

# **The social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives**

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### **Abstract:**

The study aimed to determine the levels of social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives. This study descriptive study used the comprehensive social survey method for (113) female volunteers in community initiatives in the civil society organizations under study in Cairo. The study found that the level of social return for women's voluntary participation in community initiatives is high, as the dimensions were ranked in the following order: reinforcing the social values acquired from voluntary participation, strengthening women's social relations, developing life skills acquired from voluntary participation, developing knowledge acquired from voluntary participation. The level of economic return for women's voluntary participation in community initiatives was also found to be high, as the dimensions were ranked in the following order: improving women's standard of living, improving women's income level, increasing opportunities for women to obtain suitable work, satisfying women's basic needs. Finally, there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers according to their marital status - and educational qualification, with regard to their determination of the level of social and economic returns for participation.

**Key Words:** Community initiatives, social and economic returns, - voluntary participation, - women's volunteerism.

### **Introduction:**

The progress of societies is measured by the investment of all their human resources. Women constitute half of Egyptian society, and the state is committed to empowering them and enabling their participation in the development process (Janne, 2019, p. 214).

The statistics indicated the Egyptian society's interest in women's volunteer participation: Women have reached 51.5 million, representing 48.6% of the total population in the Egyptian society (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2024, p. 4).

Al-Suwaian (2016) and Al-Qahtani (2021) noted an increase in the rate of women's participation in volunteer work and the diverse ways women help others with money, effort, and all forms of support. They recommended developing strategic visions to raise women's awareness of the importance of volunteer activities.

As a result of this increase, the Egyptian state adopted a new strategic approach to instill a culture of women's volunteer participation in society, raising awareness of the importance of their vital role in societal progress and development (Al-Khawli, 2022).

Therefore, women's voluntary participation in community development is a significant investment in human resources that must be addressed and empowered. It is illogical to expect women to demonstrate personal and societal responsibility and contribute voluntarily to community affairs without a supportive physical, social, political, and cultural environment (Hijazi, 2019, p. 133).

Hyunok (2022) demonstrated that women's participation in voluntary activities plays a remarkable role in supporting society. Hyunok's study also found that the social and political meaning of women's voluntary work, as well as the types of changes necessary to recognize women's voluntary work in society, must be appropriately rewarded.

Women's voluntary participation in community initiatives helps integrate them, consolidates ethical principles, fosters a sense of security, belonging, and connection with others, and increases awareness of community issues (Mustafa et al., 2024, p. 553).

Community initiatives are large-scale, multifaceted community investments in underserved communities, often undertaken by charitable organizations with the participation of community members to address community problems comprehensively. (Kubisch and Dewar, 2011).

In addition, Zaff and Anderson (2015) confirmed the importance of initiatives in making a difference in the lives of community members; these initiatives help develop knowledge, skills, and values and improve the quality of life in society through both political and non-political processes.

Women's voluntary participation in community initiatives yields significant social and economic benefits. Social returns are the knowledge, skills, and social values that community members acquire as a result of their participation in programs and projects, based on a cost-benefit analysis (EAST, 2015, p. 2).

The social return includes the advancement and cognitive growth of community members, the development of their skills, the formation of ethical values in dealing with community members and organizations, and the strengthening of values of dealing with others, constructive dialogue, and respect among community members (Hough, 2017, p. 14).

In terms of social return, women's voluntary participation in community initiatives has a positive effects on enhancing community security through their involvement in addressing these social and economic problems (Al-Qarni, 2022, p. 164).

Princes (2018) asserted that the social returns of women's volunteer programs include empowering and transforming them from passive recipients to active individuals capable of providing services, participating in decision-making, and developing their life skills.

Women's volunteer participation also helps empower them, develop their abilities and skills, and increase their opportunities for volunteer work (Al-Mawlawi, 2023).

Moreover, Al-Qadibi (2015) and Morsi (2020) stated that women's voluntary participation helps volunteers acquire knowledge related to community needs and problems, and skills in teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

The relevant authorities are planning and implementing initiatives to empower women, support them socially, raise their awareness, and build their capacities through education and training to fulfill their roles and enhance their competencies in community work at various levels.(Hijazi, (2019).

Al-Qadibi and Morsi (2020) also agreed with Korinne (2012) and Bulandra (2018) that women's participation in initiatives contributes to bringing about change, solving life problems, and providing them with experience and skills.

The economic returns include improving income levels, increasing opportunities for suitable employment, meeting basic needs, and improving the standard of living for community members (Hough, 2017, p. 14).

