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## Fostering volunteerism among students with learning disabilities: The role of primary schools and challenges

تعزيز العمل التطوعي لدى الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم: دور المدارس الابتدائية والتحديات

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### Abstract

The significance of the study lies in its focus on promoting volunteerism among Students with Learning Disabilities (SLD). The study aimed to provide recommendations that help overcome the challenges faced by primary school role in promoting volunteering among SLD. The study used a mixed-method approach. Personal interviews were conducted with 20 parents of SLD, and a questionnaire was administered to 98 teachers of Learning Disabilities in primary schools in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Saudi Arabia. The study results are that the teacher's role held the highest importance in fostering volunteering among SLD in primary school, followed by the school administration role, and subsequently, the school curriculum, according to parents' Perceptions. There are significant challenges facing the role of elementary schools in promoting volunteer work among SLD, with the most important of these being personal, organizational, and then academic challenges, according to teachers' perspectives. The study does not identify significant differences in these challenges based on the teachers' perspectives, considering gender and years of experience.

**Keywords:** Fostering, learning disabilities, primary school, students, volunteering.


### Introduction

Many studies have shown a positive impact of volunteer work on both individual and community levels. It contributes to the development of leadership skills among students participating in volunteer work (Al-Kalbani, 2020), reduces hyperactivity among SLD

اهتمت الدراسة بتعزيز مشاركة الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم في العمل التطوعي بالمجتمع، هدفت الدراسة لتقديم بعض التوصيات التي تساعد في التغلب على التحديات التي تواجه دور المدارس الابتدائية في تعزيز العمل التطوعي للطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج المختلط. تم إجراء مقابلات شخصية مع 20 من أولياء أمور الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم، كما تم تطبيق استبانة على 98 معلماً من معلمي الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم بالمدارس الابتدائية في محافظة الأحساء، المملكة العربية السعودية. كشفت أهم نتائج الدراسة أن دور المعلم كان له الأهمية الكبرى في تعزيز العمل التطوعي بين الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم في المدارس الابتدائية، يليه دور الإدارة المدرسية، ثم المناهج الدراسية من وجهة نظر أولياء الأمور، وأن هناك تحديات كبيرة تواجه دور المدارس الابتدائية في تعزيز العمل التطوعي بين الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم، وأهمها التحديات الشخصية، فالتنظيمية، ثم الأكاديمية من وجهة نظر المعلمين. كما أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في التحديات التي تواجه دور المدرسة الابتدائية من وجهة نظر المعلمين باختلاف النوع، وسنوات الخبرة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التطوع، تعزيز، الطلاب، صعوبات التعلم، المدرسة الابتدائية.

(Abo Al-Rab, 2018), enhances their academic achievement (Kasnawi, 2019), boosts students' personal and cognitive skills, and increases their self-esteem (Bates, 2016).

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Some studies conducted in Saudi have indicated shortcomings in the role of general education schools in promoting volunteer work among their students (Al-Jaloud, 2013), and the contribution of school administration in encouraging students to participate in volunteer work is low (Al-Shahri et al., 2017). A study by Abualrob (2019) found that the teaching performance of teachers and the training of their students in the necessary skills for volunteer work had not reached the required level. Additionally, SLD face significant challenges in educational institutions (Al-Muqbil, 2021). In light of Saudi's efforts to promote volunteer work among its citizens and in alignment with Vision 2030, which emphasizes the importance of volunteerism as part of future readiness and sustainable development, with the goal of reaching one million volunteers by the end of 2030, the researcher engaged in discussions with some parents of SLD and their teachers regarding their perceptions of the role of elementary school in promoting volunteer work for students and the challenges they face, within the context of societal culture. So, the research problem concentrated in the main question: What are the perceptions of parents and teachers of SLD regarding the role of elementary school in promoting volunteer work for students, and what challenges do school encounter?

### Question

1. What are the perceptions of parents regarding the role of elementary school (teachers, curriculum, and school administration) in promoting volunteer work among SLD?
2. What are the personal, academic, and organizational challenges that teachers perceive as hindrances to the role of elementary school in promoting volunteer work among SLD?
3. What are the statistically significant differences in the responses of the study sample concerning the challenges faced by elementary school in promoting volunteer work among SLD, relate to gender and years of teaching experience?
4. What recommendations to enhance the role of elementary school for engagement of SLD in volunteer activities?

