

## Developing a Model for Promoting Social Responsibility of the Red Crescent Society by Emphasizing on volunteers' participation in disasters

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### Original Article

#### Abstract

**INTRODUCTION:** Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), as the biggest non-governmental organizations in Iran's social system, needs to develop the concept of social responsibility. The current study was conducted to develop a model for the social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society by emphasizing on volunteers' participation in disasters.

**METHODS:** A qualitative approach (Grounded Theory method) was designed to define related components. The sample population included experts and volunteers in the Red Crescent Society. The sampling method was purposeful and 22 volunteers were selected based on theoretical saturation. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview, and data analysis was conducted based on paradigm model explanation.

**FINDINGS:** Based on data analysis, causal conditions consist of 9 main categories, 32 sub-categories and 76 concepts; contextual conditions consist of 6 main categories, 18 subcategories, and 77 concepts; 2 main categories, 8 sub-categories and 33 concepts for intervening conditions; the strategies consist of 11 main categories, 37 sub-categories and 148 concepts, and finally, the results consist of 9 main categories, 12 sub-categories and 52 concepts. On the base of extracted data, a paradigm model of the social responsibility with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers was designed.

**CONCLUSION:** The social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society is a comprehensive issue and has different legal, ethical, public, national, economic and social aspects which should be considered in planning of this organization for disasters.

**Keywords:** Community participation; Grounded theory; Red Crescent Society; Social responsibility; Volunteers

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#### Introduction

Responsibility as one of the indicators of citizenship behavior has become an obvious and acceptable issue among all organizations of social systems. According to the organizational strategy of the Red Crescent Society from 2016 to 2025, which was approved by the 90th session of the Supreme Council of the RCS, one of the issues that are considered as the organizational values of the RCS, which guides all its programs and activities, includes Responsibility towards the society,

especially the beneficiaries of public services, and in the implementation of assigned missions and tasks through ensuring organizational health, transparency, honesty and effective efficiency of donated resources and contributions, and also encouraging the participation of people and local communities in the planning and implementation of humanitarian activities. Therefore, considering that one of the main priority areas and strategic goals of the Red Crescent Society is to encourage and expand social participation in humanitarian activities by strengthening the role of volunteers

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and its strategic goal is to help promote responsibility and role-playing of volunteers in social and humanitarian activities through increasing motivation and participation in decision-making and training and empowering them.

Social responsibility has been defined in many different ways, but all of them refer to the organization's ability to support actions that consider the well-being of its workforce as well as society and community (1). "Certo" and "Graff" have defined social responsibility as follows: the commitment and duty of management to do things that protect and promote the welfare of society and the interests of the organization. (2) In fact, "when an organization behaves as if it acts out of conscience, we say that it acts with a sense of social responsibility" (3).

Wood (1991) defined the social responsibility of organizations in three levels which the first level of his definition is the society level. At this level, the responsibility of organizations in general, long-term and their relations with the whole society are discussed. This level refers to a part of the theories of social responsibility of organizations, which deals with the legalization of social responsibility of organizations by the society and is therefore applicable to all types of organizations with any dimensions and sizes. The second level is the organizational level. At this level, it becomes clear to whom exactly the organization is responsible and the main stakeholders of the organization are identified. At this level he called responsibility as social responsibility. Moreover, he called the individual level as the third level of social responsibility of organizations. At this level, the extent and power of managerial decision-making and recognition about the stakeholders are investigated. The decision-making and recognition of managers at this level indicates how much each manager pays attention to the stakeholders of the organization (4).

On the other hand, since social responsibility is known as one of the most important elements of the existential philosophy of organizations, therefore, complying with this not only brings the possibility of promoting organizational commitment but also boosts the satisfaction of stakeholders outside the organization to legitimize the organization. So the participation of volunteers is one of the factors that play a significant role in legitimizing NGOs, especially

the Red Crescent Society.