According to Romero (2015), women participate in volunteer work in community initiatives to provide a better life for their families (p. 289).

Hassan(2019) confirmed the importance of community initiatives as a fundamental mechanism for empowering women economically, professionally, and socially by developing their skills and professional abilities, boosting their ability to create and innovate, and providing them with the opportunity to control their resources and increase their potentials of decision-makings in work, production, and marketing.

Mahmoud and Al-Abbadi (2021) also confirmed stressed the importance of women's initiatives in encouraging women to enter the labor market through manual skills, small production projects, and educating knowledge in various fields.

Also, the economic returns from women's volunteering in community initiatives depend on social class, and volunteering has a positive impact on volunteers' income (Sauer et al., 2019).

The social work profession seeks to empower individuals and provide them with security and protection (Adams, et al., 2005, p. 200). Community organizing is one of the methods of social service that contributes to providing essential services to community members, meeting their needs, and helping them acquire basic skills that enable them to participate in the social and economic system of their community, thus increasing the social and economic returns from their volunteer participation in community programs and initiatives (Deepa, 2023, p. 27).

Therefore, the current study aims to determine the levels of social and economic returns from women's voluntary participation in social initiatives.

### **The importance of the study:**

### **By examining this issue, the current study provides significant insights into the following:**

1. Egyptian society's interest in women and their role in development is due to their increasing numbers. Statistics indicate that the percentage of women in Egyptian society has reached 51.5 million, representing 48.6% of the total population (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2024, p. 4).
2. Women's voluntary participation in community initiatives is essential to unleash women's energies in all areas of volunteer work, based on the belief in their ability to contribute to community development.

3. The impact of women's voluntary participation on improving their social and economic returns to society.
4. The importance of analyzing the social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives in the field of specialization to enrich the theoretical framework or practical aspects of the profession and the method of organizing society.

### **Objectives of the study:**

#### **The present study aims to obtaining the following objectives:**

1. Determining the level of social return on women's voluntary participation in community initiatives.
2. Determining the level of economic return on women's voluntary participation in community initiatives.

### **Study hypotheses:**

#### **Based on the study objectives, the following hypotheses are examined:**

**First hypothesis:** The level of social return of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives is expected to be high. This hypothesis can be tested through the following variables: Developing knowledge and- life skills,- strengthening social values,boosting women's social relations acquired from voluntary participation

**Second hypothesis:** The economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives are anticipated to be high. This hypothesis can be tested through the following variables: Increasing opportunities for women to obtain suitable work,- satisfying women's basic needs,- improving women's standard of living,- and improving women's income level.

**Third hypothesis:** There is no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers according to their social status in terms of the levels of social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives.

**Fourth hypothesis:** There is no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers according to their educational qualifications in terms of the levels of social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives.

### **Theoretical directions of the study: - Feminist theory**

**The concepts of the feminist theory relevant to social work practice are as follows: interconnectedness, reciprocity, mutuality, ambiguity, power and citizenship, each of which is defined below.**

1. Interdependence: refers to the development of social relationships, i.e., the bonds that bind them together within a framework of mutuality.
2. Reciprocity constitutes the cornerstones of equal relationships, allowing each person involved in an exchange to contribute their own strengths to interaction. Teamwork, interdependence, and reciprocity, generate social solidarity.
3. Ambiguity manifests itself in women's roles as caregivers, when women feel a dual responsibility: They are responsible for others and want to help them, while at the same time, they want to be free of responsibility and focus on themselves.
4. Citizenship :relies on interdependence, and reciprocity to build social solidarity, through which individuals accept responsibility for one another and commit to a shared common good, ensuring that the individual's well-being is the concern of all (Dominelli, 2002).

This theory fits with the current study and includes the indicators that the researchers seek measuring. These indicators are related to both the social return, including developing knowledge gained from voluntary participation, enhancing of life skills gained from voluntary participation, strengthening social values gained from voluntary participation, and boosting women's social relations, as well as the economic return, namely increasing opportunities to get a suitable job for women, satisfying the basic needs of women, improving the standard of living for women, and improving the income level of women.

### **Study concepts:**

#### **1. Concept of Socio-economic return:**

Return: means actually achieved goals, They may be economic or social, and, therefore, measured by quantitative and qualitative measures (Lynch, 2014, p.28).

That the concept of return has been associated with the economic aspects of increasing the income of individuals, their productive capacities, and investments. In addition, this concept is related to the social aspects of enhancing the individuals' scientific capacity and innovative abilities preserving social values and cultural heritage (Olsen, et al., 2012, p. 6).