**Objective and important:** The study aims to identify parents' perceptions regarding the role of elementary school in promoting volunteer work among SLD, explore the challenges perceived by teachers, and provide recommendations to mitigate these challenges. The theoretical significance of the study lies in its focus on

enhancing volunteerism among SLD. The practical significance lies in meeting the personal and societal needs of SLD, utilizing their potentials in community service, for achieving sustainable development. The study's scope includes the perceptions of parents about the role of teachers, curriculum, and school administration in promoting volunteerism among SLD. The research is confined to the personal, academic, and organizational challenges that faces elementary school, Al-Ahsa region of Saudi Arabia during the second semester of the 2022 academic year.

### Research Terminologies

**Volunteering:** Refers to involves an individual's effort for their community without expecting material or moral compensation, with the intention of contributing to social services (Al-Naeem, 2005).

**Volunteer Work:** It is dedicating time and effort without expecting financial or moral rewards to assist a specific group within society (Kasnawi, 2019). Al-Qahtani (2019) defines it as effort exerted willingly and voluntarily without any form of coercion.

**Learning Disabilities:** "disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language, which may manifest in disorders of listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, or mathematics, not attributed to intellectual, sensory, or learning conditions, or family care" (Ministry of Education, 2020, p.12).

**Student with Learning Disabilities:** "A student who exhibits clear academic and non-academic skill deficiencies, struggles with employing learning strategies, and is unable to keep up with peers academically" (Ministry of Education, 2020, p.14).

### Literature Review

Countries, societal institutions, and individuals strive to establish activities that focus on voluntary work and attract the wealthy and capable to support the poor, the sick, the needy, and the disabled within and beyond their borders. Voluntary work is a hallmark of social responsibility aim at elevating societies and nurturing their various aspects through the initiatives of individuals and groups, without burdening government institutions further (Al-Harthy, 2019). Global organizations have emerged to provide their services worldwide,

such as "Doctors without Borders," which offers medical assistance to patients, and "Habitat for Humanity," which aims to provide suitable housing for all. No country in the world is exempt from the need for voluntary work, as it holds immense importance for nations, institutions, and individuals. In recent years, the number of volunteers and volunteer organizations around the world has increased many times (Madryha et al., 2023). Volunteering contributes to achieving sustainable development (Al-Saadi & Al-Wabar, 2020).

Voluntary work emerged as a humanitarian endeavor since the beginning of creation, as a response to natural hazards that threaten human life, aiming to achieve a secure life suitable for mutual coexistence among individuals (Al-Fadala, 2021). Engravings on the walls of ancient Egyptian temples and tombs depict evidence of voluntary work aimed at assisting the poor and the needy. In Greek civilization, the wealthy cared for the poor and needy, and the state treasury organized social care for its citizens. In Roman civilization, voluntary work was offered from the aristocracy aiding the public, distributing wheat to the poor people (Al-Naeem, 2005). Religions also emphasized voluntary work and social cooperation. In Judaism, many texts from the Old Testament encourage voluntary work, with one of the Ten Commandments revealed to Moses stating, "Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the day of trouble and open your hand to your poor and needy brother in your land." Similarly, in Christianity, texts encourage the care of the needy, "Through charity, give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you." Islam introduced a comprehensive system of social care based on collaboration among people. Allah says, "And cooperate in righteousness and piety" (Quran, Al-Ma'idah: 2), and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, "He does not believe in me who sleeps with a full stomach while his neighbor goes hungry beside him, knowing (Al-Tirmidhi, 5038)." In modern times, Britain was the first to establish volunteer brigades to combat the "Great Fire of London" in September 1666. The United States was the first to organize voluntary work in the modern world, enacting a law in December 1737 to regulate voluntary firefighting in New York City (Al-Naeem, 2005).

In Saudi, voluntary work initially began as individualistic manner, guided by family and tribal dynamics. However, it took on a formal structure following the unification of the Saudi by King Abdulaziz, with the establishment of the

Charitable Ambulance Society in Mecca in 1354 A.H. Subsequently (Hamza, 2015). The Saudi has issued regulations and laws to govern voluntary work and the establishment of associations under the supervision of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development and endeavored to instill a culture of voluntary work through education, contributing to secure coexistence and stability within society. The domains of voluntary work have diversified to include education, healthcare, services for individuals with disabilities, social service, the elderly, widows, children, and some others. Additionally, the locations and sources of support for voluntary work are varied, encompassing governmental and public support both within and outside the Saudi. The importance of voluntary work and its development have been highlighted through Saudi's Vision 2030, aiming to increase the number of volunteers from 11,000 to one million by the end of 2030, with substantial females' participation (Al-Baqami & Al-Bardisi, 2021).