Regarding the meaning of the concept of "participation", there are several definitions, so participation means using personal resources to participate in collective action (5). In addition, about social participation, it can be said that social participation is rooted in the construction and group relations at the local and national levels and is ultimately based on a process, a process during which trust and solidarity are established among people (6). In general, the main essence of participation or social participation can be considered involvement, activity and affectability. In this definition, there are three important components, which include involvement, helping and responsibility (7). The fact is that the transition to a participatory way of managing affairs and planning for it is necessary and inevitable because both the capacities for participation have increased and the issues are too complex to be solved by a few. (8). Furthermore, society's participation in the form of volunteers in disaster management can lead to the active presence of people in all stages of prevention, reduction of destructive effects, confrontation, responsiveness and recovery in disasters (9). In addition, the success of any intervention related to the disasters depends on two important factors: one is the method that is chosen and used to do it, and the other is the level of acceptance of these interventions by the target community. It should be remembered that taking people's needs and interests into account is the only way to succeed in institutionalizing preparation programs and preventing disasters. Boosting the presence of people in the process of planning and implementation ensures the success and permanent establishment of programs.

On the other hand, to make an organization powerful, the members of the organization should be taken into consideration, which can point to internal and external factors. Additionally, it is necessary to take a step in attracting, organizing and preserving their workforce with appropriate planning to promote the social responsibility of the RCS, and at the same time motivate them to promote in a predetermined direction. In addition, concerning Clause 3, Article 3 of the statute of IRCS, which points to the planning and action to deal with accidents and disasters and public training in this field, and emphasizes the training of required volunteers and workforce, therefore, this study seeks to answer this main question,

what is the model of promoting social responsibility of the RCS by emphasizing the participation of volunteers? How can it be explained?

### Methods

In a qualitative study the Grounded Theory method based on Strauss and Corbin (2008) was used to determine the concept (10). The statistical population of this research included experts and relief volunteers of the IRCS who had a desire and experience related to the subject of the research directly or indirectly. Theoretical sampling was used in the research (11) and the samples were selected by purposeful selection. The sample size was based on the theoretical saturation, so that the researcher reached theoretical saturation index after 22 interviews by experts and volunteers. In addition to secondary data (literature and research review such as books, magazines, related theses, websites, etc.), the information were collected after preparing the interview guide, refer to the selected ones and the required data using interviews.

The first step in constructing a grounded theory is open coding, which helps to create a set of first-hand concepts that, while rooted in raw data, are also abstract. At this stage, the researcher reviewed the data line by line and identified its processes and coded them using words and phrases. Then, by continuously comparing the codes in terms of similarities and differences in concepts, categories were formed and the characteristics and dimensions

of each of them were determined (12). In the initial coding, the researcher attached a code (concept and label) to each in-question unit based on the coding unit. Then, by combining similar concepts, in a bigger umbrella called sub-categories, and finally, from the sub-categories, we reached the main categories. In the second stage, the categories were connected and made a set of theorems. At this stage, the codes and categories were compared and the relationships between categories and sub-categories were determined to obtain a more accurate interpretation of the intended phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin have used words called coding paradigm, which are used to describe a set of concepts that are the basis of communication and connection between the topics of the research process. This paradigm is focused on categories such as causal conditions; central phenomenon; contextual conditions; intervening conditions; practical/ interactive strategies and consequences (12).

### Validity and reliability of the research

Because of the innovation and the possible limitations of the data, the triangulation approach was used. Triangulation refers to the process of using different approaches and sources to collect data and information in the research (13) and according to the criteria provided by Creswell and Miller (2000) (14) to ensure validity and reliability was used in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Validity assurance methods

Validity assurance methods	Implementation method in this research
Triangulation	Use multiple sources to collect data
Long-term involvement	Increasing theoretical sensitivity, practical participation, and communication with participants to evaluate research perceptions
Re-inspection of the way to obtain information	Carrying out periodic inspection of the obtained information and codes in order to prevent bias and ensure accuracy, by the researcher and an external referee familiar with the subject of the research.
Check with participants	Checking the obtained data with the help of the research group and the interviewees regarding the results
Continuous comparison	Comparing the data obtained from the investigated sources with other sources continuously throughout the research

