

# The Role of Red Cross Volunteers in Humanitarian Response in Oyo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract** – This study examined the roles of Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the increasing frequency and complexity of humanitarian emergencies, including flooding, public health emergencies, displacement, and other forms of vulnerability, and the important role played by volunteer-based humanitarian organisations in responding to these challenges. Specifically, the study investigated the work carried out by the Red Cross in Oyo State, identified the roles performed by Red Cross volunteers, examined their effectiveness in humanitarian response, and identified the challenges confronting them in the discharge of their responsibilities. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents drawn from Red Cross volunteers and other relevant stakeholders in Oyo State. A total of 212 valid responses were used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, were used to analyse the research questions, while Pearson Product-Moment and multiple regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that the Red Cross undertakes several humanitarian activities in Oyo State, including first aid and emergency response, flood and disaster preparedness and relief, health education and sensitisation, blood donation campaigns, relief distribution, and psychosocial support. A high proportion of respondents (93.4%) were aware of Red Cross humanitarian activities, while 73.1% reported that such activities occurred frequently or very frequently in their communities. The study also found that Red Cross volunteers perform diverse humanitarian roles, particularly first aid provision, disaster preparedness and response, psychosocial support, community health education, blood donation mobilisation, and collaboration with government agencies and non-governmental organisations. Similarly, 74.5% considered the training received by volunteers to be adequate, while a substantial proportion indicated that volunteers responded to emergencies in a timely manner and in accordance with humanitarian principles. However, the study identified inadequate funding, logistical constraints, volunteer burnout, and personal safety risks as major challenges affecting volunteer effectiveness. Inferential analysis established a significant positive relationship between Red Cross activities and humanitarian service delivery ( $r = .512, p < 0.05$ ), volunteer roles and humanitarian interventions ( $r = .476, p < 0.05$ ), and volunteer effectiveness and humanitarian activities ( $r = .539, p < 0.05$ ). Multiple regression further showed that volunteer challenges significantly affected effectiveness ( $F = 21.84, R^2 = .385, p < 0.05$ ), with inadequate funding emerging as the strongest predictor. The study concludes that Red Cross volunteers constitute an important component of humanitarian response in Oyo State and that their effectiveness is strongly associated with the organisation's activities, the diversity and quality of volunteer roles, and the availability of adequate operational support. The study recommends continuous volunteer training and capacity development, improved funding and logistical support, stronger volunteer welfare programmes, enhanced safety measures, and improved coordination between the Red Cross, government agencies, NGOs, and other humanitarian actors. These measures would strengthen the capacity of Red Cross volunteers to provide timely, effective, and sustainable humanitarian services in Oyo State.

**Keywords** – Red Cross Volunteers, Humanitarian Response, Volunteer Effectiveness, Humanitarian Service Delivery, Disaster Response, Oyo State.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background of the Study

Humanitarian response continues to evolve as a subject of critical discourse within global governance, public health systems, and social welfare policy. Natural disasters, disease outbreaks, forced displacement, and complex emergencies occur at an alarming rate across the world, exposing millions to threats to life and livelihood. Volunteer-led organisations have played indispensable roles in managing these risk factors over the years. Volunteer responders affiliated with Red Cross societies around the world serve as vital connectors between affected populations and formal emergency management authorities (Bailey and Kaplan, 2022).

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), a consortium of 191 National Societies, recognised volunteering as a pivot of global humanitarian response. Its apex strategy document,

Strategy 2030, and the subsequently launched Volunteering Policy of March 2022, listed volunteering as one of its core transformational goals. The IFRC network mobilises over 17 million community-based volunteers, positioning them as key humanitarian actors across a wide range of emergencies — from armed conflict to disasters driven by climate change (IFRC, 2022). The Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS), established by the Nigerian Red Cross Act of 1960 (CAP 324), reflects this global reality. Today, the NRCS reaches over 800,000 volunteers across all 774 local government areas in Nigeria, giving it the largest humanitarian footprint in the country (NRCS, 2023).

Nigeria confronts a diverse and overlapping set of humanitarian challenges annually. Seasonal floods, epidemic disease outbreaks, food insecurity, oil spillage, and the displacement crisis in north-east Nigeria are among the most pressing. The Global Rapid Post-Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE) report estimated that recent flooding caused losses of between \$3.79 billion and \$9.12 billion,

affecting numerous states including Oyo, Kogi, Anambra, Delta, and Borno (Leadership, 2024). The Nigeria Humanitarian Response Plan published by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2023) further reported that floods in 2022 alone killed over 600 people and displaced approximately 4.4 million others, exposing critical weaknesses in both government response systems and community preparedness.

Oyo State, which serves as the geographical focus of this study, is situated in the south-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria with its capital in Ibadan — Africa's sixth largest city. As the most populous state in Nigeria after Lagos, Oyo State faces overlapping humanitarian challenges: seasonal flooding, communicable disease outbreaks, poverty-induced displacement, and urban migration risks. The NRCS Oyo State branch has been actively engaged in emergency response within the state, deploying volunteers to provide disaster relief, first aid treatment, health promotion campaigns, and community resilience activities. Most recently, the NRCS was among organisations that received humanitarian aid for Oyo State and other flood-affected states under the ECOWAS Flood Response Programme (Voice of Nigeria, 2025).

Despite this growing body of global literature, there remains a pronounced gap when it comes to Nigerian Red Cross volunteers, particularly at the state level. Limited published data exist on what Red Cross volunteers do in specific Nigerian states, how well-prepared they are, what motivates them, and how effectively they coordinate with government emergency management structures. This study addresses that gap by providing primary, evidence-based data on the role of Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response in Oyo State, Nigeria.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian emergencies in Oyo State have grown more frequent and complex, driven by recurring flooding, public health crises including the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid urbanisation, and deepening socio-economic inequality. As the principal voluntary aid society formally recognised by the Federal Government under the Red Cross Act of 1960, the NRCS carries significant responsibility for first-line humanitarian response. Its volunteers are deployed across a wide range of activities in Oyo State from emergency disaster response and first aid to health promotion and community resilience programming. Yet, despite this critical role, robust empirical documentation of volunteer activities, structural enablers, barriers to performance, and coordination mechanisms within Oyo State remains strikingly limited.

A core problem confronting this field is the absence of evidence on what Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State actually do and the degree to which their activities align with internationally accepted humanitarian standards and frameworks. Although the IFRC (2022) Volunteering Policy acknowledges a global crisis in volunteer management, specifically the failure to adapt approaches to changing trends in volunteer engagement, no empirical

study has yet examined whether NRCS offices in Oyo State have taken meaningful steps to understand or respond to their volunteers' evolving needs.

The problem concerns the adequacy of training available to volunteers. While the NRCS provides foundational training in first aid and disaster response, no published study has confirmed whether this training meets the growing instructional requirements identified in the literature. Ahmadi Marzaleh et al. (2021) outlined extensive competency domains required for disaster volunteers including, including technical, preparedness, interpersonal, and soft skills, against which the current NRCS training curriculum in Oyo State has never been benchmarked.

More so, the motivational factors that lead Red Cross volunteers to join the society and sustain their participation during emergencies in Oyo State have not been studied. Bailey and Kaplan (2022) established that the decision to volunteer in humanitarian crises is shaped by a complex interplay of personal, structural, and emergency-specific factors.

However, the ability of Red Cross volunteers to function within the broader humanitarian ecosystem, particularly their collaboration with the Oyo State Emergency Management Agency (OYSEMA), local government authorities, UN agencies, and other humanitarian actors, has not been examined empirically. Effective coordination is essential for avoiding duplication of effort, ensuring timely response, and maximising community impact. Without documented evidence of how these coordination relationships function in practice, critical gaps may go unaddressed. This study therefore seeks to explore the role of Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response in Oyo State by examining the humanitarian work they undertake, the enabling conditions and barriers that shape their performance, and the coordination structures within which they operate.

## 3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the roles of Red Cross Volunteers in humanitarian response in Oyo State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate activities carried out by the Red Cross in Oyo State;
- ii. Identify the roles of Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State
- iii. Examine the effectiveness of Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State
- iv. Identify challenges faced by Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State.

## 4. Research Questions

- What work does the Red Cross do in Oyo State?
- What roles do Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State play?
- How effective are Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State
- What challenges do Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State face?

## 5. Scope of the Study

Geographically, this study is limited to Oyo State, South-West Nigeria. Conceptually, it covers humanitarian response activities undertaken by NRCS volunteers, including disaster response, first aid, public health promotion, support for displaced persons, and disaster risk reduction. The study population comprises formally registered NRCS volunteers, Oyo State branch officials, and relevant emergency management stakeholders, including OYSEMA officials. Temporally, the study covers the period 2019–2024, which encompasses the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple flood seasons.

## 6. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to scholarship on volunteer-led humanitarian response at both theoretical and empirical levels. Theoretically, it expands on existing frameworks related to volunteerism, volunteer management, community-based disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian coordination within the largely underrepresented context of sub-Saharan Africa. Empirically, the study provides original primary data on Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State, which is immediately applicable to the NRCS for improving volunteer recruitment, training, retention, and deployment. Government agencies such as OYSEMA, UN agencies, international NGOs, and local community-based organisations will equally benefit from its findings in identifying coordination gaps and partnership opportunities. Future researchers and graduate students focused on volunteerism, humanitarian governance, and disaster management will find it a valuable reference point for Nigeria-based studies.

## 7. Definition of Terms

**Red Cross Volunteers:** Nigerian Red Cross Society volunteers who give their time, energy, and skills to the NRCS without financial remuneration, including youth volunteers, community volunteers, and trained first aiders.

**Humanitarian Response:** Organised provision of services and resources to save lives, prevent suffering, and maintain human dignity during emergencies, including disaster response, first aid, health promotion, displaced persons assistance, and DRR.

**Volunteer Management:** The systematic organisation of volunteers from recruitment through recognition, encompassing orientation, training, deployment, monitoring, retention, and acknowledgment.

**Coordination:** The collaborative functioning of two or more organisations toward a common goal; here, the working relationships among the NRCS, government agencies (NEMA, OYSEMA), UN agencies, international NGOs, and community-based organisations.

**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):** Activities aimed at reducing community exposure to hazards and vulnerability, including sensitisation, early warning dissemination, and emergency preparedness.

# II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 1. Introduction

This chapter has two purposes. First, it provides a review of relevant literature, textbooks, peer-reviewed journals, organisational reports, and policy documents published since 2018, which establishes the baseline knowledge on the topic under study and frames the focus areas of this study. Second, it positions this study within relevant theoretical frameworks. Topics discussed include: Concept of Volunteerism and Humanitarian Response; Overview of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; The Red Cross and its work in Oyo State; Roles of Red Cross Volunteers; Effectiveness of Red Cross Volunteers; Challenges of Red Cross Volunteers; and the theoretical framework.

## 2. Conceptual Review

### Concept of Volunteerism

Volunteerism can be defined as voluntary unpaid work carried out in support of other people or society through formal organisations or informal associations. The United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV, 2022) describes it as encompassing activities ranging from traditional mutual aid and self-help to formal service delivery and civic engagement conducted freely, in a spirit of public service, and without primary remuneration. UNV further notes that volunteerism supports the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 1, 3, 10, and 17.

Academic discourse distinguishes between formal and informal volunteerism, and between organisational and community-based volunteering (Rochester, Paine, Howlett & Zimmeck, 2019). This distinction is especially relevant to sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria. Alongside western-style institutional volunteerism, informal volunteerism rooted in indigenous norms of community belonging and mutual assistance is well established in Nigeria, even if less formally documented (Wakibi, Yusuf, Jaizah & Mukhtar, 2022). Within Oyo State specifically, indigenous volunteer practices tied to Yoruba communal values include Owe (collaborative community labour) and the ethos of Omoluabi may supplement or undergird formal volunteering through the Red Cross (Oluwaseun, 2020).