The economic return is the cost sacrificed in order to obtain a higher income in the future (Al-Hawli, 2014, p.2).

As for the social return, it refers to the knowledge gained by people, the skills they have been able to develop, the growth and maturity they have achieved, the values and trends they have adopted, as well as the new economic and social activities the project has introduced into society, new values and traditions that are valid, and the improvement of development rates through influencing special variables (Hashem, 1993, p.1).

**The procedural definition for social return in this study is :**

developing knowledge for female volunteers and their life skills and -strengthening their social values and relations.

**The procedural definition for economic return in this study is:**

increasing the chances of female volunteers to obtain a suitable job, satisfying their basic needs ,improving their standard of living,improving their income level.

**Methodological Procedures of the Study:**

**(1)- Type of the Study:** This descriptive study aims to determine the levels of social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives.

**(2)- Methodology:** This study relied on using the comprehensive social survey method for (113) female volunteers in community initiatives in the civil society organizations under study in Cairo.

**(3)- Study Tools:** A questionnaire was employed to measure the social and economic returns of women's volunteer participation in community initiatives (N=113).

**Tool Validity:** The tool was designed by reviewing the literature and theoretical frameworks, then analyzing the research and studies to identify the various dimensions.

The tool was presented to (5) faculty members at the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University, in order to conduct apparent validity. All comments were collected and after presenting the form to the honorable arbitrators, they kindly made some amendments. Some phrases were deleted, and some were rephrased. The questions and responses that achieved a percentage of agreement were kept without any modifications, whether in relation to wording or content. Hence, the questionnaire was drafted in its final form.

**Tool Reliability:** The reliability of the volunteer questionnaire was assessed calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. It was administered to a sample of (10) volunteers, not included in the study participants. The coefficients for the dimensions were found to have a high degree of reliability.

It was found that the stability coefficients of the dimensions enjoy a high degree of stability, as follows:

**Table (1) The results of the stability of the volunteers' questionnaire.**

Volunteers (n=10)	Dimensions of social return	Dimensions of economic return	Dimensions of the tool as a whole
Dimensions			
Number of statements	20	20	20
Coefficient value	0.838	0.929	0.937
Degree of reliability	high degree	high degree	high degree

The previous table demonstrates that the reliability coefficients for the dimensions of the volunteer questionnaire are highly stable, accurate, and reliable. The instrument is now in its final form, and its results are, therefore, reliable and generalizable.

#### **(4)- Study Fields:**

1. **Location Field:** The study was implemented in the Arab Women Leaders Union in Nasr City, the Arab Union for Sustainable Social Development in the Fifth Settlement, the Comprehensive Development Association in El Marg.

**The Foundation was chosen based on the following criteria** :First, the goals of these associations include encouraging women's volunteer participation. Second, these associations contribute to the implementation of numerous community initiatives. Third, there is a large number of volunteers in the foundation.

**2. Human Field:**  
**Table (2 )The distribution of female volunteers in community initiatives in civil society organizations in the study community is shown.**

Sr.	civil society organizations	Dependency	Number of volunteers	stability sample
1	Arab Women Leaders Union in Nasr City	Cairo Governorate	35	3
2	Arab Union for Sustainable Social Development in the Fifth Settlement		40	4
3	Comprehensive Development Association in El Marg		38	3
the total			113	10

**3. Time Field:** The field data collection was conducted from January 1, 2025, to March 27, 2025.

**Results of the Field Study:**  
**First Axis: Social returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives:**  
**Table (3) illustrates the development of knowledge gained from women's voluntary participation in community initiatives (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	Through my volunteering, I became aware of some of the social problems facing society.	2.84	0.37	1
2	After joining initiatives, I participated in preparing research related to community problems.	2.32	0.75	5
3	I realized the importance of completing the tasks required of me efficiently.	2.6	0.51	3
4	I learned how to plan to achieve my goals.	2.56	0.55	4
5	I learned about all the types of activities offered by volunteer organizations.	2.69	0.48	2
development of knowledge gained As a Whole		2.6	0.35	High Level

In the first ranking came "Through my volunteering, I became aware of some of the problems that society suffers from", with an arithmetic mean of 2.84, second, "I became familiar with all types of activities provided by volunteer organizations", with an arithmetic mean of 2.69, then, "I realized the importance of completing the tasks required from me efficiently", with an arithmetic mean of 2.6; And finally, in the fifth rank, "I participated after joining the initiatives in preparing research related to social problems", with an arithmetic mean of 2.32.