In this study, the reliability of the data was determined in such a way that the data obtained in the interview were also obtained in the field notes, and to achieve the criterion of verifiability, all the stages of the conducting research, especially the stages of data analysis, were registered in detail so that if another researcher wants to continue research in this field, he can easily follow this work based on the available documents related to

interviews and analyzes and other stages of the research. In addition, several extracted interviews, codes and categories were given to the research colleagues and several faculty members who are familiar with the method of qualitative research analysis, and they were asked to check the correctness of this coding. The extracted categories and sub-categories of this study are given along with some quotes from the

interviewees (narrative analysis). Finally, by presenting the extracted concepts and the final paradigm, the research has been carried out according to the method of Strauss and Corbin (2008) (10).

### Findings

Based on the results obtained from the interviews of the participants, the results were extracted in the form of concepts, sub-categories and categories and were focused on the separation of grand theory central coding such as causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, practical/interactive strategies and consequences. In the following tables, the extracted subcategories and categories are given:

In Table 2, the results related to the causes of

low social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society towards the participation of relief workers are shown. Based on the results obtained from the research, these factors have pointed to organizational causes. Organizational causes are made up of 9 main categories, 32 sub-categories and 76 concepts.

In Table 3, the results related to the background conditions of the social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society are shown with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers. Based on the results of the research, the background conditions extracted from the interviews with the participants consist of 6 main categories, 18 sub-categories and 77 concepts.

**Table 2.** The extracted categories and subcategories regarding the causes of low social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers

Subcategories	Categories
Existence of emotional trust (emotional and facial) / Existence of personal trust / Existence of hierarchical trust / Inattention to the process of building trust in the organization	Shortage of organizational trust
Lack of cooperation and timely assistance to volunteers in operations/management based on distrust/weakness in managing relief workers' work quality/weakness of commitment to volunteers /neglect of national and international standards/weakness in commitment to laws and regulations	Weakness of social responsibility
Weakness of perception in the role of ethics/weakness of perception in the role of social responsibility/inattention of management standards	Weakness in managers' perception of the social responsibility of the RCS
Weakness in ethical standards/weakness in communication with international organizations/weakness in the desired actions of the RCS /weakness in information and accountability/weakness in behavior with public participation/weakness in organizational culture	Lack of code of conduct
Existence of elitism/use of relief force in daily administrative work	Marginalization of volunteers
Little attention to providing a healthy and safe environment in the bases/ little support for volunteers against damages/injuries during the activity/ improper payment of travel expenses	Little attention to the health and safety of the volunteers
Spiritual support/material support	Weakness of law to support volunteers
Failure to motivate volunteers to help/neglecting the spiritual interests of the volunteers /lacking attention to the material interests of the volunteers	Failure to motivate volunteers
Weakness in the implementation of procedural justice/weakness in the implementation of distributive justice/weakness in the implementation of transactional justice	Weakness in implementing organizational justice

**Table 3.** The extracted categories and subcategories in the contextual conditions regarding the social responsibility with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers

Subcategory	Category
Ambiguity (relief worker)/specialism (RCS)/tendency to individualism (individual interests - relief worker)/rational action (relief worker)	Action-relief worker pattern/RCS
Unfair participation/low self-motivated participation	Participation of volunteers in the RCS
Marginal participation/compulsory participation	Methods of participation of volunteers in the RCS
Normative/task commitment/emotional commitment/continuing commitment	Organizational loyalty (RCS)
Legal dimension/ethical dimension/public and national dimension/social responsibility	The state of social responsibility in the RCS
Aid bases (inter-city and intra-city)/relief worker activities/reinvasion activities	Implementation of relief and rescue organization programs

**Table 4.** The extracted categories and subcategories related to the intervening conditions towards the promotion of social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on the participation of relief workers

Subcategory	Category
Civil liability insurance/accident insurance/approval of minimum salary insurance/managers' level of awareness of volunteers' liability insurance	The responsibility of the organization (RCS) towards volunteers
Preparation of appropriate information for volunteers in the field of working conditions and duties of volunteers /appreciation and encouragement of volunteers /existence of volunteers system/activities of volunteers club (initial/middle/final stages)	The support measures of the organization (RCS) towards volunteers

In Table 4, the intervening conditions extracted from the interview with the participants consist of 2 main categories, 8 sub-categories and 33 concepts.