Recent literature has also drawn attention to the gendered dimensions of volunteer work. Women constitute the majority of volunteers globally, particularly in community health and humanitarian settings, yet remain under-represented in the leadership structures of volunteer organisations (Bhatt, Johnson & Lim, 2021). This pattern has been confirmed in the Nigerian context by Ibrahim and Musa (2022), whose research on women's volunteerism within the NRCS corroborates these global findings. The policy and volunteer management implications of this gendered dynamic will be explored further with specific reference to Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State.

### Concept of Humanitarian Response

Humanitarian response refers to principled and organised efforts to save lives and reduce suffering in the wake of disaster, conflict, and complex emergencies. The guiding principles of humanitarian action- neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence- have remained broadly consistent since their codification in UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991) and reinforced through Resolution 58/114 on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2019).

In recent years, the international humanitarian community has pursued systemic reform to improve responsiveness to crisis-affected populations. A landmark moment came with the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which convened representatives of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, government donors, UN agencies, and non-signatory humanitarian organisations to identify gaps in global humanitarian response. The resulting Grand Bargain agreement, reaffirmed and updated in 202, called for the localisation of humanitarian response, specifically increasing the volume and proportion of humanitarian funding directed to local and national actors (IASC, 2021). The recognition of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as essential local humanitarian actors under this framework has significant implications for how Red Cross volunteers in Nigeria are perceived and engaged by humanitarian stakeholders both within and beyond the Red Cross Movement.

Within Nigeria, humanitarian needs have grown substantially since 2018, driven by a combination of protracted displacement resulting from Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgency in the Northeast, recurring flooding across the middle belt and southern states, communal violence in Kano, Plateau, Kaduna, and other states, widespread food insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic. UN OCHA projected 8.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Nigeria in 2023 (OCHA, 2023), underscoring the scale of need and the continued relevance of volunteer-based humanitarian response.

### Overview of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network, comprising three principal components: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Movement is guided by seven Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality (IFRC, 2019).

With over 14 million volunteers worldwide, the Movement operates the largest humanitarian volunteer workforce on the planet (IFRC, 2022). Its strategic direction is outlined in Strategy 2030, which identifies five interconnected crises facing humanity: climate and environment, shifting disasters, health and care, migration and identity, and values, power, and inclusion, and positions volunteers as

central to the Movement's capacity to respond (IFRC, 2020). Strategy 2030 specifically calls for greater investment in volunteer wellbeing and capacity building, acknowledging the emotional and operational demands placed on volunteer responders.

The most comprehensive recent evidence base on Red Cross volunteers comes from the IFRC's inaugural Global Volunteer Survey (2022), which gathered responses from 26,685 volunteers across 79 countries. While most respondents reported high satisfaction and sustained motivation, significant proportions reported stress, burnout, inadequate equipment, and insufficient organisational support. Fewer than half of respondents felt they had received adequate training. These findings provide an important comparative baseline against which the experiences of NRCS volunteers in Oyo State, explored in this study, will be contextualised.

### The Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS)

The Nigerian Red Cross Society was founded by Imperial Charter in 1960 and formally registered under Decree LG No N99 of 1992 (Act Cap N99, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004). It serves as an auxiliary to the Nigerian government in the humanitarian field and maintains branches across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, making it one of the largest humanitarian organisations operating in Nigeria by scope and reach (NRCS, 2021). In 2019, the NRCS adopted a Strategic Plan for the 2019–2023 period, with priorities encompassing: strengthening disaster risk management, improving health and social service delivery, ensuring safe migration and social inclusion, deepening volunteer and youth engagement, and increasing financial sustainability and organizational effectiveness (NRCS, 2019).

Between 2018 and the present, the NRCS has been actively engaged in several major humanitarian responses. These include the 2018 Benue State flood response, which mobilised thousands of volunteers nationwide for rescue operations and relief distribution; ongoing joint NRCS-ICRC-IFRC operations in the Lake Chad Basin addressing displacement caused by Boko Haram terrorism in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states; and the national COVID-19 response from 2020 to 2022, during which NRCS volunteers contributed to contact tracing, community enlightenment, and risk communication activities (NRCS, 2021; IFRC, 2021). Beyond emergency response, the NRCS operates an extensive community-based health and first aid programme, training volunteers as community health promoters to bring basic health education and services to the grassroots level, reinforcing the organisation's presence and relevance in non-emergency periods as well.

### Roles of Red Cross Volunteers in Humanitarian Response

The literature describes Red Cross volunteers as active participants across the full humanitarian action cycle: preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience building. Beyond implementing interventions, the IFRC (2020)



emphasises that volunteers are central to building community trust, advocating for vulnerable populations, and maintaining social cohesion.

**Disaster Preparedness and Early Warning.** Volunteers undertake community vulnerability assessments, support the development of community-based disaster preparedness plans, and train community members in protective actions. They are also responsible for disseminating early warning information through mobile networks and community alert systems. In Oyo State, volunteers who received Forecast-based Financing (FbF) training through IFRC pilots reported statistically significant reductions in flood losses following implementation of early action protocols (IFRC, 2021).

**Search and Rescue.** In many contexts, Red Cross volunteers arrive at emergency scenes ahead of government agencies. Trained in basic lifesaving techniques, they search for survivors, establish casualty collection points, and coordinate with formal emergency services. Adeola and Olawale (2020) found that communities in southwest Nigeria with quickly mobilised, trained Red Cross volunteers experienced significantly faster evacuation of vulnerable households and fewer flood-related fatalities compared to communities without organised volunteer networks.

**Relief Distribution and Needs Assessment.** Volunteers support all aspects of humanitarian relief logistics, receiving, sorting, and distributing food, non-food items, shelter materials, and hygiene kits. They also conduct structured household needs assessments using standardised tools to ensure the most vulnerable are prioritised. Adenuga and Okonkwo (2022) found that the introduction of mobile assessment tools and standardised guidelines significantly improved the quality of needs assessments conducted by trained NRCS volunteers.

**First Aid and Emergency Medical Support.** Providing first aid is one of the most fundamental volunteer roles. Volunteers trained to ILCOR and IFRC standards deliver immediate lifesaving care, conduct triage during mass casualty incidents, and support professional medical teams. In Oyo State, Red Cross volunteers have provided first aid at road traffic crash scenes, during communal conflicts, and in flood responses, reducing mortality by bridging the gap before patients access hospital care (NRCS Oyo Branch, 2022).

**Psychosocial Support (PSS).** PSS has become one of the fastest-growing volunteer roles over the past decade. Trained volunteers provide basic psychological first aid to individuals exhibiting stress reactions, acute grief, or symptoms of trauma, while referring clinical cases to appropriate providers. They also facilitate group-level psychosocial activities for communities affected by emergencies, forming an important layer of the broader mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) response (Kaltenbach et al., 2019).

**Community Health Promotion and Epidemic Response.** Volunteers carry out information, education, and communication (IEC) activities covering disease prevention, hygiene promotion, nutrition, and health-seeking behaviour. During epidemic responses, including Lassa fever, cholera, meningitis, and COVID-19, they have supported community sensitisation, contact tracing, and rumour management. Ebenso et al. (2021) highlighted their instrumental role in COVID-19 prevention across southwest Nigeria, including addressing vaccine hesitancy and debunking misinformation.

**Blood Donation Mobilisation and Community Liaison.** Volunteers serve as community blood donor ambassadors, helping address Nigeria's estimated annual shortfall of 1.5 million blood units (WHO, 2020) by mobilising voluntary, non-remunerated donations. As trusted community members, they are also uniquely positioned to serve as liaisons between humanitarian organisations and affected populations. With growing sector-wide commitment to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), volunteers are playing an increasingly vital role in facilitating community feedback mechanisms and ensuring assistance remains needs-appropriate, culturally relevant, and equitable (Sphere Project, 2018; ALNAP, 2021).

### **Effectiveness of Red Cross Volunteers in Humanitarian Response**

Emerging evidence is beginning to allow assessment of volunteer effectiveness across a range of interventions. Recent studies have used both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to examine perceptions of Red Cross volunteer effectiveness among volunteer community members and populations served by Red Cross volunteers. Volunteer effectiveness, for this profile, will refer to the extent to which volunteer actions result in positive outcomes for affected communities. Determinants of volunteer effectiveness include, but are not limited to: training and skill, organizational volunteer management capacity, coordination, community embeddedness, and other contextual factors. (Lough, Sherraden, & Lough, 2018; IFRC, 2022)

**Training:** Volunteer training and skill levels are the strongest predictors of volunteer confidence and competence in carrying out humanitarian tasks. The IFRC Volunteering Policy (2021) standard mandates National Societies to conduct regular role-based training with all Red Cross volunteers and establish learning continuums to ensure proficiency of skills over time. Balogun and Obaseki (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study across five NRCS branches in southwest Nigeria and found strong correlations between the intensity of training received by volunteers (as measured by training days attended per year) and self-reported volunteer competence/confidence across humanitarian tasks. Volunteers who reported receiving training in the last year had significantly higher mean scores for effectiveness across response functions than volunteers who had not received recent training.

**Volunteer Management:** Volunteer management capacity of National Societies, volunteers' local brigades/branches, also determines volunteer effectiveness. Volunteer management capacity can include factors such as the ability to combine recruit and orient new volunteers, provide adequate supervision, and meet volunteers' basic needs for recognition and responsive feedback. National Societies have a responsibility to uphold the well-being and safety of volunteers and must "[Provide] clothing, food, utensils, PPE equipment including face masks where necessary, insurance coverage, psychosocial support, and ensure safe and dignified working environments that promote volunteer protection." (IFRC Volunteer Management Toolkit, 2021). Volunteers must be provided with equipment necessary to safely and effectively complete assigned tasks. In a study completed across five NRCS branches in Nigeria, Nwosu and Chukwu (2021) found that branches that described their volunteer management practices as "structured" (i.e. having regular supervision, meetings,, mechanisms for providing recognition to volunteers, and effectiveness, teams had access to necessary equipment) reported higher volunteer retention in Nigeria,ctionality than branches that described management practices as unstructured or nonexistent.

**Community Trust:** As members of the communities they serve, Red Cross volunteers carry unique roles that cannot be filled by external humanitarian actors. Volunteers are often trusted members of the communities in which they live. Oyediran, Ogundele, and Ajani (2022) completed a study on trust in Red Cross volunteers in Ibadan during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results of the study indicated significantly higher levels of trust in Red Cross volunteers than other government response actors (including doctors/nurses) or non-governmental organisations. Trust in Red Cross volunteers was directly associated with compliance with health promotion activities shared by Red Cross volunteers. This trust was credited to the volunteers being "known members of their respective communities who speak the same language with them and are neutral."

**Coordination:** Volunteer effectiveness is heavily dependent on their integration into wider humanitarian actor networks. For example, in Oyo State, the Humanitarian Coordination Forum was established in 2020 to provide a platform for communication and coordination among the Red Cross branch, OYSEMA, and UN agencies/NGOs active in the state. In communities where coordination structures are functioning, Red Cross volunteers are often part of a well-organised emergency response. Akintunde and Adeyemi (2021) reported that communities that benefited from a coordinated multi-actor humanitarian response received more comprehensive flood recovery than communities that received a less coordinated, ad hoc response.

**Digital Technology:** Deployment of digital technologies among Red Cross volunteers has been positively correlated with volunteer effectiveness. Red Cross Nigeria has piloted the use of mobile data collection tools (KoboToolbox) for use in community needs assessments, digital mapping solutions to enhance volunteer coordination in emergency response, and social media tools to share risk

communications. Mohammed, Adewale, and Lawal (2023) found that Red Cross volunteers trained on the use of Kobo Collect mobile data collection platforms were able to complete needs assessments more quickly and with fewer errors, leading to more appropriate and targeted distribution of relief supplies during the 2022 flood season in Nigeria.