**Table (4) shows the development of life skills acquired through women's voluntary participation in community initiatives (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	I learned time management and organization skills.	2.65	0.5	4
2	I now face my problems on my own.	2.7	0.46	1
3	I gained the ability to make decisions.	2.65	0.52	5
4	I have the ability to come up with ideas for volunteer work projects.	2.71	0.48	2
5	It has helped me become more productive and effective in managing various activities.	2.66	0.47	3
<b>development of life skills gained As a Whole</b>		<b>2.67</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>High Level</b>

In the first ranking came "I now face my problems alone", with an arithmetic mean of 2.71 second, "my ability to come up with ideas for volunteer work projects", with an arithmetic mean of 2.7; then the third rank "helped me to be more productive and effective in managing different activities", with an arithmetic mean of 2.66; and finally, in the fifth rank, "I had the ability to make decisions", with an arithmetic mean of 2.65.

**Table (5) indicates reinforcing the social values gained from women's voluntary participation in community initiatives(N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	It helped me increase my confidence in my abilities.	2.65	0.75	1
2	I educate others about the importance of participating in volunteer work.	2.7	0.73	2
3	I feel a sense of social responsibility toward society.	2.65	0.72	3
4	I have the ability to stand with certain groups in achieving their demands.	2.69	0.52	4
5	I have the ability to contribute my opinion on community issues.	2.68	0.5	5
<b>Reinforcing the social values gained As a Whole</b>		<b>2.71</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>High Level</b>

In the first ranking came "It helped me increase my confidence in my abilities", with an arithmetic mean of 2.75; second, "I educate others about the necessity of participating in volunteer work", with an arithmetic mean of 2.73; then, "I feel my social responsibilities towards society", with an arithmetic mean of 2.72;and finally, in the fifth rank, "I have the ability to participate with an opinion on community issues", with an arithmetic mean of 2.68.

**Table (6) demonstrates strengthening women's social relations from women's voluntary participation in community initiatives (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	I was able to build social relationships with others.	2.72	0.45	3
2	It allowed me to organize visits to charitable and volunteer organizations that help us achieve our goals.	2.58	0.58	5
3	My social standing in society improved.	2.76	0.45	1
4	My relationships with my colleagues are now characterized by mutual respect.	2.74	0.46	2
5	was able to build social relationships with others.	2.69	0.52	4
<b>Strengthening women's social relations As a Whole</b>		<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>High Level</b>

In the first ranking came "My social standing in society improved", with an arithmetic mean of 2.76; second, "my relationships with my colleagues became dominated by mutual respect", with an arithmetic mean of 2.74; then, "I was able to form social relationships with others", with an arithmetic mean of 2.72; and finally, in the fifth rank, "it allowed me to organize visits to charitable voluntary work institutions that help us achieve our goals", with an arithmetic mean of 2.58.

**Second Axis: The economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives::**

**Table (7) indicates increasing opportunities for women to find suitable work (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	I am aware of the job opportunities available in the community.	2.65	0.48	1
2	I believe that volunteering provides job opportunities.	2.52	0.54	2
3	I have found job opportunities with a reasonable income.	2.41	0.64	4
4	I have acquired the skills required by the job market.	2.5	0.54	3
5	I have been offered various job opportunities.	2.39	0.62	5
<b>Increasing opportunities for women to find suitable work As a Whole</b>		<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>High Level</b>

In the first ranking came "have knowledge of the job opportunities available in the community", with an arithmetic mean of 2.65; second, "I believe that voluntary participation is a field for providing job opportunities", with an arithmetic mean of 2.52; then, "I gained the required skills that the labor market needs", with an arithmetic mean of 2.5; and finally, in the fifth rank, "I was offered various job opportunities", with an arithmetic mean of 2.39

**.Table (8) illustrates satisfying women's basic needs (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	I provided suitable housing for my family members.	2.26	0.78	3
2	I provided daily meals for my family members.	2.39	0.67	2
3	I provided consumer goods for my family.	2.41	0.62	1
4	I provided electrical appliances for my daughter's wedding.	2.13	0.83	5
5	I provided a drinking water connection for my home.	2.23	0.79	4
<b>Satisfying women's basic needs As a Whole</b>		<b>2.28</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>Medium Level</b>

In the first ranking came “ I provided consumer goods for my family”, with an arithmetic mean of 2.41; second,"providing daily meals for my family members", with an arithmetic mean of 2.39; then the third place by providing suitable housing for my family members with an arithmetic mean of 2.26, and finally the fifth place by providing electrical appliances for my daughter's wedding with an arithmetic mean of 2.13.