In Table 5, the results related to the use of strategies to promote the social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers are shown. Based on the results of the research, the strategies extracted from the interviews with the participants consist

of 11 main categories, 37 subcategories and 148 concepts.

In Table 6, the results related to the consequences of using strategies in promoting the social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers are shown. Based on the results of the research, the results extracted from the interview with the participants consist of 9 main categories, 12 sub-categories and 52 concepts.

**Table 5.** The extracted categories and subcategories related to the use of practical strategies in promoting the social responsibility of the population with emphasis on the participation of relief workers.

Subcategory	Category
Attention and increase fair participation/bottom-up approach	Change in the participation pattern of volunteers
Creating value for volunteers /creating motivation in volunteers / volunteers card	Creating an organizational identity
Strengthening the decision-making power among the volunteers club	Activating and strengthening the volunteers club
Improving the level of civil liability insurance/ improving the level of accident insurance/ providing supplementary insurance to volunteers / improving the level of holding training and empowerment courses / improving skill-based courses/ fair participation of volunteers in rescue courses	Paying attention to increasing the responsibility of the organization (RCS) towards volunteers
Preparation of appropriate reports/paying attention to the progress of volunteers /proper measurement of allocation to volunteers /proper evaluation of volunteers performance/proper promotion/acceptance of volunteers' documentation/strong role of managers in effective decisions	Application of competent management
Management based on trust/management based on the quality of life of a volunteers /conducting research in order to help the cause of rescue/paying attention to the concept of social responsibility of the RCS/paying attention to social accountability/paying attention to legal responsibilities	Increasing social responsibility of the organization
Paying attention to the concept of service quality/paying attention to the satisfaction of volunteers /empathy with volunteers /being responsive/understanding emotional conditions/paying attention to the process of building trust in the organization	Creating a culture of organizational loyalty
Implementation of development programs/performance evaluation and service compensation/respecting the political rights of volunteers	Formulation of organizational policies and measures
Attention to the implementation of procedural justice / attention to the implementation of distributive justice / attention to the implementation of transactional justice	Attention to the implementation of organizational justice
Supportive role of parliament members	Policy-making about rescue
Drafting legislation in the field of rescue and relief in order to facilitate the work of volunteers /actions and the process of legalizing the creation of opportunities to promote and improve the working environment for volunteers through the parliament/legislation in the field of aid with full and comprehensive consultation with volunteers /increasing opportunities rescue-oriented services through appropriate legislation for aid workers and with the cooperation and participation of all those involved/promulgating the principles and regulations of rescue and relief widely through government directives/granting benefits and tax exemptions	Legislation in the field of rescue and relief

**Table 6.** The extracted categories and subcategories related to the consequences of using strategies in promoting the social responsibility of the population with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers

Subcategory	Category
Organizational obedience/organizational loyalty/organizational participation/creation of insightful behavior (work conscience) /creation of social virtue/altruism/respect/ conscientiousness/ initiative and ability development	Creating citizenship behavior
The volunteers uses her abilities for the purposes of the RCS / The volunteers uses her initiatives for the purposes of the RCS / The volunteers uses her creations	Motivate to help
Accepting responsibility in the efforts of operational teams/turning indifference into a sense of attachment/ Turning irresponsibility into responsibility	Acceptance of responsibility
Mutual participation (dynamic)/voluntary participation/increasing agreement and hope	Increase voluntary participation
Major attention to the action and activity of the RCS instead of its value bases/focusing on the way of doing the work and the issues and tools needed/the appropriate and quick response of the RCS to the problems of the involved areas during and after accidents and disasters	Increasing social accountability
Strengthening the public image of the RCS/increasing the value and reputation of the RCS/increasing the symbol of the RCS	Increasing the credibility of the RCS
Access to a healthier and safer workforce/Access to a more capable workforce/Access to an enthusiastic workforce	Access to competent workforce
Increasing willing volunteers /retaining volunteers in the RCS/increasing trust and confidence between the volunteers and the RCS	Increasing the loyalty of volunteers to the RCS