SLD constitute one of the most prevalent categories among students with special needs. Despite their need for assistance in overcoming academic challenges, they can offer community services and compensating for educational gaps, thus gaining the ability to manage themselves and assert their identities. Saudi has shown special concern for students with special needs, including those with learning Disabilities, aiming to enhance their level of independence so that they can be beneficial members of society (Ministry of Education, 2020). SLD includes three main categories: those with low academic skills, academically gifted, and with attention deficits (Ministry of Education, 2020, p.19). SLD exhibit strengths in spatial-visual and sensory-creative aspects, such as visual and spatial perception, tactile sensory experience, heightened awareness of the present moment, and singular thinking (Shaabani & Drissi, 2021). They excel in standardized tests measuring geometric shapes and image comprehension (Boucheix et al., 2014) and display spatial intelligence while having comparatively lower language abilities than peers (Andreou et al., 2013).

Voluntary work fosters a sense of duty, self-confidence, cooperation, communication skills, leadership skills, and social experiences (Mash'al, 2021), and reduces class and social disparities and cultivates a sense of belonging (Al-Saifi, 2019), and also participating in the community's betterment to achieve sustainable development (Al-Ghaith et al., 2020). For SLD,

voluntary work brings about positive changes in their personal aspects, leading to happiness, peace of mind, vitality, activity, positive human relationships, self-appreciation, societal adaptation, increased experience, boosted self-confidence, compensation for academic weaknesses, reduction of selfishness, and alleviation of negative feelings (Al-Thunayan, 2021), and meeting their natural needs, compensating for academic shortcomings (Al-Dosari, 2018).

Schools have a crucial role in fostering voluntary work by individuals through education, instilling a sense of duty, responsibility, and giving to others (Askar et al., 2017). The role of primary school is particularly significant in promoting voluntary work among students (Abo Skina et al., 2018). The primary stage is where concepts are formed; values and positive habits are developed, especially for SLD. Teachers encourage them to engage in voluntary work, participate alongside them, nurture positive attitudes towards it, and the curriculum promotes positive attitudes towards voluntary work through its subjects. School administration fosters voluntary work by organizing non-curricular activities.

Previous studies dealt with volunteer work from different aspects. The relationship between school administration and volunteer work (Al-Aklabi, 2019), the school administration contributes to enhancing volunteerism among female students (Al-Ghaith et al., 2020), the availability of leadership skills among students engaged in volunteer work (Al-Kalbani, 2020), the impact of school leadership on enhancing volunteerism (Al-Ghaith et al., 2020) and the school's role in developing a culture of volunteerism (Al-Saadi and Al-Wabar, 2020); (Belarbi and Zougai, 2021). Enhancing volunteerism culture among secondary school students (Al-Harabsheh, 2021) and understanding the influence of family, school, and friends on school students' volunteerism between the ages of 11-15 (Law et al., 2015). Some studies have investigated the relationship between the curriculum, educational activities, and the development of a culture of volunteerism in secondary school (Askar et al., 2017), the culture of volunteerism among intermediate-grade female students (Abo Skina et al., 2018), programs based on volunteering and extracurricular activities to reduce excessive activity among SLD (Abo Al-Rab, 2018), and the effectiveness of a program based on voluntary activity in academic achievement and students' attitudes toward volunteerism (Kasnawi, 2019). Al-Sobbahi (2016) studied the importance of

values related to volunteerism in social studies curricula, while Al-Bani, (2019) studied the requirements for developing volunteer work among secondary school female students. Additionally, methods of instilling volunteerism values among elementary school students have been investigated (Al-Dosari, 2018), and strategies to attract students to participate in volunteer activities (Al-Dawi, 2021).

**Literatures studies:** Some studies have addressed digital volunteer work (Park and Johnston, 2017), the relationship between digital volunteering and professional development in education (Al-Samiri, 2021), the importance and benefits of volunteer work, and volunteers' competition in achieving integration in entrepreneurship (Rolf et al., 2021), the reality of volunteer work for high school students (Barshid, 2019), students' understanding of the concept of volunteer work (Mash'al, 2021), the students' inclination towards volunteer work (Khaldi, 2022). Some studies discussed the attitudes of teachers towards volunteer work and its relationship with the social communication methods of SLD (Al-Thunayan, 2021), the role of teachers in promoting volunteer work among students (Al-Draei, 2021). Some studies also examined the obstacles to volunteer work (Al-Shuwaihat et al., 2019), the obstacles to achieving the educational dimensions of volunteer work (Al-Harbi, 2020), the obstacles to Saudi women's volunteerism (Suleiman, 2021), (Mousa, 2023) and (Al-Baqami & Al-Bardisi, 2021), and obstacles to participation in volunteer work among high school female students (Al-Kalib, 2023).