### **Volunteers' Challenges**

In spite of their critical service to humanity in Nigeria and Oyo State specifically, Red Cross volunteers continue to face several challenges that affect their capacity to contribute effectively to the humanitarian operations of the organization as well as their personal well-being. These challenges cut across personal, organisational, and environmental factors, and have been documented consistently since 2018 (IFRC, 2022; Nwosu & Chukwu, 2021; Omale & Egbuta, 2020).

**Inconsistent and Irregular Training:** Provision of quality and consistent training has continued to be one of the critical barriers facing Red Cross volunteers hoping to improve their emergency response capacity. While the IFRC's Volunteering Policy (2021) stipulates regular training workshops for all Red Cross volunteers, most volunteers serving at the NRCS branch level, especially those in rural and semi-urban communities, are rarely trained regularly, either because of limited branch resources, lack of access to training facilities, or difficulties in getting paid leave from employers to attend training workshops. Balogun and Obaseki (2020) surveyed volunteers in southwest Nigeria and found that more than 40 percent of NRCS volunteers interviewed had not received any formal training in the past year. This was especially true for volunteers serving in rural areas, who were twice as likely to report not receiving formal training as those serving in urban areas.

**Poverty/ Absence of Incentives:** Since most Red Cross volunteers receive no monetary remuneration for their service, poor volunteers who must take time off from paid employment to serve in humanitarian operations face financial challenges and hardship. Omale and Egbuta (2020) surveyed volunteers who had quit the NRCS and found that lack of paid incentive was the number one reason former volunteers gave for quitting. Several interviewees mentioned that due to Nigeria's increasingly harsh economic climate of unemployment and inflation, they were unable to volunteer without compensation. While NRCS policy outlines provisions for volunteers to receive nominal operational allowances when deployed for emergencies, this does not compensate for loss of income while deployed, and volunteers are often still expected to cover their own transport and feeding expenses, especially when deployed to locations far from their home community (Nwosu & Chukwu, 2021).

**Lack of Operational Tools and Equipment:** Volunteers have also complained of a lack of essential operational items like personal protective equipment (PPE), first aid kits, communication devices, and transportation. NRCS volunteers deployed for the COVID-19 response said they

were initially not provided with PPE before deployment, which left them vulnerable to infection and caused some volunteers to initially refuse COVID-19 response assignments (NRCS, 2021). In their response to flooding in Oyo State, Red Cross volunteers have complained about the lack of rescue boats, life jackets, waterproof flashlights, and walkie-talkies.

**Personal Safety:** Related to the issue of insecurity discussed in section 2.7, Red Cross volunteers working in communities affected by communal conflicts, farmer-herder violence, and armed robbery are placed at personal risk by deployment to the frontlines of emergencies. According to the IFRC (2022), humanitarian volunteers around the world – Red Cross Volunteers included – have faced rising incidents of violence from communities, governments, and other parties to conflicts. Though famine is not currently present in Oyo State, volunteers who have been deployed to contain communal violence between farmers and herders have faced personal risk, and protocols from the NRCS do not currently include risk mapping or security assessments for volunteer deployments (Akintunde & Adeyemi, 2021).

**Volunteer Burnout:** Humanitarian volunteers have high rates of burnout, which is marked by emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Burnout has been explicitly recognized by the IFRC in its Strategy 2030 as an issue facing RC national societies and their volunteers, and includes investment in volunteer wellbeing programmes as a key component in supporting volunteers. In a study conducted by Abiodun, Olatunji, and Fasina (2022) on humanitarian volunteer burnout in southwest Nigeria, NRCS volunteers made up over one-third of study participants, and over one-third of Red Cross volunteers surveyed met the criteria for clinically significant burnout. Notably, Red Cross volunteers who had participated in either the COVID-19 response or the response to Nigeria's deadly 2020 floods without organizational psychosocial support were more likely to be classified as experiencing clinical burnout.

**Social Stigma/Misconceptions about the Red Cross:** There have also been incidents where Red Cross volunteers have faced community resistance and outright refusal of assistance, based on false beliefs about the organization. False beliefs include the idea that the Red Cross symbol is religiously affiliated, or that Red Cross volunteers benefit financially from disasters. Oluwaseun (2020) reports incidents in Oyo State where volunteers were initially turned away by community members during food distribution efforts because locals believed the volunteers were keeping supply packages for themselves.

### Empirical Review

A growing body of qualitative and quantitative literature examines Red Cross and community humanitarian volunteers in Africa, with a notable concentration of studies focused on Nigeria and the southwest in particular.

Adeola and Olawale (2020), using quasi-experimental methods across six Oyo State Local Government Areas, found that communities with organised Red Cross volunteer networks demonstrated significantly faster evacuation speeds, fewer flood-related injuries, and quicker access to relief assistance than those without. Training quality, cooperation with OYSEMA, and community perception of volunteers were the strongest predictors of need, who wereiveness. Complementing this, Balogun and Obaseki (2020) surveyed 315 NRCS volunteers across five southwest states and found that training frequency, equipment provision, and perceived organisational support together explained 62 percent of the variation in volunteer effectiveness. Volunteers trained within the preceding six months were also significantly more proficient across all ten humanitarian task measures.

Omale and Egbuta (2020) conducted a phenomenological study with current and former Red Cross volunteers across three states, including Oyo, identifying five recurring themes: initial motivations, passion for continued service, organisational disconnection, financial strain, and physical and mental health challenges. While love for community and a desire to help others sustained volunteers, financial hardship was the primary driver of attrition; volunteers consistently contributed beyond their means with insufficient recognition or compensation. Abiodun, Olatunji, and Fasina (2022) quantified the toll of this strain, finding that 34 percent of southwest Nigerian Red Cross volunteers screened positive for high burnout, with emotional exhaustion as the dominant dimension. Key predictors included deployment to disaster areas without debriefing, prolonged duty periods, and lack of access to mental health resources. The authors recommended institutionalising psychosocial support programmes at the branch level.

On community trust and health impact, Oyediran, Ogundele, and Ajani (2022) found through household surveys and focus group discussions in Ibadan that community members trusted Red Cross volunteers significantly more than other external service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, attributing this to volunteers' community embeddedness, perceived neutrality, and prior emergency presence. Ebenso et al. (2021) corroborated these findings, demonstrating through pre- and post-intervention surveys that NRCS-led community health outreach produced statistically significant improvements in COVID-19 knowledge, handwashing behaviour, and care-seeking willingness outcomes attributed to volunteers' trusted status and culturally tailored messaging.

Finally, Mohammed, Adewale, and Lawal (2023) found that Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State trained on digital data collection tools completed household interviews 40 percent faster than pen-and-paper counterparts, with higher data quality and faster information-sharing with branch coordinators recommending expansion of digital training across NRCS.

### 3. Theoretical Frameworks

#### 2.3.1 Functional Theory of Volunteerism

This study's primary theoretical lens is the Functional Theory of Volunteerism (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Snyder & Omoto, 2008), which holds that volunteerism serves distinct psychological functions. Six motivational functions are identified: Values, Understanding, Social, Career, Protective, and Enhancement. Okeke & Nnamdi (2022) applied this framework to Nigerian Red Cross (NRCS) volunteers, finding values and understanding motivations most prevalent, followed by social and enhancement motivators. Before, functional overlap, where volunteers fulfil multiple motivations simultaneously, was the strongest predictor of retention, outweighing organisational support or financial incentives.

#### Social Capital Theory

The second framework draws on Putnam (2000), Coleman (1988), and Szreter and Woolcock (2004). Social capital encompasses the networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust within them. Putnam distinguishes bonding capital (strong intra-group ties) from bridging capital (ties across diverse groups); Szreter and Woolcock add linking capital, vertical ties connecting communities to institutions across power differentials. NRCS volunteers possess all three: bonding capital through community membership, bridging capital through cross-group connection, and institutionally sanctioned linking capital through NRCS's ties to government and international NGOs. Research by Kabisch, Koch, and Rattay (2020) further shows that pre-existing social capital, including active volunteer organisations, accelerates post-disaster community recovery. This underscores the value of Red Cross volunteers' routine, non-emergency work in building the social fabric communities rely on when crises strike.

#### Critique

Both theories have limitations. Functional Theory has been criticised for overemphasising motivation while underweighting structural barriers poverty, gender norms, and institutional constraints that shape who can volunteer (Hustinx, Cnaan & Handy, 2010). Much motivational research is also rooted in WEIRD contexts, limiting applicability to Nigeria where purely intrinsic volunteering may be a luxury. Social Capital Theory, meanwhile, risks painting an overly optimistic picture of community cohesion. Portes (2014) warns that strong bonding capital can entrench in-group favouritism and exclude outsiders, a dynamic at odds with the Red Cross principle of impartiality. Social capital is also empirically difficult to measure in low-income African settings, where survey-based trust indicators may lack contextual validity. Together, however, these frameworks offer a complementary and inclusive lens for understanding Red Cross volunteerism in Nigeria.

### 4. Gap in Literature

While there is increasing research on Red Cross volunteerism and humanitarian response, there are still many gaps in the literature. Limited attention has been paid to the overall effectiveness of Red Cross volunteers in Oyo

State, while the majority of the existing studies have been concerned with aspects of disaster response outcomes, motivation of the volunteers, and organisational challenges. Adeola and Olawale (2020), Balogun and Obaseki (2020), and Mohammed et al. (2023) focused on individual factors and elements such as training, coordination, and digital technology but did not combine them to provide a holistic evaluation of the effectiveness of volunteers. In addition, a number of studies simply used volunteers' self-reports, without integrating volunteers' perceptions with those of the beneficiaries and organisational stakeholders. Also, despite the rising humanitarian crisis in Oyo State, there are few empirical studies specifically carried out in the state. There is also a limited amount of literature on the combined impact of the volunteer challenges on the effectiveness of humanitarian action in practice. Furthermore, there has been a lack of studies that have explored the link between volunteer roles, organizational support, and humanitarian outcomes in one analytical framework. This results in a contextual and methodological gap in the literature. The aim of this study, therefore, is to fill these gaps by thoroughly analysing the roles, effectiveness, and problems of Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response in Oyo State, Nigeria, for empirical evidence that can be used to inform policy and improve volunteer management.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Introduction

Research methodology represents the systematic strategy for drawing out logical conclusions and inferences, providing a clear framework for what a researcher sets out to investigate and prove. This chapter presents the methodology adopted in examining the roles of Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response in Oyo State, Nigeria.

It is organised under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Study Population
- Sampling Technique and Sample Size
- Instrument for Data Collection
- Validity of Research Instrument
- Reliability of Research Instrument
- Method of Data Analysis
- Ethical Considerations

### 2. Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. A cross-sectional design was considered most appropriate because it enables the collection of data from a defined population at a single point in time, facilitating the systematic description of phenomena as they exist in their natural settings (Babbie, 2020). The descriptive survey approach is particularly suited to this study because it allows the researcher to retrieve first-hand information directly from respondents, in this case, Red Cross volunteers, branch officials, community beneficiaries, and partner agency staff, regarding their knowledge, opinions, experiences, and observations



pertaining to Red Cross humanitarian activities in Oyo State.

The study employed a predominantly quantitative approach, supplemented by open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide qualitative insights where closed-ended response options may not fully capture the complexity of their experiences. This mixed-method orientation within a survey framework enhances the depth and richness of the data collected, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the roles, effectiveness, and challenges of Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### 3. Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises all active Red Cross volunteers, branch officials, and coordinators of the Oyo State Branch of the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS), as well as community beneficiaries who have received humanitarian assistance from the Red Cross in Oyo State, and staff of partner agencies specifically the Oyo State Emergency Management Agency (OYSEMA) who have collaborated with the Red Cross in humanitarian response activities. The Oyo State Branch of the NRCS operates across the thirty-three local government areas of Oyo State, with its operational headquarters in Ibadan, the state capital.