### ***Formulation of a paradigm model for promoting the social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society with an emphasis on relief workers***

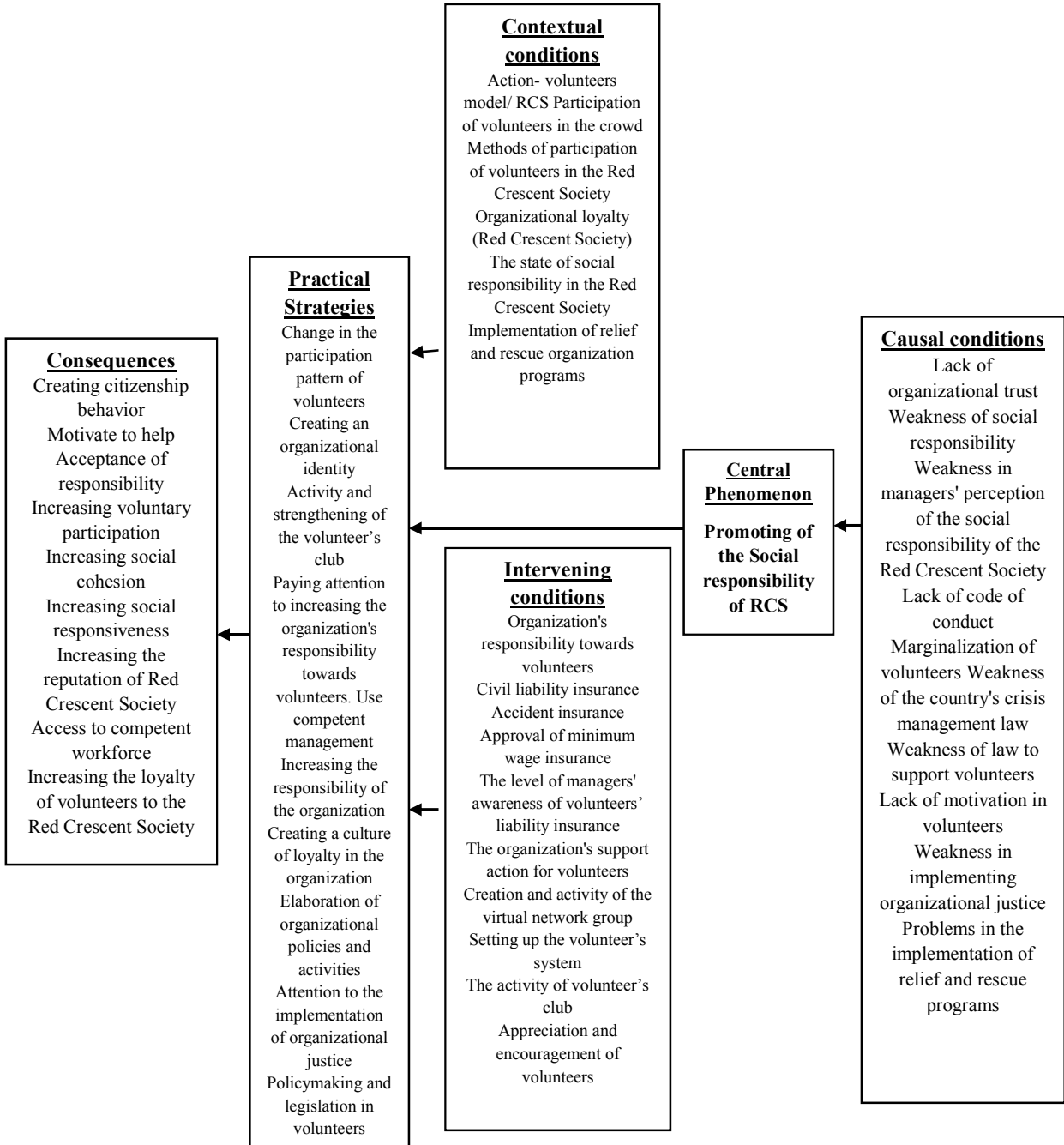
After the axial coding, the final stage of coding, i.e. selective coding begins. At this stage, the theory is almost solidified and the researcher deals with a few categories after making some possible theoretical corrections (12). The main approach in this research is the model of promoting the social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on volunteers, which is shown in the figure 1.