**Table (9) shows improving women's standard of living (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	It helped me feel more secure about my future life.	2.64	0.54	1
2	I have the ability to cope with life's pressures.	2.63	0.5	2
3	It helped me avoid borrowing from others.	2.59	0.53	3
4	I worked to cope with my living burdens.	2.64	0.48	4
5	I invest my abilities to improve my current situation.	2.69	0.48	5
<b>Improving women's standard of living As a Whole</b>		<b>264</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>High Level</b>

In the first ranking came "I invest my abilities to improve my current situation", with an arithmetic mean of 2.69; second, "I worked to confront my living burdens", with an arithmetic mean of 2.64 and a standard deviation of 0.48; then, "helped me increase the feeling of security for my future life", with an arithmetic mean of 2.64 and a standard deviation of 0.54; and finally, in the fifth rank, "helped me not to borrow from others", with an arithmetic mean of 2.59.

**Table(10) highlights improving women's income level (N=113).**

Sr.	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
1	I implemented a small project that provides income for my family members.	2.5	0.6	4
2	The income now meets my family's needs.	2.58	0.58	2
3	I gained the skill to manage and succeed in any income-generating project.	2.6	0.54	1
4	I have knowledge of multiple sales outlets to market my products.	2.5	0.55	3
5	I participated in productive family projects.	2.5	0.61	5
<b>Improving women's income level As a Whole</b>		<b>2.54</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>High Level</b>

In the first ranking came "I gained the skill to manage and succeed in any income-generating project an arithmetic mean 2.6; second, "the income has become suitable for the needs of my family members", with an arithmetic mean 2.58; then, "I have knowledge of multiple sales outlets to market my products", with an arithmetic mean 2.5 and a standard deviation 0.55; and finally, in the fifth rank, "I have participated in productive family projects", with an arithmetic mean 2.5 and a standard deviation 0.61.



### **Third Axis: Testing the Study Hypotheses**

**Table (11) clarifies the level of social return of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives as a whole(N=113).**

Sr .	Mechanisms	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Ranking
1	Developing knowledge gained through volunteer participation	2.6	0.35	High	4
2	Developing life skills gained through volunteer participation	2.67	0.33	High	3
3	Reinforcing social values gained through volunteer participation	2.71	0.34	High	1
4	Strengthening women's social relationships	2.7	0.32	High	2
<b>Total Dimensions of social return</b>		<b>2.67</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>High Level</b>	

**The table above reveals that** the level of social return of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives as a whole is high, with an arithmetic mean of 2.67. The indicators , according to the order of the arithmetic mean, are as follows: First, "strengthening the social values acquired from voluntary participation", with an arithmetic mean of 2.71; followed, "strengthening women's social relations", with an arithmetic mean of 2.7; then , "developing life skills acquired from voluntary participation", with an arithmetic mean of 2.67; and finally, "developing knowledge acquired from voluntary participation", with an arithmetic mean of 2.6. **This supports the first hypothesis of the study.**

**Table (12) presents the level of economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives as a whole(N=113).**

Sr .	Mechanisms	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Ranking
1	Increasing women's access to suitable employment opportunities	2.5	0.38	High	3
2	Meeting women's basic needs	2.28	0.6	Medium	4
3	Improving women's standard of living	2.64	0.37	High	1

Sr .	Mechanisms	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Ranking
4	Improving women's income levels	2.54	0.42	High	2
<b>Total Dimensions of economic return</b>		<b>2.49</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>High Level</b>	

**The table above reveals that** the level of economic return for women's voluntary participation in community initiatives is generally high, with an arithmetic mean of 2.49. The indicators, according to the order of the arithmetic mean, are as follows: First, "improving women's standard of living", with an arithmetic mean of 2.64; followed "improving women's income", with an arithmetic mean of 2.54; then, "increasing women's opportunities to obtain suitable work", with an arithmetic mean of 2.5; and finally, "satisfying women's basic needs", with an arithmetic mean of 2.28. **This supports the second hypothesis of the study.**

**Table (13) The analysis of variance shows the levels of social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives according to the responses of female volunteers according to their marital status.**

Dimensions	Volunteers (N=113)		Number N	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	value (f)	value (Sig)	Significance	
	Research community								
social return	Social status	Married	47	2.68	0.32	1.543	0.218	Not significant	
		Divorced	37	2.72	0.25				
		Widowed	29	2.59	0.29				
economic return		Married	47	2.49	0.41	0.442	0.644	Not significant	
			Divorced	37	2.53				0.33
			Widowed	29	2.44				0.3