According to the NRCS Oyo Branch records (2022), the branch has an active volunteer base of approximately 350 registered volunteers engaged in various humanitarian programmes, including disaster response, community health promotion, first aid services, and blood donation campaigns. Branch officials and coordinators number approximately 30 persons, while the number of community beneficiaries and partner agency staff who have interacted with the branch's humanitarian activities is considerably larger. The accessible population for this study — defined as individuals who can be practically reached by the researcher is estimated at approximately 900 persons across all respondent categories.

### 4. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Given the heterogeneous nature of the study population comprising volunteers, branch officials, community beneficiaries, and partner agency staff, a combination of non-probability sampling techniques was adopted. Specifically, purposive sampling and accidental (convenience) sampling were employed to select respondents from each category.

Purposive sampling was used to select Red Cross volunteers, branch officials, and OYSEMA partner staff, as these respondents were chosen specifically on the basis of their direct involvement in Red Cross humanitarian activities and their capacity to provide relevant and informed responses to the research questions (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Accidental sampling was applied in selecting community beneficiaries encountered at Red Cross activity venues, relief distribution points, and community health outreach locations. A total of 230

respondents were selected for the study. Table 3.1 below presents the distribution of the sample across respondent categories.

Table 1: Sample Distribution by Category of Respondents

| Category of Respondents         | Population | Sample Size | Sampling Method |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Red Cross Volunteers (Active)   | ~350       | 150         | Purposive       |
| Branch Officials / Coordinators | ~30        | 20          | Purposive       |
| Community Beneficiaries         | ~500+      | 50          | Accidental      |
| OYSEMA / Partner Agency Staff   | ~20        | 10          | Purposive       |
| Total                           | ~900       | 230         |                 |

### 5. Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection in this study was a structured self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and aligned directly with the four objectives of the study. The administration of structured questionnaires is considered appropriate for this study because it provides a cost-effective and efficient means of collecting standardised information from a relatively large and geographically dispersed respondent population within a manageable timeframe (Asika, 2002). The questionnaire contains a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, enabling both quantitative measurement and qualitative elaboration where appropriate.

The questionnaire is organised into five sections, as described in Table 3.2 below:

Table 2: Questionnaire Structure and Linkage to Research Objectives

| Section   | Content                                                | No. of Items | Research Objective Addressed |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Section A | Socio-demographic profile of respondents               | 6            | Background                   |
| Section B | Work carried out by the Red Cross in Oyo State         | 7            | Objective i                  |
| Section C | Roles of Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response | 8            | Objective ii                 |
| Section D | Effectiveness of Red Cross volunteers                  | 7            | Objective iii                |
| Section E | Challenges faced by Red Cross volunteers               | 7            | Objective iv                 |

Section A captures the socio-demographic profile of respondents, including age, sex, level of education, years of experience as a Red Cross volunteer, local government area of operation, and category of respondent. Section B addresses the first research objective by examining the range of activities and programmes carried out by the Red Cross in Oyo State. Section C addresses the second objective by exploring the specific roles performed by Red Cross volunteers in humanitarian response activities. Section D assesses the third objective by examining respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of Red Cross volunteers across different humanitarian domains. Section E addresses the fourth objective by investigating the challenges that Red Cross volunteers encounter in the performance of their duties.

Closed-ended items utilised a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) as well as dichotomous and multiple-choice response formats, depending on the nature of the question. Open-ended items invited respondents to provide additional comments, descriptions, or explanations beyond the provided response options. A total of 230 copies of the questionnaire were administered, corresponding to the sample size determined in Section 3.3.

## 6. Validity of Research Instrument

Research validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Both face validity and content validity were established for the questionnaire used in this study. Face validity was ensured through careful construction of questionnaire items in clear, simple, and unambiguous language accessible to all categories of respondents, including volunteers with varying levels of educational attainment.

Content validity was established through expert review. A draft copy of the questionnaire was submitted to the project supervisor and two faculty members with expertise in social research methodology and humanitarian studies for critical review and feedback. Their comments and suggestions regarding item clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives were incorporated in a revised version of the instrument prior to administration. The revised questionnaire was also pre-tested with ten Red Cross volunteers from the Ibadan North local government area, respondents not included in the main study sample, to identify and correct any ambiguous or poorly worded items before full deployment.

## 7. Reliability of Research Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a research instrument in measuring the variables of interest across repeated applications (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with twenty Red Cross volunteers drawn from a branch outside the main study area. The completed pilot questionnaires were subjected to internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, computed via

the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26.0).

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient obtained for the instrument was 0.814, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 recommended for social science research instruments (Nunnally, 1978; Pallant, 2020). This coefficient indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items, confirming that the instrument is reliable for data collection in this study. The reliability coefficients for individual sections of the questionnaire ranged from 0.78 to 0.83, all exceeding the acceptable threshold.

## 8. Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected through the structured questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26.0). Descriptive statistical methods including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed to summarise and describe the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and their responses to research questions across all sections of the questionnaire. Tables and charts were used to present findings in a clear and accessible format.

For analytical purposes, mean scores derived from Likert-scale items were interpreted using a criterion mean of 2.50: items with a mean score of 2.50 and above were considered as agreed upon or affirmed by respondents, while items with a mean score below 2.50 were considered as disagreed or negated. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's chi-square test, were applied where appropriate to examine associations between respondent characteristics and key outcome variables, such as perceived volunteer effectiveness and reported challenges. Qualitative responses from open-ended items were thematically coded and integrated with quantitative findings to provide richer contextual interpretation of results (Soyombo, 1996).

## 9. Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in strict adherence to established ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, written approval was obtained from the Oyo State Branch of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, granting permission for the conduct of the study among its volunteers, officials, and beneficiaries. Respondents were fully informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to questionnaire administration. To safeguard respondent confidentiality, no personally identifying information such as names, addresses, or contact details was collected as part of the questionnaire. All data collected were treated with utmost confidentiality and used exclusively for academic research purposes, consistent with the assurance given to respondents. The principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice, as outlined in the Belmont Report (1979) and the Nigerian Code of Health

Research Ethics, guided the conduct of the entire research process.

## IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 1. Preamble

This chapter presents and describes data derived from the field survey conducted among Red Cross volunteers and beneficiaries in Oyo State, Nigeria. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, frequency distribution, and mean scores were used to depict respondents' answers. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) were used to test the research hypotheses. Two hundred and twenty-five (225) copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which 218 copies were returned. Two hundred and twelve (212) respondents completed the questionnaire, which represents a response rate of 94.2%. Six (6) copies containing serious omissions were discarded.

### 2. Presentation of Data on Demographic Information

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Variable                   | Category           | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Sex                        | Male               | 114       | 53.8%          |
|                            | Female             | 98        | 46.2%          |
|                            | Total              | 212       | 100%           |
| Age                        | 18 – 25 years      | 119       | 56.1%          |
|                            | 26 – 35 years      | 50        | 23.6%          |
|                            | 36 – 45 years      | 36        | 17.0%          |
|                            | 46 years and above | 7         | 3.3%           |
|                            | Total              | 212       | 100%           |
| Highest Level of Education | Secondary          | 47        | 22.2%          |
|                            | OND/NCE            | 58        | 27.4%          |
|                            | HND/B.Sc.          | 83        | 39.1%          |
|                            | Postgraduate       | 24        | 11.3%          |

|                    |                    |     |       |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----|-------|
|                    | Total              | 212 | 100%  |
| Religion           | Christianity       | 111 | 52.4% |
|                    | Islam              | 99  | 46.7% |
|                    | Others             | 2   | 0.9%  |
|                    | Total              | 212 | 100%  |
| Marital Status     | Single             | 117 | 55.2% |
|                    | Married            | 66  | 31.1% |
|                    | Divorced/Separated | 4   | 1.9%  |
|                    | Widowed            | 25  | 11.8% |
|                    | Total              | 212 | 100%  |
| Years as Volunteer | Less than 1 year   | 38  | 17.9% |
|                    | 1 – 3 years        | 74  | 34.9% |
|                    | 4 – 6 years        | 56  | 26.4% |
|                    | 7 – 10 years       | 31  | 14.6% |
|                    | More than 10 years | 13  | 6.1%  |
|                    | Total              | 212 | 100%  |
| Red Cross Unit     | First Aid          | 54  | 25.5% |
|                    | Disaster Response  | 48  | 22.6% |
|                    | Health Services    | 41  | 19.3% |
|                    | Community Outreach | 38  | 17.9% |
|                    | Youth Wing         | 31  | 14.6% |
|                    | Total              | 212 | 100%  |

Table 4.1 displays the socio-demographic attributes of the 212 respondents that took part in the study. Concerning sex distribution, males constituted 53.8% while females accounted for 46.2%. This shows an almost equal

distribution of respondents as Red Cross volunteers across gender lines, with male respondents being marginally higher. As for age distribution, the age bracket of 18 – 25 years had the majority with 56.1%, while other age groups follow a decreasing pattern. This shows that youths made up the larger percentage of respondents and could be said to volunteer most in the Red Cross Society locally and internationally (IFRC, 2022).

For the highest level of education attained, 39.1% of respondents had HND/ B.Sc degrees, closely followed by those with OND/NCE credentials at 27.4%. While 22.2% of respondents have a certificate from secondary school, finally, 11.3% had degrees from post-graduate school. What can be inferred from this educational distribution of respondents is that Red Cross volunteers have a relatively high educational level and, as such, have the mental acuity needed to render humanitarian service. For religion, Christians made up 52.4% of respondents while Muslims constituted 46.7%. These findings mirror the religious distribution in Oyo State. Concerning marital status, singles had the majority with 55.2% of respondents, which syncs with the age distribution of respondents as they are mainly youth. Regarding years of volunteering experience, those who volunteered for 1- 3 years were closest to the majority with 34.9%, while those within the 4-6years range had 26.4%. Furthermore, there were 17.9% who had volunteered for less than a year. Finally, 6.1% of respondents had over ten years' volunteering experience. These findings depict that retaining volunteers for long years is difficult. Considering volunteers' unit membership, First Aid made up the largest proportion of respondents, which was 25.5%. Close behind was Disaster Response with 22.6%.

### 3. Presentation of Data According to Research Questions

#### Section B: Work Carried Out by the Red Cross in Oyo State

Table 4: Awareness of Red Cross Humanitarian Activities in Oyo State (Q8)

| S/N   | Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Yes      | 198       | 93.4%          |
| 2     | No       | 14        | 6.6%           |
| Total | Total    | 212       | 100%           |

Table 4.2 reveals that 93.4% of respondents confirmed awareness of the humanitarian activities of the Red Cross towards the Oyo State populace, whereas 6.6% of respondents said they were unaware. This certainly depicts the level of visibility of the humanitarian services delivered by the Red Cross in Oyo State since it captures the attention of volunteers and people in general. Furthermore, the all-inclusive awareness confirmed the appropriateness of the

sample size used, as it was capable of speaking volumes about the research topic, which is humanitarian service delivery of the Red Cross Society.

Table 5: Frequency of Red Cross Humanitarian Activities in the Community (Q10)

| S/N   | Response        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Very frequently | 68        | 32.1%          |
| 2     | Frequently      | 87        | 41.0%          |
| 3     | Occasionally    | 39        | 18.4%          |
| 4     | Rarely          | 12        | 5.7%           |
| 5     | Never           | 6         | 2.8%           |
| Total | Total           | 212       | 100%           |

As shown in Table 4.3, 41.0% of respondents reported that the Red Cross carries out humanitarian activities frequently in their communities, while 32.1% indicated very frequent activities. Only 5.7% reported rare engagement, and 2.8% observed no activity at all. Cumulatively, 73.1% of respondents reported frequent or very frequent Red Cross activities, signifying a consistent operational presence. This finding underscores the organization's sustained commitment to community engagement in Oyo State.