The current study aligns with some previous studies in terms of objectives, methodology, tools, and samples, but it differs in the research topic, which none of the previous studies explored the perceptions of parents regarding the role of elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD and the challenges they face from the perspective of teachers. This distinction adds significance to the current study and fills a gap in the research field.

## Methodology

**Research Method:** The study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative methods through personal interviews with parents of SLD. Additionally, the study employed a descriptive-analytical method using a questionnaire to teachers of SLD. The study's population includes two groups: the first comprises all parents of elementary school SLD,

and the second includes all teachers of SLD in government primary schools in Al-Ahsa, Saudi. The total number of teachers is 165 (70 males and

95 females), based on statistics from the Education Directorate in Al-Ahsa for the year 2022. The study's sample as in Table (1).

**Table 1.**

*The study sample*

	Variables	Categories	N.	%	Total
Parents' Sample	Gender	M.	10	50.0	20
		F.	10	50.0	
	Qualification	Below a university degree	7	35.0	20
		Having a university degree	11	55.0	
		Beyond a university degree	2	10.0	
Teachers' Sample	Gender	M.	38	38.8	98
		F.	60	61.2	
		<5	8	8.2	
	Years of experience	5< 10	29	29.6	98
		10<	61	62.2	

Table (1) shows that (55%) of the parents have a university degree and (10%) have a higher qualification than a university degree. The teacher sample were randomly, selected by an electronic link sent via email and WhatsApp groups for them. The response of females (61.2%) is higher than that for males. The response rate is highest among respondents with more than 10 years of experience (62.2%).

**Study Tool:** The researcher used two study instruments. The first was personal interviews, involved three open-ended questions for parents, inquiring about their perceptions of the roles of teachers, curriculum, and school administration

in promoting voluntary work for SLD. The second was a questionnaire, comprised closed-ended statements (Likert five-point scale), from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The questionnaire focused on the challenges hindering the primary school's role in enhancing voluntary work for SLD, from the perspective of teachers.

**Tool Validity:** The expert validation, and the tool's validity has been calculated using internal consistency coefficients by assessing the relationships between the scores of each statement and the total score of the dimension it measures Table (2).

**Table 2.**

*Correlation Coefficients Between the Score of Each Statement in the Questionnaire and the Total Score of the Respective Dimension*

Personal Challenges		Academic Challenges		Organizational Challenges	
N.	Correlation Coefficient	N.	Correlation Coefficient	N.	Correlation Coefficient
1	0.680**	8	0.774**	14	0.567**
2	0.815**	9	0.719**	15	0.629**
3	0.787**	10	0.722**	16	0.838**
4	0.639**	11	0.814**	17	0.797**
5	0.554**	12	0.676**	18	0.634**
6	0.683**	13	0.624**	19	0.726**
7	0.840**	--	-	20	0.785**
Total	0.889**	Total	0.918**	Total	0.916**

(\*\*) Significant at 0.01.

Table (2) demonstrates that the correlation coefficients between the statements and the corresponding dimensions are statistically significant at 0.01. This achieves the construct validity of the questionnaire.

**Tool Reliability:** The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and Spearman-Brown reliability. The values for the three dimensions and the entire questionnaire are shown in Table (3).



**Table 3.**  
*The Reliability Coefficients for the Questionnaire Dimensions.*

Questionnaire Dimensions	Alpha coefficient	Spearman-Brown
Personal Challenges	0.837	0.702
Academic Challenges	0.813	0.701
Organizational Challenges	0.827	0.622
Total Questionnaire	0.925	0.897

Table (3) illustrates that the reliability coefficients for the total score of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha method is (0.925), ranging from (0.813 – 0.837) for the dimensions of the questionnaire. The split-half reliability coefficient is (0.897), ranging from (0.622 – 0.702) for the dimensions of the questionnaire. These values indicate that the

questionnaire exhibits a high level of stability, making it dependable for obtaining reliable results.

The five-point Likert scale was used. Values and limits of the responses were determined based on Table (4).

**Table 4.**  
*Five-Point Likert Scale Values*

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Grade	5	4	3	2	1
Response Category	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
Limit	4.2≥5	3.4≥4.2	2.6≥3.4	1.8≥2.6	1≥1.8

## Results and Discussion

**First question:** The researcher used a personal interview, consisting of three open-ended questions. Voluntary interviews were conducted after obtaining the participants' consent, through phone calls. Each interview took approximately 12 minutes, involving three stages. The first stage 2 minutes, included introducing the participants, explaining the interview's objectives, encouraging them to express their opinions freely, and emphasizing that the responses would

only be used for research purposes. The second stage 9 minutes presented the interview questions. The third stage 1 minute, concluded by thanking the participants.