\*\* Significant at (0.01)

\* Significant at (0.05)

**The table above reveals the following:**

- There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers according to their marital status (i.e., married, divorced, and widowed) regarding their assessment of the level of social returns for women's volunteer participation in community initiatives.
- There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers according to marital status (i.e., married, divorced, and widowed) regarding their assessment of the level of economic returns for women's volunteer participation in community initiatives. **This supports the third hypothesis of the study.**

**Table (14) The analysis of variance shows the levels of social and economic returns of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives according to the responses of female volunteers according to their educational qualification.**

Dimensions	Volunteers(N=113)		Number N	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	value (f)	value (Sig)	Significance
	Research community							
social return	Educational qualification	Intermediate qualification	49	2.69	0.28	0.433	0.784	Not significant
		Higher qualification	34	2.69	0.28			
		Postgraduate diploma	13	2.68	0.25			
		Master's degree	10	2.59	0.35			
		Doctorate	7	2.59	0.43			
economic return		Intermediate qualification	49	2.51	0.33	0.384	0.819	Not significant
		Higher qualification	34	2.5	0.35			
		Postgraduate diploma	13	2.48	0.45			
		Master's degree	10	2.4	0.42			
		Doctorate	7	2.39	0.39			

\*\* Significant at (0.01)

\* Significant at (0.05)

**The table above reveals that the following results:**

- There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers based on their educational qualifications (i.e., intermediate qualification, higher qualification/postgraduate diploma, master's, and doctorate) regarding their assessment of the level of social returns of women's volunteer participation in community initiatives.
- There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers based on their educational qualifications (i.e., intermediate qualification, higher qualification/postgraduate diploma, /master's, and doctorate) regarding their assessment of the level of economic returns of women's volunteer participation in community initiatives. **This supports the fourth hypothesis of the study.**

### **Discussion of Results:**

This study demonstrated the validity of its objectives and hypotheses, as it showed that the level of social return for women's voluntary participation in community initiatives is high. Al-Suwaian (2016) and Al-Qahtani (2021) noted a high percentage of women's participation in voluntary work and multiple methods of women's participation in helping others with money, effort and all forms of support. The reinforcement of social values acquired from women's voluntary participation was high, as women's voluntary participation in community initiatives helps them integrate, consolidate ethical principles, achieve a sense of security, belonging and connection with others, and increase awareness of community issues (Mustafa et al., 2024). Their voluntary participation also assists in forming and reinforcing ethical values in the relationships between society members and its organizations and maintaining constructive dialogue and respect among members of society (Hough, 2017). The results of the study also found that strengthening women's social relations and developing life skills acquired from women's voluntary participation is high. In agreement with Princes (2018), one of the social returns of women's volunteer programs is their empowerment, transforming them from passive recipients into active participants in service provision, participating in decision-making, and developing their life skills. Finally, the study results revealed that the development of knowledge gained from volunteer participation is high. This may be due to the importance of initiatives in making a difference in women's lives, as they help develop knowledge, skills, and values, and improve the quality of life in society through both political and non-political processes. This aligns with the findings of Zaff and Anderson (2015). Al-Qadibi (2015) and Morsi (2020) also confirmed that women's volunteer participation helps them acquire knowledge related to community needs and problems, as well as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. This supports the first hypothesis of the study. Corresponding with Romero (2015), the study results showed that the level of economic returns from women's volunteer participation in community initiatives was high, and women participate in volunteer work in community initiatives to provide a better life for their families. The dimensions of economic returns were high, with significant improvements in women's standard of living and income levels. The economic returns from women's volunteering positively impact volunteers' incomes, as confirmed by Sauer et al.

(2019). Furthermore, increasing women's opportunities for suitable employment was also high, as the findings of Mahmoud and Al-Abadi (2021) pinpointed the importance of women's initiatives in encouraging women to enter the labor market through manual skills, small-scale production projects, and educating women in various fields. Finally, the results demonstrated that women's basic needs are met, as evidenced by their increased participation in community initiatives, which in turn reflects their satisfaction with basic needs such as food, drink, and shelter for themselves and their families, as confirmed by Hough's (2017) findings. This supports the second hypothesis of the study. Finally, the study results found that there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of female volunteers according to their (marital status or- educational qualification) with regard to their determination of the level of social and economic return of women's voluntary participation in community initiatives.

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