Table 6: Extent to Which Red Cross Effectively Reaches Vulnerable Populations (Q11)

| S/N   | Response          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Strongly Agree    | 89        | 42.0%          |
| 2     | Agree             | 77        | 36.3%          |
| 3     | Undecided         | 21        | 9.9%           |
| 4     | Disagree          | 16        | 7.5%           |
| 5     | Strongly Disagree | 9         | 4.2%           |
| Total | Total             | 212       | 100%           |

Table 4.4 below shows that 42.0% of respondents strongly agreed while 36.3% agreed that the Red Cross reaches the vulnerable in Oyo State. This brings the total percentage of respondents that had positive feelings about the NGO reaching those in need to 78.3%. This also means that



11.7% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This response rate shows that the NGO is able to effectively reach the vulnerable that they target the majority of the time.

Table 7: Overall Rating of Red Cross Humanitarian Work in Oyo State (Q13)

| S/N   | Response  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Excellent | 74        | 34.9%          |
| 2     | Good      | 91        | 42.9%          |
| 3     | Fair      | 32        | 15.1%          |
| 4     | Poor      | 10        | 4.7%           |
| 5     | Very Poor | 5         | 2.4%           |
| Total | Total     | 212       | 100%           |

Table 4.5 presents the rating of respondents on the Red Cross humanitarian works in general. It reveals that 42.9% of respondents rated Red Cross humanitarian works in Oyo State as Good, while 34.9% of respondents rated it as Excellent, giving a 77.8% positive rating. Only 7.1% rated it as poor and very poor. This implies that humanitarian works executed by the Red Cross are generally rated good by respondents but poor by some respondents.

### Section C: Roles of Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State

Table 8: Participation of Red Cross Volunteers in Disaster Preparedness and Response (Q15)

| S/N   | Response       | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Yes, always    | 118       | 55.7%          |
| 2     | Yes, sometimes | 64        | 30.2%          |
| 3     | Rarely         | 22        | 10.4%          |
| 4     | No, never      | 8         | 3.8%           |
| Total | Total          | 212       | 100%           |

From Table 4.6 above, it can be observed that 55.7% of the Red Cross volunteers are always involved in preparedness and response to disaster, while 30.2% of them are sometimes involved. Adding the percentages of volunteers that are always involved and those that are sometimes involved in preparedness and response to disaster gives 85.9%. This shows that the majority of the volunteers are

involved in preparedness and response to disaster, which is one of the cardinal responsibilities of the Red Cross. This affirms preparedness and response to disaster as one of the major areas of operation that involve Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State, as it aligns with the International Humanitarian Law and Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Table 9: Involvement of Red Cross Volunteers in Providing First Aid During Emergencies (Q16)

| S/N   | Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Yes      | 197       | 92.9%          |
| 2     | No       | 15        | 7.1%           |
| Total | Total    | 212       | 100%           |

According to Table 4.7, 92.9% of the participants agreed that Red Cross volunteers participate in providing first aid assistance during emergencies. It is safe to say that all Red Cross volunteers participate in providing first aid because responding to emergencies is what Red Cross volunteers do, and they are all trained in first aid. The 7.9% who may have answered no may be volunteers who are assigned to units that do not deploy to provide first aid.

Table 10: Extent of Volunteer Contribution to Psychosocial Support for Disaster-Affected Persons (Q20)

| S/N   | Response               | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | To a very large extent | 72        | 34.0%          |
| 2     | To a large extent      | 88        | 41.5%          |
| 3     | To a small extent      | 37        | 17.5%          |
| 4     | Not at all             | 15        | 7.1%           |
| Total | Total                  | 212       | 100%           |

Table 4.8 revealed that 34.0% of the participants contributed psychosocial support to a very large extent, while 41.5% contributed to a large extent. Thus, the total number of participants who contributed psychosocial support to a large extent was 75.5%. From this finding, it can be said that psychosocial support provision is gradually becoming a vital role of Red Cross volunteer service in Oyo State as it takes care of the mental or emotional aspects of persons affected by disasters aside from material support.

Table 11: Collaboration of Red Cross Volunteers with Government Agencies or NGOs (Q19)

| S/N   | Response        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Yes, frequently | 86        | 40.6%          |
| 2     | Yes, sometimes  | 91        | 42.9%          |
| 3     | Rarely          | 26        | 12.3%          |
| 4     | No              | 9         | 4.2%           |
| Total | Total           | 212       | 100%           |

Table 4.9 depicts that forty percent (40.6%) of respondents stated that they often collaborate with government agencies or NGOs in their efforts, while forty-two percent (42.9%) of respondents stated they sometimes collaborate with government agencies or NGOs. The total that stated they collaborate are Eighty three percent (83.5%). This means that collaborative engagement is quite present amongst volunteers in Nigeria. Collaboration allows for agencies and NGOs alike to increase humanitarian efforts while limiting redundancies. Collaboration also allows resources to be pooled together when responding to crises.

#### Section D: Effectiveness of Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State

Table 12: Effectiveness of Red Cross Volunteers in Responding to Humanitarian Emergencies (Q22)

| S/N   | Response             | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Highly Effective     | 98        | 46.2%          |
| 2     | Moderately Effective | 79        | 37.3%          |
| 3     | Slightly Effective   | 24        | 11.3%          |
| 4     | Not Effective at All | 11        | 5.2%           |
| Total | Total                | 212       | 100%           |

As shown in Table 4.10, 46.2% of respondents rated Red Cross volunteers as Highly Effective and 37.3% as Moderately Effective in responding to humanitarian emergencies. The combined positive effectiveness rating of 83.5% is a compelling indicator of the significant contribution volunteers make to emergency response. The minority that perceived volunteers as only slightly or not effective (16.5%) may be reflecting concerns around

resource limitations and response timeliness, which are discussed further in Section E.

Table 13: Adequacy of Training Received by Red Cross Volunteers (Q24)

| S/N   | Response          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Very Adequate     | 67        | 31.6%          |
| 2     | Adequate          | 91        | 42.9%          |
| 3     | Somewhat Adequate | 39        | 18.4%          |
| 4     | Inadequate        | 15        | 7.1%           |
| Total | Total             | 212       | 100%           |

Results indicated in Table 4.11 showed that 31.6% strongly agreed that their training was adequate and 42.9% agreed. In total, therefore, 74.5% felt that their training was adequate. 18.4% somewhat agreed and 7.1% disagreed that their training was adequate. Although training seems sufficient, Red Cross facilities could further help by implementing more frequent and specific training that can easily be adapted to whatever field members are working in.

Table 14: Timeliness of Red Cross Volunteers' Response During Emergencies (Q26)

| S/N   | Response          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Very timely       | 73        | 34.4%          |
| 2     | Timely            | 89        | 42.0%          |
| 3     | Somewhat timely   | 36        | 17.0%          |
| 4     | Not timely at all | 14        | 6.6%           |
| Total | Total             | 212       | 100%           |

According to Table 4.12, 42.0% of participants felt that Red Cross emergency response was timely, and 34.4% felt it was very timely. This provides a generally favourable rating (76.4%) when it comes to perceptions of responsiveness. However, the fact that there remain 23.6% of participants who either expressed a neutral or negative response towards Red Cross responsiveness suggests that logistical issues and limitations on resources sometimes affect the organisation's ability to mobilize volunteers quickly enough, echoing some of the sentiments brought up in Section E.

Table 15: Positive Impact of Red Cross Volunteers on Host Communities (Q27)

| S/N   | Response          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Strongly Agree    | 96        | 45.3%          |
| 2     | Agree             | 81        | 38.2%          |
| 3     | Undecided         | 20        | 9.4%           |
| 4     | Disagree          | 10        | 4.7%           |
| 5     | Strongly Disagree | 5         | 2.4%           |
| Total | Total             | 212       | 100%           |

Looking at Table 4.13, it shows that almost half (45.3%) of respondents strongly agree and just over a third (38.2%) agree that Red Cross volunteers have a positive impact on communities they work in, therefore demonstrating that there is a humanitarian benefit of volunteering. The 7.1% who disagreed may have been located in communities where Red Cross hasn't visited very much or where they haven't had any activities targeted towards them.

#### Section E: Challenges Faced by Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State

Table 16: Significance of Inadequate Funding as a Challenge to Red Cross Volunteers (Q31)

| S/N   | Response             | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Very significant     | 107       | 50.5%          |
| 2     | Significant          | 69        | 32.5%          |
| 3     | Somewhat significant | 27        | 12.7%          |
| 4     | Not significant      | 9         | 4.2%           |
| Total | Total                | 212       | 100%           |

From Table 4.14, about 50.5% of respondents regarded inadequate funds as a very significant source of challenge, and 32.5% of respondents said it was significant. From these results, it can be concluded that 83.0% of respondents who regard inadequate funds as a significant or very significant source of challenge show that funds still have the largest effect on the inability to run volunteer activities as desired in Oyo State. This agrees with literature that resource inadequacies are challenges facing humanitarian

volunteering services in sub-Saharan Africa (Agbola, 2019).

Table 17: Effect of Lack of Logistical Support on Volunteer Efficiency (Q33)

| S/N   | Response       | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Yes, always    | 49        | 23.1%          |
| 2     | Yes, sometimes | 98        | 46.2%          |
| 3     | Rarely         | 47        | 22.2%          |
| 4     | No             | 18        | 8.5%           |
| Total | Total          | 212       | 100%           |

Table 4.15 reveals that 42.9% of respondents believe the lack of vehicles, walkie-talkies, etc., greatly impacts volunteer productivity, while another 36.3% believe it impacts productivity somewhat. Vehicles and communication are currently a weak point in volunteer disaster response, as shown by the 79.2% who selected either 'great impact' or 'some impact.' Volunteers are typically deployed and function without the benefit of transportation or communications equipment.

Table 18: Exposure of Red Cross Volunteers to Personal Safety Risks (Q34)

| S/N   | Response   | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1     | Greatly    | 82        | 38.7%          |
| 2     | Moderately | 79        | 37.3%          |
| 3     | Slightly   | 36        | 17.0%          |
| 4     | Not at all | 15        | 7.1%           |
| Total | Total      | 212       | 100%           |

According to Table 4.16, 23.1% of volunteers face personal safety risks all the time when carrying out humanitarian service activities, and 46.2% encounter them sometimes. Overall, about 69.3% encounter personal safety risks either sometimes or all the time when engaging in humanitarian service work. This suggests that Red Cross volunteers frequently operate in hazardous conditions and face potential dangers, highlighting the importance of implementing adequate safety measures, insurance policies, and field safety training.

Table 19: Effect of Volunteer Burnout/Fatigue on Humanitarian Service Delivery (Q35)

| Variable                      | N   | Mean | Std Dev | r/F Cal | P-Value | Remarks     | Decision      |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Red Cross Activities (Q8–Q13) | 212 | 3.47 | 0.81    | .512*   | .000    | Significant | Null Rejected |
| Humanitarian Service Delivery | 212 | 3.29 | 0.74    |         |         |             |               |

Figure 4.17 indicates that 38.7% strongly agreed and 37.3% somewhat agreed that volunteer burnout/fatigue impacts service delivery. Therefore, 76.0% of respondents recognize burnout as having at least some impact on organisational performance. Volunteer fatigue can occur due to a multitude of reasons ranging from doing emotionally taxing humanitarian work, lack of welfare initiatives, and over-tasking volunteers, which can decrease service delivery.

#### 4. Test of Hypotheses

Statistical hypothesis testing refers to the subdivision of the sample space into two (2) mutually exclusive zones, namely: rejection and acceptance regions. This is done in order to minimize errors that could be made while drawing statistical inferences (Obasi, 2008). The general idea of hypothesis testing is to suggest, through a hypothesis, whether variables have a relationship. Statistical analysis of sampled data is then used to determine whether or not such relationships exist (Okeke, Olise, & Ezeh, 2010). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) together with multiple regression analysis was used in testing all four hypotheses that aid this study.

**Decision Rule:** If the computed r-value or F-statistic is greater than the critical value at degrees of freedom or p is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. However, if the computed value is less than or equal to the critical value and  $p > 0.05$ , then we retain the null hypothesis.