The interviews have been documented during the interviews to prevent the loss of important information. The responses were transcribed, and the most frequently recurring ones were categorized into closely related groups, as shown in Table (5).

**Table 5.**  
*Parents' Perceptions (N=20) About the Role of Elementary School (teachers, curriculum, and administration) in Promoting Volunteer Work Among SLD.*

R	Questions	Responses	N.	%
1	What do you envision about the role of the teacher in promoting volunteer work for SLD?	Calculating grades for student volunteer participation.	20	100
		Training students on volunteer work models.	19	95
		Setting a good example for students in volunteer work and involving them.	17	85
		Encouraging students to take initiative in volunteering.	16	80
		Discussing volunteer-related issues that students may face.	15	75
		Building confidence in SLD for volunteering.	13	65
		Seeking students' opinions on suitable volunteer areas.	11	55
		Introducing students to volunteer organizations in the community.	7	35
2	What do you envision about the role of the curriculum in promoting	Cultivating positive attitudes among students.	19	95
		Raising awareness among students about the concept and importance of volunteering.	18	90
		Reviewing inspiring volunteer work models.	16	80
		Identifying suitable volunteer fields for students.	14	70

3	volunteer work for SLD?	Guiding students in utilizing their free time for volunteering.	14	70
		Promoting teamwork and community involvement.	14	70
		Nurturing students' creativity in volunteer activities.	12	60
		Providing students with practical training for volunteer activities.	6	30
		Establishing partnership agreements with community volunteer institutions.	20	100
		Hosting school counselors to address volunteer-related issues for students.	18	90
	What do you envision about the role of school administration in promoting volunteer work for SLD?	Conducting educational seminars on suitable volunteer activities for students.	17	85
		Organizing an exhibition of students' volunteer work within the school.	17	85
		Adopting a volunteer record for students.	16	80
		Supporting individual initiatives of volunteer students.	14	70
		Assisting students in participating in volunteer day events.	13	65
		Creating an appealing environment for students to engage in volunteering.	10	50

Table (5) illustrates the perceptions of parents that the most important role of teachers in promoting students' volunteer work is to assign grades for their voluntary participation. All parents agreed on this 100%. Introducing students to community volunteer institutions ranked last in importance. The most significant role of the curriculum is to shape positive attitudes among students, with 95% of parents agreeing on this. Providing students with practical training for volunteer activities ranked

last. The primary role of school administration is to establish partnership agreements with community volunteer institutions, with all parents agreeing on this 100%. Creating an appealing environment for students that enhances volunteer work ranked last.

Regarding the degree of importance of the role of teacher, curriculum, and administration in promoting volunteer work for SLD, Table (6) illustrates the participants' responses.

**Table 6.**  
*The Importance Role of Teacher, Curriculum & Administration*

R	Domain	Responses						Mean	A
		High		Moderate		Low			
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
1	Teacher	17	0.85	2	0.10	1	0.05	2.8	1
2	Curriculum	9	0.45	8	0.40	3	0.15	2.3	3
3	Administration	12	0.60	7	0.35	1	0.05	2.55	2

Table (6) shows that the role of the teacher came in the first place, followed by the role of school administration, and then the role of the curriculum.

**Second question:** To answer the second question, The researcher used frequencies, means, standard deviations, and ranks (Table 7).

**Table 7.**  
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of Teachers' Responses Regarding the Challenges to the Role of Primary School in Promoting Volunteer Work for SLD.*

First dimension: Personal Challenges					
Seq.	Item	Mean	St.D.	Level	Ranking
1	Lack of basic skills among students to engage in volunteering.	3.828	0.827	High	3
2	SLD have a limited awareness of volunteering.	3.688	0.924	High	6
3	Insufficient motivational incentives to encourage SLD to participate in volunteering.	3.922	0.860	High	1