### ***Theory extracted from qualitative research data***

In general, it can be said that the action pattern of volunteers and the RCS is influenced by organizational factors (such as lack of organizational trust, weak social responsibility, weak understanding of managers about the social responsibility of the RCS, lack of code of conduct, marginalization of volunteers, little attention to health and safety of volunteers, the weakness of the law to support volunteers, lack of motivation in volunteers, and weakness in implementing organizational justice, and weakness in the organization's responsibility towards volunteers (weakness in civil liability insurance and accident insurance), and

insufficient support measures of the organization towards volunteers (such as providing suitable information for volunteers in the field of working conditions and tasks of volunteers), setting up the volunteers system, inappropriate activities of the volunteers club and inadequate and inappropriate recognition and encouragement of volunteers.

Therefore, in order to increase the social responsibility of the RCS and change and action model of volunteers, the organizational identity should be created, the organization's responsibility towards volunteers should be increased, the competence management should be considered, the volunteers club should be properly active, the social responsibility of the organization should be increased, the loyalty culture of the organization should be created and promoted, the organizational justice should be considered, policies and measures of the organization should be reviewed, making policies and legislating should follow the purposes of rescuing, which by implementing these strategies, it is possible to take a step towards creating citizenship behavior, creating motivation to help, accepting responsibility, increasing voluntary participation, and social responsiveness, increasing credibility of RCS, access to competent workforce, and increasing the loyalty of volunteers to the RCS.



**Figure 1.** Paradigm model of upgrading social responsibility of the RCS with the emphasis on the participation of volunteers

## Discussion and Conclusion

The current research was conducted to explain and design a suitable model for promoting the social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on the participation of volunteers. According to the results, the lack of organizational trust was one of the organizational causes of the social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on the volunteers. The lack of organizational trust has sub-categories such as the existence of emotional-sensational and facial trust, the existence of personal trust, the existence of hierarchical trust, and neglecting the process of building trust in the organization. Weak social responsibility is another organizational cause. In management theories of social responsibility, trust-based management and quality-of-life management are mentioned. Trust-based management, which became popular from the late 1930s to the early 1960s, believes in creating safe and healthy working conditions as the organization's social responsibility, and managers are asked to balance the maximum profit and society's expectations from the organization.

In addition, in managing the quality of life, since the late 1960s, managers and organizations have been working under the influence of this view of social responsibility. Managers and organizations should involve themselves directly in the solving the problems and the elimination of social anomalies (15). Weakness in managers' perception of the social responsibility of the RCS is another organizational cause. Carol's main argument was that for managers to have responsible social performance, they should have principles such as a basic definition of social responsibility, an understanding of issues related to the field of social responsibility, and familiarity with the philosophy of responding to these issues. (16). Because of this, a step can be taken to pay attention to the standardization of the responsibility of the RCS.

The lack of a code of conduct has also been another organizational cause. While the existence of a code of conduct is a practical tool of social responsibility in the organization that can be used to control the behavior of the workforces in the organization and create a socially responsible organizational culture (16), based on the results, this matter has not been paid attention to in the RCS. In addition, the marginalization of volunteers is another organizational cause.

Alamdari (2005) has stated in his work, that the marginal participation of people in planning in emergencies causes people's opinions to be considered less important, and also the effects of these opinions in planning are transitory and have little impact on development. (17)

Weakness in the implementation of organizational justice is another organizational cause. Managing and solving problems in the organization and providing a healthy environment requires a friendly atmosphere, along with justice (18). Based on this, the decisions made by the leaders and managers of organizations should lead to fair treatment towards employees, in a way that reflects their health and well-being (19).

