	Status	Network	Career	Skill	Ideological	Culture	Pressure	Experience
				Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive	Motive
1	55	2024	Australia																
2	3	2024	Saudi Arabia																
3	2	2024	Saudi Arabia																
4	57	2023	United Stated																
5	47	2023	Kyrgyzstan																
6	4	2023	Australia																
7	8	2023	German																
8	58	2023	Lebanese																
9	14	2022	United Stated																
10	9	2021	Poland																
11	52	2021	Portugal																
12	51	2021	Japan																
13	54	2021	Russia																
14	35	2021	United Stated																
15	7	2021	Pakistan																
16	34	2020	United Stated																
17	6	2020	United Stated																
18	36	2020	Canada																
19	45	2019	United Kingdom																
20	30	2019	Guinea																
21	40	2019	Japan																
22	5	2019	Spanish																
23	19	2019	Istanbul																
24	28	2019	Poland																
25	29	2019	Australia																
26	38	2019	Italy																
27	39	2019	Bulgaria																
28	20	2019	Austria																
29	43	2019	India																
30	32	2019	Australia																
31	16	2019	German																
32	42	2019	Saudi Arabia																
33	36	2018	Italy																
34	18	2018	Belgium																
35	24	2018	China																
36	52	2018	Malaysia																
37	48	2018	London																
38	12	2018	United Stated																
39	27	2018	United Kingdom																
40	25	2018	German																
41	50	2018	German																
42	17	2018	China																
43	29	2018	Saudi Arabia																
44	31	2018	Australia																



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The United States is first ranked in terms of the national tendency of study related to motivation of volunteerism in SCOPUS Databased with 6 total of study from the year 2018-2024. This is due to the United States' long history of civic participation and community service, with many people understanding the value of giving back to their communities (Guo et al., 2021). Second, there is a culture of philanthropy and social responsibility in the United States, with individuals and organizations actively finding ways to make a good difference in society (Chu et al., 2020). Third, research and academic institutions in the United States place a major emphasis on social sciences and behavioural studies, which gives a solid framework for understanding volunteer motivation (Solovey, 2020). Furthermore, the United States has a broad and large nonprofit sector, with several organizations and projects relying on volunteers to carry out their purposes (Ott & Dicke, 2021).

Next, this study shows that the trend of publications related to the motivation of volunteerism declined after the year 2020. As the motivation of volunteerism is continuously important for sustaining community engagement and addressing societal needs, the decline in publications after 2020 can have a variety of reasons. This included global interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in academic institution closures, limits on research activity, and delays in paper submissions and peer review procedures. Additionally, economic constraints, shifting objectives, and changes in funding availability may have influenced research productivity during this period.

On the other hand, the final review of this study has shown that motivation in volunteerism is broadly classified as intrinsic or extrinsic, with each having a unique motive in molding human actions. Motivation is the driving factor behind human behaviour, shaping our behaviours, decisions, and objectives. Understanding motivation is critical in determining what drives people to achieve their goals, especially in volunteerism action. Motivation is important in volunteers because it may sustain engagement, build commitment, and motivate people to donate their time and energy to help communities and causes (Ashfaq et al., 2021). Understanding and fostering volunteers' motives is critical for generating meaningful and enjoyable experiences, which improves the efficacy and impact of volunteer programs.

In the intrinsic motivation of volunteerism, the top motive are values motive (31.91%). The values motive in volunteerism demonstrates people's natural desire to connect their activities with their sincerely held ideas and convictions. This motivation, based on personal ethics, morals, and beliefs, pushes volunteers to participate in activities that reflect their basic values, such as compassion, justice, and social duty (Zhou et al., 2023). Volunteers inspired by ideals are motivated by a feeling of responsibility and a desire to make a positive change in the world. They find enjoyment in donating to causes that correspond with their values, and they feel a strong sense of purpose and satisfaction in their contribution (Joanna, 2021). By capitalizing on this inner drive, organizations may build dedicated and passionate volunteers who are sincerely committed to furthering shared ideals and achieving good social change.

Additionally, the social motive is the highest extrinsic motivation in volunteerism found in this study (27.59%). The social motive in volunteerism emphasizes people's desire to connect with others and contribute to the well-being of their communities. This motivation, based on a sense of belonging and solidarity, leads volunteers to participate in collaborative initiatives aimed at tackling common difficulties and creating social cohesion (Vorobieva & Skipor, 2021). Volunteers motivated by social reasons look for chances to develop relationships, networks, and support systems within their communities, understanding the value of cooperation and mutual support in attaining common goals. Volunteering allows them to not only contribute to real results but also to feel a feeling of camaraderie and belonging that comes from working together for a common goal (Lopez, 2021). Embracing the social purpose may strengthen community relationships and enable individuals to contribute meaningfully to the general good.

## **CONCLUSION**

This systematic review has recognized the motive of volunteerism in society around the world from seven years latest study. It identified the pattern of national and year tendency of study-related publication in the SCOPUS database. This study also found two categories of motivation in volunteerism which are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. There are 6 sub-motives in the intrinsic motivation namely values motive, enhancement motive, psychological motive, protective motive, cognitive motive, and spiritual motive. Next,





there are 10 sub-motives in the extrinsic motivation, namely social motive, career motive, skill motive, culture motive, experience motive, material motive, status motive, network motive, pressure motive, and ideological motive.

In conclusion, this systematic literature review gives a thorough grasp of the many factors that drive volunteers, including intrinsic values, social relationships, and extrinsic rewards. Recognizing and utilizing these incentives is critical for organizations seeking to effectively attract and retain volunteers, hence increasing the effectiveness of volunteer programs in tackling social concerns and boosting community wellbeing. By recognizing the intricate interplay between individual motives and volunteer participation, stakeholders may create more focused and long-term approaches to volunteer management, establishing a culture of compassion and civic engagement that benefits both volunteers and the communities they help.

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