4	Resistance of SLD families to involve their children in volunteering.	3.422	1.124	High	7
5	Parents of SLD prioritize academic achievements for their children.	3.875	0.787	High	2
6	Difficulty in time management for SLD.	3.703	0.903	High	5
7	Limited knowledge among SLD about volunteering.	3.750	0.960	High	4
All first dimensión		<b>3.741</b>	<b>0.653</b>	High	1
Second dimension: Academic Challenges					
8	Weak communication channels between the school and community institutions.	3.766	0.904	High	3
9	Conflict between volunteer hours and SLD learning time.	3.734	1.102	High	4
10	The negative impact of participation in volunteering on the academic performance of SLD.	3.016	1.076	High	6
11	A lack of activities that motivate volunteering for SLD.	3.641	.949	High	5
12	Emphasis on academic achievement in assessments at the expense of volunteering.	3.844	0.912	High	1
13	Narrowing the curriculum subjects' focus on academic achievement for SLD.	3.828	0.952	High	2
All second dimensión		<b>3.638</b>	<b>0.709</b>	High	3
Third dimension: Organizational Challenges					
14	The school's do not consider volunteer participation in the .assessment criteria for SLD	3.547	1.083	High	5
15	Insufficient training courses to foster a culture of volunteering among SLD.	3.984	0.882	High	1
16	Lack of appealing volunteer programs within the school for SLD.	3.922	0.931	High	2
17	Shortcomings in regulations governing the involvement of SLD in volunteering.	3.813	0.889	High	3
18	Difficulty in organizing volunteer exhibitions within schools.	3.537	1.140	High	6
19	The school administration lack of conviction in involving SLD in volunteering.	3.531	1.069	High	7
20	Absence of coordination between the school and families to organize volunteering for SLD.	3.797	0.839	High	4
All third dimensión		<b>3.734</b>	<b>0.688</b>	High	2
Total Questionnaire		<b>3.705</b>	<b>0.620</b>	High	

Table (7) illustrates that the average score of the importance of challenges to the role of the elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD is 3.705, indicating a significant level of challenges. The most prominent challenges are personal challenges with an average of 3.741,

following the organizational challenges 3.734, and academic challenges rank lowest 3.638.

The average score of the importance of personal challenges facing the role of the elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD, is 3.741, indicating a significant level of



challenges. The highest-ranked personal obstacle was statement (3) and (4) with an average of 3.922 and 3.875. On the other hand, statement (4) ranked last among the personal obstacle statements, 3.422, and statement (2) ranked second to last.

The average score of the importance of academic challenges facing the role of the elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD, is 3.638, indicating a significant level of challenges. The highest-ranked academic obstacle was statement (12) and (13) with an average of 3.844 and 3.828. Statement (10) ranked last among the academic obstacle statements, 3.016, making it the least significant academic obstacle. Statement (11) ranked second to last.

The average score of the importance of organizational challenges facing the role of the

elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD, is 3.734, indicating a significant level of challenges. The highest-ranked organizational obstacle was statement (15) and (16) with an average of 3.984 and 3.922. Statement (19) ranked last among the organizational obstacle statements, 3.531, making it the least significant organizational obstacle. Statement (18) ranked second to last.

**Third question:** To answer the third question concerning study variables (gender and years of experiences), the response is as follows:

1. Gender: Means and standard deviations have been computed for the scores of challenges faced by the role of the elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD, based on the gender variable. Table (8) presents the results of the Mann-Whitney test, indicating the differences between the two groups.

**Table 8.**

*Mann-Whitney Test (U) for Challenges to the Primary School Role in Promoting Volunteer Work for SLD According to the Gender*

R	Questionnaire Dimensions	Gender	N.	Mean	Sum of Ranks	U	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Personal Challenges	M	38	24.65	320.50	229.50	0.087
		F	60	34.50	1759.50		
2	Academic Challenges	M	38	29.12	378.50	287.50	0.461
		F	60	33.36	1701.50		
3	Organizational Challenges	M	38	26.92	350.00	259.00	0.223
		F	60	33.92	1730.00		
Total Questionnaire		M	38	25.88	336.50	245.50	0.151
		F	60	34.19	1743.50		

Table (8) shows that there is no significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for the entire survey and for each of the three dimensions individually according to gender.

2. Years of Experience: Kruskal-Wallis test has been used. Table (9) presents the results of differences between the three groups in terms of years of experience.

**Table 9.**

*Kruskal-Wallis Test Average Ranks of Teachers Estimates of the Challenges to the Primary School's Role in Promoting Volunteer Work for SLD, According to Years of Experiences*

R	Questionnaire Dimensions	Years of Experience	N	Mean	Chi-Square	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Personal Challenges	5<	8	41.33	0.841	0.657
		5<10	29	33.53		
		<10	61	31.59		
2	Academic Challenges	5<	8	37.83	2.275	0.321
		5<10	29	38.13		
		<10	61	30.32		
3	Organizational Challenges	5<	8	41.67	7.055	0.137
		5<10	29	42.43		
		<10	61	28.66		
Total Questionnaire		5<	8	40.33	3.287	0.193
		5<10	29	39.00		
		<10	61	29.87		

Table (9) displays the results of the Kruskal-Wallis. There is no significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for the entire questionnaire and its three sub-dimensions according to years of experience, and the challenges faced by the role of the elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD are present to a significant degree.