Also, according to Weber's opinion, we can conclude that if we assume participation as a goal, the action of the person who participates is a rational action aimed at the goal, and if we assume participation is a means to achieve the goal; then the individual's action is a rational action aimed at worth it. If a person considers participation as a good means to achieve his goal, he will turn to participation (20). Max Weber, in explaining participation based on mental methods, believes that participation is an action that is carried out about the actions of others and has a special mental meaning for the agent of the action (21).

Based on the obtained results, organizational loyalty was of normative/task commitment, emotional commitment and continuous commitment type. In the normative/task commitment of volunteers, the participants have acknowledged, that there is a sense of duty to remain as a member, a sense of commitment to their colleagues (other volunteers), and the activity in the organization is a moral duty and participation in incidents without expecting to receive any salary. Additionally, the participants mentioned the emotional commitment of volunteers. In emotional commitment, the volunteers love his activity, and a kind of emotional and psychological attachment is created in the volunteers towards the RCS. Passion is created in the volunteers to help in accidents.

In the continuous commitment of the volunteers, the results showed that it is possible to mention the conscientiousness of the volunteers, and the desire to remain in the organization because of getting accustomed to the relief activities of the RCS or because of its spiritual rewards. Homans also considers participation as a

social behavior that is done in exchange for a possible reward or punishment (22).

Based on the research results, the current state of the intervening conditions to promote the social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on the volunteers are: 1) The responsibility of the organization (RCS) towards the volunteers, 2) The support measures of the organization (RCS) for volunteers.

According to the results obtained from the interviews of the participants, the consequences of using the best strategies to promote the social responsibility of the RCS with an emphasis on volunteers are: 1. Creating citizenship behavior, 2. Creating motivation to help, 3. Accepting responsibility, 4. Increasing mutual and voluntary participation, 5. Increasing social solidarity, 6. Increasing social accountability, 7. Increasing the credibility of the RCS, 8. Access to powerful workforce, and 9. The increasing the loyalty of volunteers to the RCS. Graham (1991) believes that there are three types of citizenship behaviors in organizations: organizational obedience expresses behaviors such as respecting organizational rules, performing tasks completely, and fulfilling responsibilities according to organizational resources (23).

According to the results of this research, what is important in this study is that we cannot practically obtain a convincing definition from these concepts regarding the social responsibility of the RCS and the participation of volunteers, but first of all, these concepts and the model of promoting the social responsibility of the RCS with the emphasis on volunteers can be a precursor for research and study related to this issue. Secondly, the idea that the social responsibility of the Red Crescent Society is not a single issue, but maybe it can be legal, moral, public and national, and economic and social responsibilities. Thirdly, the participation of volunteers has a pattern of action, types of participation and methods of participation and a pattern of participation with the RCS, and the Red Crescent Society and its managers should pay special attention to this. According to the results, it can be said that the RCS as a social institution during accidents and disasters has a specific structure based on the principles of social responsibility of the United Nations Global Compact.

Therefore, respecting the principle of human rights, creating social security, reducing and

eliminating all kinds of forced or coercive work, eliminating discrimination concerning the rights of volunteers, welcoming the initiatives and innovations of volunteers and committing to bringing up their innovations, strengthening technology compatible with the environment, the fight against all forms of corruption, the attention and increase of social responsibility should be considered, and also since the volunteers as an activist follows the epistemological principles and rules appropriate to the social and cultural structure of his time, therefore, the concept of activist participation in accidents and disasters is also affected by the epistemological field during his life. Therefore, the RCS, by changing the pattern of participation of volunteers and their cooperative behavior, and providing training and promoting a collaborative humanitarian culture, can take an important step in redefining the organizational identity and reputation and public image of the RCS, creating citizenship behavior, participation of volunteers and the general public in the planning for emergencies, increasing trust in the general public towards the RCS. In other words, according to the functional-structural approach, the value and normative dimensions of action and participation become highly important for social activists. In such a way psycho-social preparations, which are defined by the system of meanings and dimensions of values and norms governing the minds of activists, determine the intentions of activists to enter into cooperative action. (24).

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### Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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