#### Hypothesis One

- $H_{01}$ : The activities carried out by the Red Cross have no significant effect on humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State.
- $H_{11}$ : The activities carried out by the Red Cross have a significant effect on humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State.

Table 20: Pearson Correlation — Red Cross Activities and Humanitarian Service Delivery

| Variable                   | N   | Mean | Std Dev | r/F Cal | P-Value | Remarks     | Decision      |
|----------------------------|-----|------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Volunteer Roles (Q14–Q21)  | 212 | 3.38 | 0.76    | .476*   | .000    | Significant | Null Rejected |
| Humanitarian Interventions | 212 | 3.21 | 0.68    |         |         |             |               |

Table 4.18 shows a positive correlation that is statistically significant between Red Cross activities and humanitarian services delivery in Oyo State ( $r=.512$ ,  $n=212$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). There is a moderate positive relationship between Red Cross activities and humanitarian services delivery in Oyo State, as when Red Cross activities increase, humanitarian services delivery increases as well; on the other hand, when Red Cross activities are poor, humanitarian services delivery is low too. There is enough evidence to conclude that Red Cross activities have a significant positive effect on humanitarian services delivery; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Humanitarian service delivery is dependent on Red Cross activities, and this result goes in line with IFRC (20 21), as their result shows that when there are organised humanitarian activities, it has a positive effect on service delivery.

#### Hypothesis Two

- $H_{02}$ : The roles performed by Red Cross volunteers have no significant contribution to humanitarian interventions in Oyo State.
- $H_{12}$ : The roles performed by Red Cross volunteers significantly contribute to humanitarian interventions in Oyo State.

Table 21: Pearson Correlation: Volunteer Roles and Humanitarian Interventions

| Variable                   | N   | Mean | Std Dev | r/F Cal | P-Value | Remarks     | Decision      |
|----------------------------|-----|------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Volunteer Roles (Q14–Q21)  | 212 | 3.38 | 0.76    | .476*   | .000    | Significant | Null Rejected |
| Humanitarian Interventions | 212 | 3.21 | 0.68    |         |         |             |               |

\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed).

There was a positive correlation between Red Cross volunteer role and humanitarian intervention among respondents in Oyo State as shown in Table 4.19 ( $r=.476$ ,  $n=212$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). The relationship is statistically significant. This correlation signifies that the multifarious roles of volunteers, ranging from first aid rendering to coordination of disaster relief efforts, health education, psychosocial support, and community mobilization/intelligence, significantly provide humanitarian intervention in Oyo State. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The study findings agree with the study done by Karunwi (20 20), where he concluded that diversity of volunteer roles determines levels of humanitarian intervention/dispatches in Nigeria.

#### Hypothesis Three

- $H_{03}$ : Red Cross volunteers are not significantly effective in carrying out humanitarian activities in Oyo State.
- $H_{13}$ : Red Cross volunteers are significantly effective in carrying out humanitarian activities in Oyo State.



Table 22: Pearson Correlation: Volunteer Effectiveness and Humanitarian Activities

| Variable                          | N   | Mean | Std. Dev | r/F Cal | P-Value | Remarks     | Decision      |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------|----------|---------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Volunteer Effectiveness (Q22–Q27) | 212 | 3.52 | 0.83     | .539*   | .000    | Significant | Null Rejected |
| Humanitarian Activities Outcome   | 212 | 3.41 | 0.79     |         |         |             |               |

\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed).

From Table 4.20, there is a positive significant relationship between volunteer effectiveness and quality humanitarian activities in Oyo State ( $r=.539$ ,  $n=212$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This was the highest correlation obtained among all the four hypotheses. Volunteer effectiveness, being core to the Red Cross mandate, explains why quality humanitarian programmes increase when volunteers are effective. Properly trained volunteers who are principled and respond timeously improve the value humanitarian activities have on people affected. Thus, we reject  $H_0$  and accept  $H_a$ . This research finding corroborates Twigg and Bhatt (1998), who said that volunteer effectiveness was the only predictor of humanitarian programme success.

#### Hypothesis Four

- $H_{04}$ : The challenges faced by Red Cross volunteers do not have a significant effect on their effectiveness in Oyo State.
- $H_{14}$ : The challenges faced by Red Cross volunteers significantly affect their effectiveness in Oyo State.

Table 23: Multiple Regression: Volunteer Challenges and Effectiveness

| Variable                     | N   | B    | SE   | Beta ( $\beta$ ) | t-value | P-Value | Decision      |
|------------------------------|-----|------|------|------------------|---------|---------|---------------|
| (Constant)                   | 212 | 1.04 | 0.09 | —                | 11.56   | .000    | —             |
| Inadequate Funding (Q31)     | 212 | .241 | .038 | .298             | 6.34    | .000    | Null Rejected |
| Logistical Constraints (Q33) | 212 | .189 | .041 | .237             | 4.61    | .000    | Null Rejected |
| Volunteer Burnout (Q35)      | 212 | .162 | .035 | .198             | 4.63    | .000    | Null Rejected |
| Safety Risks (Q34)           | 212 | .144 | .039 | .178             | 3.69    | .000    | Null Rejected |

Table 25: Regression Model Summary: Challenges and Volunteer Effectiveness

| Model | R       | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error | F-value |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|------------|---------|
| 1     | .621(a) | .385     | .376              | .31472     | 21.84*  |

a Predictors: (Constant), Inadequate Funding, Logistical Constraints, Volunteer Burnout, Safety Risks. b Dependent Variable: Volunteer Effectiveness. \*F significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Tables 4.21 and 4.22 show the results of the multiple regression analysis used to test the fourth hypothesis. The overall model was significant ( $F = 21.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with an  $R^2$  value of .385. This implies that the four challenges combined contribute to 38.5% unique variance in predicting volunteer effectiveness. Insufficient funding was the most predictive factor ( $\beta = .298$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by logistical challenges ( $\beta = .237$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), volunteer burnout ( $\beta = .198$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and safety concerns ( $\beta = .178$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Since all beta values were significant, it can be concluded that each challenge had a significant negative impact on volunteer effectiveness when combined with the other variables. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This supports Agbola (2019), who found that structural and operational challenges negatively predict humanitarian volunteer performance in West Africa.

#### 5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide important empirical evidence on the contribution of the Red Cross to humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State. The study examined the relationship between the activities of the Red Cross, the roles performed by Red Cross volunteers, volunteer effectiveness, and the challenges confronting volunteers in the discharge of their humanitarian responsibilities. Overall, the results indicate that the effectiveness of humanitarian service delivery is closely associated with the extent to which Red Cross activities are organised, volunteers are able to perform their assigned roles, and the operational challenges confronting volunteers are adequately addressed. The findings therefore reinforce the importance of community-based humanitarian organisations, particularly the Red Cross, in responding to emergencies, supporting vulnerable populations, promoting health awareness, and strengthening community resilience. The findings show that the activities of the Red Cross have a statistically significant relationship with humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State ( $r = .512$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient of .512 indicates a moderate-to-strong positive relationship between the activities of the Red Cross and humanitarian service delivery. This means that improvements in the scope, organisation and implementation of Red Cross activities are associated with corresponding improvements in the delivery of humanitarian services. The finding suggests that humanitarian service delivery does not occur independently of organisational activities; rather, it is substantially

influenced by the extent to which the Red Cross is able to plan, coordinate and implement relevant interventions within communities.

The result can be understood in relation to the broad humanitarian mandate of the Red Cross. Humanitarian organisations are expected to respond to the immediate needs of individuals and communities affected by disasters, emergencies, disease outbreaks, accidents, displacement and other forms of vulnerability. Such responsibilities require continuous activities at both the preparedness and response stages. Activities such as first aid training, emergency response, health education, disaster preparedness, relief distribution, blood donation campaigns, community mobilisation and psychosocial support collectively contribute to improving the ability of communities to cope with humanitarian emergencies. Consequently, the positive relationship found in this study indicates that where such activities are adequately implemented, beneficiaries are more likely to receive timely and relevant humanitarian assistance.

This finding is consistent with the position of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2021), which emphasises that organised humanitarian action contributes to sustainable services when interventions are based on assessed needs and are properly coordinated. The implication of this perspective for Oyo State is that the effectiveness of humanitarian service delivery depends not merely on the existence of the Red Cross as an organisation but on the practical activities undertaken by the organisation and its personnel. A humanitarian organisation may have an established structure and mandate, but its contribution to society becomes meaningful when that mandate is translated into visible activities that address the needs of vulnerable populations.

The high level of awareness of the Red Cross among respondents further strengthens this interpretation. The finding that 93.4% of respondents were aware of the Red Cross indicates that the organisation has a substantial level of visibility and recognition among members of the population covered by the study. Awareness is important because humanitarian organisations depend significantly on public recognition, trust and community participation. When community members are familiar with an organisation and understand its humanitarian mandate, they are more likely to seek assistance from it during emergencies, participate in its programmes, cooperate with volunteers and support humanitarian campaigns.

Furthermore, the finding that 77.8% of respondents gave moderate or high ratings to the work of the Red Cross suggests that the organisation's activities are relatively visible and have created some level of positive perception among respondents. This is particularly significant because humanitarian service delivery is partly dependent on the relationship between the humanitarian organisation and the communities it serves. Regular seminars, workshops, awareness campaigns and other public activities create

opportunities for the Red Cross to establish contact with communities and communicate information relating to emergency preparedness, health, safety and disaster response.

The high level of awareness may also indicate that the Red Cross has succeeded in establishing a degree of institutional legitimacy within the study area. Legitimacy in humanitarian action is not derived solely from legal or organisational recognition; it is also strengthened when communities recognise an organisation as a credible provider of assistance. The interaction between Red Cross personnel and community members through seminars, workshops, health campaigns and emergency activities can therefore strengthen confidence in the organisation. This may explain why respondents who had encountered Red Cross activities were more likely to recognise its contribution to humanitarian service delivery.

However, awareness alone does not automatically translate into effective humanitarian outcomes. Awareness must be supported by the availability of adequate resources, competent personnel, effective coordination mechanisms and timely responses. The finding of a significant relationship between Red Cross activities and humanitarian service delivery therefore suggests that the quality and consistency of the activities are more important than visibility alone. The organisation must continually convert public awareness into practical humanitarian assistance capable of responding to the changing needs of communities.

The finding also has implications for disaster preparedness in Oyo State. Humanitarian activities are often most effective when they are implemented before disasters occur rather than being limited to emergency response after an incident. Community sensitisation, first aid education, emergency drills and public health campaigns can reduce vulnerability and improve preparedness. Therefore, the positive relationship found between Red Cross activities and humanitarian service delivery suggests that sustained preventive and preparedness-oriented activities should remain an important component of Red Cross interventions in the state.

The findings further show that the roles of Red Cross volunteers have a statistically significant relationship with humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State ( $r = .476$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The result indicates that the extent to which volunteers perform their humanitarian roles is positively associated with the quality of humanitarian services delivered. Although the correlation is slightly lower than that observed for the overall activities of the Red Cross, it remains statistically significant and demonstrates the central role played by volunteers in translating organisational objectives into practical interventions.

The importance of volunteers can be attributed to the community-oriented nature of humanitarian work. Volunteers often constitute the human resources that enable humanitarian organisations to reach communities,

particularly during emergencies when there may be limitations in the number of professional personnel available. Because volunteers are frequently drawn from local communities or have extensive community networks, they can provide humanitarian organisations with knowledge of local conditions, community structures and vulnerable groups. This proximity can facilitate rapid mobilisation and improve the ability of the organisation to identify and respond to emerging needs.

The study identified several important roles performed by Red Cross volunteers, including the provision of first aid services, coordination of relief materials during disasters, mobilisation for blood donation, provision of health education, acting as a link between government and community members, and provision of psychosocial support. These roles demonstrate that volunteer activities extend beyond emergency response. Volunteers contribute to prevention, preparedness, community education, coordination and post-disaster recovery.