## Discussion of Results

**Question one:** Table (5) have revealed parents' perceptions regarding the role of the elementary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD. The most important role attributed to teachers has been the allocation of grades for students' volunteer participation. One participant mentioned, "My son needs to improve his academic grades, which would encourage him to engage in volunteer work." This implies that parents seek alternative ways to evaluate their children with learning Disabilities through engaging in activities. The assigning grades to students for their volunteer activities can enhance their engagement in volunteer work, which aligns with Abo Skina et al., (2018). Furthermore, the identification of students with volunteering institutions in the community has been ranked lowest. This could be attributed to the fact that volunteering institutions are well-known within the Saudi community and operate in a formal manner. One participant noted, "There are no charitable organizations operating outside the law or in secrecy". Parents attributed the most significant role of the curriculum to shaping positive attitudes among students. This aligns with the notion that volunteer work requires the cultivation of positive attitudes towards it. One participant emphasized, "The elementary stage is the most suitable for instilling attitudes in students", which is consistent with Al-Dosari (2018), Askar et al., (2017), and Al-Sobbahi (2016). The provision of practical training for volunteer activities has been ranked lowest. This might be due to the need for elementary school students to understand volunteer work through hands-on practice and teacher guidance, rather than relying solely on the curriculum as Al-Draei (2021). The most crucial role attributed to school administration has been the establishment of partnership agreements with community volunteering institutions. One participant stated, "Partnerships between volunteering institutions and schools provide an appropriate environment for volunteer work." This highlights the necessity of collaboration and synergy between community institutions and educational institutions to organize efforts and achieve goals, which aligns with Al-Ghaith et al. (2020). Creating an attractive environment for students

to enhance volunteer work was ranked lowest. This might indicate that students prefer to engage in volunteer work outside the school environment to develop their experiences and interactions with community institutions, which aligns with Al-Kalib (2023). Additionally, some roles mentioned by parents were individual in nature and could be included alongside the primary roles of the school.

Table (6) regarding the importance of the roles of school elements have revealed that teachers' role ranked first in terms of promoting volunteer work for SLD, as perceived by parents. This finding can be interpreted by the fact that the role of the teacher is one of the most crucial factors in promoting volunteer work among students. The other school elements depend on the teacher's performance, as the teacher has the most significant impact on students, which aligns with Al-Draei (2021), and Al-Thunayan (2021).

**Question Two:** Table (7) have revealed that the average challenges faced by primary school in enhancing volunteer work for SLD, from the perspective of teachers, was (3.705), indicating a significant degree of challenges. This finding aligns with Al-Halalat (2018), which highlighted the considerable challenges faced by schools and educational institutions in promoting volunteer work among students. Despite the contributions of school administration in fostering volunteer activities (Al-Shuwaihat et al., 2019), the results suggest that there exists a deficiency in planning and coordination among educational institutions concerning the promotion of volunteer work. Moreover, SLD often require specialized communication skills to effectively engage with them according to (Al-Thunayan, 2021). Additionally, it was found that volunteer activities might not be appealing to SLD (Al-Samiri, 2021). Furthermore, a major obstacle identified was the lack of clarity in objectives of volunteer work within educational institutions (Al-Harbi, 2020). Time management and opposition from families were also the challenges, especially for female students' participation in volunteer work in Saudi, where certain volunteer activities clash with the prevailing family culture in Saudi society (Al-Kalib, 2023), but Al-Ghaith et al., (2020) reported a high degree of school contribution to enhancing volunteering.

The results have further revealed that, according to teachers' perspectives, the greatest challenges facing the role of schools in promoting volunteer work among SLD were personal, organizational, and then academic challenges, with high level for

each. The prominence of these challenges can be attributed to the fact that volunteer work heavily relies on the efforts of individuals. Their willingness to engage in volunteer work depends on their understanding of its importance, their awareness, and the prevailing culture around volunteer work, which aligns with Mash'al (2021). The effectiveness of volunteer work relies on the support of teachers and school leadership, and the efforts must be made to address the challenges faced in volunteer work and encourage student engagement (Al-Draei, 2021), which emphasized the impact of educational methods on supporting student volunteering.