The finding that 92.9% of respondents indicated that volunteers are involved in the provision of first aid services is particularly important. First aid is often the first form of assistance available to victims immediately following accidents, injuries or other emergencies. The ability of trained volunteers to provide immediate assistance before professional medical services become available can help reduce the severity of injuries and potentially save lives. In this sense, volunteers serve as an important bridge between the occurrence of an emergency and the arrival of more specialised emergency services.

The role of volunteers in relief coordination is equally important. During disasters, affected communities may require food, clothing, medical supplies, shelter materials and other forms of assistance. Without proper coordination, relief materials may not reach the people who need them most, and duplication or wastage of resources may occur. Volunteers can assist in identifying affected households, organising distribution points, communicating with beneficiaries and supporting the monitoring of relief activities. Their local knowledge can also help humanitarian organisations determine where assistance is most urgently required.

Volunteer involvement in blood donation campaigns also demonstrates the preventive and health-related dimension of Red Cross activities. Blood is essential for emergency medical treatment, surgery, childbirth complications and accident-related injuries. By mobilising community members to donate blood, volunteers contribute indirectly to strengthening the availability of lifesaving medical resources. This role shows that humanitarian service delivery extends beyond direct disaster intervention to include activities that support the wider health system.

The finding that 75.5% of respondents agreed that volunteers contribute significantly to psychosocial support is also significant. Emergencies and disasters can result in fear, grief, anxiety, displacement and emotional distress

among affected individuals. Although material assistance is essential, psychological and social support can be equally important to recovery. Volunteers who provide emotional support, facilitate social connections, and help affected persons access appropriate services can contribute to community recovery and resilience.

The findings agree with Karunwi (2020), who observed that the roles of humanitarian volunteers continue to evolve in response to changing community needs. This supports the argument that volunteerism within humanitarian organisations should not be understood as a static function. As the nature of disasters and humanitarian crises changes, volunteers must acquire new skills and adapt to emerging forms of vulnerability. For example, contemporary humanitarian response increasingly requires knowledge of public health, psychosocial support, community engagement, risk communication and disaster preparedness in addition to traditional first aid and relief activities.

The findings therefore suggest that strengthening humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State requires continuous investment in volunteer development. Volunteers need regular training, refresher courses, appropriate equipment, clear role definitions and effective supervision. Where volunteers are adequately prepared, they are more likely to respond confidently and efficiently during emergencies. Conversely, poorly trained or inadequately supported volunteers may struggle to provide the level of assistance expected by affected communities.

The finding that volunteer effectiveness has the strongest correlation with humanitarian service delivery ( $r = .539$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) is one of the most important outcomes of the study. Compared with the correlation coefficients for Red Cross activities ( $r = .512$ ) and volunteer roles ( $r = .476$ ), volunteer effectiveness demonstrates the strongest relationship with humanitarian service delivery. This suggests that although the existence of humanitarian activities and the performance of volunteer roles are important, the effectiveness with which those roles are performed may be even more critical to achieving positive humanitarian outcomes.

The result indicates that humanitarian service delivery depends substantially on the capacity of volunteers to translate responsibilities into effective action. Merely assigning volunteers to first aid, relief distribution, health education or psychosocial support does not guarantee effective service delivery. What matters is whether volunteers possess the skills, knowledge, commitment, responsiveness and resources required to perform those responsibilities successfully.

The finding that 83.5% of respondents rated volunteers as either moderately effective or highly effective provides further support for the positive relationship. This relatively high assessment suggests that a substantial proportion of respondents perceive Red Cross volunteers as capable of carrying out their responsibilities. The result may be associated with the training and practical experience

acquired by volunteers through repeated participation in humanitarian activities.

Effective volunteers are expected to understand their responsibilities, respond promptly to emergencies, communicate appropriately with beneficiaries, and work effectively with other actors. In emergency situations, delays can have serious consequences. A trained volunteer who is able to respond quickly, provide basic assistance and communicate information to appropriate authorities can contribute significantly to reducing the impact of an emergency.

Volunteer effectiveness may also improve coordination among humanitarian actors. Humanitarian response frequently involves government agencies, community leaders, health workers, security agencies, non-governmental organisations and community-based groups. Volunteers who understand organisational procedures and communication channels can help ensure that information moves efficiently between these actors. This coordination can reduce delays, prevent duplication and improve the targeting of humanitarian assistance.

The result is consistent with the broader argument in Twigg and Bhatt (1998) that volunteer effectiveness is an important determinant of the success of humanitarian and disaster-related programmes. Although humanitarian organisations may possess adequate policies and structures, implementation ultimately depends on the individuals responsible for delivering services. Volunteers therefore constitute a critical operational resource within the Red Cross system.

The strongest correlation recorded for volunteer effectiveness further implies that strengthening the capacity of volunteers may produce substantial improvements in humanitarian service delivery. Training should therefore not be limited to initial recruitment. Continuous professional development, emergency simulations, refresher courses and field-based learning can help volunteers maintain and improve their competence. In addition, volunteers require access to appropriate equipment, protective materials, communication tools and transportation facilities to enable them to apply their knowledge effectively.

Another important dimension of volunteer effectiveness is motivation. Volunteers may not receive conventional financial remuneration for their services, but they still require recognition, encouragement and institutional support. Recognition of outstanding performance, opportunities for development, inclusion in decision-making and supportive supervision can contribute to volunteer commitment. Where volunteers feel valued by the organisation, they may be more willing to remain active and respond when their services are needed.

The finding therefore demonstrates that humanitarian service delivery should be viewed as both an organisational and human-resource issue. The Red Cross may have an

established humanitarian mandate, but the realisation of that mandate depends heavily on the competence and commitment of the volunteers who implement its activities. Improving volunteer effectiveness is consequently likely to improve the quality, speed and reliability of humanitarian services in Oyo State.

The final major finding indicates that challenges faced by volunteers have a significant effect on volunteer effectiveness in Oyo State ( $F = 21.84$ ,  $R^2 = .385$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The result demonstrates that the regression model is statistically significant and that the identified challenges collectively explain approximately 38.5% of the variation in volunteer effectiveness. This is a substantial proportion and indicates that operational challenges represent an important factor influencing the capacity of volunteers to perform their humanitarian responsibilities.

The finding is particularly important because it demonstrates that volunteer effectiveness cannot be considered solely in terms of individual commitment or competence. Even highly motivated and well-trained volunteers may be unable to perform effectively when they operate under severe resource and environmental constraints. The challenges identified by respondents—insufficient funding, inadequate logistics, volunteer burnout and safety concerns—represent interconnected barriers that can affect the speed, quality and sustainability of humanitarian interventions.

Insufficient funding was identified as the most prominent challenge, with 83.0% of respondents identifying it as a major problem. Funding is fundamental to humanitarian operations because almost every aspect of emergency response requires financial resources. Training programmes, transportation, communication, first aid materials, relief supplies, protective equipment and administrative activities all require funding. When financial resources are inadequate, the organisation may be unable to provide volunteers with the tools required to perform their duties.

The importance of funding agrees with Agbola (2019) and Omoleke (2017), who identified inadequate financial resources as a major constraint to humanitarian volunteerism in Nigeria. This finding suggests that the problem is not unique to Oyo State but reflects a broader challenge facing humanitarian organisations operating within resource-constrained environments. Reliance on limited funding sources can make humanitarian programmes vulnerable to interruptions, especially when emergencies occur simultaneously or continue for extended periods.

Insufficient funding can also affect volunteer motivation indirectly. Volunteers may be willing to provide their services without expecting conventional salaries, but they may still incur transportation, communication, feeding and other personal costs while responding to emergencies. If these costs are consistently borne by volunteers, participation may decline over time. Therefore, supporting



volunteers financially does not necessarily mean converting volunteer positions into salaried employment; rather, it may involve ensuring that reasonable operational expenses associated with humanitarian duties are covered.

Logistical challenges constitute another important barrier to volunteer effectiveness. Humanitarian response often requires volunteers to move quickly from one location to another, transport relief materials, communicate with affected communities and access difficult or remote areas. Inadequate transportation, communication equipment, emergency supplies, and other logistical resources can therefore delay response. A volunteer may possess the necessary knowledge and motivation but remain unable to provide timely assistance if transportation or equipment is unavailable.

This challenge is particularly relevant during emergencies because the value of humanitarian assistance is partly determined by how quickly it reaches affected people. Delayed response can increase vulnerability and worsen the consequences of disasters. Improving logistical support should therefore be treated as a strategic priority for humanitarian organisations operating in Oyo State.

Volunteer burnout is another challenge identified by respondents. Humanitarian work can be physically and emotionally demanding, particularly when volunteers repeatedly respond to emergencies involving injuries, deaths, displacement and suffering. Prolonged exposure to such situations without adequate rest and psychological support can result in fatigue, reduced motivation and diminished performance. Burnout can therefore affect both individual volunteers and the broader capacity of the organisation.

The issue of burnout also demonstrates why volunteer management should include welfare and psychosocial support. Volunteers themselves may be exposed to traumatic experiences while helping others. If their emotional and physical needs are ignored, their ability to continue providing quality humanitarian assistance may decline. Appropriate work-rest arrangements, peer support, recognition, counselling where necessary, and supportive supervision can help reduce the negative effects of prolonged humanitarian engagement.

Safety concerns constitute another important challenge. Volunteers may have to operate in environments affected by disasters, accidents, disease outbreaks, social unrest or other hazards. If volunteers do not have adequate protective equipment, security information or safety procedures, their own wellbeing may be placed at risk. Fear for personal safety can also discourage volunteers from responding to emergencies or cause delays in service delivery.

Volunteer safety is therefore directly connected to humanitarian effectiveness. Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that volunteers are adequately prepared for the risks associated with their duties. This includes appropriate training, protective equipment,

emergency communication procedures, risk assessment and clear protocols for withdrawing from unsafe environments. Volunteers should not be expected to place their lives at unnecessary risk in the process of assisting others.

The regression result of  $F = 21.84$ ,  $R^2 = .385$ , and  $p < 0.05$  therefore provides strong evidence that these challenges collectively influence volunteer effectiveness. The  $R^2$  value suggests that 38.5% of the observed variation in volunteer effectiveness can be explained by the challenges included in the model, while the remaining variation may be attributable to other factors not examined in the study. Such factors could include training quality, leadership, volunteer motivation, organisational culture, supervision, personal commitment and previous field experience. Nevertheless, the proportion explained by the identified challenges demonstrates that operational constraints should not be overlooked when evaluating humanitarian service delivery. Taken together, the findings demonstrate that humanitarian service delivery in Oyo State is influenced by an interconnected chain of organisational activities, volunteer roles, volunteer effectiveness and operational conditions. The significant relationship between Red Cross activities and humanitarian service delivery indicates that the organisation's programmes and interventions provide an important foundation for humanitarian assistance. The significant relationship between volunteer roles and humanitarian service delivery demonstrates that volunteers are central to translating those programmes into practical community-level interventions. The stronger relationship between volunteer effectiveness and humanitarian service delivery further indicates that the quality of implementation is critical to achieving desirable humanitarian outcomes.

At the same time, the regression findings demonstrate that volunteer effectiveness can be weakened by inadequate resources, logistics, burnout, and safety concerns. This creates an important policy implication: increasing the number of humanitarian activities alone may not necessarily produce better service delivery if volunteers are not adequately supported to implement those activities. Investment in volunteer capacity, welfare and operational resources is therefore essential.

The findings also highlight the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to humanitarian management in Oyo State. Such an approach should combine community awareness, volunteer recruitment and training, adequate funding, logistical support, volunteer welfare and effective coordination with government and other humanitarian actors. Since volunteers constitute an important link between the Red Cross and local communities, strengthening their capacity can improve not only emergency response but also disaster preparedness, health promotion and community resilience.

The findings have practical implications for the Red Cross in Oyo State. First, the organisation should continue to expand community-based awareness programmes because the high level of public awareness demonstrates the value of such activities. Second, volunteer training should be

continuous and should reflect changing humanitarian needs. Third, adequate logistical resources should be provided to ensure that trained volunteers can apply their skills promptly. Fourth, volunteer welfare mechanisms should be strengthened to reduce burnout and maintain long-term commitment. Finally, volunteer safety should remain a priority through appropriate protective measures, risk assessment and emergency response protocols.

## V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the research, a conclusion based on the study, and recommendations from the research findings/evidence. To begin with, the study focused on assessing the roles played by volunteers of the Red Cross Society as it relates to humanitarian issues across Oyo State. Through a questionnaire administered to 212 respondents that cut across members of the Red Cross Volunteers Corps in Oyo State, four major variables were assessed. They are as follows: What does the Red Cross do, What Roles do the volunteers play, are they effective, and what Challenges do they face while carrying out their humanitarian responsibilities? Findings from the survey analysis done in Chapter Four are presented in this chapter, showing relationships with other research done on humanitarian volunteerism.

### Summary of the Study

The study was prompted by the evolving understanding of volunteer humanitarian groups as essential elements in the humanitarian framework. However, humanitarian crises persist in countries facing emergencies and social vulnerabilities, especially developing nations where states are limited in their capacity to respond. While the significance of the Red Cross organization in Nigeria's humanitarian response was undisputed, there is limited empirical evidence that highlights the roles played by Red Cross volunteers, their effectiveness, and the challenges they face at the sub-national level, which inspired this study focusing on Oyo State.

The study had four objectives: (i) To determine the work done by Red Cross Oyo State. (ii) To find out the roles of Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State. (iii) To ascertain the effectiveness of Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State. (iv) To determine the challenges of Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State. With these objectives came four null hypotheses that were stated and tested.

A descriptive survey design was utilized for this study. Questionnaires with closed-ended and scaled questions were used for data collection. The questionnaire had five sections, which were based on the study objectives. Two hundred and twelve respondents made up the study sample, which was drawn from the population of Red Cross Volunteers serving in Oyo State using purposive and stratified sampling methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores were used

to analyze the questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression were used as inferential statistics to test the study hypotheses. They were all analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25).

### Summary of Findings

Based on the results obtained from this study, the following can be concluded:

- The Red Cross performs several humanitarian services in Oyo State, including First Aid and emergency response, Flood and disaster preparedness and relief, Blood donation services/ campaigns, Health education and sensitisation, Food Relief/Bucket outside and Distribution of relief materials, and Psychosocial Support Services. Respondents were aware of Red Cross activities in their communities (93.4%) and also reported Red Cross activities as occurring frequently (73.1%). Respondents rated the performance of humanitarian activities by the Red Cross in the State as Good or Excellent (77.8%).
- The roles of Red Cross volunteers are varied and complementary. They include first aid provision, Disaster preparedness and response, health education and community sensitisation, Psychosocial support provision, blood donation mobilization, and collaborating with governments and NGOs in Humanitarian Service provision. The predominant roles played by volunteers include: rendering First Aid services in cases of emergency (92.9%) and responding to disasters (preparedness and actual) sometimes or always (85.9%). Collaborating with Governments and NGOs at least sometimes also features highly (83.5%).
- R.Y.S.T.N.V.Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State are effective in their delivery of humanitarian activities. Respondents believe volunteers are Highly Effective or Moderately Effective in responding to emergencies (83.5%) and also rated training as Adequate (74.5%). They were also Happy with the response time (76.4%) and indicated that volunteers Highly Follow humanitarian principles in the line of duty. Furthermore, most respondents believe that the activities of volunteers have a positive effect on host communities (83.5%).
- Related to the major challenges faced by Red Cross Volunteers in Oyo State that hinder their effectiveness, findings from this study have shown that inadequate funding is the most prevalent challenge Volunteers face (83.0% marked this as either a significant challenge or very significant challenge). Logistical constraints (fewer vehicles, logistics, and communication equipment) were marked by most respondents as challenges that affect volunteer efficiency at least moderately (79.2%). Safety concerns when operating in the field were admitted by most volunteers (69.3%), and volunteer burnout was confirmed to be affecting volunteer performance by most respondents (76.0%).

- Null Hypotheses One through Four were rejected at  $\alpha = .05$ . The Pearson correlation analysis showed a statistically significant positive relationship between Red Cross Activities and Humanitarian Service delivery ( $r = .512$ ), Red Cross Volunteer Roles and Humanitarian Services ( $r = .476$ ), and Volunteer Effectiveness and Humanitarian Service Activity ( $r = .539$ ). The Multiple Regression analysis showed that the challenges faced by volunteers (independent variables) have a significant negative effect on Volunteer Effectiveness (the dependent variable) ( $F = 21.84$ ,  $R^2 = .385$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## 2. Conclusion

In light of the evidence from the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Volunteerism via the Red Cross has been sustainable in Oyo State. The Red Cross Volunteers have been involved in carrying out humanitarian activities that add value to humanity. Volunteers are aware they belong to the Red Cross organization, while most respondents have a favourable perception about the humanitarian activities of the Red Cross society in Nigeria. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Red Cross humanitarian programme has legitimacy in Oyo State.
- Volunteerism has played a key role in humanitarian activities in Oyo State. Respondents volunteer as first aid attendants during disaster management operations, engage in disaster mitigation efforts and psychosocial support, health education/promotion, support government/aid agencies during humanitarian missions, and others. These responses show that volunteers add value to humanitarian activities, which suggests that volunteerism contributes to humanitarian activities in Oyo State.
- Volunteers are effective in providing humanitarian services. Because volunteers add value to humanitarian activities as established in conclusion 2, and since respondents agreed that volunteers provide effective services to victims of disasters and vulnerable individuals, it can be concluded that volunteers are effective in providing humanitarian services.
- Volunteerism via the Red Cross may not be sustainable if these challenges are not addressed. Volunteers are faced with problems of insufficient funds, lack of tools necessary for work, Volunteer burnout, and insecurity. Since the above problems significantly affect how well volunteers can give humanitarian services, volunteerism via the Red Cross Society may not be sustainable if these problems are not addressed.
- Acknowledging that volunteerism through the Red Cross Society is functioning at a satisfactory level in Oyo State, there is a need for all stakeholders, including government, development partners, and members of the Civil society, to help address some of

the challenges facing volunteers if they are to give their best in serving humanity.

## 3. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached from the study, I hereby make the following recommendations to the Nigerian Red Cross Society (Oyo State Branch), Federal and Oyo State Governments, Development Partners and other stakeholders who might find these suggestions useful.

Nigerian Red Cross Society (Oyo State Branch) should create and institutionalise a Volunteer Welfare and Retention Policy; this policy should capture Red Cross volunteer burnout solutions, provision of psychosocial support for volunteers, regular rest passes for volunteers, and assurance that volunteers won't be deployed or assigned more hours than they declared upon registration. Volunteer welfare is vital if they are to remain humanitarian effective.

Red Cross should seek to invest in quality, regular, specialised and field-adaptive training for every cadre of volunteers that work with them. Training for volunteers should include topics that border on disaster risk reduction (DRR), psychosocial first aid, community talks, inter-agency coordination, volunteerism, and the changing nature of humanitarian emergencies in Oyo State. The training syllabus should be updated yearly.

Create a volunteer safety policy that provides detailed knowledge on working safely in fields affected by disasters. This policy should cover risk assessment of every area volunteers are deployed to, official security briefings before every deployment, provision of personal safety equipment, and group insurance coverage for volunteers. Safety of volunteers should never be compromised.

The Nigerian Red Cross Society should engage more in community engagement and awareness creation so that citizens of Oyo State, especially people in the rural areas, know what the Red Cross does, our mandate, and the humanitarian principles that guide our actions. Building community literacy on who we are will help garner support, improve relationships, and make our humanitarian work effective.

The Nigerian Red Cross Society should recognise the effort of volunteers who help the society; this can be done by issuing certificates, awards and prizes at the end of every year where applicable. Skill acquisition or added courses can be sponsored for volunteers who have spent over 3 years with the society. Some volunteers can be assisted with job placement after they've given 5 years of selfless service to Red Cross. Recognition is key and has been proven to be one of the surest motivators that doesn't cost anything but will guarantee you reduce the volunteer attrition rate.

The Federal Government of Nigeria and the Oyo State Government should earmark more funds in their yearly budgets that have to do with humanitarian activities and disaster management. A sub-committee for the support of

civil society and volunteer-based humanitarian organisations like the Nigerian Red Cross Society should be created. Without an assured stream of funds, we can't always guarantee our preparedness, cannot scale up when the need arises, and may have to close the doors of our offices.

The Oyo State Government should partner with the Nigerian Red Cross Society by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU). Partnership with the government at the state level ensures a hitch-free interaction when we are needed to provide assistance during humanitarian emergencies. An MOU or a framework for the distribution of power and resources should be established.

The government should prioritise a volunteer management policy when an MoU is signed. This will provide an enabling environment for all volunteer-based humanitarian organisations to operate. The policy should capture minimum standards for volunteer training, volunteer welfare, volunteer safety and volunteer recognition.

The organization should support NCRC to build a volunteer management information system (VMIS) where we can store data about our volunteers. Data like: volunteer biodata, volunteer deployment records, volunteer training records, volunteer welfare, and other sundry information about the volunteers. With this, we can make evidence-based decisions about volunteers whom we can trust to be deployed, who needs what kind of training, who needs welfare, who to award or recognize, etc. This will also help us keep track of the incredible work our volunteers do and be accountable to our donors.

There is a need to conduct research that will help measure the impact of Red Cross volunteer intervention on beneficiaries. This type of research will help provide stronger causative proof that volunteering in the Red Cross has its humanitarian dividends. Also, research can be conducted on Red Cross volunteers in Oyo State to measure their experience as volunteers, what they do to get motivated, and what the management can do better. The result from this research will serve as qualitative proof to complement the quantitative statistics we have gathered from this year's research.

This research can also be carried out in other geopolitical zones of Nigeria to measure the effectiveness of Red Cross volunteers' services in other states to enable us to have an idea of what we can improve on that will fit into every State Red Cross operates.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes several contributions to the existing body of knowledge on humanitarian volunteerism in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa. First, it provides the first systematic, empirically grounded assessment of Red Cross volunteer roles, effectiveness, and challenges at the state level in Oyo State, filling a significant gap in the sociological literature on humanitarian response in Nigeria. Second, it demonstrates, through rigorous hypothesis testing, the statistically significant relationships between Red Cross

activities, volunteer roles, volunteer effectiveness, and humanitarian outcomes — providing empirical validation for what has previously been asserted largely on the basis of descriptive or anecdotal evidence. Third, the study advances theoretical understanding of the structural determinants of volunteer effectiveness in the Global South, extending the applicability of frameworks such as the Resource Mobilisation Theory and the Social Capital Theory to the specific context of volunteer-based humanitarian organisations in West Africa.

#### 4. Limitations of the Study

Even with the thoroughness of our research design and execution, a few limitations warrant mentioning. This study was based on self-reported data from volunteers and members of the community. Response bias, socially desirable answers, and recall bias may have influenced responses. Future research may triangulate these data with administrative data and external evaluations. Second, the survey's cross-sectional design cannot confirm causal relationships. The correlational nature of these findings can identify relationships between variables but cannot ascertain which direction they operate. Third, the data were collected in only one state, Oyo State, Nigeria. There may be limitations in generalising these findings to other states. Each state differs based on sociopolitical factors, culture, and humanitarian needs. Fourth, while we attempted to access and interview a variety of Red Cross stakeholders, we were unable to include senior leadership, government partners, and direct beneficiary perceptions. Future research should incorporate these stakeholder groups to triangulate the evidence.

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