The results also have indicated that the most significant personal obstacle has been the lack of intrinsic motivation, which could be attributed to the unclear objectives and importance of volunteer work among participants (Rolf et al., 2021). Similarly, the limited role of teachers in promoting volunteer work for students has been highlighted (Al-Thunayan, 2021), although this differs from the findings of Al-Bani (2019), who reported the availability of requirements for developing a culture of volunteer work among secondary school female students.

Regarding academic challenges, the prioritization of tests and academic achievement over volunteer activities has been identified as a significant challenge. Elementary school tend to emphasize academic performance, and volunteer work might conflict with students' study schedules. Furthermore, parents' preference for academic achievement over volunteer work might discourage their children's participation (Al-Kalib, 2023) and (Al-Harbi, 2020). In terms of organizational challenges, the scarcity of training courses aimed at cultivating a volunteering culture was highlighted (Al-Ghaith et al., 2020). This reflects the school's focus on academic achievements rather than volunteer work, which align with Al-Harbi (2020), which highlighted the lack of clear objectives and philosophy of volunteer work in primary school. Similarly, the limited role of schools in promoting volunteer work was noted (Al-Harabsheh, 2021).

**Question Three:** Table (8) shows that there are no significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for the entire questionnaire and its three dimensions concerning gender. This suggests the similarity of challenges faced by both male and female schools in Saudi regarding personal challenges, environmental and curricular challenges, and organizational and physical facilities challenges.

The absence of differentiation between male and female schools can be attributed to the fact that they both serve the same educational role according to the educational policy goals in the Saudi. The treatment of male and female students is equitable, and teachers from both genders hold the same bachelor's degrees from education colleges that offer identical programs. Additionally, this result could be interpreted as cultural elements having a similar impact on learning in both male and female schools in Saudi (Al-Ghaith et al., 2020). However, this finding differs from the results of Al-Kalib (2023), who find differences in the requirements of volunteer work between female and male students. It was suggested that proper care must be provided for females, possibly due to the conservative nature of Saudi society, which can lead to restrictions on female participation in activities that do not align with traditional roles.

Table (9) shows that there are no significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for the entire questionnaire and its three sub-dimensions according to years of experience. This reaffirms the consensus among teachers that challenges facing primary school in promoting volunteer work for SLD are significantly present, regardless of the number of years of experience. This finding suggests that identifying the challenges does not necessarily require years of teaching experience, and all teachers contribute to enhancing volunteer work for students despite their varying levels of experience. This result aligns with Al-Draei (2021), but it contrasts with the findings of Al-Dosari (2018), who stated that methods of instilling volunteer work values in elementary students depend on teachers' experience and communication skills.

**Question Four:** The study proposes the following recommendations to enhance the role of elementary school for engagement of SLD in volunteer activities and development of a culture of volunteerism within the education system:

- Allocate grades for volunteer work within the assessment of SLD.
- Establish a file recording volunteer activities for SLD within their academic file.
- Design an incentives and attractive elements, to encourage SLD to participate in volunteer activities.
- Training teachers on strategies to overcome challenges faced volunteer work for SLD.
- Develop curricula to enhance volunteer work among SLD.
- Promote a culture of volunteerism within primary school.

- Allocate school activity hours for community-based volunteer work.
- Establish a department within educational administrations to provide consultations regarding volunteer work.
- Utilize the expertise of community institutions to address challenges to student participation in volunteer activities.
- Coordinate between school administration and the parents of SLD to encourage their participation in volunteer work.
- Organize an annual conference on volunteer work for students.
- Issuance of an annual guide covering all aspects related to volunteer work for students.

### Conclusions

As a results of the study of Parents' Perceptions of the Primary School Role in Promoting Volunteering Among Students with Learning Disabilities and Teachers' Perspectives on Challenges:

- The perceptions of parents highlighted the roles of teachers, curriculum, and school administration in promoting volunteer work for SLD, with the most significant role attributed to teachers.
- Significant challenges were identified by teachers, facing the primary school's role in promoting volunteer work for SLD.
- Personal challenges were the most significant challenges from the perspective of teachers regarding the primary school's role in promoting volunteer work for SLD, followed by organizational and academic challenges.
- There is no significant differences in the challenges faced primary school in promoting volunteer work for students according to gender and years of experience.

Regarding to further research, the researcher considers it necessary to make more studies about "digital volunteerism for students and its role in enhancing global citizenship", "factors influencing the engagement of SLD in volunteer work" and "the role of volunteer work for SLD in achieving sustainable development".

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